

Denise
KEEP
Links to Bill Creasy's Audio Files

Old Testament

The Five Books of Moses

- 01 Introduction to the Bible 50:01
- 02 In The Beginning... (Genesis 1: 1-2: 25) 35:26
- 03 Sin Enters the World (Genesis 3: 1-11: 32) 55:13
- 04 The Plan of Salvation (Genesis 12: 1-21: 34) 31:51
- 05 Isaac on the Altar (Genesis 22: 1-24) 42:34
- 06 The Story Goes On . . . (Genesis 23: 1-36: 43) 47:37
- 07 Jacob/Joseph Story, Part 1 (Genesis 37:1-41: 57) 55:58
- 08 Jacob/Joseph Story, Part 2 (Genesis 42: 1-50: 26) 39:23
- 09 Servitude & Slavery (Exodus 1: 1-6: 30) 52:20
- 10 The Exodus (Exodus 7: 1-15: 27) 43:11
- 11 The Law (Exodus 16:1-24:18) 42:25
- 12 The Tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-40:38) 33:27
- 13 A Holy People, Part 1 (Leviticus 1: 1-10: 20) 50:23
- 14 A Holy People, Part 2 (Leviticus 11: 1-17: 16) 40:42
- 15 A Holy People, Part 3 (Leviticus 18: 1-27: 34) 46:41
- 16 Moving Out (Numbers 1: 1-10: 36) 36:33
- 17 In the Wilderness (Numbers 11: 1-36: 13) 44:34
- 18 And Moses Said . . . (Deuteronomy 1: 1-34: 12) 42:35

The Historical Books

- 19 Israel Attacks! (Joshua 1: 1-8: 35) 52:59
- 20 Conquest (Joshua 9: 1- 24: 33) 37:47
- 21 Settlement (Judges 1: 1-21: 25) 51:36
- 22 Ruth: A Love Story (Ruth 1: 1- 4: 22) 51:18
- 23 The Final Judge (1 Samuel 1: 1-7:17) 47:12
- 24 Israel Demands a King (1 Samuel 8: 1-15: 35) 39:16
- 25 A Real King (1 Samuel 16: 1-20: 42) 53:52
- 26 David on The Run (1 Samuel 17: 1-31: 13) 39:32
- 27 Rise to Power (2 Samuel 1: 1-10: 19) 55:46
- 28 David's Fall (2 Samuel 11: 1-11: 27) 38:32
- 29 Consequences (2 Samuel 12: 1-13: 39) 38:56
- 30 Disaster (2 Samuel 14: 1-24: 25) 50:24
- 31 Solomon, Part 1 (1 Kings 1: 1-4: 34) 58:25
- 32 Solomon, Part 2 (1 Kings: 5: 1-11: 43) 35:01
- 33 A Kingdom Divided (1 Kings 12: 1-16: 28) 48:24
- 34 Elijah, the P.T. Barnum of the Prophets (1 Kings 16: 29-19: 18) 36:04
- 35 Elijah on the Run (1 Kings 19: 1-22: 53) 47:58
- 36 Elisha, a Quiet Man (2 Kings 1: 1-9: 37) 35:52
- 37 Assyria Conquers Israel (2 Kings 10: 1-17: 41) 41:45
- 38 Babylon Conquers Judah (2 Kings 18: 1-25: 30) 44:48
- 39 Return from Captivity, Part 1 (Ezra 1: 1-6: 22) 58:17
- 40 Return from Captivity, Part 2 (Ezra 7: 1-Nehemiah 13: 31) 39:47
- 41 Left Behind, Part 1 (Esther 1: 1-4: 17) 51:27
- 42 Left Behind, Part 2 (Esther 5: 1-10: 3) 54:52

The Wisdom Books

- 43 Yet We Suffer (Job 1: 1-3: 26) 45:50
- 44 Here's Why (Job 4: 1-42: 17) 38:59
- 45 Psalms, a Journey through the Poetry of Experience 40:45
- 46 Psalms, a Journey into the Heart of David (selected Psalms) 1:03:09, 53:14, 1:28:45
- 49 Inside The Heart Of Solomon Pt. 1 (Proverbs) 52:47
- 50 Inside The Heart Of Solomon Pt. 2 (Ecclesiastes, Song Of Songs) 35:22

The Prophets

- 51 Introduction to the Prophets 42:18
- 52 The Thundering Prophet, "Judgment" (Isaiah 1:1-35:10) 40:06
- 53 The Thundering Prophet, "Narrative Interlude" (Isaiah 36:1-39:8) 46:55
- 54 The Thundering Prophet, "Grace" (Isaiah 40:1-66:24) 47:19
- 55 The Weeping Prophet (Jeremiah 1:1-52:34) 54:12
- 56 Hot Tears (Lamentations 1:1-5:22) 31:52
- 57 The Weird Prophet (Ezekiel 1:1-48:35) 45:55
- 58 The Royal Prophet (Daniel 1:1-12:13) 36:00
- 59 The Minor Prophets Pt. 1 (Hosea-Jonah) 52:23
- 60 The Minor Prophets Pt. 2 (Micah-Malachi) 37:45

New Testament

The Gospels

- 61 Introduction to the Gospels 49:24
- 62 The Birth of the Messiah (Luke 1:1-2:52) 53:38
- 63 Jesus' Public Ministry (Luke 3:1-19:27) 49:11
- 64 Death, Burial and Resurrection (Luke 19:28-24:53) 41:15
- 65 Focus on Resurrection 46:55

Acts

- 66 Birth of the Church (Acts 1:1-9:31) 40:58
- 67 On The Road With Paul Pt. 1 (Acts 9:32-15:35) 57:43
- 68 On The Road With Paul Pt. 2 (Acts 15:36-28:31) 39:52

Paul's Epistles

- 69 Saved By Grace (Romans 1:1-16:27) 51:57
- 70 The Corinthian Correspondence (1 & 2 Corinthians) 39:29
- 71 Letters From Corinth (1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians) 44:01
- 72 The "Prison" Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon) 50:11
- 73 Timothy, My Dear Son (1 & 2 Timothy) 45:02

General Epistles

- 74 General Letters (Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, Jude) 53:55

Revelation

- 75 Introduction to Revelation (Revelation 1:1-2:7) 56:50
- 76 The Seven Churches (Revelation 2:8-3:22) 42:10
- 77 The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord (Revelation 4:1-19:21) 1:04:32
- 78 A New Heaven and a New Earth (Revelation 20:1-22:21) 29:02

Inter-Testamental Period

400 years of silence

- 400 years of silence – Time between the Old Testament and New Testament when God did not speak to the Jewish people

400 years

- 400 years of slavery before the exodus – Another 400 years when God was silent
 - One of the reasons that God allows this to happen is that it allows them to grow into a people with their own identity
 - Instead of studying Scripture to seek God and to prepare for the coming Messiah (Psalm 43-44), these 400 years of foreign military oppression blinded and deafened the nation to the point where most of the Jews could not even consider the concept of a humble Messiah (Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 6:10; John 12:40).
 - Isa 6:10 Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."
 - Jn 12:40 "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them." 41 Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.
 - Zec 9:9 See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- Almost two millennia have passed since the New Testament canon was completed, and though the Word is full of grace and truth, and though the birth, life and death of Jesus fulfilled a staggering array of prophecies, the Jews as a people have yet to open their eyes and ears. But Jesus is coming again, and one day a remnant will both see and hear.

430 BC – Malachi's warning

- 430 BC – Began with Malachi's warning because Jews were not honoring God – Closed the Old Testament
 - Ended with the coming of John the Baptist, the Messiah's forerunner.

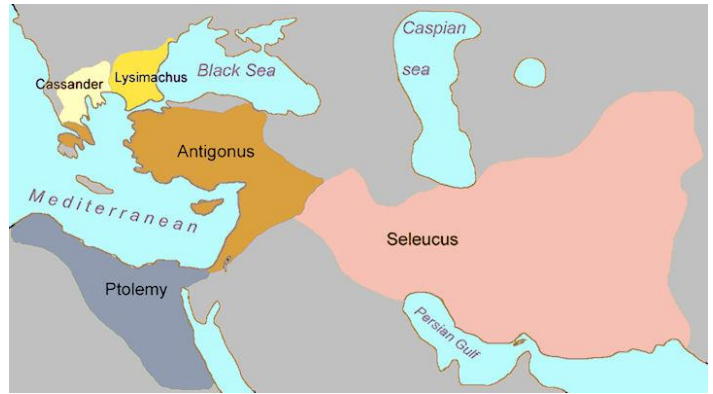
Mal 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

331 BC – Greece defeats Persia

- 331 B.C. – Greece
 - Alexander the Great (Greece) defeats Darius (Persia), ending 200 years of Persian rule.
 - They adopted the Greek language and many of the Greek customs and manners
- Daniel 5 – The writing on the wall

323 BC – Alexander dies and his four generals divide the kingdom

- When Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., his empire stretched from his homeland of Macedonia to India



- 323 BC – Alexander dies on his return from Persia and his four generals divide the kingdom:
 - Divided the kingdom
 - Antipater and Cassander get Macedon and Greece
 - Lysimachus gets Thrace and Asia Minor
 - Seleucus gets Syria
 - Ptolemy gets Palestine and Egypt
 - Daniel 8 – Ram and He-Goat

- 204 BC Greece – Antiochus the Great of Syria – recaptured Palestine
 - He and his successor, Antiochus Epiphanes, persecuted the Jews and sold the priesthood

167-160 BC – Maccabean Revolt

- 167-160 BC – Maccabean Revolt
 - 167 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes IV, a Seleucid king of Syria, attacks Egypt
 - The Roman navy fought him off
 - He was angry and frustrated by the Roman defense and lashed out at Israel and on God's temple
 - Antiochus attacks Jerusalem and desecrates the temple Holy of Holies by offering pig flesh on the altar
 - Antiochus' suppression of the Jews came to a head in December of 168 BC – When returning in defeat from Alexandria, he ordered his generals to seize Jerusalem on a Sabbath
 - There he erected an idol of Zeus and desecrated the altar by offering swine on it and sprinkling the broth in the sanctuary
 - Sacrifice was ceased because the temple was desecrated
 - The Jews, especially their leaders, invited God's judgment upon them through Antiochus because of their sins and transgressions – Antiochus' 1st attack was to settle a rivalry for the high priesthood
 - A pious high priest, Onias III, was removed from office and replaced with his brother Jason, because Jason had bribed Antiochus
 - In 172 BC, another brother, Menelaus, gave Antiochus an even bigger bribe and replaced Jason.
 - In 171 BC, Menelaus started selling many of the gold utensils of the temple to raise money to pay off the bribe.
 - Onias III rebuked him, and Menelaus had him murdered
 - Meanwhile, Jason marshaled armies and tried to oust Menelaus by force; Antiochus came in 171 to defend his appointee
 - Mattathias, a priest of Judea, raises a revolt against Syria, which is led by his son, Judas Maccabaeus
 - 165 B.C. the Jews recaptured Jerusalem, cleansed the Temple and rededicated it
 - Judas Maccabees – leader of the revolt – Maccabees means hammer
 - The revolution results in a brief period of Jewish independence.
 - Rededication of the Temple

- Only enough oil for the Menorah to last 1 day but miraculously, the Menorah kept burning for the entire week of the rededication festival
- Hanukkah (Festival of Lights) – Remembers this miracle
- Fighting continued between the Jews and the Syrians until the Romans gained control

146 BC – Rome defeats Greece

- 275 BC – The Romans in Italy were beginning to expand out of Italy and conquer other parts of the Mediterranean
 - They started with Sicily, an island near Italy. The Romans were fighting the Carthaginians.
 - Some of the Greeks decided to help the Carthaginians fight the Romans, because the Greeks were afraid of the Romans. But the Carthaginians lost.
- 146 BC – Battle of Corinth
 - The Romans were very angry at the Greeks, and they started to take Greece over as well. At first the Romans pretended to let Greece be independent, but by 146 BC the Romans destroyed Corinth and made Greece into a province of the Roman Empire.
 - Beginning of the Roman Empire
 - Lasted until ??
 - In the late fourth century, the Western Roman Empire crumbled after a nearly 500-year run as the world's greatest superpower. Historians have blamed the collapse on hundreds of different factors ranging from military failures and crippling taxation to natural disasters and even climate change.
 - Still others argue that the Roman Empire didn't really fall in 476 A.D., since its eastern half continued for another thousand years in the form of the Byzantine Empire. While just how—and when—the Empire fell remains a subject of ongoing debate, certain theories have emerged as the most popular explanations for Western Rome's decline and disintegration.
- 63 B.C. – Rome
 - The Roman general, Pompey, takes Jerusalem and the people of Israel come under Roman rule.
 - Pompey walked into the Holy of Holies, once again shocking and embittering the Jews
 - Israel stays under Roman rule throughout the entire period of the New Testament.
- 47 B.C. – Caesar installed Antipater as procurator of Judea
 - Antipater was a descendant of Esau
 - Antipater subsequently appointed his two sons as kings over Galilee and Judea.
- 40 B.C. – The Roman senate appoints Herod as king of Judea.
- 31 B.C. – Caesar Augustus becomes Roman emperor, establishing Imperial Rome and displacing the Roman Republic.
- 19 B.C. – Herod the Great begins a major renovation and expansion of the temple in Jerusalem. The work continues throughout the New Testament period until Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed in the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-73.
- As the New Testament opens, Antipater's son, Herod the Great, a descendant of Esau, was king
 - The priesthood was politically motivated and not of the line of Aaron.
 - Politics also resulted in the development of two major factions, the Sadducees and the Pharisees.
 - Synagogues, new places of worship and social activity, had sprouted up all over the country
 - Sadducees
 - Favored the liberal attitudes and practices of the Greeks
 - Held to only the Torah as regards religion, but like all aristocrats they did not think God should have any part in governing the nation.
 - Pharisees

- Conservative zealots who, with the help of the scribes, developed religious law to the point where the concerns and care of people were essentially meaningless
- Sanhedrins
 - Religious and civil matters were governed by the lesser and the greater Sanhedrins, the greater Sanhedrin being comprised of a chief priest and seventy other members that handed out justice, sometimes by 39 lashes administered with full force.
- Between the time of Malachi and the coming of the Messiah, several prophecies were fulfilled
 - Dan 8:14 He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."
 - The 2,300 days of desecration between 171 and 165 B.C.

250 – 132 BC – Septuagint (LXX)

- The Old Testament was translated into Greek
 - That translation, the Septuagint, came into widespread use (and is quoted frequently in the New Testament)
- Around 250 B.C. the books considered by most to be inspired Scripture were translated from Hebrew into Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean world.
 - Also known as the Greek Old Testament
- Legend has it that Ptolemy II commissioned 70 rabbinical scholars to make the translation for inclusion in the great library of Alexandria, Egypt. The story first appears in "Letter of Aristeas," and it is repeated, with embellishments, by Philo of Alexandria, Josephus, and later by St. Augustine himself.
 - This translation is known as the "Septuagint," or "the 70," and it is typically referenced with the Roman numerals, LXX (referring to the legendary 70 Jewish scholars who completed the translation).
- This is the "Scripture" quoted most often in the New Testament, especially in the Pauline epistles, and later by the early Church Fathers.
 - This is the "Scripture" that Jesus would have known.
- Between 250 B.C. and the later part of the 1st century A.D. books continued to be written, primarily in Greek, on "biblical" themes and topics—hundreds of them.
 - Some gained traction in both Judaism and in the early Church, expanding the loosely defined 1st century A.D. "canon" of Scripture to include:
 - Tobit
 - Judith
 - 1 & 2 Maccabees
 - Book of Wisdom
 - Sirach and
 - various additions to Daniel and Esther
- Throughout the 1st century nearly all "books" were in the form of scrolls, sheets stitched end to end, then rolled.
 - Each book of the Hebrew Scriptures would have been on an individual scroll (or scrolls).
 - Nearly all Jewish communities would have had the five Torah scrolls (Genesis – Deuteronomy), but most communities would only have had some of the other books considered "Scripture," depending upon availability and the resources of the community, since each was handwritten at considerable expense.



**Papyrus page from the Septuagint.
Institute of Papyrology, Heidelberg.**

Herod the Great (37 BC – 4 BC)

Herod was an Edomite

- Herod was born c. 74 B.C. in Idumea (Edom)
 - Half-Jew/half-Edomite

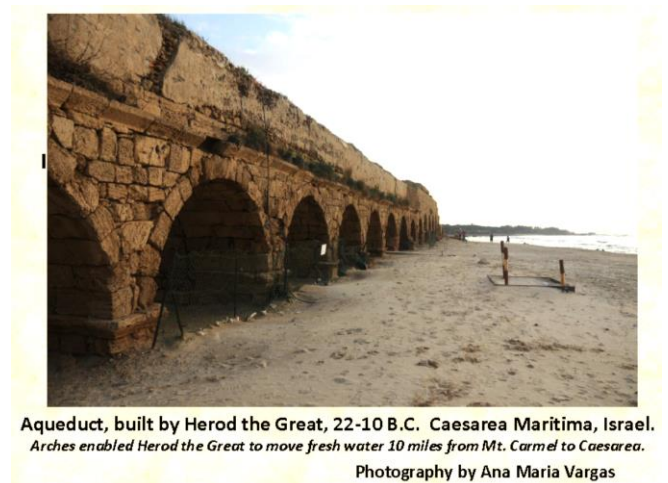
- He considered himself a Jew
 - The Jewish leadership, observant Jews (Pharisees & Sadducees) & nationalist Jews (Zealots) did not
- Edom
 - Battle between 2 babies in the womb (Jacob & Esau)
 - Turned into a battle between 2 nations (Jews & Edomites)
 - Edomites refused passage on the Kings Highway after the Jews left Egypt
 - Jews were forced to go into the desert at Kadesh Barnea
 - Edomites pillaged Jerusalem when it fell to the Babylonians
 - Ended at the foot of the cross between 2 men (Jesus & Herod)
 - Herod is the only person in the Bible to whom Jesus had absolutely nothing to say

King Herod

- Rome appointed Herod governor of Galilee in 49 B.C.
 - In 40 B.C. the Roman Senate elected Herod “King of the Jews,” and placed him in charge of the entire land.
 - King appointed by Caesar Augustus – honorific title – more of an administrator
 - His job was to manage the land and collect taxes to send to Rome
 - His kingdom comprised Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Idumea, Batanea, and Peraea, which was approximately the same size as the kingdom of David and Solomon.
 - Though supported by Rome, the Jewish Sanhedrin condemned Herod and loathed him for his brutality.
- Herod secures the throne in 37 B.C.
 - To secure his position, Herod married the teenage niece of Antigonus, Mariamne
 - He banished his current wife Doris and his son Antipater
- Herod was a brutal, violent man
 - Known as the Bible’s bloodiest tyrant
 - Herod executed several members of his own family when he found them to be a threat to him
 - His wife Mariamne and 2 sons
 - He executed his son Antipater in 4 B.C. for plotting the murder of his father
 - Murder of the innocence
 - Orders that all the baby boys under 2 years old to be killed to get rid of Jesus
 - Herod the Great is in reference to his great building projects
- Herod dies in 4 B.C.
 - Chronic kidney disease complicated by a very uncomfortable case of maggot-infested gangrene of the genitals
 - Herod was buried at Herodium according Josephus, but his remains could never be found
 - 5/7/2007 Ehud Netzer of Hebrew University discovered Herod's tomb
 - Took 35 years of archaeological work
 - When he died, he appointed his son, Herod Antipas
- Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great
 - Reigned 4 BC to AD 39
 - Husband of Herodius
 - Put John the Baptist to death
 - Pilate sent Jesus to him
- Herod Agrippa I (37 – 44 AD)
 - Killed James, brother of John
 - Put Peter in prison
 - Struck down by an angel at the Theater in Caesarea
- Herod Agrippa II
 - Paul makes a legal defense before him

Herod's Fortresses

- Herod was hated by the Jews, loathed by most of the Romans, but he was Herod the Great because he was a great builder
 - Herod started enormous building projects in order to generate revenue in Jerusalem
 - Built huge aqueducts to run water into the Temple
- Cleopatra was a powerful opponent of King Herod
 - Herod unlawfully appointed Aristobulus as high priest then had him murdered – Cleopatra wanted him to be held accountable
 - Cleopatra was dating Marc Anthony – Caesar's powerful second-in-command
 - Herod built these fortresses to escape in the event that Marc Anthony or Cleopatra came for revenge
- Had several fortresses that he could escape to in times of trouble – Escape route back to Idumea
 - Fortress of Herodium
 - 7.5 miles south of Jerusalem on the outskirts of Bethlehem
 - Fortress of Masada
 - The place where the last Jewish stronghold against Roman invasion stood
- Masada
 - Spectacular fortress
 - Supplies for 10,000 men for 10 year
 - 4 Swimming pools
 - Drinking water diverted from the wadi into cisterns
 - After the battle that destroyed the Temple, the Zealots took refuge in the Fortress of Masada
 - Romans made Jewish slaves build a ramp to get to the battering ram to the fortress
 - Zealots did not want to kill Jews
 - When the Zealots knew that the Romans were coming in the next day, they all killed themselves – better to be dead than to show allegiance (as a slave) to anyone other than God
 - Only 2 women and 5 children were found alive – that's how we know the story
 - Currently, the Israeli Army takes their oaths at Masada, saying that Masada will never fall again



Augments the Temple in Jerusalem (37 BC)

- Expanded the size of the Temple platform to accommodate the influx of people during the Pilgrimage Festivals
 - To the size of 5 football fields
 - Would hold upwards of 400,000 people
- Turned the Temple into a 16 story glistening white limestone building trimmed in 24K gold
 - Golden doors that were 2 stories high
 - This is the Temple that Jesus knows
- Why did he do it?
 - God prescribes 3 Pilgrimage Festivals a year, where all good Jews throughout the world (who are able), are to go to the Temple and worship as one people

- Passover – Remembers the Exodus (springtime)
- Pentecost – Remembers the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai (50 days after Passover)
- Tabernacles – Remembers the wanderings in the wilderness (fall time)
- At the time of Jesus, Jerusalem had a population of about 100,000 people
 - During the Pilgrimage Festivals, those numbers would swell to over 1,000,000 people
 - Similar to bringing to Major League football franchise to a city – creates a lot of tax revenue



Christ in the Old Testament

- After his resurrection, Jesus said to his disciples:

Lk 24:44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

- Jesus established a hermeneutic for reading Scripture in a new light
 - A method of re-envisioning the Hebrew Scriptures through a new interpretative lens
 - A method that allows Scripture to be re-read, evolving in continuity with its original sense, while providing a depth and breadth unimagined in the old covenant.

Christ in the Law – Tabernacle and the Five Great Sacrifices of Leviticus

- The Tabernacle is the dwelling place of God
 - God's "glory" fills the Holy of Holies in the theophany of the Pillar of Cloud and Fire.
 - Heb 8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a *copy and shadow of what is in heaven*. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."
 - Heb 9:11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.
- Highlights the vast chasm between us and God
 - In the Tabernacle, God is with humanity, yet he is separated from us in his infinite holiness, alone in the Holy of Holies, separated by walls of pure gold, and covered by exquisite tapestries.
 - Only the High Priest can approach God in his sanctuary, and then only one day each year, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.
 - The very structure of the Tabernacle, with its many barriers between sinful humanity and a holy God, highlights the vast chasm between us and God.
- The five great sacrifices God prescribes in Leviticus 1-5 enable the chasm to be bridged, but only through the mediation of a priest, and only after the shedding of much blood, for as our author of Hebrews says, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22).
 - 4 of the 5 are **blood** sacrifices.
 - **Burnt** Offering (Lev 1:1-17)
 - Grain Offering (Lev 2:1-16)
 - **Communion** Offering (Lev 3:1-17)
 - **Sin** Offering (Lev 4:1- 5:13)
 - **Reparation** Offering (Lev 5:14-26)
- We may divide the five great sacrifices into two categories:
 - Sweet Savor offerings (portray the person of Christ)
 - Burnt offering
 - Grain offering
 - Communion offering
 - Non/sweet Savor offerings (portray the work of Christ)
 - Sin offering
 - Reparation offering

Burnt offering (Lev 1:1-17)

- Sweet savor offering #1 – The person of Christ

- The burnt offering pictures **Christ offering himself wholly and without blemish to God**
 - The burnt offering is both atoning and substitutionary: Christ dies in our place.
- Each of the offerings pictures Christ in some aspect of his redeeming character:
 - the bull speaks of his strength and perfection;
 - the sheep speaks of his patience and unresisting abandonment to death
 - “He was led like a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7)
 - the goat typifies the sinner
 - When used of Christ, it speaks of he who was “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53: 12).
 - As Paul says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21);
 - Scapegoat – Our sins are transferred to our goat, which is taken outside the camp and slaughtered
 - the turtledove or pigeon speaks of:
 - mourning innocence (Isaiah 38: 14)
 - the poverty of the one who “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Grain offering (Lev 2:1-16)

- Sweet savor offering #2 – The person of Christ
- The grain offering pictures the **perfection of Christ's humanity**:
 - the fine flour speaks of his even personality, of the loveliness of Jesus;
 - the bread without yeast speaks of his total lack of corruption;
 - the bread mingled with oil speaks of his being anointed by the Holy Spirit;
 - the lack of honey speaks of his honesty and forthrightness; there is no “sweetness” in him;
 - the salt speaks of his faithfulness.
 - Salt preserves
 - the “salt of the covenant” binds one’s word to an agreement.
- This represents the personality of Christ, in His perfect, unblemished full humanity
 - He was like fine flour, purely refined, perfect in every way
 - Did not include:
 - Yeast = sin
 - Honey = nothing artificially sweet about Him – never flattered people or told them what they wanted to hear, just the truth
 - Did include salt
 - make people thirsty for God

Peace/Fellowship/Communion offering (Lev 3:1-17)

- Sweet savor offering #3 – The person of Christ
- The communion offering pictures **Christ as our peace**.
 - At peace with God through the redemptive action of Christ, we are invited into communion with him, to share a meal.
 - Paul says, “He himself is our peace” (Ephesians 2: 14)
 - When Jesus leaves his disciples and goes to the cross he says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you” (John 14:27).
 - As the penitent sinner at the Tabernacle is invited to share a meal with God in the Communion Offering, so are we invited to share in the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.
 - Eucharist/communion – Sacrifice is made, and then you consume the communion

- He offered himself totally to God in the burnt offering (fully God and fully human) and then He offers Himself back to us
 - Christ sharing Himself with us

Sin offering (Lev 4:1-5:13)

- Non-sweet savor offering #1 – The work of Christ
- The sin offering pictures **Christ atoning for our sin:**
 - “The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood” (Hebrews 13: 11-12).
 - Paul says, God sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering” (Romans 8:3).
- Christ became our sin offering
 - As the sin offering is substitutionary in Leviticus, so is the sin offering of Christ substitutionary: “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).
 - He went the cross on our behalf – He shed His blood in our place
 - He became a substitutionary offering for us

Guilt/Reparation offering (Lev 5:14-26)

- Non-sweet savor offering #2 – The work of Christ
- The guilt offering pictures **Christ atoning for the damage caused by our sin.**
 - It focuses not on the sin itself, but on its consequences.
 - Restitution – Making restitution for what one has done
 - Psalm 51:4 expresses this aspect of the offering very nicely:
“Against you [God], you alone, have I sinned. What is evil in your sight I have done, and so you may be justified when you give sentence and be without reproach when you judge.”

Typologically

- If we view the sacrifices in Leviticus typologically, we see in them as a perfect portrait of the Lord Jesus.
 - As God takes common sacrificial rituals from the ancient world and raises them to a higher moral and ethical plane in Leviticus, so too does he take the sacrifices in Leviticus and raises them to a higher plane in the sacrifice of Christ.
 - What begins in the ancient world with the blood of bulls and goats takes on a profound meaning as it foreshadows in Leviticus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- The epistle to the Hebrews summarizes the typology in Leviticus:
When Christ came as High Priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves: but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9: 11-14)

Christ in the Prophets – Suffering Servant of Isaiah

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

- Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40)
 - After the birth of the Church at Pentecost, A.D. 32, we read that Philip encountered on the road to Gaza an Ethiopian eunuch, a wealthy official of the Ethiopian royal court who had been visiting Jerusalem. While there he had acquired a scroll of Isaiah, and he was reading Isaiah 53: 7-8. Seeing Philip, the Ethiopian asked him whether Isaiah was writing about himself or about someone else. Philip then explained that Isaiah was writing about Christ. Listen to the story in Acts 8:26-40.
- Isaiah contains four “Suffering Servant” songs:
 - Isaiah 42: 1-9 The Servant of the Lord
 - Isaiah 49: 1-7 The Servant of the Lord
 - Isaiah 50: 1-11 Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience
 - Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 The Suffering and Glory of the Servant
- The “prologue” to the songs identifies God’s “Suffering Servant” as Israel:
Isa 41:8 "But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, 9 I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you.
- The suffering servant figure in all four songs is clearly Israel personified.
 - Yet, when we read Isaiah 53: 7-8, as Philip instructs the Ethiopian eunuch to do, we rightly see Christ as the suffering servant, if we understand the passage as re/envisioned in light of the Christian experience and the broader Christian canon. Such a reading does not contradict the original textual intent of Isaiah; rather, it adds additional depth and breadth to it.

Christ in the Psalms – The Anointed One

- The Hebrew verb “to anoint” is *mashach*,
 - From it we get the noun “messiah,” which means “the anointed one.”
- “Anointing” elevates the status of a person or thing from the ordinary to a higher position
 - Moses anoints the Tabernacle and everything in it, as well as when he anoints his brother Aaron as High Priest (Leviticus 8: 10-12)
 - Samuel anoints David as king (1 Samuel 16: 4/13).
- The Psalms contain many references to people and things being “anointed,” but one reference is particularly notable – Psalm 2.
 - Jewish perspective – Technically a psalm for a royal coronation, most certainly in reference to David.
 - Christian interpretative lens, however, it is read as a “messianic” psalm, in reference to Christ.
 - The book of Revelation clearly sees it this way. When Christ returns in the end times as King of kings, we read: “Out of his mouth came a sharp sword to strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod . . .” (Rev 19:15), a direct allusion to Psalm 2.
 - And when Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss in the Gospels, we shudder at the chilling irony, when read in light of Psalm 2.
- Ps 110

Fullfilled Prophecies on Jesus

The Lineage and Birth of Jesus Foretold

Prophecy	Old Testament Reference	New Testament Fulfillment
Seed of a woman	Genesis 3:14-15	Galatians 4:4
From the Tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Luke 3:33
Descendant of Abraham, Issac and Jacob	Genesis 12:3, 17:17-19; Numbers 24:17	Matthew 1:1-2,16; Luke 3:34, 38
Heir to the Throne of David	Isaiah 9:6-7	Luke 1:32
Anointed and Eternal	Psalms 45:6-7	Hebrews 1:8-10
Jesus to be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Luke 2:4-7
The time of Jesus' birth	Daniel 9:24-25	Luke 2:1-5
Christ to be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:13-14	Luke 1:26-28, 30-31
Lamentation for the killing of infants	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
To be called out of Egypt	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:13-15

Preparation for and Ministry of Jesus

Prophecy	Old Testament Reference	New Testament Fulfillment
The way of the Lord prepared	Isaiah 40:3-4	Luke 3:2-5
A messenger to come before the Lord	Malachi 3:1	Luke 7:24-27
A prophet would be raised up	Deuteronomy 18:15	Acts 3:19-20, 22
Declared to be a Son of God	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:13-17
Ministry centered in Galilee	Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:12-16
Jesus Christ would speak in parables	Psalms 78:1-2	Matthew 13:34-35
Jesus to bind up and heal the brokenhearted	Isaiah 61:1-3	Luke 4:17-21
A Priest after the order of Melchizedek	Psalms 110:1,4	Hebrews 5:5-6
Despised, rejected and not believed, especially by the Jews	Isaiah 53:1-4	John 1:11, 12:37-40; Luke 23:16-18
Hated without reason	Psalms 35:19	John 15:24
Triumphal entry in Jerusalem	Zechariah 9:9	Mark 11:7-11
Praised by the mouth of babes	Psalms 8:1-2	Matthew 21:15-16
The Messiah would be cut off, but not for himself	Daniel 9:25-27	John 11:49-52

Fullfilled Prophecies on Jesus

The Last Twenty-Four (24) Hours in Jesus' Life (From Betrayal to his Trial)

Prophecy	Old Testament Reference	New Testament Fulfillment
Betrayal of Jesus Christ by a close friend (Judas)	Psalm 41:9	Mark 14:10, Luke 22:47-48
Price paid to Judas for betraying Jesus	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:14-15
What would be done with the betrayal money	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:3, 5-7
Forsaken by His disciples	Zechariah 13:7	Mark 14:50; Matthew 26:31
False witnesses against Christ	Psalm 27:12, 35:11	Matthew 26:59-61; Mark 14:55-57
Jesus would not open his mouth (defend himself) against false accusations	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5, Matthew 27:13-14

The Last Twenty-Four (24) Hours in Jesus' Life (From after his Trial to his Death)

Prophecy	Old Testament Reference	New Testament Fulfillment
Satan shall bruise Jesus' "heel"	Genesis 3:15	John 19:18; John 12:31-33
His scourging predicted	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15
His body would be brutalized	Psalm 22:16-17; Isaiah 52:14	Matthew 27:26, 29-30; John 19:1-3
Jesus would be bruised and crucified for the sins of the world	Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-11	Romans 5:6-8
Shame, reproach and dishonor; adversaries before Him.	Psalm 69:17-19	Matthew 27:27-30
Feet and hands would be pierced	Psalm 22:15-16; Zechariah 12:9-10	John 19:33-35, 20:25-27
He was numbered among the transgressors	Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:33
Some observers would shake their heads at him	Psalm 22:7-8, 109:25	Matthew 27:39-40
Reviled and mocked by the crowd	Psalm 22:7-8	Matthew 27:39-43; Luke 23:34-35
Intercession for sinners and those killing him	Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:33-34

Fulfilled Prophecies on Jesus

Parting of His garments and the casting of lots for them	Psalm 22:18	Matthew 27:35; John 19:23-24
Stared at Jesus on the cross	Psalm 22:16-17	Matthew 27:36, 55
Family and friends would observe	Psalm 38:10-11	Luke 23:48-49; Matthew 27:55-56
Forsaken by God	Psalm 22:1-2	Matthew 27:45-46
His side would be pierced	Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
Gave Him vinegar to drink	Psalm 69:21	Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23; John 19:28-30
Christ would commit His spirit to the Father	Psalm 31:5	Luke 23:46; John 19:30
Not one of His bones would be broken	Exodus 12:43, 46; Psalm 34:19-20	John 19:33-36
Jesus Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us	Exodus 12:3, 5-6; Isaiah 53:7	John 1:29; 1Corinthians 5:7; 1Peter 1:18-19
Jesus would be buried in the tomb of a rich man	Isaiah 53:8-9	Matthew 27:57-60
Jesus would be resurrected	Psalm 16:10-11; Psalm 49:15	Mark 16:5-6
His ascension to God's right hand	Psalm 68:18	1Corinthians 15:3-6; Mark 16:19-20; Ephesians 4:8-10

The prophecies of his death, burial and resurrection

Of the more than three hundred prophecies about Jesus, twenty-nine speak of the betrayal, death and burial of Jesus. The prophets spoke at various times and with different voices from 1000 to 500 BC. All were fulfilled in one 24-hour period in Jesus' life! Here are a few of them with their corresponding fulfillment. This is amazing!

Prophecy	Scripture	Fulfillment
Betrayed by a friend	Psalm 41:9	Matthew 10:4
Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15
Forsaken by his disciples	Zechariah 13:7	Mark 14:50
Mocked	Psalm 22:7-8	Matthew 27:31
Hands and feet pierced	Psalm 22:16	Luke 23:33
Crucified with thieves	Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:34
Garments parted and lots cast	Psalm 22:18	John 19:23-24
His forsaken cry	Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46
His bones not broken	Psalm 34:20	John 19:33
His side pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
Buried in a rich man's tomb	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-50

Statistically speaking . . .

Peter Stoner was chairman of the mathematics and astronomy departments at Pasadena City College until 1953 when he moved to Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. There he served as chairman of the science division. At the time he wrote this book, he was professor emeritus of science at Westmont.

Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963) considered the probability of any one person fulfilling just 48 of the prophecies by chance. The odds are 1 out of 10 to the 157th power. That number would look like this:

[illegible]

Awesome!

There are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about the 1st coming of Jesus

Peter Stoner calculated the probability of just 8 Messianic prophecies being fulfilled in the life of Jesus. As you read through these prophecies, you will see that all estimates were calculated as conservatively as possible.

- The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
The average population of Bethlehem from the time of Micah to the present (1958) divided by the average population of the earth during the same period = $7,150/2,000,000,000$ or 2.8×10^{-5} .
- A messenger will prepare the way for the Messiah (Malachi 3:1).
One man in how many, the world over, has had a forerunner (in this case, John the Baptist) to prepare his way?
Estimate: 1 in 1,000 or 1×10^{-3} .
- The Messiah will enter Jerusalem as a king riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).
One man in how many, who has entered Jerusalem as a ruler, has entered riding on a donkey?
Estimate: 1 in 100 or 1×10^{-2} .
- The Messiah will be betrayed by a friend and suffer wounds in His hands (Zechariah 13:6).
One man in how many, the world over, has been betrayed by a friend, resulting in wounds in his hands?
Estimate: 1 in 1,000 or 1×10^{-3} .

- The Messiah will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12).
Of the people who have been betrayed, one in how many has been betrayed for exactly 30 pieces of silver?
Estimate: 1 in 1,000 or 1×10^3 .
- The betrayal money will be used to purchase a potter's field (Zechariah 11:13).
One man in how many, after receiving a bribe for the betrayal of a friend, has returned the money, had it refused, and then experienced it being used to buy a potter's field?
Estimate: 1 in 100,000 or 1×10^5 .
- The Messiah will remain silent while He is afflicted (Isaiah 53:7).
One man in how many, when he is oppressed and afflicted, though innocent, will make no defense of himself?
Estimate: 1 in 1,000 or 1×10^3 .
- The Messiah will die by having His hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16).
One man in how many, since the time of David, has been crucified?
Estimate: 1 in 10,000 or 1×10^4 .

Multiplying all these probabilities together produces a number (rounded off) of 1×10^{28} . Dividing this number by an estimate of the number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies (88 billion) produces a probability of all 8 prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of one person. That probability is 1 in 1017 or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. That's one in one hundred quadrillion!

Imagine filling the State of Texas knee deep in silver dollars. Include in this huge number one silver dollar with a black check mark on it. Then, turn a blindfolded person loose in this sea of silver dollars. The odds that the first coin he would pick up would be the one with the black check mark are the same as 8 prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of Jesus.

The point, of course, is that when people say that the fulfillment of prophecy in the life of Jesus was accidental, they do not know what they are talking about. Keep in mind that Jesus did not just fulfill 8 prophecies, He fulfilled 108. The chances of fulfilling 16 is 1 in 1045. When you get to a total of 48, the odds increase to 1 in 10157. Accidental fulfillment of these prophecies is simply beyond the realm of possibility.

When confronted with these statistics, skeptics will often fall back on the argument that Jesus purposefully fulfilled the prophecies. There is no doubt that Jesus was aware of the prophecies and His fulfillment of them. For example, when He got ready to enter Jerusalem the last time, He told His disciples to find Him a donkey to ride so that the prophecy of Zechariah could be fulfilled which said, "Behold, your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey" (Matthew 21:1-5 and Zechariah 9:9).

But many of the prophecies concerning the Messiah could not be purposefully fulfilled — such as the town of His birth (Micah 5:2) or the nature of His betrayal (Psalm 41:9), or the manner of His death (Zechariah 13:6 and Psalm 22:16). One of the most remarkable Messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures is the one that precisely states that the Messiah will die by crucifixion. It is found in Psalm 22 where David prophesied the Messiah would die by having His hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16). That prophecy was written 1,000 years before Jesus was born. When it was written, the Jewish method of execution was by stoning. The prophecy was also written many years before the Romans perfected crucifixion as a method of execution.

Even when Jesus was killed, the Jews still relied on stoning as their method of execution, but they had lost the power to implement the death penalty due to Roman occupation. That is why they were forced to take Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor, and that's how Jesus ended up being crucified, in fulfillment of David's prophecy.

The bottom line is that the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in the life of Jesus proves conclusively that He truly was God in the flesh. It also proves that the Bible is supernatural in origin.

New Testament

The New Covenant

New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Covenant is a covenant made first with the nation of Israel and, ultimately, with all mankind. In the New Covenant, God promises to forgive sin, and there will be a universal knowledge of the Lord. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law of Moses (Matthew 5:17) and create a new covenant between God and His people. Now that we are under the New Covenant, both Jews and Gentiles can be free from the penalty of the Law. We are now given the opportunity to receive salvation as a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Jer 31:31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, " declares the LORD. 33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Mt 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Ep 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

The World of the New Testament

- A world very different from that of the Old Testament
 - It was still patriarchal, monarchical, polytheistic and slaveholding
 - The world of the Old Testament:
 - Spans 2,000 years (2100 B.C. – 2nd century B.C.)
 - It is tribal and insular
 - It is centered in what we call the “Middle East,” with tribal warlords vying for land & resources.
 - The world of the New Testament:
 - Spans 100 years (4/6 B.C. – A.D. 95)
 - It is global (in 1st-century terms) with a centralized, highly-developed government and infrastructure
 - Consisted of the landmass surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, an authentic “Empire” that was already 500 years old as the New Testament opens.
- The New Testament Roman Empire was not insular and tribal like that of the Old Testament; rather, it was “global,”
 - Comprised not just Italy and Europe of today, but the entire land mass surrounding the Mediterranean, including all of Asia Minor and North Africa.
- Although fundamentally stable, New Testament times saw considerable political and religious turmoil within the Roman Empire, especially the Jews living in Palestine on the far-eastern edge of the Empire.



The Greek Scriptures—or “New Testament”—spans roughly 100 years, from the birth of Jesus in 4/6 BC through the apocalyptic vision of Revelation, A.D. 95.

- 63 B.C. Roman General Pompey conquers Jerusalem and the people of Palestine come under Roman rule.
- 40 B.C. Roman Senate appoints Herod as king of Judea
- 27 B.C. Augustus becomes the first Roman Emperor
 - Establishes Imperial Rome, displacing the 500 year old Roman Republic
- 4/6 B.C. Birth of Jesus.
- A.D. 14 Augustus dies and is succeeded by his son, Tiberius.
- A.D. 26 Pontius Pilate appointed Prefect of Judea (A.D. 26-36)
- A.D. 32 Death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
- A.D. 37 Tiberius dies
 - Succeeded by a series of nine emperors: Caligula (A.D. 37-41) through Domitian (A.D. 81-96).
- A.D. 66-72 Jewish revolt against Rome
 - Destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70
 - 1.2 million Jews killed in the fighting.

Dating Systems (B.C. and A.D.)

- It is commonly thought that B.C. stands for “before Christ” and A.D. stands for “after death.” This is only half correct. How could the year 1 B.C. have been “before Christ” and A.D. 1 been “after death”?
 - B.C. does stand for “before Christ.”
 - A.D. actually stands for the Latin phrase *anno domini*, which means “in the year of our Lord.”
- The B.C./A.D. dating system is not taught in the Bible. It actually was not fully implemented and accepted until several centuries after Jesus’ death.
- The purpose of the B.C./A.D. dating system was to make the birth of Jesus Christ the dividing point of world history.
 - However, when the B.C./A.D. system was being calculated, they actually made a mistake in pinpointing the year of Jesus’ birth.
 - Scholars later discovered that Jesus was actually born around 6—4 B.C., not A.D. 1.
 - That is not the crucial issue. The birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ are the “turning points” in world history.
 - It is fitting, therefore, that Jesus Christ is the separation of “old” and “new.” B.C. was “before Christ,” and since His birth, we have been living “in the year of our Lord.”

- Viewing our era as “the year of our Lord” is appropriate. Philippians 2:10–11 says, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
- In recent times, there has been a push to replace the B.C. and A.D. labels with B.C.E and C.E.
 - B.C.E “before common era”
 - C.E. “common era,”
 - The change is simply one of semantics—that is, AD 100 is the same as 100 CE; all that changes is the label.
 - The advocates of the switch from BC/AD to BCE/CE say that the newer designations are better in that they are devoid of religious connotation and thus prevent offending other cultures and religions who may not see Jesus as “Lord.”
 - The irony, of course, is that what distinguishes B.C.E from C.E. is still the life and times of Jesus Christ.

Roman Empire

- The Roman Republic began in the 6th century B.C.
 - The Roman Republic continued for half a millennium until Augustus became Emperor in 27 B.C., marking the birth of Imperial Rome.
- Contrary to popular belief, the Roman Empire was NOT a brutal oppressive dictatorship
 - Rather, it created unprecedented stability and prosperity in government and civil life for most of its 1,000-year history, while introducing extraordinary advancements in virtually every area of knowledge.
- On the whole, Roman civilization was a great blessing to humanity, bringing stability and prosperity to millions.
 - Of course, like any great civilization it had its share of rascals and rogues, heroes and villains, wars and brutalities, scandals and horrors.
- The New Testament mirrors a brief slice of Rome’s 1,000 year history, a time of great achievement but also of great turmoil and strife.
- The Roman Empire of Jesus’ time
 - Multicultural and multilingual
 - Fully developed maritime trade
 - A network of more than 58,000 miles of roads (what we would call an Interstate highway system)
 - A population of 50-60 million people
 - A large and robust economy
 - Vibrant cultural developments in art, theater, music, architecture and popular entertainment
- Romans persecuted the Christians. They were accused of being:
 - Atheist – They would not worship Caesar, only Jesus
 - Incest – thru loved their brothers and sisters
 - Cannibalism – Eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus
- The second half of the 1st century was a tumultuous time in the Roman Empire, politically, economically, culturally and religiously.
 - Fifty years see eight emperors: Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian—seven of whom met violent deaths.
 - A persecuted minority within the Roman Empire, the emerging Church became the target of two state-sponsored persecutions, one under Nero and the other under Domitian.
 - Rome burned twice.
 - Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in A.D. 70, bringing 1,000 years of Temple worship to an abrupt end.
 - Vesuvius erupted.
 - And as the last eyewitnesses of Jesus’ public ministry died out, a generation of oral teaching and preaching coalesced in the written Gospels

Demographics

- At its peak, under the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117), the Roman Empire:
 - Consisted of 5 million square kilometers
 - Encompassed 40 different modern-day countries and as many different cultures
- Its three largest cities—Rome, Alexandria and Antioch—were over twice as large as any city on earth until the modern-day 18th century industrial revolution.
- 50-60 million people lived in the Roman Empire.
- Class system - high degree of social mobility
 - Unlike most other ancient cultures, the Roman Empire did not have a rigid class system, but evidenced a high degree of social mobility.
 - Freeborn women were Roman citizens, kept their family name (not their husband's), could own property independent of their husbands, could own and operate businesses, could inherit property and wealth, wrote their own wills and could travel freely throughout the Empire.
- Slavery
 - The Roman Empire practiced slavery. Overall, 10-20% of the population throughout the Empire were slaves. Slaves were primarily war captives or indentured servants; slavery was not racially based. Slaves could earn their freedom or be granted their freedom by those who owned them.

Commerce

- Built roads
 - Although commerce was conducted primarily by sea, the Roman empire built over 58,000 miles of roads, many of which are still evident today, over 2,000 years later.
- Fully-developed banking system
 - To encourage efficient and effective commerce the Roman Empire had a fully-developed banking system and common coinage.

Language

- Greek – Thanks to Alexander the Great, Greek was the common language of the empire until the 4th century A.D.
 - Created cohesion in a very geographically and culturally diverse population
- A plethora of local languages were also used
 - e.g., Jesus and his friends spoke Aramaic, the local language of Palestine
 - But the entire New Testament was written in Greek.

Law

- Roman law formed the basis for the entire Western legal tradition, including the United States.

Caesar Augustus

- Caesar Augustus – wanted to be worshipped as a God – known as the son of God – most powerful human in the world
 - Introduced a reign of peace
 - Issued the order that got Joseph back to Bethlehem to fulfill the prophecy of the real Son of God

Nero (54-68)

- Notoriously evil – especially toward Christians
- Mother – Julia Agrippina (A.D. 15-59)
 - Great granddaughter of Caesar Augustus; adoptive granddaughter of the Emperor Tiberius; sister of the Emperor Caligula; wife of the Emperor Claudius; and mother of the Emperor Nero.

- Through incestuous marriages, imperial intrigue and duplicitous assassinations, Agrippina engineered her son's rise to power. After poisoning Claudius (her uncle and 3rd husband), her seventeen year-old son Nero became Emperor in A.D. 54, with Agrippina controlling the reins of power.
- Quickly, however, Nero's relations with his mother deteriorated, ending by Nero having her murdered in A.D. 59.

Fire of Rome – 64 AD

- On July 18, 64 the Great Fire of Rome erupted, destroying a large portion of the city.
- According to the historian Tacitus, the fire raged for five days, destroying three of fourteen districts and severely damaging seven others.
- Both Suetonius and Cassius Dio point to Nero as the arsonist, who wanted to clear a large part of Rome so he could build a new palace complex.



Christian persecution

- To deflect blame, Tacitus writes that Nero blamed the fire on Rome's Christians:
Therefore, to put an end to the rumor Nero created a diversion and subjected to the most extraordinary tortures those called Christians, hated for their abominations by the common people. The originator of this name [was] Christ, who, during the reign of Tiberius had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate. Repressed for the time being, the deadly superstition broke out again not only in Judea, the original source of the evil, but also in the city [Rome], where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and become popular. So an arrest was made of all who confessed; then on the basis of their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of arson as for hatred of the human race.
- Both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome during this time.
- The persecution ended with Nero's death.

Nero's death

- The Roman Senate had declared him a public enemy of the Roman people and announced their intention to have him executed. With that, Nero turned to suicide, but too cowardly to carry it out, he enlisted his private secretary, Epaphroditos, to do the deed.
- Nero died on 9 June A.D. 68, the 6th anniversary of his murdering his stepsister and first wife, Octavia.
- Following Nero's death, civil war erupted
 - 4 emperors reigned in quick succession:
 - Galba – 68-69 (8 months) – Assassinated
 - Otho – 69 (2 months) – Suicide
 - Vitellius – 69 (8 months) – Assassinated
 - Vespasian – 69-79 (10 years) – Natural death
 - The first three emperors were dispatched through murder or suicide within a year.

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Vespasian (69-79)

- With Nero's death in Rome, Vespasian's troops proclaimed him Emperor.
 - Support spread quickly, and in A.D. 69 Vespasian left Jerusalem for Rome to claim the throne, leaving his son Titus to conclude the war in Jerusalem.
- Vespasian dies on June 23, 79 and his son Titus succeeds him, the first Roman Emperor to follow his father to the throne.

Titus (79-81)

- Sixty-two days after Titus become Emperor, Vesuvius erupts.
 - Titus immediately organized a massive relief effort, funded by large donations from the imperial treasury.
 - In his Roman History, Cassius Dio reports that Titus made two personal visits to the disaster area, one shortly after the eruption and the second a year later (LXVI, 24).
- Titus died on September 13, 81, after a brief two-year reign.
 - The cause of his death is uncertain. In his Roman History Cassius Dio reports that as Titus lay dying he uttered his last words: "I have made but one mistake" (LXVI, 26), prompting great speculation, of course, as to what that mistake may have been.
 - Both Cassius Dio and Suetonius suggest that his mistake was allowing his brother Domitian to live, after having discovered that his brother was plotting against him.
 - In his Life of Apollonius of Tyana, Philostratus flatly accuses Domitian of murdering his brother by poisoning him with the flesh of a sea-hare, a culinary ingredient favored by Nero in dispatching his enemies (VI, 32).
- Although universally judged a stellar emperor by the Roman world, Jewish writings excoriate Titus.
 - He is, after all, the general who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70.
 - The Babylonian Talmud (*Gittin 56b*) claims that Titus had sex with a whore on a Torah scroll inside the Temple while it burned, and that his death was caused by an insect flying up his nose and gnawing at his brain for seven years, growing to the size of a bird in the process!

Great Jewish Revolt (66-73 AD)

- At a time of enormous political chaos—in A.D. 66—the great Jewish revolt broke out in Palestine.
- Nero chose the brilliant general (and future Emperor) Vespasian to suppress it.
 - Fielding more than 50,000 combat troops, Vespasian began operations in Galilee;
 - By A.D. 68 he had crushed opposition in the north, moved his headquarters to Caesarea Maritima, the deep-water port on the Mediterranean, and methodically began clearing the coast
- The defeated Jewish leaders in Galilee escaped to Jerusalem, where a bitter civil war among the Jews erupted, pitting the fanatical Zealots and Sicarii against the more moderate Sadducees and Pharisees.
 - By A.D. 68 the entire Jerusalem leadership and their followers were dead, having been killed by their fellow Jews, and the Zealots held the temple complex, using it as a staging area for their war against Rome.
- With Nero's death in Rome, Vespasian's troops proclaimed him Emperor.

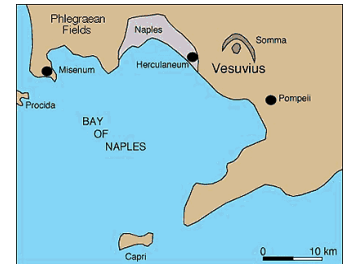
- Support spread quickly, and in A.D. 69 Vespasian left Jerusalem for Rome to claim the throne, leaving his son Titus to conclude the war in Jerusalem.
- By the summer of A.D. 70, Titus had breached the city walls and captured the Temple.
 - During the fierce fighting, the temple complex caught fire, and on Tisha B'Av (29/30 July A.D. 70) the Temple fell – 1,000 years of Jewish temple worship ended in a single day.
 - The fire spread quickly to the city itself, destroying most of it.
- Tacitus writes that no fewer than 600,000 Jews fought the Romans in Jerusalem; those captured were crucified, up to 500 per day; and historians estimate that 1.2 million Jews died during the span of the Jewish revolt, A.D. 66-73. It was the greatest catastrophe in Jewish history until the Nazi holocaust of 1939-1944.



Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius (79 AD)

- During the Jewish Revolt of A.D. 66-73, thousands of Jews fled Jerusalem to other parts of the Roman Empire, many to the far west. In Pompeii, Mt. Vesuvius was heating up.
- Located a little over five miles east of modern-day Naples, a short distance from the Mediterranean shore
 - Pompeii sits at the foot of a somma volcano, a 4,203 foot high, humpbacked mountain with a summit caldera surrounding a newer cone
- It is one of the most dangerous volcanic mountains on earth
 - Erupting countless times throughout history. In modern times Vesuvius has erupted:
 - 6 times in the 18th century
 - 8 times in the 19th century
 - 3 times in the 20th century, the last in 1944.
 - On several occasions post-eruption ash blanketed all of southern Europe, and twice— A.D. 472 and 1631— Vesuvian ash fell on Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), over 750 miles to the northeast!
- Never had there been an eruption like that of A.D. 79. Nothing like it had ever been seen.
 - On the morning of August 24th, a massive explosion occurred, blasting a column of ash and pumice 50,000 – 100,000 feet into the atmosphere at a rate of 1.5 million tons per second.
 - Studies suggest that the energy supporting the column came from steam superheated by magma
 - The cloud collapsed as expanding gasses lost the ability to support their solid contents, creating a pyroclastic surge, a huge turbulent mass of fluid rock and gas traveling at near supersonic speed, releasing over 100,000 times the thermal energy of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima.
 - Six such surges occurred over two days, dropping ash and debris at temperatures reaching 600° F and reaching a depth up to 75 feet, burying both Pompeii and neighboring Herculaneum.
 - 16,000 people died instantly in the surges and thousands more from poisonous gasses, falling debris and collapsed buildings.
- Pliny the Younger gives us the only eyewitness account of the Vesuvius eruption in his two letters to the historian Tacitus. Here's a sample, written by Pliny at Misenum, about 20 miles across the Bay of Naples from Vesuvius:

Though it was now morning, the light was exceedingly faint and doubtful; the buildings all around us tottered . . . we therefore resolved to quit the town. A panic-stricken crowd followed us . . . Being at a convenient distance from the houses, we stood still, in the midst of a most dangerous and dreadful scene. The chariots, which we had ordered to be drawn out, were so agitated backwards and forwards, though upon the most level ground, that we could not keep them steady, even by supporting them with large stones. The sea seemed to roll back upon itself, and to be driven from its banks by the convulsive motion of the earth; it is certain at least the shore was considerably enlarged, and several sea animals were left upon it. On the other side [of the bay], a black and



dreadful cloud, broken with rapid zigzag flashes, behind it variously shaped masses of flame; these were like sheet-lightning, but much larger . . . Soon afterwards, the cloud began to descend, and cover the sea . . . a dense dark mist seemed to be following us, spreading itself over the country like a cloud . . . We had scarcely sat down when night came upon us, not such as we have when the sky is cloudy, or when there is no moon, but that of a room when it is shut up, and all the lights put out. You might hear the shrieks of women, the screams of children, and the shouts of men . . . some wishing to die, from the very fear of dying; some lifting their hands to the gods; but the greater part convinced that there were now no gods at all, and that the final endless night of which we have heard had come upon the world. (Pliny the Younger, “Letter 66,” to Cornelius Tacitus)

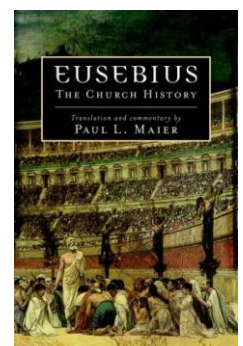
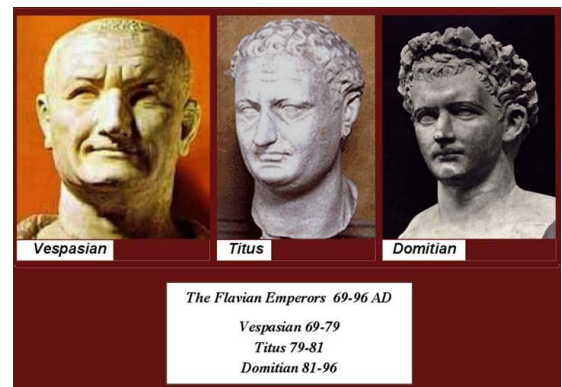
Fire of Rome – 80 AD

- During Titus’ second visit to Vesuvius in the spring of A.D. 80, fire broke out again in Rome, raging for three days and three nights, consuming large parts of the city. Although not as disastrous as the Great Fire of A.D. 64, it nevertheless destroyed a significant number of temples, as well as numerous public buildings, including the Baths of Agrippa, the Pantheon, the Diribitorium, the theater of Balbus and Pompey’s theater.
- In the wake of the fire, plague ravished Rome, prompting widespread belief that the fire and plague—not to mention the eruption of Vesuvius—were punishments visited on Rome by the gods.

Domitian (81-96)

- Domitian succeeded his brother as Emperor on September 14, 81 as the third and last emperor of the Flavian Dynasty (Vespasian, Titus and Domitian).
- New government
 - Quickly dispensing with the republican form of government favored by his father and brother, Domitian believed the Roman Empire should be governed as a divine monarchy, proclaiming himself dominus et deus, (“Lord and God”), moving the center of government to the imperial court, rendering the Roman Senate impotent and expelling those senators whom he deemed troublesome.
- Tolerated foreign religions
 - Although taking his deification seriously, Domitian tolerated foreign religions as long as they did not interfere with public order and could be assimilated into traditional Roman religion.
 - Egyptian religion flourished under Domitian, since the Egyptian gods Serapis and Isis were closely identified with the Roman gods Jupiter and Minerva.
 - Conversely, Judaism and Christianity were not tolerated, as both rejected the Roman gods outright and Christianity proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth not only as divine, but as “King of kings” and “Lord of lords,” who would return to usher in a new kingdom, the Kingdom of God—a treasonous claim to Roman ears.
 - Consequently, in his 4th-century Church History, Eusebius states that Domitian severely persecuted Christians in Rome and throughout the Empire:

“Many were the victims of Domitian’s appalling cruelty. At Rome great numbers of men distinguished by birth and attainments were for no reason at all banished from the country and their property confiscated. Finally, he showed himself the successor of Nero in enmity and hostility to God. He was, in fact, the second to organize persecution against us, though his father Vespasian had had no mischievous designs against us.” (Church History, XVII)
- Domitian was murdered on September 18, 96 in a palace conspiracy.



- Immediately after Domitian's murder the Roman Senate—who loathed him—proclaimed Marcus Nerva emperor and passed *damnatio memoriae* on Domitian's memory, the first of only two Roman Emperors in history to be so excoriated (the other is Publius Septimius Geta, A.D. 189 – 211), melting his coins and statues and erasing his name from all public records.
- Every major ancient source—Juvenal, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus and Suetonius—vilifies Domitian as a cruel tyrant; only Domitian's court poets, Martial and Statius, have anything good to say about him.

Nervan-Antonin Dynasty (96-192) – The Five Good Emperors

Domitian's successor was his advisor **Nerva** who founded the Nervan-Antonin Dynasty which ruled Rome 96-192 CE. This period is marked by increased prosperity owing to the rulers known as The Five Good Emperors of Rome. Between 96 and 180 CE, five exceptional men ruled in sequence and brought the Roman Empire to its height. Under their leadership, the Roman Empire grew stronger, more stable, and expanded in size and scope.



5 Good Emperors

- Nerva (96-98 CE)
- **Trajan** (98-117 CE)
 - 13th Emperor of the Roman Empire (AD 98-117)
 - The Roman Empire reached its greatest extent under emperor Trajan.
 - Ancient sources are unanimous in their praise of Trajan's personality and accomplishments.
 - Pliny the Younger (A.D. 61-112) celebrates him as a wise and just ruler and a moral man.
 - Dio Cassius (A.D. 155-235) praises him for being dignified and fair.
 - St. Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225-1274) discusses Trajan as a "virtuous pagan."
 - In the Divine Comedy Dante (A.D. 1265-1321) has a mural of Trajan helping a poor woman on the first terrace of Purgatory, as a lesson for the proud.
 - Dante also places Trajan among the saved in Paradise, residing in the Sphere of Jupiter.
 - In The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon (A.D. 1737-1794) places Trajan 2nd among the "Five Good Emperors" who presided over eras of peace and prosperity.
- **Hadrian** (117-138 CE)
- **Antoninus Pius** (138-161 CE)
- **Marcus Aurelius / Lucius Verus** (161-180 CE)
 - Lucius Verus was co-emperor with Marcus Aurelius until his death in 169 CE and seems to have been fairly ineffective.

1 Bad Emperor

- Commodus (r. 180-192 CE)
 - Aurelius' son and successor, Commodus was one of the most disgraceful emperors Rome ever saw
 - He is universally depicted as indulging himself and his whims at the expense of the empire.
 - He was strangled by his wrestling partner in his bath in 192 CE, ending the Nervan-Antonin Dynasty and raising the prefect **Pertinax** (who most likely engineered Commodus' assassination) to power.

The Severan Dynasty (193-235)

- The Year of the Five Emperors
 - Pertinax governed for only three months before he was assassinated.
 - He was followed, in rapid succession, by four others in the period known as The Year of the Five Emperors, which culminated in the rise of Septimus Severus to power.
- Severus (193-211 CE), founded the Severan Dynasty, defeated the Parthians, and expanded the empire.

- His campaigns in **Africa** and Britain were extensive and costly and would contribute to Rome's later financial difficulties.
- He was succeeded by his sons **Caracalla** and Geta, until Caracalla had his brother murdered.
- Caracalla ruled until 217 CE, when he was assassinated by his bodyguard.
 - It was under Caracalla's reign that Roman citizenship was expanded to include all free men within the empire. This **law** was said to have been enacted as a means of raising tax revenue, simply because, after its passage, there were more people the central government could tax.
- The Severan Dynasty continued, largely under the guidance and manipulation of Julia Maesa (referred to as 'empress'), until the assassination of **Alexander Severus** (r. 222-235 CE) in 235 CE which plunged the empire into the chaos known as The **Crisis of the Third Century** (lasting from 235-284 CE).

The Crisis of the Third Century (Imperial Crisis) (235-284)

- This period was characterized by constant civil war, as various military leaders fought for control of the empire.
- The crisis has been further noted by historians for widespread social unrest, economic instability (fostered, in part, by the devaluation of Roman currency by the Severans)
- Finally, the empire dissolved into three separate regions.
 - The empire was reunited by **Aurelian** (270-275 CE)
 - His policies were further developed and improved upon by Diocletian who established the Tetrarchy (the rule of four) to maintain order throughout the empire.

Two Empires: East & West (285-311)

- Even so, the empire was still so vast that Diocletian divided it in half in c.285 CE to facilitate more efficient administration by elevating one of his officers, Maximian (r. 286-305 CE) to the position of co-emperor.
- In so doing, he created the **Western Roman Empire** and the **Eastern Roman Empire** (also known as the **Byzantine Empire**).
- Since a leading cause of the Imperial Crisis was a lack of clarity in succession, Diocletian decreed that successors must be chosen and approved from the outset of an individual's rule. Two of these successors were the generals Maxentius and Constantine.
- Diocletian voluntarily retired from rule in 305 CE, and the tetrarchy dissolved as rival regions of the empire vied with each other for dominance.
- Following Diocletian's death in 311 CE, Maxentius and Constantine plunged the empire again into civil war.

Constantine, Theodosius I & Christianity (312-395)

- In 312 CE Constantine defeated Maxentius at the **Battle** of the Milvian Bridge and became sole emperor of both the Western and Eastern Empires (ruling from 306-337 CE but holding supreme power 324-307 CE).
- Believing that **Jesus Christ** was responsible for his victory, Constantine initiated a series of laws
 - Edict of Milan (313 CE) – mandated religious tolerance throughout the empire and, specifically, tolerance for the faith which came to known as Christianity.
 - At the First Council of Nicea (325 CE), he presided over the gathering to codify the faith and decide on important issues such as the divinity of Jesus and which manuscripts would be collected to form the book known today as The **Bible**.
 - Jesus was the patron God of Constantine
 - In the same way that earlier Roman emperors had claimed a special relationship with a deity to augment their authority and standing (Caracalla with Serapis, for example, or Diocletian with **Jupiter**), Constantine chose the figure of **Jesus Christ**.

- Constantine stabilized the empire, revalued the currency, and reformed the military, as well as founding the city he called New Rome on the site of the former city of **Byzantium** (modern-day Istanbul) which came to be known as Constantinople.
- He is known as **Constantine the Great** owing to later Christian writers who saw him as a mighty champion of their faith but, as has been noted by many historians, the honorific could as easily be attributed to his religious, cultural, and political reforms, as well as his skill in battle and his large-scale building projects.
- After his death, his sons inherited the empire and, fairly quickly, embarked on a series of conflicts with each other which threatened to undo all that Constantine had accomplished.
 - His three sons, Constantine II, **Constantius II**, and Constans divided the Roman Empire between them but soon fell to fighting over which of them deserved more.
 - In these conflicts, Constantine II and Constans were killed.
 - Constantius II died later after naming his cousin Julian his successor and heir.
- Emperor Julian ruled for only two years (361-363 CE) and, in that time, tried to return Rome to her former glory through a series of reforms aimed at increasing efficiency in government.
 - As a Neo-Platonic philosopher, Julian rejected Christianity and blamed the faith, and Constantine's advocacy for it, for the decline of the empire.
 - While officially proclaiming a policy of religious tolerance, Julian systematically removed Christians from influential government positions, banned the teaching and spread of the **religion**, and barred Christians from military service.
 - His death, while on campaign against the Persians, ended the dynasty Constantine had begun.
 - He was the last pagan emperor of Rome and came to be known as 'Julian the Apostate' for his opposition to Christianity.
- After the brief rule of Jovian, who re-established Christianity as the dominant faith of the empire and repealed Julian's various edicts, the responsibility of emperor fell to Theodosius I.
- Theodosius I (r. 379-395 CE) took Constantine's and Jovian's religious reforms to their natural ends
 - Proclaimed Christianity Rome's state religion in 380
 - Outlawed pagan worship throughout the empire
 - Closed the schools and universities
 - Converted pagan temples into Christian churches
- Many of his reforms were unpopular with both the Roman aristocracy and the common people who held to the traditional values of pagan practice.
 - It was during this time that **Plato's** famous Academy was closed by Theodosius' decree.
 - The unity of social duties and religious belief which paganism provided was severed by the institution of a religion which removed the gods from the earth and human society and proclaimed only one God who ruled from the heavens.
- This new god, unlike the gods of old, had no special interest in Rome - he was the god of all people
 - This distanced the religion of Rome from the state of Rome.
 - Previously, Roman religious belief was state-sponsored and the rituals and festivals went to enhancing the status of the government.
 - Theodosius I devoted so much effort to promoting Christianity that he seems to have neglected other duties as emperor and would be the last to rule both Eastern and Western Empires.

The Fall of the Roman Empire (378-476)

- Gothic Wars (376-382)
 - From 376-382 CE, Rome fought a series of battles against invading **Goths** known today as the Gothic Wars.

- At the **Battle of Adrianople**, 9 August 378 CE, the Roman Emperor Valens (r. 364-378 CE) was defeated, and historians **mark** this event as pivotal in the decline of the Western Roman Empire.
- Various theories have been suggested as to the cause of the empire's fall but, even today, there is no universal agreement on what those specific factors were.
 - Christianity
 - Edward Gibbon has famously argued in his *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that Christianity played a pivotal role, in that the new religion undermined the social mores of the empire which paganism provided.
 - The theory that Christianity was a root cause in the empire's fall was debated long before Gibbon, however, as the theologian **Orosius** (l. c. 5th century CE) argued Christianity's innocence in Rome's decline as early as 418 CE. Orosius claimed it was primarily paganism itself and pagan practices which brought about the fall of Rome.
 - Political instability due to size of empire
 - The ungovernable vastness of the empire, even divided in two, made it difficult to manage.
 - The self-interest of the two halves of the empire
 - The Eastern Empire flourished while the Western Empire struggled and neither gave much thought to helping the other. Eastern and Western Rome saw each other more as competitors than teammates and worked primarily in their own self-interest.
 - Invasion of barbarian tribes
 - Government corruption
 - The growing strength of the Germanic tribes and their constant incursions into Rome could have been dealt with more effectively if not for government corruption, especially among provincial governors, and fair treatment of the Goths by the Romans overall.
 - Mercenary armies
 - The Roman military, manned largely with barbarian mercenaries who had no ethnic ties to Rome, could no longer safeguard the borders as efficiently as they once had nor could the government as easily collect taxes in the provinces.
 - Over-reliance on slave labor lead to massive unemployment and inflation
 - The debasement of the currency, begun under the Severan Dynasty, had steadily encouraged inflation and slave labor, which was widespread, deprived lower-class citizens of jobs so unemployment levels soared.
 - The arrival of the **Visigoths** in the empire in the third century CE, fleeing from the invading **Huns**, and their subsequent rebellions has also been cited a contributing factor in the decline.
- The Western Roman Empire officially ended 4 September 476 CE, when Emperor Romulus Augustulus was deposed by the Germanic King Odoacer (though some historians date the end as 480 CE with the death of Julius Nepos).
- The Eastern Roman Empire continued on as the Byzantine Empire until 1453 CE
 - Though known early on as simply 'the Roman Empire', it did not much resemble that entity at all.
- The Western Roman Empire would become re-invented later as The Holy Roman Empire (962-1806 CE)
 - That construct was also far removed from the Roman Empire of antiquity and was an 'empire' in name only.
- Western Roman Empire = The Holy Roman Empire = Papal States, officially the State of the Church

- Also known as the Papal States – officially the State of the Church – these were a series of territories in the Italian Peninsula under the direct sovereign rule of the pope, from the 8th century until 1870.
 - They were among the major states of Italy from roughly the 8th century until the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia successfully unified the Italian Peninsula by conquest in a campaign virtually concluded in 1861 and definitively in 1870.
 - At their zenith, the Papal States covered most of the modern Italian regions of Lazio (which includes Rome), Marche, Umbria and Romagna, and portions of Emilia. These holdings were considered to be a manifestation of the temporal power of the pope, as opposed to his ecclesiastical primacy.
- By 1861, much of the Papal States' territory had been conquered by the Kingdom of Italy.
 - Only Lazio, including Rome, remained under the pope's temporal control.
- In 1870, the pope lost Lazio and Rome and had no physical territory at all, except the Basilica of St Peter and the papal residence and related buildings around the Vatican quarter of Rome, which the new Italian state did not occupy militarily.
- In 1929 the head of the Italian government, at the time the Italian Fascist leader Benito Mussolini, ended the crisis between unified Italy and the Holy See by negotiating the Lateran Treaty, signed by the two parties. This recognized the sovereignty of the Holy See over a newly created international territorial entity, the Vatican City State, limited to a token territory.
 - The Holy See, also called the See of Rome, is the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, known as the pope, which includes the apostolic episcopal see of the Diocese of Rome with universal ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the worldwide Catholic Church, as well as a sovereign entity of international law.

Legacy of the Roman Empire

- The inventions and innovations which were generated by the Roman Empire profoundly altered the lives of the ancient people and continue to be used in cultures around the world today.
- Advancements in the construction of roads and buildings, indoor plumbing, **aqueducts**, and even fast-drying cement were either invented or improved upon by the Romans.
- The calendar used in the West derives from the one created by Julius Caesar, and the names of the days of the week (in the romance languages) and months of the year also come from Rome.
- Even the practice of returning some purchase one finds one does not want comes from Rome whose laws made it legal for a consumer to bring back some defective or unwanted merchandise to the seller.
- Apartment complexes (known as `insula), public toilets, locks and keys, newspapers, even socks all were developed by the Romans as were shoes, a postal system (modeled after the Persians), cosmetics, the magnifying glass, and the concept of satire in **literature**.
- During the time of the empire, significant developments were also advanced in the fields of **medicine**, law, religion, government, and **warfare**.
- The Romans were adept at borrowing from, and improving upon, those inventions or concepts they found among the indigenous populace of the regions they conquered.
 - It is therefore difficult to say what is an `original' Roman invention and what is an innovation on a pre-existing concept, technique, or tool.
 - It can safely be said, however, that the Roman Empire left an enduring legacy which continues to affect the way in which people live in the present day.

Religious factions

Within Judaism intrigue, rebellion and infighting permeated society, with the Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes and Zealots vying for political power and influence. Jesus was born into this tumultuous world, and he lived on the extreme edge of its radical fringe.

Religion

- Religion in the Roman Empire was an integral part of civil life, and it encompassed practices and beliefs the Romans considered their own.
- Religions of other cultures within the Empire were respected and protected
 - The Jews, for example, were free to practice their religion and to operate their temple in Jerusalem.

Judaism in the Roman Empire

- At the time of Jesus about 4,000,000 Jews lived in the Roman Empire (6-7% of the population)
 - Primarily in Jerusalem, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and other urban cities and towns
 - Remote corner of the Roman Empire.
- The Jews were a small, insignificant minority group
- Jews were free to worship their own God
 - As monotheists in a polytheistic culture they tended to separate themselves from the Gentiles and cluster together for familiarity and mutual support.
- From the time of the Babylonian captivity onward (586-539 B.C.), Judaism experienced considerable social, political and religious contention from within and intermittent persecution from without.
 - At the time of Jesus Judaism had four major “sects” or “divisions”: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and Zealots—along with countless “splinter groups.”

Pharisees

- The Pharisees are the people of the synagogues scattered throughout the Roman Empire.
 - Synagogues – Jewish houses of study and prayer
 - Synagogues emerged during the Babylonian Captivity when the Jews became a People of the Book
 - The Pharisees become established after the Maccabean Revolt, 167-160 B.C.
- The Pharisees are primarily the common people, striving to live good and holy lives.
 - Devout and holy people, the Pharisees observed the Mosaic Law, believed in immortality and resurrection, and held that the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures was the inspired word of God.
- The dark side of the Pharisees was excessive legalism and self-righteousness
 - Jesus did not attack the Pharisees per se; rather, he attacked the “dark side” of their religious piety: hypocrisy and self-righteousness.
- The Pharisees were the dominant sect of Judaism at the time of Jesus
 - Joseph, Mary and Jesus
 - Paul and most of the Apostles
 - most early Jewish Christians

Sadducees

- They were active in Judea from the 2nd century B.C. through the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70.
- Emerged from the priesthood and those associated with it.
 - Drawn primarily from the upper socio-economic strata of Jewish society (high social status and wealth)
- They were actively involved in Temple operations (functioning and finances)
 - Had a vested political and economic interest in maintaining the status quo
- Theologically conservative

- They viewed the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) as the highest form of divine inspiration, relegating the rest of Scripture to a secondary position.
 - They don't believe in resurrection (not in the Torah), so they are SAD U SEE (pneumatic device)
- After the Maccabean Revolt, the Sadduceean leadership became increasingly corrupt and the target of intense criticism.
- After the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, the Sadducees faded from the scene, being mentioned only rarely in extra-biblical sources, such as the Talmud.

Zealots

- Determined to end Roman oppression through violent revolutionary means.
 - Members of a movement in violent opposition to Roman rule, claiming that only God could be their king.
 - The Zealots' chief tactic was the targeted assassinations of Romans and Jews who opposed them.
 - We might think of them as Jewish patriots; the Romans thought of them as terrorists.
- Although active during the reign of Herod the Great (37 B.C. – A.D. 4) the movement solidified under the leadership of Judas of Galilee in A.D. 6 in opposition to Quirinius' Tax Reform, shortly after the Roman Empire declared that what had formerly been the tetrarchy of Herod Archelaus would henceforth be a Roman province.
- The reign of the Emperor Caligula (A.D. 37-41) triggered an open break between Rome and the Jews, culminating in the Jewish Revolt of A.D. 66-72 and the destruction of the Temple.
 - During the Revolt the Zealots took control of Jerusalem, using the Temple complex as a staging area for war.
 - The Zealots were eliminated during the Jewish Revolt, making their last stand against the 10th Roman Legion at Masada in A.D. 73.
- Jesus included Simon the Zealot among his disciples (Matthew 10:4).

Essenes

- The Essenes were a separatist group, highly critical of the Sadducees and to a lesser degree critical of the Pharisees.
 - Men who removed themselves from the constant strife of the battling Jewish sects and lived ascetic lives in remote desert communities, spending their time in prayer, fasting and communal life and awaiting the coming of the "Righteous One."
- Their thinking embraced a decidedly apocalyptic vision.
 - Jesus clearly shared their eschatological (end-times) thinking.
- The Essenes are first mentioned by Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23-79) in his Natural History, where he writes that they do not marry and possess no money.
- Josephus (A.D.37-95) discusses the Essenes in detail in his History of the Jewish War
 - They are celibate, have no possessions, live in community, practice extreme forms of asceticism, await the "coming of the righteous one," and have a decidedly apocalyptic vision of the future.
- The community at Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in 1946/47, was most likely an Essene community.
 - Livelihood was in copying scrolls – what we found was their inventory
- John the Baptist may have been affiliated with the Essenes
 - His parents were very old when he was born. As a male community, the only way that they could add to their numbers would be through taking in orphans
 - Shares the extreme forms of asceticism
 - Where John was baptizing was just across the valley from Qumran
- The Essenes are not mentioned in Scripture, but Jesus possibly alludes to them in Matthew 19:11-12, as they renounced marriage, lived celibate lives and focused exclusively on the imminent coming of the kingdom of heaven.

Galilee

Galilee

E6 on the Map

Region

- The northern part of Palestine
- Also referred to as Galilee of the gentiles because of the Assyrian conquest (Is 9:1).
- S border was the Valley of Jezreel
- E border was to Sea of Galilee
- N border was Lebanon
- W border was the Plain of Acre.
- It is the highest region in the country, with the coolest temperature.
- It was well watered by the winter rains and had numerous and abundant springs.
- The area is divided into two parts by a deep valley, thus upper Galilee and lower Galilee. Upper Galilee rose to a height of more than 3000 feet above sea level. Galilee's lush territory and fertile soil for agriculture provide a basis for rich economy in this region. It also contained a major road which brought the peoples of the Mediterranean to the lands of the East.

Galilee in the OT

- Galilee is referred to only seven times in the O.T.
 - Jos 12:23
 - Jos 20:7
 - Jos 21:32
 - 1Ch 6:76
 - 1Ki 9:11
 - 2Ki 15:29

History of Galilee

- The territory was first conquered under Joshua – the tribes that inhabited the territory dwelt among the Canaanite inhabitants.
- In 732 Tiglath-Pileser III conquered Galilee, and a region became an Assyrian Satrapy, known in the Assyrian documents as the Satrapy of Megiddo.
- In the Persian period Galilee was outside the Jewish state, and Galilee and Samaria were both a single district.
 - Under the Seleucids this district was called an eparchy
 - Under the Ptolemies Galilee formed a separate hyparchy
 - At this time there were many Greeks and Phoenicians there, and some Jewish settlements.



- In 104-103 B.C. the Hasmonean Aristobulus conquered Galilee and added it to his kingdom.
- It remained a Jewish territory even after Palestine had been conquered by Pompey in 64 B.C., and later it became part of Herod's kingdom.
- After Herod's death in 4 B.C. Galilee and Perea was passed on to his son Herod Antipas who became Tetrarch, he founded the city of Tiberias and made it capital of Galilee.

Galilee in the NT

Most of the early ministry of Jesus took place in Galilee. He lived in Nazareth (Matt 21:11) and performed his first miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11). When he ministry in Galilee the crowds received him gladly (Mark 12:37), and it was in Judea where Jesus was put to death. During the last supper Jesus told his disciples that after he been raised from the dead, He would go before them to meet them (Mark 14:28). After his resurrection an angel informed the disciples that Jesus had preceded them in Galilee were they would see him as he had promised (Mark 16:7).

During the Jewish war against the Romans Galilee was where the first battles were fought and the city was fortified by Josephus. After the revolt was put down Galilee was made part of the Roman province of Judea. The area of thrived after the period of the Second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 132-135), with numerous cities and villages.

Luke 1:26; 2:4; 3:1; Mark. 1:9; 1:14, 28; Matt. 4:23; 28:26; John 7:1; Acts 9:31.

R. T. France, in his very fine commentary on *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT, 2007), laments:

Modern readers of the NT often know little about the geopolitical world of first-century Palestine. It is commonly assumed that “the Jews” were an undifferentiated community living amicably in the part of the world we now call “the Holy Land” united in their resentment of the political imposition of Roman rule to which all were equally subject.

But, he says, “this is a gross distortion of the historical and cultural reality.” The northern province of Galilee was decisively distinct—in history, political status, and culture—from the southern province of Judea which contained the holy city of Jerusalem.

Admitting that the following is a drastic oversimplification but hoping that it’s not a complete caricature, Professor France summarizes seven differences:



1. **Racially** the area of the former Northern Kingdom of Israel had had, ever since the Assyrian conquest in the eighth century B.C., a more mixed population, within which more conservative Jewish areas (like Nazareth and Capernaum) stood in close proximity to largely pagan cities, of which in the first century the new Hellenistic centers of Tiberias and Sepphoris were the chief examples.
2. **Geographically** Galilee was separated from Judea by the non-Jewish territory of Samaria, and from Perea in the southeast by the Hellenistic settlements of Decapolis.
3. **Politically** Galilee had been under separate administration from Judea during almost all its history since the tenth century B.C. (apart from a period of “reunification” under the Maccabees), and in the time of Jesus it was under a (supposedly) native Herodian prince, while Judea and Samaria had since A.D. 6 been under the direct rule of a Roman prefect.
4. **Economically** Galilee offered better agricultural and fishing resources than the more mountainous territory of Judea, making the wealth of some Galileans the envy of their southern neighbors.

5. **Culturally** Judeans despised their northern neighbors as country cousins, their lack of Jewish sophistication being compounded by their greater openness to Hellenistic influence.
6. **Linguistically** Galileans spoke a distinctive form of Aramaic whose slovenly consonants (they dropped their aitches!) were the butt of Judean humor.
7. **Religiously** the Judean opinion was that Galileans were lax in their observance of proper ritual, and the problem was exacerbated by the distance of Galilee from the temple and the theological leadership, which was focused in Jerusalem.

The result, he says, is that

even an impeccably Jewish Galilean in first-century Jerusalem was not among his own people; he was as much a foreigner as an Irishman in London or a Texan in New York. His accent would immediately mark him out as “not one of us,” and all the communal prejudice of the supposedly superior culture of the capital city would stand against his claim to be heard even as a prophet, let alone as the “Messiah,” a title which, as everyone knew, belonged to Judea (cf. [John 7:40-42](#)).

This may at first blush sound like interesting background material that is not especially helpful for reading and interpreting the gospels. But Mark and Matthew have structured their narratives around a geographical framework dividing the north and the south, culminating in the confrontation of this prophet from Galilee and the religious establishment of Jerusalem.

Professor France writes: “To read Matthew in blissful ignorance of first-century Palestinian sociopolitics is to miss his point. This is the story of Jesus of *Nazareth*.”

Judea

- Southern territory
- Tribe of Judah
 - The tribe from which both David and Jesus came
- Jerusalem is the capital of Israel
- Center of both religious and political power and authority
 - Any location that is the center of both religious and political authority is conservative by its very nature
 - Not conservative in the modern sense, but conservative in that there is a vested interest maintaining the status quo
 - Jerusalem and Judea were, indeed, very conservative under this definition at the time of Jesus
 - Center of religious power at the Temple
 - Strong influence of Roman authority
 - Rome occupied all of this area
 - Roman troops were stationed at Ceaseria, the deep water port on the coast
 - When the 3 Jewish festivals took place (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles), these troops (with the governor, Pilate) moved to Jerusalem and took up residence in the Antonio Fortress, on the NW corner of the Temple area
 - Creates a profoundly conservative area in the sense of maintaining the status quo
- Galilee – Very radical place
 - 100 miles north
 - Every radical idea that originated during this time, originated in Galilee
 - Every revolution against Rome originated in Galilee
 - Jesus is 1st and foremost a radical reformer within Judaism

New Testament Manuscripts

- A Jew living in Palestine at the time of Jesus would have:
 - Understood Greek
 - Spoken Aramaic as his native language
 - Been able to read Hebrew
 - Most would also have had a working knowledge of Latin, since they were living under Roman rule.
- The New Testament was written entirely in koine Greek, that is, the “common” Greek
 - Understood by ordinary people living in Palestine at the time of Jesus.
 - They understood Greek because Alexander the Great had conquered the region in 331 B.C., establishing a long period of Greek rule that lasted until the Roman general, Pompey, conquered the area in 63 B.C.
 - Although the events in the New Testament happen in the first century A.D., the manuscripts that record those events date from much later.
- Manuscripts of the New Testament are divided into four types: papyri, uncials, minuscules, and lectionaries.
 - New Testament papyri – written on papyrus and generally more ancient
 - New Testament minuscules – written in minuscule letters and generally more recent
 - New Testament lectionaries – usually written minuscule (but some in uncial) letters and generally more recent
 - New Testament uncials – written in majuscule letters, on parchment or velum.

Example of a Papyrus Manuscript



This is the oldest existing manuscript of the new Testament, a fragment of the Gospel according to John, A.D. 125 (John 18: 31-34; 37-38). John Rylands Library, Manchester, England.

Example of an Uncial Manuscript



Codex Sinaiticus, perhaps the most important of the New Testament manuscripts. Dating from the 4th century, it contains part of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament. British Library, London.

Example of a Miniscule Manuscript



This is a parchment manuscript from the 10th century containing the Acts of the Apostles, and the general and Pauline letters (Philemon 10-25 is shown above). Mt. Athos, Greece.

Example of a Lectionary



This is a parchment codex containing a gospel lectionary dated A.D. 991. It is carefully written with elaborate decorative letters in yellow, blue, green and scarlet. The text is John 19: 10-16 and Matthew 27: 3-5. Vatican Library.

Common names in the NT

Jesus

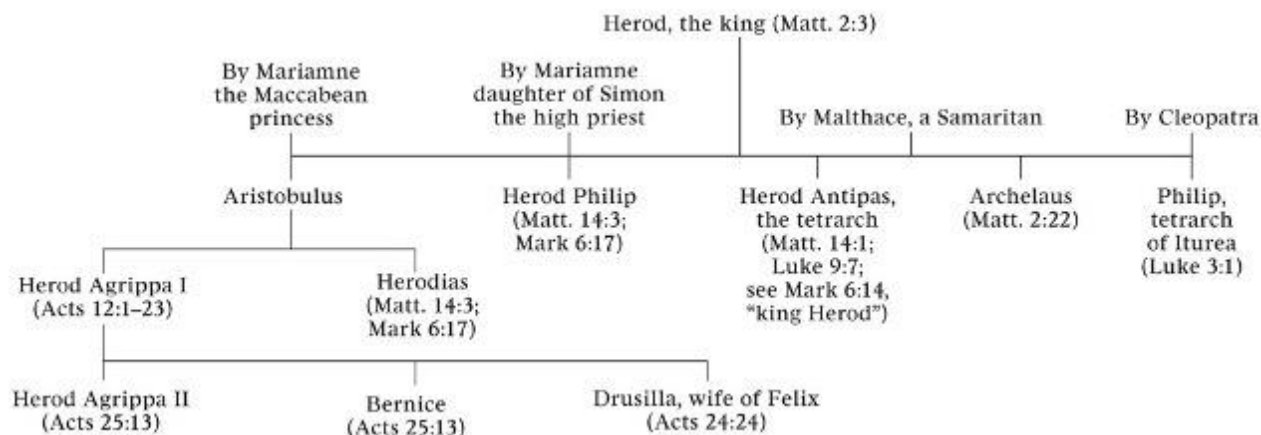
- Name is same as Joshua, which means ‘the Lord saves’

Mary

- Name is same as Miriam – named after Moses’ sister

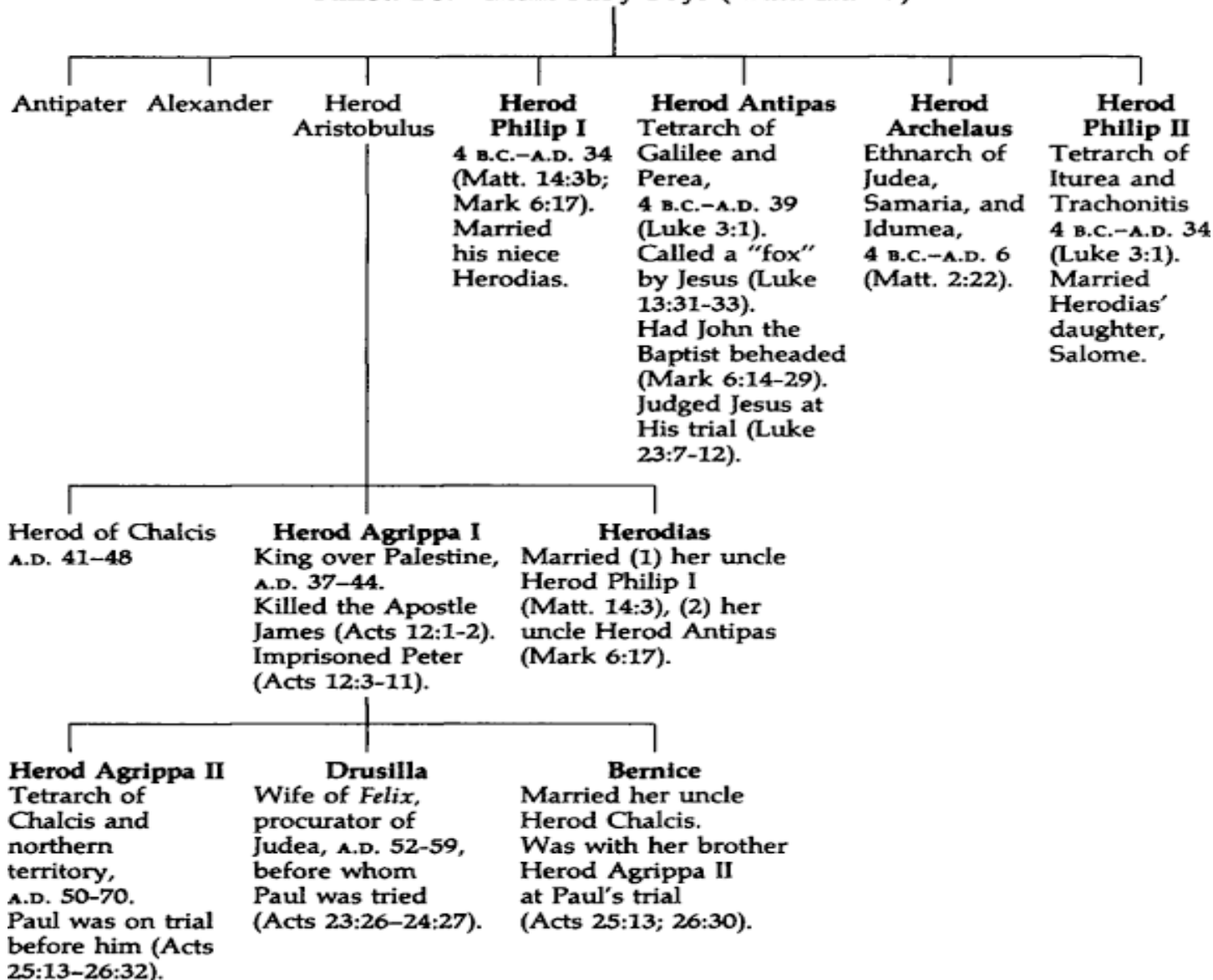
Herods

- Herod the Great (37 – 4 BC)
 - Present at the birth of Jesus
 - Slaughter of the Innocents – Orders the boys of Bethlehem to be killed (Mt 2:1-19)
 - Remains found at Herodium
- Herod Antipas (4 BC – AD 39)
 - Murders John the Baptist (Lk 9:9)
 - Pilate sent Jesus to him (Lk 23:7-12)
- Herod Agrippa I (37 – 44 AD)
 - Killed James, brother of John
 - Imprisons Peter
 - Struck down by an angel at the Theater in Caesarea and is eaten by worms and dies (Act 12:1-24)
- Herod Agrippa II
 - Paul makes a legal defense before him (Acts 25:13-26:32)



Herod the Great

King of Palestine, 37–4 B.C. (Luke 1:5)
Killed Bethlehem baby boys (Matt. 2:1-17)



The Gospels

- Narrative communication involves no fewer than four basic perspectives:
 - the author who fashions the story,
 - the narrator who tells it,
 - the audience or reader who experiences it,
 - the characters who enact it
 - Some critics also distinguish between an “implied” and “real” narrator (or narrators), as well as an “implied” and “real” reader (or readers).
- Prologue – Few things are more important to a story than how it begins.
 - In the first few pages the narrator sets the stage for what follows:
 - Introduces his major characters
 - Lays the groundwork for their relationships with one another
 - Plants seeds of conflict
 - Creates a mood that will shadow the rest of the story.
 - In the first few pages the narrator also establishes his own relationship with those who participate in the story:
 - the author
 - the narrator
 - the characters
 - the reader

Who was Jesus of Nazareth?

Christianity is arguably the single most important force in shaping the past 2,000 years of western civilization, and one may reasonably argue that Jesus of Nazareth is the single most influential person who ever lived. Yet, what do we really know about the historical Jesus?

- There is not a single piece of documentary evidence from the time of Jesus (4/6 B.C. – A.D. 32) to suggest that he ever existed. Nothing.
 - Not a birth certificate.
 - Not a death certificate.
 - Not a letter.
 - Not a property record.
 - Not a record of his trial.
 - Not a single document with his name on it.
- Apart from the NT—written decades after Jesus’ life on this earth—there are only a few references to him.
 - Flavius Josephus, c. A.D. 95 – *Jewish Antiquities* (18:3:3)
 - *About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.*
 - Josephus mentions Jesus again in passing (20.9.1) when he notes that the High Priest Ananias summoned the Sanhedrin, the Jewish governing council . . . *and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned . . .* [Acts 12 chronicles the result of this incident].

- Gaius Cornelius Tacitus – *Annals* (XXV.44.2-8)
 - A longer account shows up in Tacitus' *Annals* (c. A.D. 116). He recounts the great fire in Rome under Nero (XXV.44.2-8): *Nero fastened the guilt and afflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom their name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a deadly superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out, not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but also in the city, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world meet and become popular.*
- Pliny the Younger – *Letters* (10.96)
 - The earliest non-biblical report about the Christians comes from Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia (c. 112 A.D.) He isn't quite sure how to deal with the Christians, so he writes to the emperor Trajan for advice (Letters 10.96). Pliny had tortured a few Christians, and he passes on the information he received: *They maintained, moreover, that the amount of their fault or error had been this, that it was their habit on a fixed day to assemble before daylight and recite by turns a form of words to Christ as to a god; and that they bound themselves with an oath, not for any crime, but not to commit theft or robbery or adultery, not to break their word, and not to deny a deposit when demanded. After this was done, it was their custom to depart, and to meet again to take food, but ordinary, harmless food . . . I discovered nothing else than a perverse and extravagant superstition.*
- Lucian of Samosata – *Passing of Peregrinus* (11-13)
 - A final account of the Christian movement before the end of the second century comes from the satirist Lucian of Samosata (A.D. 120-180). In his *Passing of Peregrinus* he slams Peregrinus—the very model of the conman. Among those duped by Peregrinus was a group of Christians (Peregrinus 11-13): *It was then he learned the wondrous lore of the Christians by associating with their priests and scribes in Palestine. And—how else could it be—in a trice he made them all look like children; for he was prophet, cult leader, head of the synagogue, and everything, all by himself. He interpreted and explained some of their books, and even composed many, and they revered him as a god, made use of him as a lawgiver, and set him down as a protector, next after that other, to be sure, whom they still worship, the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world.*
- Among Jewish writings, the Talmud contains only a few references to Jesus (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 43a, b; 103a; 106b; 107b), though later censors may have removed others. The ones that do remain are very brief and often veiled. If we did not know of Jesus from the New Testament, we would probably not recognize the allusions to him in the Talmud.
- During the first century after Jesus' death, the world took little notice of what it considered to be a minor Jewish sect. For the most part, Jewish and Hellenistic writers completely ignored both Jesus and Christianity.
- What happened?
 - After Jesus's resurrection, he said to his Apostles: *"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28: 18-20)
 - And that is precisely what they did.

Titles for Jesus

Christ

- Christ is a title which means the anointed one, or Messiah
 - Christ is not his last name.
 - It is the Greek word "Christós" meaning "anointed," which is the translation of the Hebrew word "Māšîaḥ", meaning "the Messiah, the anointed one"

- Paul almost always refers to the Lord as Christ Jesus, as opposed to the other Apostles refer to him as Jesus Christ
 - The Apostles knew Christ in a very personal, intimate way – they refer to him as Jesus, the Messiah
 - Paul never knew Jesus on earth. He persecuted the followers of Christ, then had a dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus.
 - He refers to him as the Messiah Jesus. It's almost like he saying 'Sir' with a salute.
 - It's a different relationship that Paul has with Christ than the other Apostles had

Son of God

- Jesus is not God's Son in the sense of a human father and a son.
 - God did not get married and have a son.
 - God did not mate with Mary and, together with her, produce a son.
- Jesus is God's Son in the sense that He is God made manifest in human form (John 1:1,14).
 - Jesus is God's Son in that He was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit.
 - Luke 1:35 declares, "The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'"
- To be the Son of God is to be of the same nature as God.
 - The Son of God is "of God."
 - The claim to be of the same nature as God—to in fact be God—was blasphemy to the Jewish leaders; therefore, they demanded Jesus' death, in keeping with Leviticus 24:15. Hebrews 1:3 expresses this very clearly, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being."
 - During His trial before the Jewish leaders, the High Priest demanded of Jesus, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63). "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). The Jewish leaders responded by accusing Jesus of blasphemy (Matthew 26:65-66). Later, before Pontius Pilate, "The Jews insisted, 'We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God'" (John 19:7). Why would His claiming to be the Son of God be considered blasphemy and be worthy of a death sentence? The Jewish leaders understood exactly what Jesus meant by the phrase "Son of God."
 - Another example can be found in John 17:12 where Judas is described as the "son of perdition." John 6:71 tells us that Judas was the son of Simon. What does John 17:12 mean by describing Judas as the "son of perdition"? The word perdition means "destruction, ruin, waste." Judas was not the literal son of "ruin, destruction, and waste," but those things were the identity of Judas' life. Judas was a manifestation of perdition. In this same way, Jesus is the Son of God. The Son of God is God. Jesus is God made manifest (John 1:1,14).

Son of Man

- Highly exalted title – Claim to divine authority
- Jesus is referred to as the "Son of Man" 88 times in the New Testament
 - Almost always spoken by Jesus himself.
- Jesus was the Son of God—He was in His essence God. Jesus was also the Son of Man—He was in His essence a human being. In summary, the phrase "Son of Man" indicates that Jesus is the Messiah and that He is truly a human being.
- Refers back to OT prophets
 - Messianic title

Da 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His

dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

- Jesus is the One who was given dominion and glory and a kingdom.
 - When Jesus used this phrase, He was assigning the Son of Man prophecy to Himself.
 - The Jews of that era would have been intimately familiar with the phrase and to whom it referred. Jesus was proclaiming Himself as the Messiah.
- Title of humanity
 - God called the prophet Ezekiel “son of man” 93 times.
 - God was simply calling Ezekiel a human being. A son of a man is a man.
 - Jesus was fully God, but He was also a human being
 - Jn 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - Jn 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
 - 1Jn 4:2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

What is the Gospel?

The person and work of Christ – Who He is and what He did – and we appropriate it by grace through faith

- The word “gospel” derives from the Old English *godspel*, which means “good news.”
 - *Godspel* is the Old English rendering of the Greek euangelion (eu = “good,” angelion = “message”).
 - Euangelion is the word Paul uses in 1Corinthians 15: 1 when he reminds the church at Corinth of “the *gospel* I preached to you.”
- **A “gospel” is an account of the “good news” of the coming kingdom of God and the redemption of humanity through the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as seen through the eyes of a living faith tradition, guided by the Holy Spirit, 30-60 years after the events it portrays.**
- A “gospel” is NOT:
 - A biography of a person, although it does contain biographical information
 - An historical account of a person, although it is rooted in historical time
 - A fictional account of a person, although it does include miracles, wonders and a large dose of the supernatural
- Oral teaching of the Gospel
 - After Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection he commissions his disciples to take the gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1: 8). And they do just that. Those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus’ life and works travel throughout the Roman Empire, telling stories about him: what he said, what he did, miracles he performed, conversations and debates he had. Over time, those oral stories take on shape and form—not changing from telling to telling, as many insist—but solidifying into a standardized form
 - For the first 30+ years of the Church the “gospel” spread throughout the Roman Empire by the oral teaching and preaching of the Apostles and others.
- Written Gospels
 - By the early to mid-60s—30 years after Jesus’ life on earth—the eyewitness generation begins to die off, through natural death and through periodic persecutions, such as that of the Roman Emperor Nero (A.D. 64 – 68). With the eyewitness generation disappearing it seemed wise to write the stories down, lest they be lost. Thus the first written Gospels emerge.
 - Handwritten on scrolls and later in codex form (like our modern book), the Gospels spread throughout the Roman world as a final, stable text. They are the Gospels we read today.

- Many written “gospel” accounts emerged during the first three centuries of the Christian era, but common usage generally applies the term to the four canonical gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- Unique literary genre

How did the Gospel spread?

- For three years (A.D. 29-32) Jesus “went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and curing every disease and illness among the people” (Luke 4: 23).
- Disciples
 - During his 3-year public ministry Jesus gathered many followers, twelve of whom became his “inner circle,” his Apostles. They lived with him, traveled with him, studied with him: they were eyewitnesses to his public ministry and to his death, burial and resurrection.
 - After his resurrection, Jesus commissioned his inner circle to go and “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 19-20).
 - His Apostles did exactly that, becoming his “witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth [i.e., throughout the Roman Empire+” (Acts 1: 8).
- Oral Teaching
 - Between A.D. 32 and the mid 60s, teaching and preaching about Jesus was primarily oral, with occasional letters, such as those written by Paul. Faith communities formed throughout the Roman Empire based on such teaching and preaching.
 - Jesus’ Apostles—and other followers—traveled throughout the Roman Empire telling stories about him: they repeated his teaching; they told about his encounters with the religious authorities; and they told about the miracles God performed through him.
 - Virtually everyone in the early Christian communities believed that Jesus was crucified, buried and raised, and that he would return again, ushering in the Kingdom of God – They believed this would happen in their lifetime.



- Written Gospels
 - By the mid-60s the eyewitness generation was drawing to a close—either through natural death or persecution. Jesus had not yet returned, so it became imperative that the oral teaching and preaching about Jesus be written down, lest it be distorted or lost. Thus, the written Gospels begin to emerge in the mid to late 60s.
 - Over time, this oral teaching and preaching took on a fixed form and shape through repetition: expository teaching (e.g., Sermon on the Mount), parables (e.g., the Prodigal Son); dialectic (argumentation); healing stories; etc.

Cononical Gospels

- There were many “gospels” written during the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., but the Gospels we shall study are the four canonical Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- These are the gospels the early church believed were written by the Apostles (Matthew and John) or someone closely associated with the Apostles (Mark and Luke)—during the first generation of the Church.

Matthew (Mt)

- A tax collector
- Left his work to follow Jesus (Matthew 9: 9-13)
- One of the twelve apostles
- A Jew (probably a Levite) writing for a Jewish audience.
- Wrote his Gospel in late AD 60



Rembrandt. *The Evangelist Matthew and the Angel*
(oil on canvas), 1661.
Louvre-Lens Gallery, Pas-de-Calais, France.

Mark (Mk)

- John Mark, a young man
- He was not an apostle, but he was on the fringes of the group that followed Jesus
- He is first mentioned in Acts 12:12 “*When this dawned on him (Peter), he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.*”
- Mark was a nephew of Barnabas (Col 4: 10) and the spiritual son of Peter (1 Peter 5:13).
- A Jew writing for a Gentile audience.



Anonymous. *The Evangelist Mark with a Lion* (illumination on parchment), 1524. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Luke (Lk)

- Luke was not an apostle—nor was he a follower of Jesus during his 3-year public ministry.
- Luke, the “beloved physician” was a Gentile, a close friend and traveling companion of Paul during A.D. 50-68.
- Luke wrote both the Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.
- A Gentile writing to someone named Theophilus.



Andrea Mantegna. *Luke the Evangelist* [detail from the St. Luke altarpiece] (tempera on wood), 1454. Brera Art Gallery, Milan

John (Jn)

- John was an apostle
- The son of Zebedee and Salome, the brother of James, and one of Jesus’ cousins.
- Of all the apostles, John was the most intimate with Jesus.
 - He is the “beloved disciple” who rests his head on Jesus’ shoulder at the last supper
 - He is the one to whom Jesus entrusts the care of his mother, Mary, as he is dying on the cross.
- Traditionally, John is the author of the Gospel according to John; 1, 2 & 3 John and Revelation.

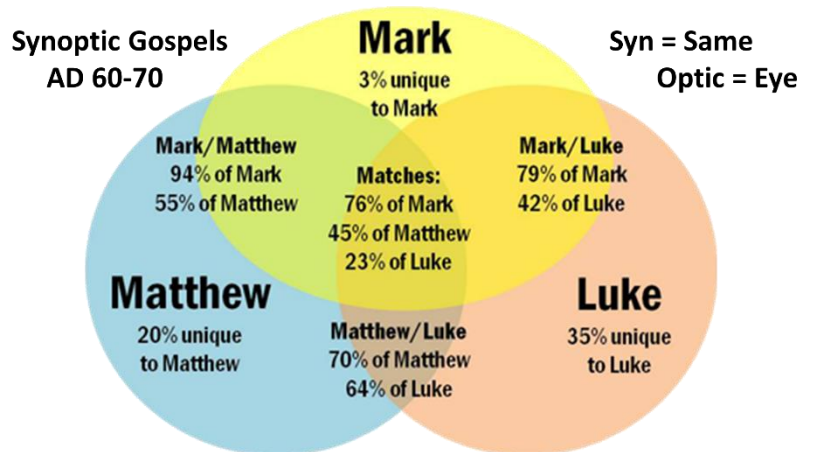
Synoptic Gospels

- Matthew, Mark & Luke
- Each of the synoptic Gospels draws on a similar body of oral teaching and preaching for their content
 - *syn* = “same,” as in synonym; *optic* = “eye”—“seen with the same eye”

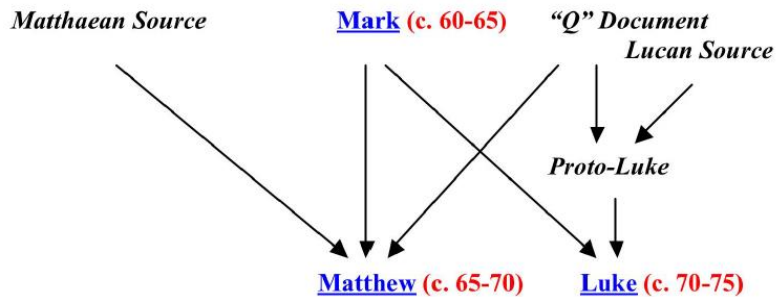
- The Gospel according to John emerges 20-30 years after the synoptic Gospels, and it is written from an entirely different perspective with an entirely different purpose.

- Matthew, Mark and Luke organize the oral stories about Jesus and present them:
 - From three different perspectives
 - For three different audiences
 - For three different purposes.

- Each Gospel presents that material in radically different ways: theologically, structurally and stylistically.
 - Matthew
 - The Apostle Matthew is the traditional author of the Gospel according to Matthew
 - Jew writing principally to a Jewish audience
 - Structures his gospel in a balanced, chiasmic form, imbedded with the theme of the “hero’s journey”
 - His style employs carefully structured parallelism.
 - Presents Jesus in the fullness of his humanity, portrayed in later iconography as a winged man.
 - Mark
 - The cousin of Barnabas and traveling companion of Peter



- Jew writing principally to those in the Church at Rome during a period of intense persecution
- Structures his gospel in two parts, framed by a prologue and an epilogue that pivots on Peter's confession of faith
- His style creates a sense of great urgency, moving forward at a blistering pace, ending with an implied "call to action."
- Mark presents Jesus as a king, portrayed in later iconography as a lion.
- Luke
 - Paul's traveling companion
 - Author of both the Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, the two comprising one great work
 - Gentile writing to an individual person, a man named Theophilus
 - Structures his 2-part work like an "hourglass," opening his gospel with a vast panorama of the entire Roman Empire and narrowing it down to Jerusalem, the cross and the empty tomb, and then in Acts he begins with the cross and the empty tomb and opens the narrative back out to the entire Roman Empire
 - His style is at once elegant and colloquial, creating individual "voices" for his characters and allowing the interaction of his characters to move the story ahead, rather than depending upon his narrator to do so.
 - Luke presents Jesus as a servant, portrayed in later iconography as an ox.



MATTHEW

	<div>Announcement and Arrival of the King</div> <div>Main Emphasis: His Credentials</div> <div><div><div>Birth</div><div>Baptism</div><div>Temptation</div></div></div> <div>CHAPTERS 1–4</div>	<div>Proclamation and Reception of the King</div> <div>Main Emphasis: His Message</div> <div><div><div>Sermon on the Mount</div><div>Miracles</div><div>Discourses</div><div>Parables</div></div></div> <div>CHAPTERS 5–15</div>	<div>Opposition and Rejection of the King</div> <div>Main Emphasis: His Suffering and Death</div> <div><div><div>Spread of opposition</div><div>Preparation of disciples</div><div>Final predictions</div><div>Crucifixion</div></div></div> <div>CHAPTERS 16–27</div>	<div>Resurrection and Triumph of the King</div> <div>Main Emphasis: His Conquest</div> <div><div><div>God’s power</div><div>Great Commission</div></div></div> <div>CHAPTER 28</div>
The King	His identity: Israel’s promised King		His destiny: “Crucify Him!”	
Scope	Teaching the vast multitudes		Teaching the Twelve	
Location	Bethlehem and Nazareth	Ministry in Galilee	Ministry in Judea	
People’s Reaction	Increased popularity		Increased hostility	
Theme	Jesus is the King, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.			
Key Verses	16:16–19; 28:18–20			
Christ in Matthew	Jesus, the Messiah, fulfills the prophecies, promises, types, and expectations of the Old Testament Scriptures (16:16–19; 28:18–20).			

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The book of Matthew is a Gospel that contains Narrative History, Genealogy, Parables, Sermons, and some Prophetic Oracles. It was written by Matthew (Levi), the Disciple of Christ around 48-50 A.D. The key word in Matthew is "Kingdom" and is used 28 times.

The personalities of this book include the Messiah Jesus Christ, His parents Mary and Joseph, the Twelve Disciples, the prophet John the Baptist, and other kinds of leaders. These leaders include those in government like Pilate and religious leaders such as the Pharisees (who attempt to hinder the work of Jesus).

The book of Matthew is the first of the synoptic gospels and it was written to reveal the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, the King of the Jews, from the line of David. It also was written to convince the Jews that Jesus Christ was indeed their long-awaited Messiah.

- Chapters 1-4 in Matthew mainly deal with the miracle birth of Jesus and the events surrounding His early life. This primarily involves the commonly told Christmas story but also includes the genealogy of Jesus, which goes all the way back to Abraham. "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (1:21).
- Chapters 5-25 consist of the ministry of Jesus from the interdiction of John the Baptist up to the point of His death at Calvary. These chapters are vital to our knowledge of Jesus Christ and are much of what we know about God living as a perfect man on Earth. These passages include Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount, numerous miracles, and priceless teachings to all who would listen and follow.

- Chapters 26-28, contain the death and resurrection of Jesus. These chapters present the truth of the "Good News" and about how Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself. This is the central theme of salvation through faith alone in the complete and finished work of Christ Jesus on the cross. Salvation is possible only through His death, His burial, and His resurrection from the dead, all for the sake of sinners. Numerous and amazing Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled frequently in these final chapters. Some of these are His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver by Judas, crucifixion with two robbers, and those wagging their heads at Jesus while He was yet on the cross.

Traditional Author: St. Matthew, the Apostle

Traditional Date Written: A.D. 65-75

Period Covered: 6/5 B.C.-A.D. 32

Outline

- A** Narrative: **Jesus as Messiah**, Son of God (1-4)
Minor discourse: John the Baptist identifies the authority of Jesus (3:7-12)
- B** Great Discourse #1: Demands of true discipleship (5-7)
 - C** Narrative: The supernatural authority of Jesus (8-9)
 - D** Great Discourse #2: Charge and authority of disciples (10)
 - E** Narrative: Jews reject Jesus (11-12)
 - F** Great Discourse #3: Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven (13)
 - E'** Narrative: Disciples accept Jesus (14-17)
 - D'** Great Discourse #4: Charge and authority of church (18)
 - C'** Narrative: Authority and invitation (19-22)
 - B'** Great Discourse #5: Judgment on false discipleship (23-25)
 - A'** Narrative: **Jesus as Messiah**, suffering and vindicated (26-28)
Minor discourse: Jesus identifies the authority of the church (28:18-20)

I. Narrative: Jesus as Messiah, Son of God (1-4)

A

- A. The Genealogy of Jesus (1:1-17)
 - i. Prologue (1:1)
 - 1. Abraham to David (1:2-6a)
 - 2. David to Babylonian captivity (1:6b-11)
 - 3. Babylonian captivity to Jesus (1:12-16)
 - ii. Epilogue (1:17)
- B. The Birth of Jesus (1:18-2:23)
 - i. Birth (1:18-25)
 - ii. Visit of the Magi (2:1-12)
 - iii. Flight to Egypt (2:13-18)
 - iv. Return to Nazareth (2:19-23)

II. Preparation (3:1-4:25)

- A. John the Baptist paves the way (3:1-17)
 - i. John arrives (3:1-6)
 - ii. Minor discourse: John identifies the authority of Jesus (3:7-12)**
 - iii. John baptizes Jesus (3:13-17)
- B. Satan tempts Jesus (4:1-11)
- C. Jesus moves to Capernaum (4:12-17)
- D. Jesus chooses his disciples (4:18-22)
- E. Jesus begins preaching, teaching and healing (4:23-25)

III. Great Discourse #1: Demands of true discipleship (5-7)

B

- A. Introduction (5:1-16)
 - i. Prologue (5:1-2)
 - ii. The fruits of blessedness (5:3-12)
 - 1. Those who are poor in spirit (5:3)
 - 2. Those who mourn (5:4)
 - 3. Those who are meek (5:5)
 - 4. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (5:6)
 - 5. Those who are merciful (5:7)
 - 6. Those who are pure in heart (5:8)
 - 7. Those who are peacemakers (5:9)
 - 8. Those who are persecuted because of righteousness (5:10)
 - 9. Those who suffer because of Jesus (5:11-12)
 - iii. The responsibilities of blessedness (5:13-16)
 - 1. Salt of the earth (5:13)
 - 2. Light of the world (5:14-16)
- B. Six propositions that exceed the Law (5:17-48)
 - i. Prologue (5:17-20)
 - 1. Proposition #1: Murder (5:21-26)
 - 2. Proposition #2: Adultery (5:27-30)
 - 3. Proposition #3: Divorce (5:31-32)
 - 4. Proposition #4: Oaths (5:33-37)
 - 5. Proposition #5: Conflict (5:38-42)
 - 6. Proposition #6: Love (5:43-48)
- C. Six concrete actions to implement the Law (6:1-7:6)
 - i. Prologue (6:1)
 - 1. Action #1: Almsgiving (6:2-4)
 - 2. Action #2: Prayer (6:5-15)
 - 3. Action #3: Fasting (6:16-18)
 - 4. Action #4: Serving God (6:19-24)
 - 5. Action #5: Not worrying (6:25-34)
 - 6. Action #6: Not judging (7:1-6)
- D. Conclusion (7:7-29)
 - i. Prologue (7:7-12)
 - 1. The narrow gate (7:13-14)
 - 2. A tree and its fruit (7:15-23)
 - 3. Wise and foolish builders (7:24-27)

IV. Narrative: The supernatural authority of Jesus (8-9)

C

- A. The man with leprosy (8:1-4)
- B. The faith of the centurion (8:5-13)
- C. Peter's mother-in-law (8:14-15)
- D. People of Capernaum (8:16-17)
- E. The cost of following Jesus (8:18-22)
- F. Jesus calms the storm (8:23-27)
- G. The demon-possessed men at Gadara (8:28-34)
- I. The paralytic (9:1-8)
- J. The calling of Matthew (9:9-13)
- K. The question about fasting (9:14-17)
- L. The dead girl at Capernaum (9:18-19; 23-26)
- M. The woman with the bleeding (9:20-22)

- N. The blind man (9:27-31)
- O. The deaf man (9:32-34)
- P. Epilogue (9:35-38)

V. Great Discourse #2: Charge and authority of disciples (10)

D

- A. Prologue (10:1-5a)
- B. Instruction (10:5b-42)

VI. Narrative: Jews reject Jesus (11-12)

E

- A. Prologue (11:1)
- B. John the Baptist doubts Jesus (11:2-19)
- C. Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum question Jesus (11:20-24)
- D. Jesus turns to the Father for support (11:25-30)
- F. The Pharisees doubt Jesus (12:1-14)
- G. Jesus heals the sick (12:15-21)
- H. The Pharisees doubt Jesus (12:22-37)
 - i. The Pharisees accuse Jesus of being in league with Beelzebub (12:24-37)
- I. The Pharisees demand a miraculous sign (12:38-45)
- J. Jesus' mother and brothers doubt him (12:46-50)

VII. Great Discourse #3: Parables of the kingdom of heaven (13)

F

- A. Prologue (13:1-3a)
- B. Parable of the seeds (13:3b-23)
- C. Parable of the weeds (13:24-30)
- D. Parable of the mustard seed (13:31-32)
- E. Parable of the yeast (13:33)
- F. Jesus explains the parables (13:34-43)
- G. Parable of the hidden treasure (13:44)
- H. Parable of the pearl (13:45-46)
- I. Parable of the net (13:47-50)
- J. Epilogue (13:51-58)

VIII. Narrative: Disciples accept Jesus (14-17)

E'

- A. Doubt and resolve (14:1-36)
 - i. John the Baptist beheaded (14:1-12a)
 - 1. Jesus told (14:12b)
 - ii. Jesus leaves Capernaum and the crowds follow him (14:13)
 - 1. Jesus heals the sick (14:14)
 - 2. Jesus feeds the crowd (14:15-21)
 - 3. Jesus sends the disciples home and dismisses the crowd (14:22)
 - iii. Jesus prays (14:23-24)
 - iv. Jesus returns to Capernaum, walking on the water (14:25-33)
 - 1. Peter tests Jesus (14:28-32)
 - 2. The disciples acknowledge Jesus as "Son of God" (14:33)
 - v. The crowds acknowledge Jesus (14:34-36)
- B. Increasing confidence (15:1-16:12)
 - i. Pharisees criticize Jesus again (15:1-2)
 - 1. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees publicly (15:3-11)
 - 2. Jesus rebukes his disciples privately (15:12-20)
 - ii. Jesus travels to Tyre and Sidon and meets the Canaanite woman (15:21-28)

- iii. Jesus feeds another crowd (15:29-39)
- iv. Pharisees ask for a sign again (16:1-4)
 - 1. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees publicly (16:2-4)
 - 2. Jesus warns the disciples about the Pharisees (16:5-12)
- v. Peter's confession of faith (16:13-28)
 - 1. Peter's confession (16:13-16)
 - 2. Jesus' response (16:17-28)
- vi. The transfiguration (17:1-13)
- vii. Jesus heals the boy with a demon that his disciples couldn't heal (17:14-23)
- viii. Jesus pays the temple tax, although he declares he doesn't have to (17:24-27)

IX. Great Discourse #4: Charge and authority of the church (18)

D'

- A. Jesus defines the "greatest" in the kingdom of heaven (18:1-14)
- B. Jesus defines the church's authority (18:15-20)
- C. Jesus defines the church's obligation to forgive (18:21-35)

X. Narrative: Authority and invitation (19-22)

C'

- A. Teaching on divorce (19:1-15)
- B. Teaching on secular wealth (19:16-30)
- C. Teaching on one's position in the church (20:1-28)
 - i. Jesus gives sight to the blind (20:29-34)
- D. Jesus enters Jerusalem (21:1-11)
 - i. Jesus wrecks the temple (21:12-17)
 - ii. Jesus prophesies the end of temple worship (21:18-22)
- E. The priests question Jesus' authority (21:23-27)
- F. Jesus questions the priests' and Pharisees' integrity (21:28-22:14)
 - i. The Pharisees strike back: paying taxes to Caesar (22:15-22)
 - ii. The Sadducees strike back: marriage and the resurrection (22:23-33)
 - iii. The Scribes strike back: the greatest commandment (22:34-40)
 - iv. The Pharisees try again: "Whose son is the Christ?" (22:41-46)

XI. Great Discourse #5: Judgment on false discipleship (23-25)

B'

- A. Jesus savages the religious leaders (23:1-39)
- B. Judgment (24:1-51)
 - i. The disciples call attention to the temple buildings (24:1)
 - ii. Jesus prophesies the destruction of the temple (24:2)
 - iii. The disciples rephrase their question (24:3)
 - iv. Jesus answers their rephrased questions (24:4-35)
 - 1. Answer regarding the destruction of the temple (24:5-6)
 - 2. Answer regarding the sign of Jesus' return (24:7-8)
 - 3. Answer regarding the interval between the destruction of the temple and Jesus' return (24:9-14)
 - 4. Answer regarding Jesus' return (24:15-35)
 - 5. Answer regarding the time of Jesus' return (24:36-51)
 - v. What to do in the meantime (25:1-30)
 - vi. What will happen when Jesus returns (25:31-46)

XII. Narrative: Jesus as Messiah, suffering and vindicated (26-28)

A'

- A. The plot against Jesus (26:1-5)
- B. Jesus anointed at Bethany (26:6-13)

- C. Judas agrees to betray Jesus (26:14-16)
- D. The Passover meal (26:17-30)
- E. Jesus predicts Peter's denial (26:31-35)
- F. Agony in the garden of Gethsemane (26:36-46)
- G. Jesus arrested (26:47-56)
- H. The trial (26:47-27:26)
 - i. On trial before the Sanhedrin (26:47-75)
 - 1. Peter's denial (26:69-75)
 - ii. On trial before Pilate (27:1-26)
 - 1. Judas hangs himself (27:1-10)
 - 2. The hearing (27:11-26)
- I. The punishment (27:27-44)
 - i. Jesus flogged (27:27-31)
 - ii. Jesus crucified (27:32-44)
 - iii. Jesus' death (27:45-56)
 - iv. Jesus' burial (27:57-66)
- J. The resurrection (28:1-15)

K. Minor Discourse: Jesus identifies the authority of the church (28:18-20)

- i. The great commission (28:19-20)

Biblical Placement – Transition from the OT to the NT

Matthew's narrative begins with a genealogy that reaches back into the Hebrew Scriptures and anchors the gospel in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. Like a swinging door, Matthew's gospel reaches back into the Old Testament and pulls the linear narrative up into the New, demonstrating the continuity of God's plan of redemption.

- Begins with a genealogy
 - Written by a Jew for a Jewish audience
 - The first verse swings back to the Hebrew Scriptures and God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3, picks up God's covenant with David in 1 Chronicles 17:10-14, and brings both forward to introduce his story.
 - In a metaphorical sense, the door of salvation swings on the hinges of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants
 - Abrahamic covenant – Introduces the plan of redemption when God tells the great patriarch, "all the families of the earth will find blessing in you," (Genesis 12:3)
 - David covenant – God says, "I will raise up your offspring after you who will be one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He it is who shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me." (1 Chronicles 17:11-14)..
 - In one deft movement Matthew not only links the entire linear narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures to the birth of Jesus, but he also makes the birth of Jesus the culminating event in Jewish history.
- Hebrew parallelism – B exceeds A, transforms it, and fulfills it
 - Standing at the head of the New Testament, Matthew's story plays an important role in the literary structure of the Christian Bible.
 - The Gospel according to Matthew—the first book of the New Testament—reflects the pattern of "stepped-up" parallelism.
 - It is intimately linked to the Old Testament, but it fulfills it, and in fulfilling it, transforms it.
 - Harvard Professor Frank Kermode observes that the Old Testament is to the New Testament as A is to B in Hebrew parallelism. Consider the example in Psalm 6:10

A *The Lord has heard my plea;*
B *The Lord will accept my prayer.*

- The B line doesn't simply repeat A; it exceeds it, transforming the A line and fulfilling it.
- Note that the verb *has heard* in the first line is in the past tense, while the verb in the second line *will accept* is in the future tense.
 - The psalmist's condition hasn't changed, but the strength of his faith has.
 - A long, dark road of anguish and suffering lies behind the first line, while faith lies behind the second.
- Engage the text on ITS terms, not yours
 - Matthew is a Jewish author writing for a Jewish audience and that he uses literary techniques familiar to his readers. Our job as contemporary readers is to engage the gospel from this perspective:
 - Understand how the story is told
 - Understand the historical and cultural context from which it emerges
 - Engaging the gospel on its own terms, not imposing ours upon it.
 - In doing so we produce an authentic, nuanced reading and a much deeper understanding of the text. And that is what becoming an educated reader of Scripture is all about.
- 1. The Greek word *seismos* rumbles beneath the narrative.
 1. It occurs seven times: 8:24, 21:10, 24:7, 27:54, 28:2, and 28:4.
 2. It suggests an earthquake, a sudden shock that shakes the story's foundations, recalling Haggai 2:

Hag 2:6 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7 I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty.
- 2. Matthew uses narrative structures that were used in the OT:
 - Chiastic structure similar to that used in the story of Noah and the Flood
 - Inclusio techniques similar to that used in the story of creation

Theme

Jesus is king – he emphasizes the kingdom of God

Narrative Structure

Chiastic

Matthew's story is artfully structured, along the lines of Hebrew poetry:

- Matthew builds the entire chiastic structure of his story on an underlying 3-part Christological foundation:
 1. the *person* of Christ (1:1-4:16)
 2. the *proclamation* of Christ (4:17-16:20)
 3. the *suffering, death and resurrection* of Christ (16:21-28:20)
- The chiastic structure

A	Narrative: Jesus as Messiah , Son of God (1-4)
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C	Narrative: The supernatural authority of Jesus (8-9)
D	<u>Great Discourse #2</u> : Charge and authority of disciples (10)
E	Narrative: Jews reject Jesus (11-12)
F	<u>Great Discourse #3</u> : Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven (13)
E'	Narrative: Disciples accept Jesus (14-17)
D'	<u>Great Discourse #4</u> : Charge and authority of church (18)

- C'** Narrative: Authority and invitation (19-22)
- B'** Great Discourse #5: Judgment on false discipleship (23-25)
- A'** Narrative: **Jesus as Messiah**, suffering and vindicated (26-28)
- Minor discourse: Jesus identifies the authority of the church (28:18-20)

- Inclusio – Notice that the whole chiastic structure is enveloped by the *name* of Jesus – **Jesus as a Messiah**.
 - Reaching back to Isaiah 7:14, Matthew says, “they will call him Immanuel—which means ‘*God with us*’” (1:23).
 - At the last line of the Gospel, Jesus says, “And surely *I am with you* always, to the very end of the age” (28:20).
- In addition,
 - **A-E** (Ch 1-12) – Jesus directs himself to the Jewish people: they neither listen to him nor understand him
 - **F** (Ch 13) – the central element of the chiasm - Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven
 - **E'-A'** (Ch 14-28) – Jesus directs himself to his disciples, who accept him and believe in him.
- If we move from the gospel’s overall structure to a particular story within the structure, we see the same careful craftsmanship at work. For example, the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7:
 - It is a carefully structured, 4-part exposition of the Law.
 - Part 1 (5:3-16) - Introduces the teaching with nine striking and memorable statements:
 - Each statement takes the form of “Blessed are X for they shall be Y”
 - Each statement offers a paradox
 - The sequence ends with a final paradox: “blessed are *you* when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you because of me.”
 - The nine statements certainly capture the attention of Jesus’ audience!
 - And then he follows up the “blessedness” with two statements of responsibility:
 - 1) “you are the salt of the earth”
 - 2) “you are the light of the world.”
 - With the blessedness spoken of in the previous nine statements comes responsibility to make people thirsty for God and to be an example to the world
 - Part 2 (5:17-48) – Jesus introduces six propositions that exceed the Law.
 - He is very clear that he has not “come to abolish the law or the prophets . . . but to fulfill” them (5:17).
 - Again, we have a clearly defined form, “You have heard it said X, but I tell you Y.”
 - Each proposition takes us inside a principle of the Law.
 - Part 3 (6:1-7:6) – Addresses six concrete actions to implement the Law
 - The first three focusing on the three pillars of devotional Judaism: almsgiving, prayer and fasting.
 - Each takes the common expression of an action and presents it paradoxically:
 - 1) do not give to the needy with great show, but give anonymously;
 - 2) do not pray to be seen, but pray privately; and
 - 3) do not fast publicly, but fast in secret.
 - Acquiring wealth, worrying and judging function in the same way.
 - Part 4 (7: 1-29) – Jesus offers an nine-part dramatic “call to action,”
 - Capped by the astonishment of the crowd
 - The symmetry of the teaching adds to its impact & to his audience’s ability to remember it—9, 6, 6, 9
 - Part 1 begins with 9 statements;
 - Part 2 continues with 6 propositions that exceed the law;
 - Part 3 offers 6 concrete actions to implement the law; and
 - Part 4 closes with a dramatic 9-part call to action.
 - Such a carefully structured teaching is not accidental
 - It reflects a master teacher at work

- It also reflects a master narrator carefully crafting his story.

Hero's Journey

- “The Hero’s Journey” is a basic narrative pattern found in many stories across a variety of times and cultures.
 - Joseph Campbell describes it in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, his 1949 seminal work on the archetypal hero. Borrowing from James Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake*, Campbell calls the pattern a “monomyth.”
- Matthew draws on ancient literary antecedents as models for shaping and telling his story, especially “The Hero’s Journey” archetype.
 - Joseph, Mary and Jesus flee Bethlehem and take refuge in Egypt.
 - Recall that Abraham and Sarah flee the Promised Land to take refuge in Egypt.
 - Massacre of the Infants
 - Recalls the story of Moses as an infant in Exodus 1, when Pharaoh orders that all the newborn male Hebrew children be drowned in the Nile River.
 - It is Moses through whom God will redeem his people from slavery in Egypt.
 - It is Jesus through whom God will redeem all of humanity from slavery to sin and death.
- The narrative structure of Matthew’s Gospel reflects this “Hero’s Journey” pattern.
 1. Departure: Jesus’ supernatural birth (1:18–2:23);
 2. Initiation: Jesus baptism by John (3:1-17);
 3. First Trial: Jesus’ tempted by Satan (4:1-11);
 4. Movement from the familiar: Jesus relocates to Capernaum (4:12-17);
 5. Choosing Companions: Jesus gathers his disciples, his “inner circle” of companions (4:18-22);
 6. The Journey begins: Jesus travels throughout Galilee teaching, preaching and healing (4:23-18:35);
 7. Final Trial: Jesus leaves Galilee and heads for Jerusalem and the cross (19:1-20:34);
 8. Entering enemy territory: Jesus’ “Palm Sunday” entry into Jerusalem (21:1-17);
 9. Engaging the enemy: Jesus’ escalating encounters with the religious leaders (21:18-25:46);
 10. The climatic battle: The “Passion” (26:1-27:66);
 11. Victory: Resurrection (28:1-15); and
 12. Reward: The Great Commission (28:16-20).

MARK

	Introduction and Preparation A brief introduction sets Jesus's ministry in motion. <u>John the Baptizer prepares the way.</u> <u>Jesus is tempted in the wilderness.</u> <i>CHAPTER</i> <i>1:1–13</i>	The Servant at Work An unbroken chain of events reveals Jesus helping people in need. <u>Because people are in darkness, He enlightens.</u> <u>Because people are sick/afflicted, He heals.</u> <u>Because people are without hope, He encourages.</u> <u>Because people are in bondage to satanic control, He liberates.</u> <u>Because people are sinful, He forgives.</u> <i>CHAPTERS</i> <i>1:14–8:30</i>	The Servant Rejected . . . Then Exalted A growing discontent among the authorities leads to Jesus's suffering and death. <u>He presses the claim, "Messiah."</u> <u>He spends more time alone with His disciples.</u> <u>He comes into open conflict with His enemies.</u> <u>He is hated, deserted, tortured, crucified, and buried.</u> <u>He is raised bodily from the dead!</u> <i>CHAPTERS</i> <i>8:31–16:20</i>
Emphasis	Service to others		Sacrifice for others
Scope	Ministry to the multitudes		Ministry to the Twelve
Sections	Action . . . reaction . . . confrontation		Revelation . . . crucifixion . . . exaltation
Theme	Jesus is the Suffering Servant, who gives His life to save the world.		
Key Verse	10:45		
Christ in Mark	Jesus suffered and died so that salvation would be available to all people (10:45).		

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The book of Mark is a Gospel that contains Narrative History, Sermons, Parables, and some Prophetic Oracles. This Gospel has somewhat of an emphasis in miracles (27 total) which is significantly more than any of the other Gospels. The key word in Mark is "Immediately" which is used 34 times causing the reader to move from one account to the next rapidly. Mark is the shortest of the synoptic gospels and was written about 64 A.D. The key personalities of this book are Jesus Christ, His Twelve Disciples, Jewish religious leaders, Pilate, and John the Baptist.

It was written by John Mark who was one of the missionaries who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their mission trips. It is possible that Mark wrote this Gospel at the urging of Peter (his companion in Rome) since he had firsthand knowledge of the things that Mark wrote about.

The purpose of the Gospel of Mark is to show that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God who was sent to suffer and to serve in order to rescue and restore mankind.

The 16 chapters of the Gospel of Mark can be divided into two parts, 8 chapters each. In the first 8 chapters Jesus is essentially traveling north and preaching until chapter 8. In Chapter 8, Jesus is in the city of Caesarea Philippi where He asks His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" (vs. 27). Peter replies, "You are the Christ". Throughout the last 8 chapters, Jesus is traveling south, back to Jerusalem; all the way to Calvary's Cross.

- In chapter 1, there is a quick introduction of John the Baptist and his preparation for the coming Messiah. It also includes the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan, and the temptation in the desert by Satan. The focus quickly changes to the message and ministry of Jesus.
- In chapters 2-10, Jesus selects His Disciples, "And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him, and that He could send them out to preach" (3:14). The rest of these passages almost completely refer to Jesus as a Servant. It

presents Jesus either teaching, healing, helping, performing miracles, blessing, feeding, challenging authority, and feeling compassion (8:2).

- Chapters 11-16 are the final chapters that declare the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ again another example of servanthood. He is betrayed, dragged through a faulty trial, and then unmercifully beaten, humiliated and crucified; all for the purpose of serving sinners. The final chapter is the miraculous resurrection of His physical body, numerous appearances, and command of the Great Commission, and finally His ascension to the right hand of God.

Traditional Author: John Mark

Traditional Date Written: A.D. 60-70

Period Covered: 6/5 B.C.-A.D. 32

Outline

Mark stands shoulder to shoulder with any book in Scripture—indeed, any book in literature— as a world-class work of dazzling narrative.

- 2-fold structure, framed by a prologue and an epilogue that pivots on Peter’s confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi.
 - Prologue
 - Establishing Jesus’ identity (Mk 1:1-8:26)
 - Takes place on and around the Sea of Galilee
 - As readers, we know exactly who Jesus is, for we are told in the proclamation of 1: 1—“Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God . . .”
 - The characters in the world of the narrative, however, aren’t privy to this information; they have to learn his identity
 - Chapters 1:1-8:26 provide dramatic evidence of Jesus’ messianic credentials
 - Peter’s confession of faith – turning point in the story (Mk 8:27-9:13)
 - At Caesarea Philippi, the disciples finally understand who Jesus
 - Peter confesses, “You are the Christ,”
 - The statement that is confirmed at the Mount of Transfiguration by the voice of God the Father in the presence of two credible witnesses, Moses and Elijah.
 - Implications of Jesus’ identity (Mk 9:14-16:20)
 - Story then moves south from the Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem
 - Concentration is on the implications of Jesus’ identity – both for the characters in the story and for the reader.
 - Epilogue

Prologue: (1: 1-15)

A. Proclamation (1: 1-8)

B. Baptism and Temptation (1: 9-15)

I. “Who is this man?” (1: 16 - 8: 26)

A. The disciples called (1: 16-20)

B. An evil spirit attacks (1: 21-28)

People are amazed (1: 27)

C. Peter’s mother-in-law healed; great crowds gather (1: 29-34)

D. Jesus retreats to a solitary place for prayer (1: 35-39)

E. A man with leprosy healed (1: 40-45)

F. A paralytic healed (2: 1-12)

People are amazed (2: 12)

G. Levi called (2: 13-17)

H. John’s disciples and the Pharisees attack: fasting (2: 18-22)

- I. Pharisees attack: picking grain on the Sabbath (2: 23-27)
- J. Pharisees attack: healing on the Sabbath (3: 1-6)
 - Pharisees and Herodians plot to kill Jesus* (3: 6)
- K. Large crowds gather (3: 7-12)
 - Evil spirits cry out* (3: 11-12)
- L. Apostles appointed (3: 13-19)
- M. Jesus attacked (3: 20-35)
 - i. Jesus' family claims "he is out of his mind" (3: 21)
 - ii. Teachers of the Law claim "he is possessed by Beelzebub" (3: 22)
 - iii. Jesus' mother and brothers want to take charge of him (3: 31-35)
 - Jesus denounces them (3: 33-35)
- N. Jesus teaches (4: 1-34)
 - i. Parable of the sower (4: 1-20)
 - ii. Parable of the lamp (4: 21-25)
 - iii. Parable of the growing seed (4: 26-29)
 - iv. Parable of the mustard seed (4: 30-32)
 - v. Many other parables (4: 33-34)
- O. Jesus calms the storm (4: 35-41)
 - Disciples are terrified* (4: 41)
- P. Jesus heals (5: 1-34)
 - i. Demon-possessed man of Gaderene (5: 1-20)
 - ii. Jairus' daughter (5: 21-24a; 35-43)
 - Woman subject to bleeding (5: 24b-34)
- Q. Jesus rejected at Nazareth (6: 1-6a)
- R. Jesus sends out the twelve (6: 6b-13)
- S. John murdered (6: 14-29)
 - i. Jesus retreats to a solitary place to pray (6: 30-44)
 - Jesus teaches and feeds the 5,000 (6: 33-44)
 - ii. Jesus walks back on the water (6: 45-56)
- T. Pharisees and teachers of the Law attack: eating with unclean hands (7: 1-23)
- U. Jesus leaves Galilee
 - i. Tyre (7: 24-30)
 - Jesus encounters the Syrophenician woman (7: 25-30)
 - ii. Decapolis (7: 31-37)
 - Jesus encounters the deaf and mute man (7: 32-35)
 - People are overwhelmed and amazed* (7: 37)
- V. Jesus returns to Galilee (8: 1-26)
 - i. Jesus feeds the 4,000 (8: 1-13)
 - Jesus warns of "the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod" (8: 14-21)
 - iii. Jesus heals the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22-26)

Turning Point: Peter's Confession of Faith (8:27-9:13)

- A Identity: Who is Jesus? (8:27-28)
 - B Response: "You are the Christ"—Peter (8:29-30)
 - Peter's misunderstanding (8:31-33)
 - C ***"Take up [your] cross and follow me"*** (8:34-38)
 - B' Response: "This is my Son"—God (9:1-8)
 - Peter's misunderstanding (9:5-6)
 - A' Identity: Who is John? (8:9-13)
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II. "What does it all mean?" (9: 14 - 16: 8)

- A. Healing the boy with an evil spirit (9: 14-32)
 - “Who is the greatest?” (9: 33-37; 42-50)
 - We’re in charge! (9: 38-41)
- B. Jesus’ teaches on divorce (10: 1-16)
 - Jesus teaches on children (10: 13-16)
- C. Rich young man encounters Jesus (10: 17-31)
- D. Jesus predicts his death (10: 32-24)
 - James and John ask to be the greatest (10: 35-4)
- E. Bartimaeus receives his sight; the disciples remain “blind” (10: 46-52)
- F. Jesus enters Jerusalem (11: 1-11)
- G. Jesus clears the temple (11: 12-19)
- H. Jesus curses the fig tree (11: 20-26)
- I. Chief priests, teachers of the Law and elders confront Jesus (11: 27-33)
- J. Jesus teaches (12: 1 - 13: 37)
 - i. Parable of the tenants (12: 1-12)
 - ii. Paying taxes to Caesar (12: 13-17)
 - iii. Marriage at the resurrection (12: 18-27)
 - iv. The greatest commandment (12: 28-34)
 - v. Whose son is the Christ? (12: 35-40)
 - vi. The widow’s offering (12: 41-44)
 - vii. The end of the age (13: 1-37)
- K. Jesus anointed at Bethany (14: 1-11)
- L. Passover meal (14: 1-31)
- M. Jesus predicts Peter’s denial (14: 27-31)
- N. Jesus arrested in the garden of Gethsemane (14: 32-52)
- O. Jesus on trial before the Sanhedrin (14: 53-72)
 - Peter denies knowing Jesus (14: 66-72)
- P. Jesus on trial before Pilate (15: 1-15)
- Q. Jesus crucified (15: 16-47)
 - i. Roman soldiers mock Jesus (15: 16-20)
 - ii. Jesus on the cross (15: 21-41)
 - Jesus dies (15: 33-41)
- R. Jesus buried (15: 42-47)
- S. Jesus resurrected (16: 1-8)
 - “Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid”* (16: 8)

Epilogue (16: 9-20)

- A. Jesus’ appearances (16: 9-13)
- B. Jesus’ final commands to his disciples (16: 13-20)

Author – Mark

- John Mark
 - Not an apostle, but he was on the fringes of the group that followed Jesus.
 - Mary, Mark’s mother, was a disciple of Jesus
 - Mark is first mentioned in Acts 12: 12— “When this dawned on him [Peter], he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.”
 - Mark was a nephew of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10)
 - Mark was the spiritual son of Peter (1 Peter 5:13).
- Mark joined Paul and Barnabas in A.D. 50 for the 1st missionary journey (Acts 13:5)

- Mark turned back at Perga (Acts 13:13).
 - Paul & Barnabas had a falling out over this at the time of the 2nd missionary journey (Acts 15: 37-39).
 - Barnabas took Mark and headed in the opposite direction of Paul
 - In Colossians 4:10, we hear that Mark is back in Paul's good graces
 - The letter was written 12 years after the falling out with Barnabas
 - In 2 Timothy 4:11, Paul writes from Rome: "Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry."
 - Paul's last letter before his death in A.D. 68
- The early church unanimously agreed that John Mark wrote the *Gospel According to Mark*.
 - Papias (c. A.D. 140) quotes an earlier source saying the following:
 - Mark was a close associate of Peter, from whom he received the things said and done by Jesus
 - These things did not come to Mark as a finished, sequential account of the life of Jesus, but they came from Peter's preaching.
- John Mark wrote for a Gentile audience, probably those who lived in Rome.
- Founded the Coptic church in Alexandria, Egypt

Biblical Placement

- Follows Matthew
 - Provides a very different point of view toward the events that transpire during Jesus' public ministry.
 - Although Matthew and Mark draw on the same source material, Mark does something quite different with his.
 - Matthew provides the door that brings the OT people into the NT
- Mark's narrative begins abruptly, and it moves ahead at break-neck speed, jolting to a stop with the women at the tomb who "did nothing, for they were afraid."
 - Mark's gospel is a sudden and dramatic proclamation
 - Mark's prose style is dramatic and abrupt
 - Dominated by short phrases linked with "and"
 - Pushed forward by the repetitive use of "immediately"
 - Use of the "historical present" tense – shifts from past tense to present
 - Gives a sense of urgency to the message
 - The *Gospel According to Mark* is far from being a "primitive" gospel; it is a brilliant narrative, crafted by a superb prose stylist.

Narrative Structure

- Mark's structure is purely linear—a straight line from beginning to end.
Who is this man? → Peter's confession of faith → What does it all mean?
- 2-fold structure, framed by a prologue and an epilogue that pivots on Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi.
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Prose Style

“*And immediately* **coming up** out of the water **he saw** the heavens **being torn apart** and the Spirit like a dove **descending into him**, and there was **a voice out of the heavens**: ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; in you I am well-pleased.’ *And immediately* the Spirit **drives him out** into the desert . . .”

- Mark’s prose style is dramatic and abrupt
- Repetitive use of “immediately”
 - Used 41 times – Pushes the story forward
 - “and immediately” – Used 25 of those 41 times
 - “immediately” piled on “and immediately” creates a sense of urgency
 - Example above
 - Notice the intense action – Jesus is coming up out of the water; he sees the heavens being torn apart; the Spirit descends into him; he hears the voice from heaven, and the Spirit drives him into the desert.
 - The entire sequence bristles with activity
 - Physical movement goes up, down and out
 - The senses see and hear
 - *and immediately* thrusts the action forward
- Use of the “historical present” tense – shifts from past tense to present
 - Gives a sense of urgency to the message
 - Mark uses the historical present 151 times, while Matthew uses it 93 times and Luke only 9
- Dramatic tension
 - Mark creates dramatic tension by providing us—and the demons—with important information that the rest of the characters in the story lack

Narrative Strategy

- In Mark, the narrator drives the story.
 - The story depends upon the narrator to drive the action and to develop the characters.
 - In a story of 11,022 words, the narrator speaks 5,826 of them — 53%,
 - Jesus speaks 36%
 - The rest of the characters 11%.

Prologue

- In these first 15 verses Mark sets the narrative pace, creates spring-tight tension and begins building an urgency that reaches fever-pitch by the Gospel’s end. This is dazzling technique, bathing Jesus and the gospel message in a white-hot light; incandescent and dangerous.
- The prologue sets the stage for the story that follows. In a brief fifteen verses—249 words in the Greek—Mark has drawn together threads of prophecy reaching back to Moses, positioning God’s anointed Son on the stage of history where he will alter it forever.

- This is a very literal translation of Mark's prologue translated from the Greek in the Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graeca*, 28th edition, and I am striving to replicate the prose style, verb tenses and rhetorical devices as closely as possible:

The Gospel According to Mark: The Prologue, 1: 1-15

1 **Beginning** of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ, Son of God, as 2 it has been written in Isaiah the prophet:

Look! I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way; 3 a voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way of the Lord; make straight paths for him."

4 John, the one baptizing in the desert, appeared proclaiming a baptism of repentance toward the forgiveness of sins, 5 and the entire Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan river confessing their sins and 6 John was clothed with camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey and 7 he spoke out saying: "After me comes one who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy of stooping down to loosen; 8 I have baptized you in water, but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

9 And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John, 10 and immediately coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn apart and the Spirit like a dove descending into him, 11 and there was a voice out of the heavens: "You are my Son, the Beloved; in you I am well-pleased." 12 And immediately the Spirit drives him out into the desert, 13 and he was in the desert forty days being tempted by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to him. 14 After John had been arrested Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and 15 saying: "The appointed time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is fast approaching; repent and believe in the **gospel**."

- In these first 15 verses of Mark
 - The narrator roots his story in history and prophecy
 - He identifies John the Baptist as the forerunner of the Messiah
 - He establishes Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.
- Mark accomplishes three things in the prologue as a narrator
 - He dramatically proclaims the beginning of a new era in history
 - For half a millennium God's people waited for this time.
 - When Mark says, "Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God," he announces its arrival.
 - In a fusion of deft allusions, Mark first brings on stage the Lord's forerunner, who prepares the way of the Lord by "proclaiming a baptism of repentance toward the forgiveness of sins," and then he brings on the Lord himself, who announces that "the appointed time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is fast approaching."
 - Throughout the rest of the gospel, we see the kingdom of God breaking into history, spreading its roots and taking hold.
 - Mark creates a dramatic tension by providing us—and the demons—with important information that the rest of the characters in the story lack.
 - We know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the one spoken of by the prophets.
 - We also know that he has been commissioned by God to act with divine authority and power.
 - Satan and the demons know it, too. But no one else in the story does!
 - Withholding such critical information sets the stage for conflict, not only between Jesus and the disciples, but also between the Jesus and the religious leaders and Jesus and the crowds.
 - In addition, it creates conflict between the reader and the characters in the story.
 - As we bring our inside information to each scene, we respond differently to the events from the way they do.

- When the disciples see Jesus calm the storm and they say, “Who is this, that even the wind and the lake obey him?” we want to say, “Can’t you see, he’s the Son of God!”
 - Or when he teaches in his own town and his neighbors say, “Where did this one get these things . . .?” we grow impatient at their lack of understanding and perhaps judge them harshly.
- As we are drawn into the story with our privileged information, we become complacent; when we reach the second half of the story, however, that complacency crumbles as we confront the meaning of who Jesus is and of what that implies, not only for the characters in the story, but for us.
- Mark’s prologue presents a dangerous terrain, and we move through it at break-neck speed.
 - In only fifteen verses we abruptly begin a story that:
 - Moves us back and forth from the deep desert
 - We see God commission Jesus for conflict
 - We encounter Satan and the wild beasts
 - We hear of John’s arrest.
 - If the world has indeed been given into Satan’s hands, he is not going to relinquish it willingly
 - The kingdom of God will be established at a high cost – the prologue casts the ominous shadow of that cost across the pages that follow.
 - When Jesus says that the kingdom of God “is fast approaching,” we experience the speed of the kingdom bearing down upon us. The sense of urgency is overwhelming.
 - Sentences begin with strong, active verbs; “immediately” piles on “immediately”
 - Phrases and sentences link together with “and”
 - The historical present thrusts past events to center stage
 - We rush through the story.
 - In such a fast-moving story, the plot shifts abruptly, looming dangers suddenly erupt, and we come head-to-head with the unexpected at random turns.
 - As readers we have to stay on our toes. On the one hand, we are lulled into complacency by our insider knowledge; on the other, we approach turns in the story so quickly that we easily skid off track.
- This is critical information to the story
 - In these first fifteen verses the narrator provides it to us, but not to the characters themselves: as the story opens, we become privy to information that the characters will have to discover.
 - Providing us with such important information while withholding it from the characters creates an enormous tension that runs throughout Mark’s story.
- We might think of these first fifteen verses as an introduction to the story proper.
 - The first 8 verses focus on John the Baptist and his mission as forerunner
 - A desert landscape sets the opening scene
 - We hear “a voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way of the Lord . . .,’” and John appears from deep within the desert, clad as the prophet Elijah and baptizing “the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem” in the Jordan River.
 - Most translations translate this ‘prepare the way of the Lord; make straight paths for him,’” Isaiah 40:3, however, clearly reads: “A voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God,’”
 - Associates the desert with the place where one prepares for the Lord, not the place from which the voice is calling.
 - I believe this best reflects Mark’s intent, for in the following verses John comes in from the desert and Jesus goes out to the desert.
 - The last 7 verses spotlight Jesus as the long-awaited Christ, the Son of God.
 - Story’s action moves from the desert to the fringes of civilization
 - The second half of the prologue moves the story from the edge of civilization back to the desert: Jesus is baptized at the Jordan and he is immediately driven deep into the desert “with the wild beasts,” where he confronts Satan.

- As Israel passes through the Red Sea in Exodus and faces conflict in the desert for forty years before entering the Promised Land, so does Jesus reverse the movement in Mark, leaving the Promised Land and passing through the Jordan River to face conflict in the desert for forty days.
- Mark begins with a sudden and dramatic proclamation: “*Beginning* the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God, as it has been written in Isaiah the prophet . . .”
 - The word “beginning” in Greek is the same word that begins Genesis, “in the *beginning*.”
 - Mark announces the start of the gospel with a proclamation that echoes Genesis 1:1, positioning the unfolding events at the beginning of creation itself
 - *Anarthrous* construction
 - *Anarthrous* construction – Grammatically, the lack of a definite article before a verb
 - It is relatively common in Greek
 - In Mark, no definite article precedes “beginning,”
 - Most translators supply it: “*The beginning* of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God . . .”
 - It serves to create an abrupt start, a sudden proclamation rather than a measured introduction
 - Throughout the prologue events rush forward; sentences begin with strong verbs; we find Mark’s first use of “immediately,” and he begins to employ the “historical present” to intensify the drama.

Mark’s gospel is anchored in the OT

- Mark’s prologue is a fusion of three texts: Exodus 23:20-21, Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3
 - This fusion of three texts in Mark’s opening produces a dazzling rhetorical effect.
- In Mark, “John, the one baptizing in the desert,” fulfills the prophecy in Isaiah, a prophecy that has its roots in the Exodus and in Israel’s covenant with God. When Mark proclaims “the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God, as it has been written in Isaiah the prophet,” Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11 is his point of reference.
- Mark’s sudden proclamation sets the stage for the intrusion of the gospel into history with a deft allusion that gathers up a long history of Messianic promise and drops it on the edge of the desert, on the bank of the Jordan River. In three short verses, Mark sets the stage for the Messiah’s entrance into the story.

Mark 1:2-3

*Mk 1:2 ...**Look!** I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way; 3 a voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way of the Lord; make straight paths for him.”*

Exodus 23:20-21

*God’s Angel to Prepare the Way – Ex 23:20 “**See**, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. 21 Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him.*

- Mark does not quote this, but it lies at the foundation of his reference.
- God has already freed his people from Egyptian slavery; he has given them his law at Mt. Sinai, and he is about to reaffirm his covenant with them. Before he does, though, he promises a guide who will lead them through the desert and into the land.
- God promises to send an “angel” to lead the way through the scorching heat, danger and desolation of the desert, an “angel” who will “go ahead of you and bring you into the land.”
 - In both Hebrew and Greek the word “angel” literally means messenger.
- The messenger that God sends to lead his people to the Promised Land in Exodus is a foreshadowing of the messenger promised in Malachi 3:1, the text that Mark quotes.

Malachi 3:1

*Mal 3:1 “**See**, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.*

- The passage begins with the same imperative as Exodus 23:20 “See!”
- “I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me”
 - Literally, “before the face of me,” a vivid Semitic idiom
 - Mark moves the line, with its idiom, directly to his text: “Look!” I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way ...”
- Although Mark does not quote the second half of Malachi 3: 1, he does incorporate it into his reference by following the exact sequence of references:

	Mal 3:1	Mark 1:1-15
Speaker	God	God
Messenger prepares the way	Elijah (confirmed in 4:5)	John the Baptist
“will come to his temple”	“the Lord”	“Jesus Christ, Son of God”

Isaiah 40:3

Is 40:3 A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

- As we move into the second half of Mark’s quote, we at last encounter Isaiah the prophet
- The context here is extremely important.
 - King Hezekiah shows Babylon his palace
 - King Hezekiah has recovered from his illness and has received envoys congratulating him and bearing gifts from the king of Babylon. In gratitude—and pride—he shows them his palace, Is 39:2 “his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine oil, his entire armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them”
 - Isaiah’s bone-chilling prophecy
 - Isaiah enters, asks what Hezekiah has done, and replies with a bone-chilling prophecy: Is 39:5 "Hear the word of the LORD Almighty: 6 The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. 7 And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."
 - This terrible prophecy is literally fulfilled some 125 years later, when in 586 B.C. the Babylonians sack Jerusalem and carry the surviving population into captivity.
- Comfort for God's People
 - Is 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. 5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
 - Here, God tells Israel that the time will come when her hard service will end, a time when there will be “a voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God,’” a time when sin will be paid for.
 - The immediate reference is freedom from the Babylonian captivity; the eschatological reference is Messianic.
- If we move ahead a few verses we read more about the Lord who will come
 - Is 40:9 You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" 10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. 11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

- The shepherd simile is striking, and we shall see it closely associated with Jesus as ark's story progresses.
- Verse 9, however, is especially significant to Mark's prologue: "You who bring good tidings to Zion . . . you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem."
 - "Good tidings" in the Hebrew is translated in the Greek as "gospel."
 - This is the verbal link between the "voice of one calling" in Isaiah 40: 3 and the "gospel" proclaimed in Mark.
- It is this "gospel" which is rooted back in the Old Testament and that bursts forth in the New that so frightens the characters who people Mark's story.
 - When Jesus stills the storm, his disciples are terrified, saying: "Who is this, that even the wind and the lake obey him?" (4:41)
 - When he drives out "Legion" from the demonized man, and the Gerasenes see the man "sitting down, clothed and in his right mind . . . they were terrified," (5:15)
 - When the women at the empty tomb are told to tell Peter and the disciples of Jesus' resurrection, "trembling and amazement gripped them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (16:8).
 - The intrusion of the gospel into daily life shocks and disorients those it touches: they draw back, frozen with fear, bewildered. Like a vector shot from eternity into history, the gospel intersects reality at precisely Mark's moment in time, accompanied by the proclamation: "Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God ..."

Gospel

- Mark proclaims God's entrance into history, and he calls it the *gospel* of Jesus Christ, Son of God.
 - "Gospel" is the key word in Mark's prologue
 - It is his theme, the very substance and message of his narrative.
- Inclusio – The word "gospel" frames the prologue, bracketing it at the beginning and the end.
 - So important is the "gospel" in Mark that it frames his prologue and provides the launching pad for the story proper: Verse 1 reads, "Beginning of the *gospel* of Jesus Christ, Son of God . . .," and verse 15 closes with Jesus proclaiming the gospel of God, saying: "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is fast approaching; repent and believe in the *gospel*"
- Gospel
 - The Greek term means far more than "good news" or "good report," as it originally meant in classical literature and as Paul uses it in 1 Thessalonians 3:6
 - In Mark it embodies the *entire* Christian message—the person, words and works of Jesus.

Heavens are "torn apart"

- In verse 10, the heavens are "torn apart" and the Spirit descends into Jesus.
- The word "torn" reappears in Mark 15:38 when, at the instant of Jesus' death, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom," giving access to God once for all.
- The Greek word is vigorous, violent, intense and dramatic
 - Pronounced skhid'-zo, from which we get the word "schizophrenic," a person who is "torn apart"
- Inclusio
 - It opens the story as Jesus enters the narrative
 - It closes the story as he exits.
 - Just as "gospel" frames the prologue, so does "torn apart" frame Mark's entire story.

Epilogue

Mark's gospel ends at 16: 8, but a longer ending was appended later as an "epilogue," written in a very different vocabulary and style, sometime between the gospel's original composition and the end of the 2nd century. Although clearly a later addition to the gospel, the verses are mentioned by the Church Fathers: St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and Peter Chrysologus; they are included in St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate; and the Roman Catholic Church accepted the verses

as canonical at the 4th session of the Council of Trent (1546) in the document “Decretum de Canonicis Scripturis,” (“Decree on the Canon of Scripture”).

Luke (Lk) Overview

LUKE

The Son of Man					
	Preface	Announced and Appearing	Ministering and Serving	Instructing and Submitting	Resurrected and Commissioning
	About 90 percent unique to Luke “Jesus the Nazarene . . . a prophet . . .”	“ . . . mighty in deed . . .”	“ . . . and word in the sight of God and all the people.” (24:19)		
	CHAPTER 1:1–4	CHAPTERS 1:5–4:13	CHAPTERS 4:14–9:50	CHAPTERS 9:51–23:56	CHAPTER 24
Activity	Coming		Seeking		Saving
Location	Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Judea		Galilee	Judea and Perea	Jerusalem
Time	About 30 years		1½ years	6 months	8 days 40 days
Theme	Jesus is the ideal Man, who comes to save all humankind — Jew and Gentile alike.				
Key Verse	19:10				
Christ in Luke	Jesus is the perfect God-Man, who comes to offer salvation to all people (19:10).				

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The book of Luke is a Gospel that contains Narrative History, Genealogy, Sermons, Parables, and some Prophetic Oracles. The emphasis of Luke is Parables and contains more of them than any other Gospel (19 total). It is the third of the synoptic gospels. Luke, a doctor and a Greek Christian, wrote it circa 59-61 A.D. He accompanied Paul on mission journeys, as described in the book of Acts, which Luke also wrote. The key word in Luke is "Son of Man" which is used 80 times.

The key personalities of the book include Jesus Christ, His parents Mary and Joseph, the Twelve Disciples, John the Baptist, Herod the Great, Jewish religious leaders, and Pilate.

This book was written to record an accurate account “so that you may know the exact truth” (1:4), of the life of Jesus Christ as the perfect Savior of the world. He wrote to the Greeks to present Jesus in His perfect manhood as the “Son of Man,” the Savior of all men.

- In chapters 1-4, Luke writes a very detailed account of the birth of Jesus, a common Christmas story, yet always fascinating. He then explains John the Baptist’s preparation of the coming Messiah, then Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River, which transitions into Jesus’ beginning ministry in Galilee.
- Chapters 5-21 consist of the ministry of Jesus. As Jesus travels, He teaches, preaches, heals the sick, and brings hope to the desperate and discouraged. He was also seeking those who were obedient and faithful, such as the Roman Centurion who sincerely pleads with Jesus to heal his servant from a far distance, “just say the word, and my servant will be healed” (7:7). Jesus met many religious leaders who relentlessly opposed Him and constantly tried to trick and kill Him.

- In chapters 22-24, one of His own (Judas) betrays Jesus. He was unlawfully convicted by a dishonest and hateful court, and sentenced to an excruciating death. However, death could not hold Him and after three days He resurrected and arose from the grave, just as He had miraculously raised others during His ministry.

Traditional Author: Luke

Traditional Date Written: A.D. 70-80

Period Covered: 6/5 B.C.-A.D. 62

Outline

Prologue: (1:1-4)

I. Infancy Narrative (1:5-2:52)

- A. Gabriel speaks with Zachariah (1:5-25)
 - a. The offer (1:5-17)
 - b. Zachariah's question (1:18)
 - c. Gabriel's response (1:19-20)
 - d. The result (1:21-25)
- B. Gabriel speaks with Mary (1:26-38)
 - a. The offer (1:26-33)
 - b. Mary's question (1:34)
 - c. Gabriel's response (1:35-37)
 - d. The result (1:38)
- C. Mary visits Elizabeth (1:39-80)
 - a. Mary's stay (1:39-56)
 - 1. Mary's song (*Magnificat*) (1:46-55)
 - b. Birth of John the Baptist (1:57-80)
 - 1. Elizabeth's song (*Benedictus*) (1:67-79)
- D. Jesus' Birth and Youth (2:1-52)
 - a. Jesus born (2:1-7)
 - b. Shepherds visit (2:8-20)
 - c. Jesus presented in the temple (2: 21-40)
 - 1. Jesus' circumcision (2:21)
 - a). Simeon's song (*Nunc Dimittis*) (2:29-32)
 - 2. Mary's purification (2:22-38)
 - d. Return to Nazareth (2:39-40)
 - e. Jesus at the temple at twelve years old (2:41-51)

II. Jesus' Public Ministry (3:1-23:56)

A. Prelude: John the Baptist prepares the way (3:1-22)

- a. Jesus baptized (3:21-22)

B. Phase 1: The Beginnings (3:23-9:50)

- a. Jesus' genealogy (3:23-37)
- b. Jesus tempted (4:1-13)
- c. Jesus rejected at Nazareth (4:14-30)
- d. Jesus relocates to Capernaum (4:31-9:50)
 - 1. Jesus preaches at synagogue and drives out an unclean spirit (4:31-37)
 - 2. Jesus heals many people (4:38-44)
 - 3. Jesus calls Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John as disciples (5:1-11)
 - 4. Jesus heals a man with leprosy (5:12-16)

5. Jesus heals a paralytic (5:17-26)
6. Jesus calls Levi (Matthew) as a disciple (5:27-32)
7. “Why do your disciples not fast?” (5:33-39)
8. “Why do your disciples work on the Sabbath?” (6:1-11)
9. Jesus calls Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas son of James and Judas Iscariot as disciples, completing the twelve (6:12-16)
10. Jesus preaches the “Sermon of the Plain” (6:17-49)
11. Jesus complements a Centurion’s faith (7:1-10)
12. Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain (7:11-17)
13. John the Baptist’s disciples question Jesus (7:18-35)
14. Jesus dines with Simon the Pharisee (7:36-50)
15. Jesus travels about Galilee, “proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God” (8:1-9:50)
 - a) Parable of the sower (8:1-15)
 - b) Parable of the lamp (8:16-18)
 - c) Jesus’ mother and brothers visit (8:19-21)
 - d) Jesus calms the storm (8:22-25)
 - e) Jesus heals a demon-possessed man at Gadara (8:26-40)
 - f) Jesus heals the woman bleeding for twelve years and raises Jairus’ twelve-year old daughter (8:40-56)
 - g) Jesus sends out his twelve disciples (9:1-9)
 - h) Jesus feeds the 5,000 (9:10-17)
16. Confessions of faith (9:18-50)
 - a) Peter’s confession: “The Messiah of God” (9:18-27)
 - b) Jesus transfigured; God’s “confession”: “This is my Son” (9:28-36)
 - 1) Response #1: Jesus heals a very difficult case (9:37-45)
 - 2) Response #2: Disciples argue over “which of them will be the greatest” (9:46-50)

C. Phase 2: On the Road to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)

- a. Samaritan opposition (9:51-56)
- b. Cost of discipleship (9:57-62)
- c. Jesus sends out seventy-two disciples (10:1-24)
- d. Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37)
- e. Jesus dines with Mary and Martha (10:38-42)
- f. Jesus teaches on prayer (11:1-13)
- g. Jesus and Beelzebub (11:14-28)
- h. The sign of Jonah (11:29-36)
 1. “Your eye is the lamp of your body” (11:33-36)
- i. Jesus dines with another Pharisee (11:37-12:12)
- j. Parable of the rich fool (12:13-21)
- k. Jesus teaches about worry (12:22-34)
- l. Jesus encourages watchfulness (12:35-48)
- m. Jesus brings division, not peace (12:49-53)
- n. Signs of the times (12:54-59)
- o. Repent or perish (13:1-9)
- p. Jesus heals the woman bent double (13:10-17)
- q. Parable of the mustard seed (13:18-19)
- r. Parable of the yeast (13:20-21)
- s. “Who will be saved?” (13:22-30)
- t. Herod hunts for Jesus (13:31-33)
- u. Jesus laments over Jerusalem (13:34-35)
- v. Jesus dines with yet another Pharisee (14:1-24)
 1. Parable of the great banquet (14:15-24)
- w. Cost of discipleship (14:25-35)
- x. Parable of the lost sheep (15:1-7)

- y. Parable of the lost coin (15:8-10)
- z. Parable of the lost son (15:11-32)
- aa. Parable of the shrewd manager (16:1-15)
- bb. The law stands (16:16-17)
- cc. Divorce (16:18)
- dd. The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)
- ee. Sin, faith and duty (17:1-10)
- ff. Jesus heals ten lepers (17:11-19)
- gg. Jesus teaches on the kingdom of God (17:20-18:30)
 - 1. "When will it come?" "You don't know." (17:20-37)
 - 2. "What should we do in the meantime?" "Pray." (18:1-8)
 - 3. "What about our righteousness?" "Don't count on it." (18:9-14)
 - 4. "Who will be in the kingdom?" "Those like little children." (18:15-17)
 - 5. "What must we do to enter the kingdom?" "Eliminate what stands in the way." (18:18-30)
- hh. Approaching Jerusalem, Jesus predicts his death (18:31-34)
- ii. Up from Jericho (18:35-19:27)
 - 1. Jesus heals the blind beggar in Jericho (18:35-43)
 - 2. Jesus meets with Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector (19:1-10)
 - 3. Parable of the ten minas (19:11-27)

D. Phase 3: Jerusalem (19:28-23:56)

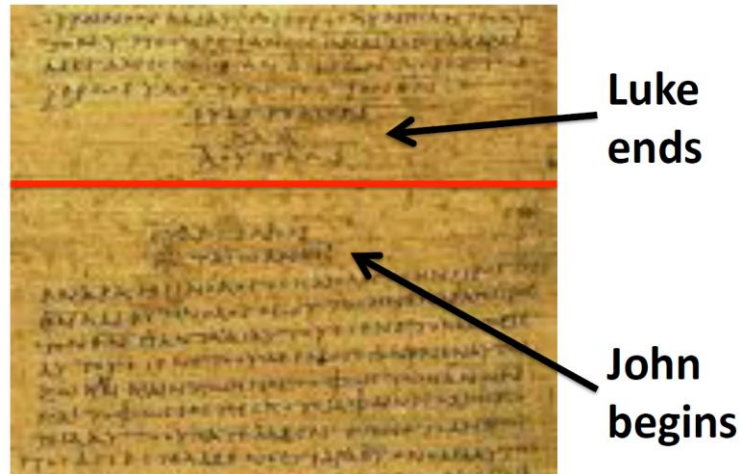
- a. Jesus arrives in Jerusalem (19:28-44)
- b. Jesus enters the temple area and drives out the merchants (19:45-46)
- c. Jesus teaches at the temple (19:47-21:38)
 - 1. Jesus' authority questioned (20:1-8)
 - 2. Parable of the Tenants (20:9-19)
 - 3. "Should we pay taxes to Caesar?" (20:20-26)
 - 4. "Is there a resurrection?" (20:27-40)
 - 5. "Whose son is the Christ?" (20:41-47)
 - 6. The widow's offering (21:1-4)
 - 7. Signs of the end of the age (21:5-38)
- d. Judas agrees to betray Jesus (22:1-6)
- e. The Last Supper (22:7-38)
- f. The Garden of Gethsemane (22:39-53)
 - 1. Jesus arrested (22:47-53)
- g. Trail at the home of the high priest (22:54-71)
 - 1. Peter disowns Jesus (22:54-62)
 - 2. Guards abuse Jesus (22:63-65)
 - 3. Jesus found guilty (22:66-71)
- h. Trial before Pilate (23:1-23:25)
- i. Jesus crucified (23:23:26-49)
- j. Jesus buried (23:50-56)

III. Jesus Resurrected (24:1-Acts 1:11)

- A. The empty tomb (24:1-12)
- B. Jesus speaks with Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35)
- C. Jesus appears to his disciples in the upper room (24:36-49)
- D. Transitional conclusion (24:50-53)**

Author – Luke

- Luke is not mentioned as the author of The Gospel According to Luke or The Acts of the Apostles in the text of either work. Nevertheless, the early Church unanimously ascribed both works to him.
 - The oldest extant copy of the gospel, p⁷⁵, which is dated A.D. 175-225, is titled “Gospel according to Luke”
 - The Muratorian Canon, dated A.D. 170-180, attributes the gospel to Luke and also identifies him as a physician and Paul’s companion
 - Tertullian, writing in the first decade of the third century, notes Luke as the author of the gospels
 - A steady stream of later tradition supports these earlier ascriptions.



Papyrus Bodmer (P⁷⁵) is the oldest surviving manuscript of the *Gospel according to Luke*, dating c. 175-225. It consists of 102 leaves, in whole or in part, and about half the text of Luke (3: 18 – 24: 53, with missing fragments) and John. In the above illustration we see where Luke ends and John begins. The manuscript resides at the Vatican Library.

- Luke is only mentioned on three occasions in scripture itself.
 - In Philemon 24 he is included among Paul’s “fellow workers.”
 - In Colossians 4:14, Paul refers to him as “our dear friend Luke, the doctor,” where he also includes him among his gentile helpers.
 - In 2 Timothy 4:11 he appears as Paul’s sole companion while Paul awaits death in Rome.
- The author of Luke-Acts includes his narrator among the travelers on Paul’s second missionary journey, joining them in Troas. As he tells his story, his pronouns shift from “they” to “we”:

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

Act 16:6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

- From this point on, the pronouns include our narrator who places himself with Paul for eighteen years, from the second missionary journey (A.D. 50-52) through Paul’s death in Rome (A.D. 68).
- In Luke and Acts, our author does not identify himself, although I am content to view him as Luke, the “beloved physician” and traveling companion of Paul, as tradition holds. The narrator, however, is a distinct creation of our author.

Authenticity

- Textual criticism – Reconstructs the ancient texts based upon the manuscripts that do exist

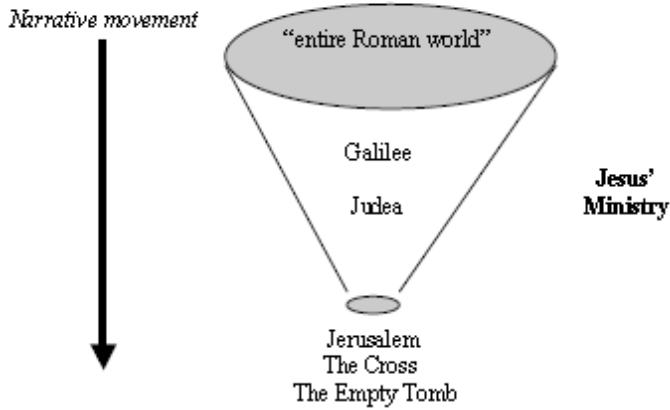
- Presently there are:
 - Over 5,800 complete or fragmented Greek New Testament manuscripts
 - Over 10,000 Latin manuscripts
 - Over 9,300 manuscripts in other languages
- These manuscripts date from AD 125 to the beginning of printing (1450)
 - The vast majority date after the 10th century AD

Narrative Structure

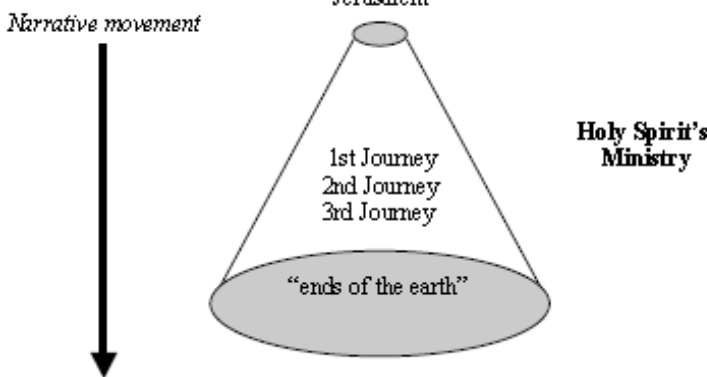
Narrative strategy

- A narrator takes the place of the author
 - Once we leave the prologue, the narrative voice abruptly shifts from first person to third person.
 - Shifting the narrative voice in such a fashion draws attention to what follows and it emphasizes the deliberate creation of a third person narrator, distinct from the voice in the opening lines.
 - This is the mark of a *very* sophisticated author.
 - Some critics have seen in this shift a gospel editor trained in classical rhetoric who was more interested in compiling sources than in crafting a narrative. See for example, W.L. Knox, *Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), Lecture 1. However, as Eduard Norden points out in *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1958), 2:483, the reader is very aware that the author could have told his story in a superb classical style *but did not*. From a literary perspective, the shift in style and person suggests the intentional introduction of a third person narrator.
- Characters drive the story, not the narrator
 - 19,165 words in Luke
 - Narrator speaks only 7,690 words—40%,
 - Jesus speaks 47%
 - Rest of the characters 13%. In Mark, the narrator drives the story; in Luke, the characters do, reflecting a fundamentally different narrative strategy.
- Luke anchors his story in time by including time markers of events:
 - Lk 1:5 In the time of Herod king of Judea
 - Lk 2:1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world
 - Lk 3:1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—
- Luke incorporates parables into his narrative
 - All synoptic gospels include parables, but Luke includes several the others do not
 - In Luke, parables are a main feature of the narrative landscape
- Structurally, Luke-Acts make up one unified work, each the mirror image of the other.
 - Narrative structure looks like an hourglass
 - Census of the entire Roman world → Galilee/Judea → Jerusalem → The Cross → the empty tomb
 - Ascension → Jerusalem → Paul's journeys to spread the Gospel → our mission to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth

Luke



Acts



Distinct, identifiable (Lukan) voices

- Distinct, identifiable voices for his narrator and his characters
 - Every story has at least 4 basic perspectives
 1. Author – Fashions the story
 2. Narrator – Tell the story
 3. Characters – Populate the story
 4. Reader – Experiences the story
- The author carefully develops distinct, identifiable voices for his narrator and his characters.
 - Like Mark Twain in *Huckleberry Finn* or William Faulkner in his Yoknapatawpha County stories, our *Luke-Acts* author creates voices for his narrator and characters that position them in time, distinguish them from one another and define who they are.
 - James M. Dawsey provides an excellent and comprehensive analysis of the voices in *The Lukan Voice, Confusion and Irony in the Gospel of Luke* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986).
 - Very few (if any, at all) ancient literature writers use this technique

Author

- Though not positively identified in the story, it is traditionally held that Luke wrote this gospel
- Tells us the purpose and method of his work
- Tells us to who the work is addressed

Introduction

In as much as many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed good to me also, having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Bill's translation)

- This introduction tells us several things:
 -

Narrator

- Casual, oral voice
 - Unlike the formal voice in the prologue, the narrator's voice speaks words of few syllables in relatively short sentences consisting of clauses strung together by "and" and "but."
 - After he is introduced in 1:5, we find that his voice throughout is best characterized as an *oral* voice, that is, the voice of one who is telling his story aloud, rather than writing it.
 - Of the roughly 1,260 particles in the narrator's speech, 1,064 are one or the other.
 - This is not acceptable practice in written Greek, but it is very characteristic of oral Greek.
 - Recall that the use of "and" (often followed by "immediately") characterizes Mark's gospel as well. In Mark, however, it is much more than an indication of oral speech: it is a distinct feature of the narrator's written prose style, as I have argued in my introduction to Mark.
 - Of the 11,022 words in Mark, 1,084 of them are "and"—10%
 - Mark uses "immediately" 41 times
 - Mark's use is clearly exaggerated—even for oral language—and thus suggests a deliberate construct.
 - Of the 19,165 words in Luke, 1,435 are "and"—7%. Mark uses "immediately" 41 times;
 - Luke uses "immediately" only once.
 - The narrator's voice is distinctly "Christian"
 - In writing his story our author seems to have constructed a recognizably "Christian" narrator, one who speaks in a colloquial, oral voice, one who observes the characters in the story, who moves them from place to place, and who comments upon their actions and attitudes from a believer's perspective.
 - He uses formulaic constructions that hardly ever appear in the direct speech of the story's characters and are unusual outside of a Christian context
 - Examples: 1) "and it happened" 2) "answering, he said" 3) "and behold," 4) "when," with an infinitive 5) "praising God" and 6) "in that hour."
 - Such formulaic constructions identify the narrator as part of a believing community, much as the use of current "Christian jargon" identifies one as a believer today.

Jesus

- When we turn to Jesus we find a very different voice from that of the narrator.
- Jesus speaks the language of ordinary people in Luke
 - Creating a distinctive voice for Jesus is a difficult task, for any author runs the risk of turning him into a caricature, as John nearly does in his gospel when he places such unnatural phrases in Jesus' mouth as "Verily, verily I say unto you."
 - Rather than speaking in the unnatural or formulaic phrases of a believing community, Jesus speaks the language of ordinary people in Luke.
 - James Dawsey numbers 212 instances of popular phrasing in Jesus' speech.
 - Of those instances, 47 parallel Mark or Matthew, but the words themselves do not occur in either of those gospels, while 87 instances are unique to Luke.
 - Our author clearly has not taken the phrasing from his sources, but has deliberately used the phrasing to characterize Jesus' speech.
- Jesus' speech takes the form of a pronouncement or a question

- Although Jesus speaks the language of common people, the style of his speech is far from common.
- Notice how often in Luke Jesus' speech takes the form of a pronouncement or a question.
- Examples
 - Repent or Perish (Lk 13:1-9)
 - Crippled woman Jesus heals on the Sabbath (Lk 13:10-17)
- Of the eighty-some questions in Jesus' speech in Luke, nearly all are posed rhetorically.
 - Their answers do not depend upon Jesus' ability to construct logical, rational or clever arguments; they rely solely upon his authority as the speaker.
 - In this sense, we might say that in Luke Jesus speaks prophetically, wielding the authority of God himself through his words.

Prologue / Introduction (Lk 1-4)

In as much as many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed good to me also, having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1-4)

- Creasy's translation – In the Greek, this is all 1 sentence.
- Author tells us the purpose and method of his work, and he also tells us to whom it is addressed
- Notice several things about this 'prologue.'
 - Our author knows that others have written works on the same subject
 - Based upon "eyewitness" accounts and those provided by "servants of the word."
 - A careful, word-by-word comparison of *Luke* with *Matthew* and *Mark* suggests that our author used *The Gospel According to Mark* as one of his primary sources
 - He also used *The Gospel According to Matthew*—or a source common to both—for additional material.
 - Moreover, *Luke* includes considerable material not mentioned in either *Mark* or *Matthew*, suggesting that our author drew on other sources, perhaps both written and oral.
 - Our author tells us that, using these sources, he "carefully investigated everything from the beginning" and that he wishes to arrange them in an "orderly account."
 - He writes for a very specific audience, a man named "Theophilus," who apparently is a recent believer.
 - He writes in order that Theophilus may know "the certainty of the things he has been taught," suggesting that his work is a factually accurate one, designed to provide a solid foundation for Theophilus's new faith.
 - Like a good historian, he carefully provides context for his narrative, creating a strong sense of verisimilitude and authorial credibility.
- Note, too, the prose style of this preface:
 - It is a single carefully structured sentence consisting of forty two words in Greek
 - Arranged in a very symmetrical, balanced fashion, with a *protasis* (verses 1 & 2) and an *apodosis* (verses 3 & 4), each containing three parallel phrases, all written in the first person.
 - Look at a schematic diagram of the sentence:


In as much as many
have undertaken
 to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,
just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were
 eyewitnesses and servants of the word,
 it seemed good to me also
having investigated everything from the beginning,
 to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

- Notice the formal contrast between “many” and “me also,” between “draw up an account” and “write an orderly account” and the secondary subordinate clauses in both the *protasis* and *apodosis*, “just as”/ “so that.”
 - This is superb Greek—some of the best in the New Testament.
 - It is certainly the work of a writer trained in classical Greek rhetoric, who chooses to introduce his story in a clearly defined, classical style.
- Significantly, this is the last time we will encounter the first person, classical voice in *Luke-Acts*
 - Beginning with verse 5, the narrative becomes colloquial, with Semitic idioms and strings of coordinate clauses taking the place of the balanced and highly structured opening sentence.
 - The author starts with a distinct first person classical style to introduce his story and then how abruptly shifts that style to a third person colloquial one to distinguish himself from the narrator he creates

John (Jn) Overview

JOHN

	Deity “The Word was God” (1:1).	God-Man “The Word became flesh” (1:14). <i>Miraculous signs:</i> Turns water into wine (2) Heals official’s son (4)	Ministry <i>Miraculous signs:</i> Heals invalid at Bethesda (5) Feeds 5,000 (6) Walks on water (6) Heals blind man (9) Raises Lazarus (11)	Discourse <i>Private talks:</i> Servanthood (13) Heaven (14) Abiding (15) Promises (16) Prayer (17)	Trials and Death 	Empty Tomb <i>Private talks:</i> Appearances (20)	Assurance <i>Private talks:</i> Future (21)
	CHAPTER 1:1–13	CHAPTERS 1:14–4:54	CHAPTERS 5–12	CHAPTERS 13–17	CHAPTERS 18–19	CHAPTER 20	CHAPTER 21
Stage	Prologue	Acceptance	Conflict	Preparation	Crucifixion	Triumph	Epilogue
Audience	Public message			CHANGE	Private message		
Time	Three years			Several days			
Jesus’s Seven “I Am” Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I am the bread of life.” (6:35)• “I am the Light of the world.” (8:12)• “I am the door.” (10:9)• “I am the good shepherd.” (10:11)				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I am the resurrection and the life.” (11:25)• “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” (14:6)• “I am the true vine.” (15:1)		
Theme	Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.						
Key Verse	20:31						
Christ in John	Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the way, the truth, and the life who alone is the revelation of God and salvation of people (1:1–18; 20:31).						

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The book of John is a Gospel that contains Narrative History, Sermons, Parables, and a few Prophetic Oracles. It was written by the Disciple/Apostle John around 85-95 A.D. The key personalities of this book are Jesus Christ, His Twelve Disciples, Mary Magdalene, John the Baptist, Lazarus, his sisters Mary and Martha, Jewish religious leaders, and Pilate.

It was written so that all may believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God who gives eternal life. John's gospel uses the word “Believe” 98 times and the word “Life” 36 times, in an effort to embed the importance that one must believe in order to live

eternally. John is not one of the three synoptic (common view) gospels, but instead was written with a more theological substance, yet equally as inspired and important as the first three gospels.

- Chapter 1 is the preamble of the Messiah's coming ministry. John gives clear evidence that Jesus is more than just a man, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1). John then describes that the "Word" is Jesus who became a man to "live among us" (1:14). The beginning verses in the first chapter teaches us that Jesus is more than just a man who came into existence but rather, He is infinite God.
- Chapters 2-12 consist of Jesus' ministry. He meets with a religious leader named Nicodemus and teaches him that no one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless they have are personally "Born-Again" (3:3). Several times throughout the book, Jesus claims that He Himself is God, "I am the Father are one" (10:30). Jesus also repeats and applies to Himself, the Jehovaic statement, "I AM" as found in Exodus 3:14, for example, when Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25), "I am the way the truth and the life" (14:6), "I am the door" (10:9), and "I am the bread of life" (6:35).
 - I am the bread of life (6:48)
 - I am the light of the world (8:12)
 - I am the door (10:9)
 - I am the good shepherd (10:11)
 - I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
 - I am the way, the truth and the life (14:6)
 - I am the true vine (15:1)
- The events in Chapters 13-17 occur less than 24 hours before Jesus' death. They describe the details of the Last Supper with Jesus and His disciples. Jesus taught many important topics to the Disciples during this time. Some of these were topics about the Kingdom, and about the work of the Holy Spirit that would be sent to them. He also prays for Himself, His disciples, and for all the future believers.
- Chapters 18-21 portray the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In these final chapters, He is on trial and then convicted illegally. After which He is appallingly beaten, humiliated, and then crucified. Jesus resurrected and arose from the tomb and appeared to Mary Magdalene and to His disciples. When John finishes his gospel he writes one of the most amazing truths about Jesus Christ, "And there are many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written" (21:25).
- John provides a summary of what it was that he felt – what it was that he understood about Jesus of Nazareth
 - Jn 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - 60 years of reflecting upon who Jesus was/is

John the Baptist

- End of the Old Testament is a prediction that John the Baptist will come

Mal 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

- John's mission is distinct and well-defined:
 - He prepares "the way of the Lord" making "straight paths for him,"
 - He does so by "proclaiming a baptism of repentance toward the forgiveness of sins."
 - The grammatical construction of "baptism of repentance"
 - "Repentance" in the genitive ("of repentance")
 - Defines and qualifies the baptism that John proclaims.
 - Hence, the baptism itself expresses repentance.
 - Enters the story very abruptly in Mark
 - The verse starts with a strong verb, appeared.
 - A literal translation would render the verse: "Appeared John, the one baptizing in the desert . . ."
 - In Mark we know nothing of John's history: he simply walks out of the Old Testament and appears on the pages of the New, proclaiming "a baptism of repentance toward the forgiveness of sins."
 - Placing the verb at the head of the sentence in the Greek intensifies the action and the suddenness of John's appearance.
 - John's message drew the entire Judean countryside
 - John's message at the Jordan is so compelling that "the entire Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him."
 - A literal translation reads, "and were going out to him the entire Judean countryside . . ."
 - Again, the verb sits at the head of the verse in the Greek, stressing action
 - The imperfect tense ("were going out") stresses the continuous stream of people flowing out to hear John
 - "The entire Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem" is striking in its sheer boldness
 - John's preaching does not draw a curious few, but thousands flock to him.
 - The structure and word order of the Greek phrase emphasize the large number of people who went out to hear John. It reads:

entire
A

Judean countryside
B

and

the Jerusalemites
B'

all
A'
 - "Entire" and "all" frame a chiastic phrase
 - Emphasizes the larger Judean countryside with the capital city of Jerusalem inside it
 - Josephus also suggests something of the effect that John had when he reports that the crowds he drew were so large that Herod became alarmed.

[John] "had so great an effect on mankind [that Herod was afraid] it might lead to some form of sedition, for it looked as if [the crowds] would be guided in everything that they did. Herod decided therefore that it would be much better to strike first and be rid of him before his work led to an uprising" (*Antiquities* 18. 117).
- Prophet
 - Dressed in camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist and eating locusts and wild honey, John presents a striking prophetic figure

- Elijah - 2 Kings 1:8 They replied, "He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist." The king said, "That was Elijah the Tishbite."
- John the Baptist was prophesized in Malachi, Matthew

Birth of John the Baptist

- John precedes the Messiah - Preparing “the way of the Lord” and making “straight paths for him”
- Both Mark and Luke link the story of John the Baptist to Isaiah 40:3-5, identifying John’s arrival as the fulfillment of a seven-hundred year old prophecy.
- Every one of the Gospel writers start with John the Baptist (after the introductions)
 - You can’t understand Jesus without John – If we’re going to receive Jesus as your savior, you need John the Baptist to prepare the way through repentance
- The offer (1:5-17)
 - Gabriel speaks with Zachariah (1:5-25)
 - Zachariah’s question (1:18)
 - Gabriel’s response (1:19-20)
 - The result (1:21-25)

Parallels to Exodus

- It has been about 400 years since Malachi
- The Israelites go to the wilderness to be saved

Zechariah and Elizabeth

- Zechariah means ‘the Lord has remembered’
- Elizabeth was barren
 - There is a theme in the Bible of women who are unable to have children, who, by miraculous intervention by God, are able to have children – All lead up to the birth of Jesus by miraculous intervention
 - Sarah/Abraham – Isaac
 - Rebekah/Isaac – Jacob
 - Rachel/Jacob – Joseph
 - Sampson
 - Hanne – Samuel
 - Elizabeth – John

Gabriel speaks with Zachariah (Lk 1:5-25)

- Zechariah goes to the Temple for his 2 week reserve duty
 - He is chosen by lot to offer the prayers of the people before God
 - Very rare privilege – probably the only time that he ever had done it
 - Best job at the Temple – to enter the Temple & offer the prayers of the people on the Alter of Incense before God
 - Happens twice / day – once in the morning and once in the evening
 - Incense – Symbolic of the prayers of the people
 - This is what a priest is born to do – remember that a priest must be born into the tribe of Levi – but chances are still VERY slim that you will be chosen for this job – happens by lot
- Gabriel
 - Angel means ‘messenger’
 - Gabriel seems to have the job description of delivering messages about the birth of the Messiah
 - We meet him for the 1st time in Daniel 8 and 9
 - The structure exactly parallels his message to Elizabeth

The offer (Lk 1:5-17)

Zachariah's question (Lk 1:18)

Gabriel's response (Lk 1:19-20)

The result (Lk 1:21-25)

- Zechariah is rendered speechless (and possibly deaf)
 - Why is Zechariah rebuked but Mary is not? Because he did not believe his words
 - No difference in the outward words, but Gabriel knew their hearts
 - Great blessing – he is given a period of silence to ponder the events – to ponder the magnitude of what is about to happen
 - Elizabeth is also rendered speechless?
 - Not the only one that will be plunged into silence

Zechariah's song (Benedictus) (Lk 1:67-79)

- Great song of praise for God's salvation
- Themes
 - God is fulfilling every OT prophecy right now
 - John's Ministry – Prepare the Lord's way – Repentance unto forgiveness

John is born

- Birth of John the Baptist (Lk 1:57-80)
- Named him John at his circumcision
 - Not named after anyone in the family – very abnormal
 - Zechariah's can speak after he writes on a tablet that his name is to be John

Lifelong Nazirite

- Set apart for a Holy purpose – Turn people to God – repentance
- John is a lifelong Nazirite (Nazirite from birth)
 - Only Sampson, Samuel and John the Baptist
 - Nazirite vow – Numbers 6:1-21
 - Nu 6:1 ... 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the LORD as a Nazirite, 3 he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. 4 As long as he is a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins. 5 " 'During the entire period of his vow of separation no razor may be used on his head. He must be holy until the period of his separation to the LORD is over; he must let the hair of his head grow long. 6 Throughout the period of his separation to the LORD he must not go near a dead body
 - John is to be a lifelong Nazirite
 - Lk 1:13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. 16 Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Qumran

- Lk 1:80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.
 - Zechariah and Elizabeth lived in the hill country of Judea, not the desert
 - Zechariah and Elizabeth were very old and probably died when he was young
- Qumran
 - Dessert just across the valley from Judea
 - Probably an Essene community – Quasi monastic community
 - The Essenes in Qumran lived very ascetic lives, much like John
 - What they taught at Qumran is very similar to what John taught and preached
- All male community
 - How do your numbers increase? Take in orphans
 - Zechariah and Elizabeth were very old when John was born – probably died when he was young
 - Qumran was just across the valley from Jericho where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived



Qumran, most probably an Essene community, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1946/47. This is Cave #4.

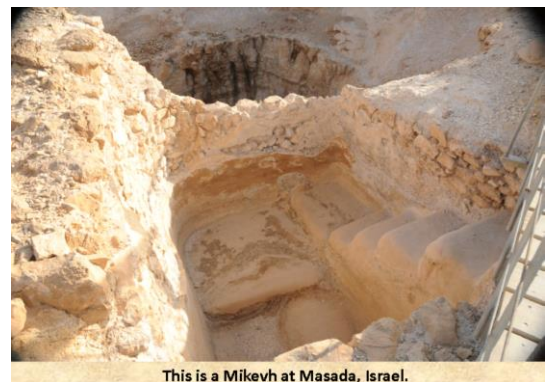


The "Scriptorium" of Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were copied.

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas

Ritual immersion

- Cleansing one's self by ritual immersion dates back to the purification laws in Leviticus.
- The Essenes practiced ritual immersion in a Mikevh, or ritual bath.
- There were ten mikva'ot at Qumran.
- Probably the precursor to baptism
- Scripture presents many examples:
 - A man or woman with a bodily discharge must wait seven days and then cleanse him/her self by immersion in "living water" (Leviticus 15);
 - In the David & Bathsheba story, when David see Bathsheba "she had been purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness" (2 Samuel 11);
 - The prophet Elisha tells Naaman, the commander of Aram's military, to dip himself seven times in the Jordan to cleanse himself of leprosy (2 Kings 5);
 - Jesus tells the leper he cures to present himself to the priest and offer the gift prescribed, which includes ritual immersion. (Matthew 8).



This is a Mikevh at Masada, Israel.

- Ritual immersion at Qumran, however, went considerably beyond the scriptural prescriptions.
 - Ceremonial purification was an integral part of community life among the Essenes, as indicated by the “Community Rule” found in Cave 1 (Q1S).
 - Ritual immersion was used for:
 - Initiation
 - Annual renewal
 - Daily purification

Dead Sea Scrolls

- Work that the community did was copying the Biblical scrolls to sell for food



Dead Sea Scrolls, “Community Rule,” Qumran. Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

John’s Message

Repent

Repenting is being sorry for sin AND turning away from your sin
 Changing the direction that your life is going
 Produce fruit – Show that you have changed your life

Impending judgement

If you don’t repent, you will be judged
 Creates a healthy dose of fear

Personal application

Being Jewish does not make you a child of Abraham

A true child of Abraham is someone that has the faith of Abraham
Brood of vipers = Satan's spawn
John 8
God has no grandchildren


Jesus

Jesus, separate from Jesus, will mean nothing
When you believe, you are baptized in your soul
Water represents what the Holy Spirit does in your hearts

Baptism

- Signs of the Old and New Covenants – Circumcision compared to baptism

Comparison Between Circumcision and Baptism

Circumcision (Old Covenant)		Baptism (New Covenant)
Has God's Command: Genesis 17:11 - Linked to faith: Deuteronomy 4:2		Has God's Command: Matthew 28:19-20 - Linked to faith: Mark 16:16; John 3:3-18
Physical Aspect: Genesis 17:11 - Removal of foreskin - Shedding of blood – reached forward to sacrifice for sin		Physical Aspect: 1 Peter 3:20-21, Titus 3:5 - Washing of water - Cleansing – Reaches back to sacrifice for sin: 1 Peter 3:20-21, Titus 3:5
God's Promise: Brought one into God's Old Covenant of salvation - Genesis 17:9-14		God's Promise: Brings one into God's New Covenant of salvation - John 3:3-7, 1 Peter 3:20-21, Titus 3:5
How Often: Once - Can't have 2 nd circumcision		How Often: Once - Ephesians 4:5: "one baptism"
Normative Age: Infant (on 8 th day) - Leviticus 12:3		Normative Age: Infant - Matthew 28:19-20 ("all" includes infants)
Exception to Norm: Adult Converts		Exception to Norm: Adult Converts

- John the Baptist took ritual immersion even further than ritual purification.
- Water associations with baptism – All linked by being God's visible covenant community
 - Sign of chaos – God hovered over the water (chaos) when He created the earth
 - Flood – Covenant of works was broken by Adam and Eve, Covenant of grace took over
 - Exodus – Red sea parted – Brought Israelites through death (sea) and into life
 - Crossing of the Jordan – Israelites coming into God's promises
 - Jesus' death and resurrection
- John's baptism was an initiation rite, requiring a candidate:
 - To reflect upon the condition of his soul;
 - To feel remorse for his sins;
 - To confess his sins;
 - To repent of his sins;
 - To show the fruits of his repentance;

- To prepare for the coming of the “Righteous One,” Christ; and
- To be incorporated into the covenant community by being baptized, fully immersed in water (Greek, baptidzo = “to dip”).
- “Baptism” is an act signifying “repentance,” or metanoia – A deliberate turning away from sin and toward God.
 - It is not a casual move but a deliberate one, accompanied by a cleansing with water.
 - First one repents; then one is baptized.

Baptism and repentance point TOWARD the forgiveness of sins

- Repentance and baptism precede “the forgiveness of sins” and point toward it; they do not accompany it or cause it.
 - The usual translation, “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,” misses the meaning entirely.
 - Together, baptism and repentance point *toward* the forgiveness of sins, not *for* the forgiveness of sins
 - The preposition toward “denotes the direction of an action to a specific end.”
 - A correct translation should emphasize the proper relationship: “a baptism of repentance toward the forgiveness of sins.”
- Only the Lord who will follow John can forgive sin, and it is in this sense that John prepares his way.
 - When John says, “After me comes one who is mightier than I . . . I have baptized you in water, but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit,” he supports the sequence of his “baptism of repentance” preceding Jesus’ “forgiveness of sins.”
- John’s message and actions lay the foundation for the work that Jesus will do.
 - John’s baptism in water precedes Jesus’ baptism in the Holy Spirit; it prepares the way and ushers in Jesus Christ, Son of God.

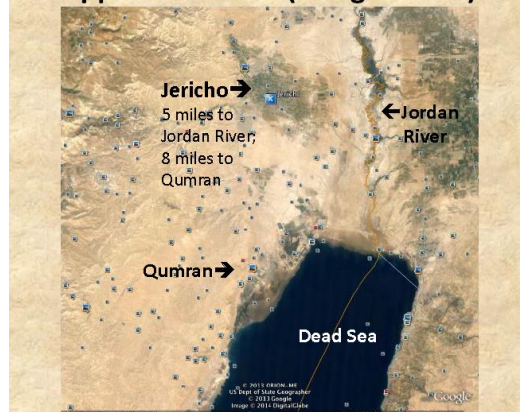
Baptism in the Old Testament

- Baptism itself does not appear in the Old Testament
- It has its antecedent in ritual cleansing of leprosy
 - Leprosy is an emblem of sin in the Old Testament
 - When a person who has been cured of leprosy “must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe with water; then he will be ceremonially clean” (Leviticus 14: 8),
 - Elisha commands Naaman to wash himself seven times in the Jordan: “So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy” (2 Kings 5: 10, 14).
 - In the Naaman story the LXX translates the Hebrew “dipped” as baptisma; in both instances the cleansing involves leprosy, an emblem of sin in the Old Testament.
- Ez 36:25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

John was baptizing in the wilderness

- Baptizing at the Jordan River opposite of Jericho
 - Major crossing point of the Jordan River during trip to Jerusalem
 - Not baptizing in the middle of nowhere
- A delegation from Jerusalem was sent to see what John was doing
- When John’s work was done, he stepped back and let Jesus take over
 - Jn 3:22-30

John was baptizing in the Jordan River, opposite Jericho (Google Earth)



John is arrested

John 3:22

I must become less so that Jesus can become more
His whole purpose was to prepare people for Jesus

Lk 3:19 But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, 20 Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

- When Jesus steps on stage, John steps off
 - “John had been arrested ...” The eschatological conflict is not without casualties.
 - This exit plants a seed of concern about the cost of the coming conflict
- “deliver up”
 - John’s arrest also foreshadows things to come
 - It is a legal term used about the police and the courts.
 - The verb “deliver up” occurs 20 times in Mark
 - It is the same term Jesus uses when he says: “The Son of Man is betrayed [literally, “delivered up”] into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and having been killed, after three days, he will arise” (Mark 9:31)
 - It is the same term he uses when he is arrested in Gethsemane: “Look, the Son of Man is betrayed [“delivered up”] into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go. See, the one betraying [“delivering up”] me is at hand” (Mark 14:41-42).

John sends servants to question Jesus

- John is related to Jesus – He was a cousin of Jesus
 - Lk 1:36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.
 - Elizabeth was maybe Mary’s aunt
- John knows Jesus
 - Lk 1:39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea

- Elizabeth lives in the hill country of Judea – 100 miles, 3 days journey – on the way to Jerusalem
 - They grew up together – they saw each other 3 times a year on their travels to Jerusalem
- John is questioning Jesus – He did not understand why Jesus was not doing what John expected
 - Mt 11:2 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"
 - Doubt is OK – we are encouraged to question God
 - Jesus encourages John
 - Mt 11:4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. 6 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."
- Jesus praises John
 - Mt 11:11 I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.
 - John is the greatest man born of woman
 - Anyone that has been born again – and is a citizen in the kingdom of God – is greater than anyone born into this world
- Jesus condemn the world – there's no making them happy
 - John came and didn't eat or drink – they didn't like him
 - Jesus came and did eat and drink – they didn't like him
 - They are a generation of people that want to be unhappy

Jesus is the Messiah

Fulfilled Prophecy Charts

A Short List of Prophecies About Jesus Christ and their Fulfillment from 4004 BC to AD 33

Prediction about Jesus	OT Prophecy	NT Fulfillment
Seed of Abraham	Genesis 12:3	Matthew 1:1
Seed of a Woman	Genesis 3:15	Galatians 4:4
Seed of Isaac	Genesis 17:19	Luke 3:34
Seed of Jacob	Numbers 24:17	Matthew 1:2
Tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Matthew 1:2
Heir to the Throne of David	Isaiah 9:7	Luke 1:32-33
Born in Bethlehem ("House of Bread")	Micah 5:2	Luke 2:4-6
Time of His Birth	Daniel 9:25	Luke 2:1-2
Born of a Virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Luke 1:26-31
Slaughter of the Innocents	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
Flight to Egypt	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:14-15
Preceded by a Forerunner	Malachi 3:1	Luke 7:24, 27
Declared the Son of God	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:17
Galilean Ministry	Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:13-16
A Prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15	Acts 3:20-22
To Heal the Brokenhearted	Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
Rejected by His Own People, the Jews	Isaiah 53:3	John 1:11
Priest after the Order of Melchizedek	Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 5:5-6
Triumphal Entry into City of Jerusalem	Zechariah 9:9	Mark 11:7-9
Betrayed by a Friend	Psalms 41:9	Luke 22:47-48
Sold for Thirty Pieces of Silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15
Silent to Accusations	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5
Accused by False Witnesses	Psalms 35:11	Mark 14:55-64
Spat upon and Smitten	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
Hated without Reason	Psalms 35:19	John 15:24-25
Vicarious Sacrifice	Isaiah 53:5	Romans 5:6-8
Crucified with Malefactors	Isaiah 53:12	Mark 15:27-28
Pierced through Hands and Feet	Zechariah 12:10	John 20:27
Scorned and Mocked	Psalms 22:7-8	Luke 23:35
Given Vinegar and Gall	Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34
Prayed for His Enemies	Psalms 109:2-5	Luke 23:34
Soldiers Gambled for His Coat	Psalms 22:17-18	Matthew 27:35-36
No Bones Broken	Psalms 34:20	John 19:32-36
His Side Pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
Buried with the Rich	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
To Be Resurrected	Psalms 16:10, 49:15	Mark 16:6-7
His Death Announcement	Daniel 9:24	Matthew 27:46
His Ascension to God's Right Hand	Psalms 68:18	Mark 16:19; 1Cor.15:4; Eph. 4:8

Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus (CBN.com)

Prophecy	Old Testament References	New Testament Fulfillment
Jesus' Birth		
Be of the offspring of the woman; shall bruise the serpent's head	Genesis 3:14, 15 So the LORD God said to the serpent . . . "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head , and you will strike his heel."	Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman , born under law, Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death . . . that is, the devil . 1 John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work .
All nations shall be blessed through Abraham	Genesis 18:17, 18 Then the LORD said . . . "Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him ." Also Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14	Acts 3:25, 26 " . . . He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed .' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you . . ." Also Matthew 1:1, 17; Galatians 3:16
Be of the tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:8-10 "Judah, your brothers will praise you . . . The sceptre will not depart from Judah , nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his." Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are small among the clans of Judah , out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel , whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."	Matthew 1:1-3 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham . . . Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah . . . Hebrews 7:14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah . Revelation 5:5 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah , the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."
Be born in the town of Bethlehem of Judea (Judah)	Micah 5:2-5 "But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are small among the clans of Judah , out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." . . .	Matthew 2:1-6 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea , during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? . . ."
Be born a king of the line of David	Isaiah 9:7 . . . He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom . . . Also 2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Jeremiah 23:5; 30:9	Matthew 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David , the son of Abraham . . . Also Luke 1:32; Acts 13:22, 23
A child to be born	Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born . . . he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God . . .	Luke 2:11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.
Be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:13, 14 Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (<i>God with us</i>)."	Matthew 1:18-23 . . . His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:26-35 . . . God sent the angel . . . to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. . . .
Kings shall bring him gifts, fall down before him	Psalms 72:10, 11 The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts . All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him.	Matthew 2:1-11 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem . . . On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.
Be born of the seed of Abraham	Genesis 17:7, 8; 26:3, 4	Matthew 1:1, 17; Galatians 3:16, 29; Hebrews 2:16
Be born of the seed of Isaac	Genesis 17:19; 21:12; 26:2-4	Matthew 1:2, 17; Romans 9:7; Hebrews 11:17-19
Be of the seed of Jacob; a star out of Jacob	Genesis 28:13, 14; Numbers 24:17, 19	Matthew 1:2; Luke 1:33; 3:23-38
Be a firstborn son, sanctified	Exodus 13:2; Numbers 3:13; 8:17	Luke 2:7, 23
Be a rod out of the stem of Jesse	Isaiah 11:1, 2	Matthew 1:6; Acts 13:22, 23
Massacre of children	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
Have eternal existence	Micah 5:2	John 1:1, 4; 8:58; Colossians 1:15-19
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	Prophecies more than 500 years before Jesus' birth are highlighted in blue.	

Prophecy	Old Testament References	New Testament Fulfillment
Jesus' Life and Ministry		
Be called out of Egypt	<u>Hosea 11:1</u> "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. . . . "	<u>Matthew 2:13-15, 19-21</u> . . . So he . . . took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt . . .
Be rejected by his brethren	<u>Psalms 69:8</u> I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's sons . . .	<u>John 7:3-5</u> Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here . . . so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. . . ." For even his own brothers did not believe in him.
Rulers take council against him	<u>Psalms 2:1, 2</u> Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.	<u>Matthew 12:14</u> But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. <u>Matthew 26:3, 4</u> Then the chief priests and the elders . . . plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. <u>Matthew 26:47</u> . . . Judas . . . arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. See also Luke 23:11, 12
Be rejected as capstone	<u>Psalms 118:22, 23</u> The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes.	<u>Matthew 21:42</u> Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone . . ."
Was to enter the Temple	<u>Malachi 3:1</u> ". . . Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple ; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come . . ." <u>Haggai 2:7, 9</u>	<u>Matthew 21:12-16</u> Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. . . . See also Mark 11:11; Luke 2:25-47; Luke 19:45-47
Call those who were not his people	<u>Isaiah 55:4, 5</u> . . . Surely you will summon nations you know not , and nations that do not know you will hasten to you . . . Also <u>Hosea 2:23</u>	<u>Romans 9:23-26</u> . . . even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? . . .
The King comes to Jerusalem riding on a donkey	<u>Zechariah 9:9</u> . . . See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt , the foal of a donkey.	<u>Mark 11:1-10</u> . . . When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. . . . Also <u>Matthew 21:1-5</u> ; <u>Luke 19:28-38</u> ; <u>John 12:14, 15</u>
Be a "stone of stumbling" to the Jews	<u>Isaiah 8:14</u> . . . and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.	<u>Romans 9:31-33</u> . . . Israel . . . stumbled over the "stumbling-stone." As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." <u>1 Peter 2:7, 8</u> . . . They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.
Upon his coming, the deaf hear, the blind see	<u>Isaiah 29:18</u> In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. <u>Isaiah 35:5</u> Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.	<u>Matthew 11:5</u> The blind receive sight , the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear , the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Also <u>John 9:39</u> ; <u>Luke 7:19-22</u> ; <u>Mark 7:37</u>
Fulfill promises to Jews, be a light to the Gentiles	<u>Isaiah 42:6</u> ". . . I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles . . . " <u>Isaiah 49:6</u> ". . . I will also make you a light for the Gentiles , that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."	<u>Luke 2:25-32</u> ". . . a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel. " <u>Acts 26:23</u> ". . . that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles. "
A new everlasting covenant	<u>Jeremiah 31:31-34</u> ". . . I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers . . . I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. . . ." Also <u>Jeremiah 32:37-40</u> ; <u>50:5</u>	<u>Luke 22:15-20</u> . . . "This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . ." <u>Hebrews 10:15-20</u> . . . "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time . . ." a new and living way opened for us . . . Also <u>Matthew 26:27-29</u> ; <u>Mark 14:22-24</u> ; <u>Luke 22:15-20</u> ; <u>1 Corinthians 11:25</u> ; <u>Hebrews 8:8-12</u>
Be a prophet like Moses, speaking God's words	<u>Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19</u>	<u>Matthew 21:11</u> ; <u>Luke 7:16</u> ; <u>24:19</u> ; <u>John 6:14</u> ; <u>7:40</u> ; <u>Acts 3:18-22</u>
Be hated without reason	<u>Psalms 35:19</u> ; <u>69:4</u>	<u>John 15:24, 25</u>

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Prophecy	Old Testament References	New Testament Fulfillment
Jesus' Life and Ministry		
Come to do the will of God	Psalm 40:7, 8	Matthew 26:39; Hebrews 10:5-9
Anointed by God	Psalm 45:6, 7	Hebrews 1:8, 9
Have great zeal for God's house	Psalm 69:9	John 2:17
Care for the poor and needy	Psalm 72:12-14	Luke 7:22
Speak in parables with hidden meaning	Psalm 78:2	Matthew 13:10-16; 34, 35; Luke 8:10
Will pray for His enemies	Psalm 109:4	Matthew 5:44; Luke 23:34
Be a priest after the order of Melohizedek	Psalm 110:4	Hebrews 5:1-6; 6:20; 7:15-17
People's hearts are hardened	Isaiah 6:9, 10	Matt. 13:13-15; John 12:37-40; Acts 28:24-27
His ministry in Zebulun, Naphtali, and Galilee	Isaiah 9:1, 2	Matthew 4:12-16
The government is on his shoulders	Isaiah 9:6	Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:24, 25
Someone will prepare for the coming of the Lord	Isaiah 40:3-5	Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:3-5; John 1:23
The Spirit of the Lord rests upon him	Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1, 2	Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; 4:18; John 1:32; 3:34; Acts 10:38
Be a healer and savior, do miracles	Isaiah 35:4-6	Matthew 9:30; 11:4-6; 12:22; 20:34; 21:14; Mark 7:32-35; John 9:1-7; 11:47
Be a Shepherd who tends his sheep	Isaiah 40:10, 11	John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25
Be a Servant of God	Isaiah 42:1-4	Matthew 12:16-21
The Redeemer to come out of Zion	Isaiah 59:16-20	Romans 11:26, 27
Nations shall walk in the light of the Lord	Isaiah 60:1-3	Matthew 4:16; Luke 2:32; John 12:46
Anointed to preach liberty to the captives	Isaiah 61:1-2a	Luke 4:16-21; Acts 10:38
His Spirit poured out upon people	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:16-23
David's house shall be restored	Amos 9:11, 12	Acts 15:16-18
God shall dwell among His people	Zechariah 2:10-13	John 1:14; Revelation 21:3
A new priesthood established	Zechariah 3:8	1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6, 5:10
Messenger sent to prepare the way before Him	Malachi 3:1	Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2-4, 7; Luke 7:27, 28
Prophet sent before the day of the Lord	Malachi 4:5, 6	Matthew 11:13, 14; Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:17; 7:27, 28

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Prophecy	Old Testament References	New Testament Fulfillment
Jesus' Death and Resurrection		
Be Passover sacrifice with no bone broken	<u>Exodus 12:46</u> It must be eaten inside one house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones. <u>Numbers 9:12</u> They must not leave any of it till morning or break any of its bones. When they celebrate the Passover, they must follow all the regulations. Also Psalm 34:20	<u>John 19:31-36</u> . . . But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. . . . These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken."
Be hung upon a tree as a curse for us	<u>Deuteronomy 21:23</u> . . . Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.	<u>Galatians 3:13</u> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."
Be thirsty during his execution	<u>Psalms 22:15</u> My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death..	<u>John 19:28</u> Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."
Be accused by false witnesses	<u>Psalms 27:12</u> Do not hand me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence. <u>Psalms 35:11</u> Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about.	<u>Matthew 26:60</u> . . . many false witnesses came forward. . . . <u>Mark 14:55-61</u> . . . Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him. . . .
Be struck on the head	<u>Micah 5:1</u> . . . They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.	<u>Matthew 27:30</u> They spat on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.
Have hands and feet pierced	<u>Psalms 22:16</u> Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. <u>Zechariah 12:10</u> " . . . They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as . . . for a firstborn son.	<u>Matthew 27:35</u> . . . they had crucified him . . . Also <u>John 19:18, 34-37</u> <u>John 20:25-29</u> . . . "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands . . . and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." . . . Then he said " . . . Reach out your hand and put it into my side." . . .
Have soldiers cast lots for his coat	<u>Psalms 22:18</u> They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.	<u>John 19:23, 24</u> . . . This garment was seamless . . . "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." Also <u>Matthew 27:35</u> ; <u>Mark 15:24</u> ; <u>Luke 23:34</u>
Be given gall and vinegar (sour wine)	<u>Psalms 69:20-22</u> . . . They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst. . . .	<u>Matthew 27:34</u> There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall ; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. Also <u>Matthew 27:48</u> ; <u>Mark 15:23</u> ; <u>15:36</u> ; <u>Luke 23:36</u> ; <u>John 19:29</u>
Be beaten and spat upon	<u>Isaiah 50:6</u> I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.	<u>Matthew 26:67</u> Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him. <u>Matthew 27:26-30</u> . . . They spat on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. Also <u>Mark 14:65</u> ; <u>15:15-19</u> ; <u>Luke 22:63-65</u> ; <u>John 19:1</u>
Be betrayed by a friend	<u>Psalms 41:9</u> Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. <u>Psalms 55:12-14</u> If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.	<u>Matthew 26:14-16</u> Then one of the Twelve . . . the one called Judas Iscariot . . . went to the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you? " . . . <u>Matthew 26:23</u> Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me." Also <u>Matthew 26:47-50</u> ; <u>Luke 22:19-23, 48</u> ; <u>John 13:18-30</u> ; <u>18:2-5</u>
Be despised and rejected	<u>Isaiah 53:2, 3</u> . . . He was despised and rejected by men, . . . Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.	<u>Luke 17:25</u> But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <u>Luke 23:18</u> . . . "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" Also <u>Matthew 26:67</u> ; <u>John 1:11</u>
Be accused and afflicted, but did not open his mouth	<u>Isaiah 53:7</u> He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.	<u>Matthew 27:12</u> When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. <u>Luke 23:9</u> He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. Also <u>Matthew 26:62, 63</u> ; <u>27:14</u> ; <u>Mark 14:61</u> ; <u>15:5</u> ; <u>John 19:9</u>
Commit his spirit into God's hand	<u>Psalms 31:5</u> Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.	<u>Luke 23:46</u> Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. " When he had said this, he breathed his last.
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Prophecy	Old Testament References	New Testament Fulfillment
Jesus' Death and Resurrection		
Be buried with the rich	Isaiah 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.	Matthew 27:57-60 ... there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. ... he asked for Jesus' body, ... and placed it in his own new tomb. ...
Be numbered (or numbered) with transgressors	Isaiah 53:12 ... he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors ...	Matthew 27:38 Two robbers were crucified with him, ... Also Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37; 23:32, 33
The 30 pieces of silver buy the potter's field	Zechariah 11:12, 13 ... So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. ... I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD to the potter.	Matthew 27:3, 6-10 ... Judas ... returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders ... they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field ...
Be sold for thirty pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:14, 15
Be Passover male lamb, without blemish, slain, with blood applied as protection from judgment	Exodus 12:1-11, Isaiah 53:7	John 1:29-36; 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Revelation 5:6-13; 7:14; 21:22-27; 22:1-4
Be lifted up, just as Moses lifted up a serpent	Numbers 21:8, 9	John 3:14, 15
Be raised from the dead	Psalms 16:8-11	Luke 24:6-8; John 20; Acts 1:3; 2:32; 13:34-37; 2 Timothy 2:8
Conquer death through his resurrection	Psalms 16:8-11; 49:15; 86:13	Acts 2:24-36; 13:30-39; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4
Feel forsaken by God	Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34
Be mocked and insulted by many	Psalms 22:7, 8, 17	Matthew 27:31, 39-43; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-39
Friends stand afar off	Psalms 38:11; 88:18	Matthew 26:56-58; 27:55; Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49
Ascend on high	Psalms 68:18	Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; Ephesians 4:8
Reproaches of others fall on him	Psalms 69:9	Romans 15:3
Another to succeed Judas	Psalms 109:7, 8	Acts 1:16-20
Be a Son who is given	Isaiah 9:6	John 3:16; Romans 8:32
Swallow up death in victory	Isaiah 25:8	1 Corinthians 15:54-57
Be mistreated, hardly recognized	Isaiah 52:14	Hebrews 5:8; 1 Peter 2:21
Bare our griefs and carry our sorrows	Isaiah 53:4, 5	Matthew 8:17; Romans 5:6-8
Be wounded for our transgressions	Isaiah 53:5	1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18
Be led as a lamb to the slaughter	Isaiah 53:7	John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:28-35; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6
Be sinless and without guile	Isaiah 53:9	1 Peter 2:22
Make intercession for the transgressors	Isaiah 53:12	Luke 23:34; "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."
Be made into an offering for sin	Isaiah 53:10, 11	Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39; Romans 3:21-26; 4:5-8; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 2:2
Be "out off" at a specific time after Jerusalem wall is rebuilt, before the Temple is destroyed	Daniel 9:24-26; Zechariah 9:9	Matt. 21:1-5; 1:15; 24:1, 2 Luke 19:37, 38; John 12:13-15
His body would be pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34-37
Shepherd smitten, sheep scattered (deserted by his followers)	Zechariah 13:6, 7	Matthew 26:31, 56; Mark 14:27; John 16:32
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Prophecy	Old Testament References	New Testament Fulfillment
Jesus' Titles and Attributes		
"I Am" (Jehovah)	Exodus 3:13-15	John 8:24; 13:19
A Prophet like Moses	Deuteronomy 18:18, 19	John 1:21; 6:14; Acts 3:22, 23; Hebrews 3:1-6
The throne of David established forever	2 Samuel 7:12, 13, 16, 25, 26; Psalm 89:3, 4, 36, 37; Isaiah 9:7 1 Chronicles 17:11-14, 23-27;	Luke 1:32, 33; Acts 2:29-36; 2 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 1:8
The promised Redeemer	Job 19:25-27; Psalm 130:7, 8; Isaiah 59:20	Galatians 4:4, 5; Titus 2:13, 14
The Son of God	Psalm 2:7	Matt. 3:17; 8:29; 16:16; Mark 1:11; Luke 1:32, 35; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5; 2 Peter 1:17
Delights to do God's will	Psalm 40:8	John 4:34; 6:38
A King known for righteousness, anointed	Psalm 45:1-7	Hebrews 1:8, 9
Seed of David	Psalm 89:3, 4	John 7:42; Acts 13:22, 23
The firstborn over all creation	Psalm 89:27	Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15
Never changing, everlasting	Psalm 102:24-27	Hebrews 1:10-12; 13:8
David's son; David's Lord at God's right hand	Psalm 110:1	Matthew 22:41-45; Mark 12:35-37; 16:19; Acts 7:56; Romans 1:3; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 1:3
A Priest according to the order of Melchizedek	Psalm 110:4	Hebrews 5:5, 6, 10; 6:20; 7:1-22
The Chief Cornerstone	Psalm 118:22, 23	Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:10-12; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4-7
The way of repentance for all nations	Isaiah 2:2-4	Luke 24:47
Immanuel, God with us	Isaiah 7:14; 8:8, 10	Matt. 1:21-23; John 1:14; 14:8-11; Colossians 2:9
A stone of stumbling, a rock of offense	Isaiah 8:14, 15	Matt. 21:42-44; Romans 9:32, 33; 1 Peter 2:6-8
The light which has shone out of darkness	Isaiah 9:1, 2	Matthew 4:14-16; Luke 1:7, 9; 2:32; John 1:4, 5
Prince of Peace	Isaiah 9:6	John 14:27; Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14; Col. 1:20
Full of wisdom, power and righteousness	Isaiah 11:1-10	Acts 10:38; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 2:2, 3
The key of the house of David is upon his shoulder	Isaiah 22:21-25	Revelation 3:7
The stone in Zion, a sure foundation	Isaiah 28:16	Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6
God's elect Servant, in whom he delights	Isaiah 42:1-4	Matthew 12:17-21; Philippians 2:7
Spirit of the LORD shall rest on him	Isaiah 61:1	Matthew 3:16; Luke 4:18
The Righteous Branch	Jeremiah 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16	Romans 3:22; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Philippians 3:9
The Good Shepherd	Ezekiel 34:23, 24; 37:24	John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25
The enthroned High Priest	Zechariah 6:12, 13	Hebrews 7:11-28; 8:1, 2
Sun of Righteousness; the Dayspring; our Light	Malachi 4:2, 3	Luke 1:78; Ephesians 5:14; 2 Peter 1:19; John 8:12; Revelation 2:28; 22:16

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Introduction

The passion of Jesus Christ stands alone as the most important event creation has ever known. The Bible tells us that long before the world began, God had planned that the crucifixion of Jesus would be the method and payment for sin – the only payment that would reconcile sinners to a holy and loving God.

1 Peter 1:19-20 – “He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose Him for this purpose long before the world began, but now in these final days, He was sent to the earth for all to see. And He did this for you.”

Down through history, God provided us a roadmap. He foretold various signs and conditions through His prophets. These prophets spoke of things that mankind should watch for so that the Messiah would be recognized and believed. These signs or prophecies were given to us in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the part of the Bible written before Jesus was born. Its writings were completed in 450 B.C. The Old Testament, written hundreds of years before Jesus’ birth, contains over 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled through His life, death and resurrection.

Mathematically speaking, the odds of anyone fulfilling this amount of prophecy are staggering. Mathematicians put it this way:

1 person fulfilling 8 prophecies: 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 1 person fulfilling 48 prophecies: 1 chance in 10 to the 157th power 1 person fulfilling 300+ prophecies: Only Jesus!

It is the magnificent detail of these prophecies that mark the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Only God could foreknow and accomplish all that was written about the Christ. This historical accuracy and reliability sets the Bible apart from any other book or record.

The New Testament was written after the death of Jesus Christ. Archeologists have found thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament. Some of these pieces of manuscript are dated less than 100 years after the original letters were written. In terms of historical reliability, the Bible is superior to any other ancient writings.

This is the miraculous and reliable record of the Word of God. God gave us these prophecies to build our faith and point the way to His Son. As *1 John 1:1-3* states:

“The One who existed from the beginning is the One we have heard and seen. We saw Him with our own eyes and touched Him with our own hands. He is Jesus Christ, the Word of Life. This One who is life from God was shown to us, and we have seen Him. And now we testify and announce to you that He is the One who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then He was shown to us. We are telling you about what we ourselves have actually seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”

In this booklet, we will take a look at just a few of the prophecies concerning the life and passion of Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that your faith will be increased and your witness strengthened as you understand and are able to communicate more clearly that Jesus Christ is indeed the Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world. (See Revelation 13:8.) Our hope is that you will know beyond doubt that His death and resurrection are the sacrifice for our sins; and in His death, *“He takes away not only our sins but the sins of all the world” (1 John 2:2).*

A Word About God's Prophets

The prophets of God were often sent on dangerous missions. The prophets were to warn the people about God’s coming judgment against sin. They were sent to call the people back to God in repentance and to assure them of God’s continuing love and purpose for them.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY JESUS

The Messiah Will Be Born In Bethlehem

Micah 5:2 – “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.”

About the Prophecy of Micah

Micah was an eighth century B.C. prophet. He lived at the same time as the prophets Amos, Hosea and Isaiah.

The Book of Micah tells how the judgment of God will fall on Samaria and Jerusalem due to sin, and afterwards, God will give restoration.

Micah describes a wonderful future where the city of Bethlehem will give birth to a ruler greater than David. He also prophesies of a time when Jerusalem will become the religious center of the world.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 2:1-6 – “Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have seen His star as it arose, and we have come to worship Him.’ Herod was deeply disturbed by their question, as was all of Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law. ‘Where did the prophets say the Messiah would be born?’ he asked them. ‘In Bethlehem,’ they said, ‘for this is what the prophet wrote: ‘O Bethlehem of Judah, you are not just a lowly village in Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’”

Luke 2:4-5, 7, 15 – “And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was obviously pregnant by this time. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped Him snugly in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn. When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, ‘Come on, let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’”

John 7:42 – “For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born.”

The Messiah Will Be Born Of A Virgin

Isaiah 7:14 – “All right then, the Lord Himself will choose the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel – ‘God is with us.’”

Isaiah 9:6-7 – “For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. And the government will rest on His shoulders. These will be His royal titles: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His ever expanding, peaceful government will never end. He will rule forever with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David. The passionate commitment of the Lord Almighty will guarantee this!”

About the Prophecy of Isaiah

The prophet Isaiah lived in Jerusalem in the eighth century B.C. The book of Isaiah is one of the four major prophetic books in the Old Testament, along with Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

Chapter 7 of Isaiah was written about 735 B.C. King Ahaz was on the throne and Isaiah was sent with the message that God was sending Judah a sign – this sign would be a child called “God is with us.”

The Fulfillment

Matthew 1:20-23 – “As he considered this, he fell asleep, and an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. ‘Joseph, son of David,’ the angel said, ‘do not be afraid to go ahead with your marriage to Mary. For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ All of this happened to fulfill the Lord’s message through His prophet: ‘Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and He will be called Immanuel (meaning, God is with us).’”

The Messiah Will Be A Prophet Like Moses

Deuteronomy 18:15 – “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites, and you must listen to that prophet.”

About the Prophecy in Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 1:1a states: *“This book records the words that Moses spoke to all the people of Israel while they were in the wilderness east of the Jordan River.”* These words were written about 1260 B.C. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, Moses talks to the people of Israel as they are about to enter the Promised Land. He reminds them of their covenant with God and their glorious future, if they obey Him.

The Fulfillment

John 7:40-42 – “When the crowds heard Him say this, some of them declared, ‘This man surely is the Prophet.’ Others said, ‘He is the Messiah.’ Still others said, ‘But He can’t be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee? For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born.’”

Acts 3:20-23 – “Then wonderful times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and He will send Jesus your Messiah to you again. For He must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through His prophets. Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up a Prophet like me from among your own people. Listen carefully to everything He tells you.’ Then Moses said, ‘Anyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be cut off from God’s people and utterly destroyed.’”

The Messiah Will Be Tempted By Satan

Psalms 91:10-12 – “No evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your dwelling. For He orders His angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you with their hands to keep you from striking your foot on a stone.”

About the Prophecy of The Psalms

The Psalms are a collection of the hymns of ancient Israel. Scholars divide them into five groups:

1. Hymns in praise of God’s glory

2. Community lamentations
3. Royal hymns for special occasions
4. Individual prayers
5. Individual praise and thanksgiving

It is difficult to date the individual psalms. King David is credited with writing many of them, and the collection of these hymns continued after the days of Israel's exile. It is believed the collection was finalized before the second century B.C.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 4:5-7 – “Then the Devil took Him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, ‘If You are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, “He orders His angels to protect you. And they will hold you with their hands to keep you from striking your foot on a stone.”’ Jesus responded, ‘The Scriptures also say, “Do not test the Lord your God.”’”

The Messiah Will Enter Jerusalem Triumphantly

Zechariah 9:9 – “Rejoice greatly, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey – even on a donkey's colt.”

About the Prophecy of Zechariah

Zechariah the prophet came from a priestly family. He was a visionary, who with the prophet Haggai worked on the rebuilding of the Temple. The New Testament Gospels quote Zechariah more than any other prophet.

Part one of the book of Zechariah was written in 520 B.C. Zechariah spoke about the judgment and salvation of God and about the coming Messiah who would be a priest, governor, humble king and afflicted shepherd.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 21:8-11 – “Most of the crowd spread their coats on the road ahead of Jesus, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. He was in the center of the procession, and the crowds all around Him were shouting, ‘Praise God for the Son of David! Bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest heaven!’ The entire city of Jerusalem was stirred as He entered. ‘Who is this?’ they asked. And the crowds replied, ‘It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.’”

Luke 19:35-37 – “So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for Him to ride on. Then the crowds spread out their coats on the road ahead of Jesus. As they reached the place where the road started down from the Mount of Olives, all of His followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.”

John 12:12-15 – “The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A huge crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet Him. They shouted, ‘Praise God! Bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel! Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: ‘Don't be afraid, people of Israel. Look, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.’”

The Messiah Will Be Rejected By His Own People

Isaiah 53:1, 3 – “Who has believed our message? To whom will the Lord reveal His saving power? He was despised and rejected – a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way when He went by. He was despised, and we did not care.”

About the Prophecy of Isaiah

Chapters 40–55 in the book of Isaiah address the people in exile in Babylon – directly before the time of their return – about 538 B.C.

Chapter 53 is known as the great prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

The Fulfillment

John 1:10-11 – “But although the world was made through Him, the world didn’t recognize Him when He came. Even in His own land and among His own people, He was not accepted.”

John 12:37-38 – “But despite all the miraculous signs He had done, most of the people did not believe in Him. This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted: ‘Lord, who has believed our message? To whom will the Lord reveal His saving power?’”

Matthew 26:3-4 – “At that same time the leading priests and other leaders were meeting at the residence of Caiaphas, the high priest, to discuss how to capture Jesus secretly and put Him to death.”

The Messiah Will Be Betrayed By One Of His Followers

Psalms 41:9 – “Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” (NIV)

Psalms 55:12-13 – “It is not an enemy who taunts me – I could bear that. It is not my foes who so arrogantly insult me – I could have hidden from them. Instead, it is you – my equal, my companion and close friend.”

About the Prophecy of The Psalms

Psalms 41 is a psalm of David. He speaks of his own isolation and his trust in God. He describes how the sharing of food unites people in loyalty and friendship.

Psalms 55 is a psalm of David as well. In this psalm, he outlines the betrayal of a trusted friend, who was seemingly a follower of God.

Both of these psalms prophesy the betrayal of Jesus by a close and trusted friend.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 26:47, 49-50a – “And even as He said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a mob that was armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent out by the leading priests and other leaders of the people. So Judas came straight to Jesus. ‘Greetings, Teacher!’ he exclaimed and gave Him the kiss. Jesus said, ‘My friend, go ahead and do what you have come for.’”

Luke 22:21-22, 47b – “ ‘But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray Me. For I, the Son of Man, must die since it is part of God’s plan. But how terrible it will be for My betrayer!’ A mob approached, led by Judas, one of His twelve disciples. Judas walked over to Jesus and greeted Him with a kiss.”

John 13:18, 21, 26 – “ ‘I am not saying these things to all of you; I know so well each one of you I chose. The Scriptures declare, “The one who shares My food has turned against Me,” and this will soon come true’. Now Jesus was in great

anguish of spirit, and He exclaimed, 'The truth is, one of you will betray Me!' Jesus said, 'It is the one to whom I give the bread dipped in the sauce.' And when He had dipped it, He gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot."

The Messiah Will Be Betrayed For 30 Pieces Of Silver

Zechariah 11:12-13 – "And I said unto them, 'If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.'" (KJV)

About the Prophecy of Zechariah

In chapter 11 of the book of Zechariah, the prophet refers to 30 shekels of silver as a "goodly price." This amount also refers to the amount paid for the life of a slave. Zechariah's prophecy speaks about the amount paid for the Lord and His life.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 26:14-16 – "Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests and asked, 'How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?' And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. From that time on, Judas began looking for the right time and place to betray Jesus."

Matthew 27:3-4a – "When Judas, who had betrayed Him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and other leaders. 'I have sinned,' he declared, 'for I have betrayed an innocent man.'"

The Messiah Will Be Tried And Condemned

Isaiah 53:8 – "From prison and trial they led Him away to His death. But who among the people realized that He was dying for their sins – that He was suffering their punishment?"

About the Prophecy of Isaiah

Written in 538 B.C., chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah is known as the Great Prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 27:1-2 – "Very early in the morning, the leading priests and other leaders met again to discuss how to persuade the Roman government to sentence Jesus to death. Then they bound Him and took Him to Pilate, the Roman governor."

Luke 23:1, 23 – "The entire council took Jesus over to Pilate, the Roman governor. But the crowd shouted louder and louder for Jesus' death, and their voices prevailed."

Acts 4:26-28 – "'The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against His Messiah.' That is what has happened here in this city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, Your holy Servant, whom You anointed. In fact, everything they did occurred according to Your eternal will and plan."

The Messiah Will Be Silent Before His Accusers

Psalm 35:11 – "Malicious witnesses testify against me. They accuse me of things I don't even know about."

Isaiah 53:7-8a – “He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet He never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, He did not open His mouth. From prison and trial they led Him away to His death.”

About the Prophecy of The Psalms and Isaiah

Psalm 27 is a psalm of David. In this hymn, he reassures those who are right with God that they have nothing to fear. He calls on God to pay back his enemies who have unjustly come against him. The prophecy in this psalm shows the confidence of the Messiah to entrust His life to God, who will answer and judge His accusers.

Again, the 53rd chapter of Isaiah was written in 538 B.C. It is known as the Great Prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 27:12-14 – “But when the leading priests and other leaders made their accusations against Him, Jesus remained silent. ‘Don’t you hear their many charges against You?’ Pilate demanded. But Jesus said nothing, much to the governor’s great surprise.”

Mark 15:3-5 – “Then the leading priests accused Him of many crimes, and Pilate asked Him, ‘Aren’t You going to say something? What about all these charges against You?’ But Jesus said nothing, much to Pilate’s surprise.”

1 Peter 2:22-23 – “He never sinned, and He never deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when He was insulted. When He suffered, He did not threaten to get even. He left His case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.”

The Messiah Will Be Smitten And Spat Upon

Micah 5:1 – “Mobilize! Marshal your troops! The enemy is laying siege to Jerusalem. With a rod they will strike the leader of Israel in the face.”

Isaiah 50:6 – “I give My back to those who beat Me and My cheeks to those who pull out My beard. I do not hide from shame, for they mock Me and spit in My face.”

About the Prophecy of Micah and Isaiah

The book of Micah, by the prophet Micah, was written in the eighth century B.C. He describes how the restoration of God follows His judgment of sin. Micah describes the future of Jerusalem as the center of religious activity for the whole world.

Chapter 50 in the book of Isaiah was written in 538 B.C. In the Servant Song of Isaiah, chapter 50, we see the first glimpse of the Messiah’s suffering and rejection.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 26:67-68 – “Then they spit in Jesus’ face and hit Him with their fists. And some slapped Him, saying, ‘Prophecy to us, You Messiah! Who hit You that time?’”

Matthew 27:30 – “And they spit on Him and grabbed the stick and beat Him on the head with it.”

Mark 14:65a – “Then some of them began to spit at Him, and they blindfolded Him and hit His face with their fists.”

Mark 15:19 – “And they beat Him on the head with a stick, spit on Him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship.”

John 19:1-3 – “Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. The soldiers made a crown of long, sharp thorns and put it on His head, and they put a royal purple robe on Him. ‘Hail! King of the Jews!’ they mocked, and they hit Him with their fists.”

The Messiah Will Be Mocked And Taunted

Psalms 22:7-8 – “Everyone who sees Me, mocks Me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, ‘Is this the One who relies on the Lord? Then let the Lord save Him! If the Lord loves Him so much, then let the Lord rescue Him!’”

About the Prophecy of The Psalms

Psalms 22 is a psalm of David, and in it he describes an execution. The early portion of the psalm speaks of the Messiah’s suffering; the later portion describes the universal deliverance the Messiah makes possible.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 27:39-40 – “And the people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. ‘So! You can destroy the Temple and build it again in three days, can You? Well then, if You are the Son of God, save Yourself and come down from the cross!’”

Luke 23:11, 35 – “Now Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Then they put a royal robe on Him and sent Him back to Pilate. The crowd watched, and the leaders laughed and scoffed. ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘let Him save Himself if He is really God’s Chosen One, the Messiah.’”

The Messiah To Die By Crucifixion, With Pierced Hands And Feet

Psalms 22:14-16 – “My life is poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, melting within Me. My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay. My tongue sticks to the roof of My mouth. You have laid Me in the dust and left Me for dead. My enemies surround Me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on Me. They have pierced My hands and feet.”

Zechariah 12:10a – “Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and on all the people of Jerusalem. They will look on Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only son.”

About the Prophecy of The Psalms and Zechariah

Again, Psalms 22 is a Psalm of David. In this psalm he is describing an execution. The early portion of this psalm describes the Messiah’s suffering; the later portion describes the universal deliverance the Messiah makes possible.

In Chapter 12 of the book of Zechariah, the prophet speaks of God’s own representative who is killed at the hands of His people. At a future point, the people of God will realize whom they have pierced and will mourn for “the son” who died.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 27:31 – “When they were finally tired of mocking Him, they took off the robe and put His own clothes on Him again. Then they led Him away to be crucified.”

Mark 15:20 – “When they were finally tired of mocking Him, they took off the purple robe and put His own clothes on Him again. Then they led Him away to be crucified.”

John 19:15-16 – “‘Away with Him,’ they yelled. ‘Away with Him – crucify Him!’ ‘What? Crucify your king?’ Pilate asked. ‘We have no king but Caesar,’ the leading priests shouted back. Then Pilate gave Jesus to them to be crucified.”

The Messiah Will Suffer With Sinners

Isaiah 53:12a – “I will give Him the honors of One who is mighty and great, because He exposed Himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners.”

About the Prophecy of Isaiah

The prophet Isaiah lived in Jerusalem in the eighth century B.C. The book of Isaiah is one of the four major prophetic books in the Bible, along with Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Chapter 53 is known as the Great Prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 27:38 – “Two criminals were crucified with Him, their crosses on either side of His.”

Mark 15:27 – “Two criminals were crucified with Him, their crosses on either side of His.”

Luke 23:32-33 – “Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with Him. Finally, they came to a place called The Skull. All three were crucified there – Jesus on the center cross, and the two criminals on either side.”

The Messiah’s Garments Will Be Divided By Casting Lots

Psalms 22:18 – “They divide My clothes among themselves and throw dice for My garments.”

About the Prophecy of The Psalms

Again, Psalm 22 is a psalm of King David. In this hymn he describes an execution. The early portion of the psalm speaks of the Messiah’s suffering and the later portion describes the universal deliverance He made possible.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 27:35 – “After they had nailed Him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for His clothes by throwing dice.”

Mark 15:24 – “Then they nailed Him to the cross. They gambled for His clothes, throwing dice to decide who would get them.”

John 19:23-24a – “When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided His clothes among the four of them. They also took His robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said, ‘Let’s not tear it but throw dice to see who gets it.’ This fulfilled the Scripture that says, ‘They divided My clothes among themselves and threw dice for My robe.’”

The Messiah’s Bones Will Not Be Broken

Numbers 9:12 – “They must not leave any of the lamb until the next morning, and they must not break any of its bones. They must follow all the normal regulations concerning the Passover.”

About the Prophecy of Numbers

Numbers is the fourth of the five books written by Moses. It is the travel history of Israel’s journey in the desert.

It begins two years after leaving Egypt and ends just before entry into Canaan. It is a 38-year record of the murmurings of the nation of Israel and the constant companionship of God. It is a record of God's ongoing work to produce repentance in His people.

Chapter 9 discusses the proper observance and preparation of Passover and prophetically describes Jesus, the Passover Lamb.

The Fulfillment

John 19:31-37 – “The Jewish leaders didn't want the victims hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath at that, because it was the Passover), so they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that He was dead already, so they didn't break His legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced His side with a spear, and blood and water flowed out. This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account; it is presented so that you also can believe. These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, ‘Not one of His bones will be broken,’ and ‘They will look on Him whom they pierced.’”

1 Corinthians 5:7b – “Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.”

The Messiah Will Die As A Sin Offering

Isaiah 53:5-6, 8, 12 – “But He was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on Him the guilt and sins of us all. From prison and trial they led Him away to His death. But who among the people realized that He was dying for their sins – that He was suffering their punishment? I will give Him the honors of One who is mighty and great, because He exposed Himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.”

About the Prophecy of Isaiah

Isaiah the prophet lived in Jerusalem in the eighth century B.C. Chapter 53 of Isaiah is known as the Great Prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

The Fulfillment

John 1:29 – “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

Acts 10:43 – “He is the One all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in Him will have their sins forgiven through His name.”

Acts 13:38-39 – “Brothers, listen! In this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. Everyone who believes in Him is freed from all guilt and declared right with God – something the Jewish law could never do.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – “I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me – that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said.”

Ephesians 1:7 – “He is so rich in kindness that He purchased our freedom through the blood of His Son, and our sins are forgiven.”

1 Peter 2:24 – “He personally carried away our sins in His own body on the cross so we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. You have been healed by His wounds.”

Revelation 1:5b – “All praise to Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding His blood for us.”

The Messiah Will See His Seed

Isaiah 53:10-11 – “But it was the Lord’s good plan to crush Him and fill Him with grief. Yet when His life is made an offering for sin, He will have a multitude of children, many heirs. He will enjoy a long life, and the Lord’s plan will prosper in His hands. When He sees all that is accomplished by His anguish, He will be satisfied. And because of what He has experienced, My Righteous Servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for He will bear all their sins.”

About the Prophecy of Isaiah

The Great Prophecy of the Suffering Servant reveals the incredible purpose of God in sending the Messiah to suffer for our sins. Isaiah wrote this chapter in the eighth century B.C. He foretold that the Messiah would see His heirs, those who would find salvation through His sacrifice.

The Fulfillment

Ephesians 1:4-5, 21-23 – “Long ago, even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure. Now He is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come. And God has put all things under the authority of Christ, and He gave Him this authority for the benefit of the church. And the church is His body; it is filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with His presence.”

Hebrews 12:2 – “We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy He knew would be His afterward. Now He is seated in the place of highest honor beside God’s throne in heaven.”

The Messiah Will Be Buried In A Rich Man’s Tomb

Isaiah 53:9 – “He had done no wrong, and He never deceived anyone. But He was buried like a criminal; He was put in a rich man’s grave.”

About the Prophecy of Isaiah

Once again, the Great Prophecy of the Suffering Servant reveals the incredible purpose of God in sending the Messiah to suffer for our sins. Isaiah wrote this chapter in the eighth century B.C. He foretold that the Messiah would die and be buried in a rich man’s grave.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 27:57-60 – “As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who was one of Jesus’ followers, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance as he left.”

The Messiah Will Be Raised From The Dead

Psalm 16:10 – “For You will not leave my soul among the dead or allow Your Godly One to rot in the grave.”

Psalm 30:3 – “You brought me up from the grave, O Lord. You kept me from falling into the pit of death.”

About the Prophecy of The Psalms

The Psalms are a collection of the hymns of ancient Israel. The collection of Psalms was finalized before the second century B.C.

Psalm 16 is a psalm of David. In this hymn he reminds us that as we set our hearts on God and trust our lives to His care, we will find joy and security. David prophesies that the Messiah will not be abandoned in the grave, and His body will not decay.

Psalm 30 is a psalm written by David, for the dedication of the Temple. In it he prophesies that the Messiah will be raised from the grave.

The Fulfillment

Matthew 28:5-7 – “Then the angel spoke to the women. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He has been raised from the dead, just as He said would happen. Come, see where His body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell His disciples He has been raised from the dead, and He is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him there. Remember, I have told you.’”

Mark 16:6-7 – “The angel said, ‘Do not be so surprised. You are looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He has been raised from the dead! Look, this is where they laid His body. Now go and give this message to His disciples, including Peter: Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him there, just as He told you before He died.’”

Acts 2:27-31 – “‘For You will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave. You have shown me the way of life, and You will give me wonderful joy in Your presence.’ Dear brothers, think about this! David wasn’t referring to himself when he spoke these words I have quoted, for he died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us. But he was a prophet, and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David’s own descendants would sit on David’s throne as the Messiah. David was looking into the future and predicting the Messiah’s resurrection. He was saying that the Messiah would not be left among the dead and that His body would not rot in the grave.’”

1 Corinthians 15:17, 20 – “And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead. He has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again.”

The Messiah Will Sit At God’s Right Hand

Psalm 110:1 – “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit in honor at My right hand until I humble Your enemies, making them a footstool under Your feet.’”

About the Prophecy of The Psalms

Psalm 110 is a psalm of David. It is a prophetic psalm that seems to speak of a coming coronation. This royal psalm clearly speaks of the coming Messiah.

The Fulfillment

Mark 16:19 – “When the Lord Jesus had finished talking with them, He was taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand.”

Acts 2:32-36 – “This prophecy was speaking of Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, and we all are witnesses of this. Now He sits on the throne of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as He had promised, gave Him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit in honor at My right hand until I humble Your enemies, making them a footstool under Your feet.”’ So let it be clearly known by everyone in Israel that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified to be both Lord and Messiah!”

Hebrews 10:12-13 – “But our High Priest offered Himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then He sat down at the place of highest honor at God’s right hand. There He waits until His enemies are humbled as a footstool under His feet.”

JESUS AND YOU

As you have just read, it was God’s plan from before the world began that Jesus would come to earth and be crucified as a holy and final offering for sin. Because of God’s deep love for each one of us, He provided the way of salvation – the only way that we are able to enter a relationship with Him.

The Birth of the Messiah

Drawing primarily on Luke and Matthew this session focuses on Jesus’ birth.

John writes in his prologue: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . [and] the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1: 1, 14). This is the great miracle in the Bible: God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, became man and lived among us.

Luke begins his gospel with the Annunciation, God’s offer to Mary that she become the mother of his Son, an offer framed by God’s announcement to Zechariah that he will become the father of John the Baptist, Jesus’ cousin and forerunner.

Gabriel’s announcement in the Temple to Zechariah structurally parallels his announcement in Nazareth to Mary, followed by Mary’s visit to Elizabeth in the hill country of Judea, where she stays until John’s birth.

Creating an exact parallel between the announcements to Zechariah and Mary, and then sending Mary to Elizabeth’s home where she visits with Elizabeth and awaits the birth of John, creates a cohesive narrative with finely woven details, from which the gospel story will emerge.

OT Prophecies about the Birth of the Messiah

Fullfilled Prophecies on Jesus

The Lineage and Birth of Jesus Foretold		
Prophecy	Old Testament Reference	New Testament Fulfillment
Seed of a woman	Genesis 3:14-15	Galatians 4:4
From the Tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Luke 3:33
Descendant of Abraham, Issac and Jacob	Genesis 12:3, 17:17-19; Numbers 24:17	Matthew 1:1-2,16; Luke 3:34, 38
Heir to the Throne of David	Isaiah 9:6-7	Luke 1:32
Anointed and Eternal	Psalms 45:6-7	Hebrews 1:8-10
Jesus to be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Luke 2:4-7
The time of Jesus' birth	Daniel 9:24-25	Luke 2:1-5
Christ to be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:13-14	Luke 1:26-28, 30-31
Lamentation for the killing of infants	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
To be called out of Egypt	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:13-15

Genealogy of Jesus

Differences between Luke's genealogy and Matthew's genealogy

- From Abraham to David, the genealogies of Matthew & Luke are almost the same.
 - Abraham/Sarah → Isaac (and Ishmael)
 - Isaac/ Rebekah → Jacob (and Esau)
 - Jacob/Leah → Judah
 - Judah/Tamar – Tamar was his deceased son (Er's) wife who posed as a prostitute & became pregnant → Perez
 - Salmon/Rahab – Rahab (prostitute from Jericho, helped the spies as they scouted out the promised land) → Boaz
 - Boaz/Ruth – From the book of Ruth → Obed
 - Obed → Jesse
 - Jesse → King David
- But from David on they are different.
 - Matthew follows the line of Joseph (Jesus' legal father through Solomon)
 - David/Bathsheba (Uria's wife whom David raped) → Solomon → Joseph
 - Matthew's genealogy swings back to the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12 and recalls the 2,000---year narrative of the Old Testament, leading directly to the birth of Christ and the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that "all the families of the earth will find blessing in [him]"
 - Luke emphasizes that of Mary (Jesus' blood relative through Nathan, Lk 3:31).
 - David → Nathan → Mary
 - Although tracing a genealogy through the mother's side was unusual, so was the virgin birth.
 - Luke's explanation here that Jesus was the son of Joseph, "so it was thought" (Lk 3:23), brings to mind his explicit virgin birth statement (Lk 1:34-35) and suggests the importance of the role of Mary in Jesus' genealogy. However, this view is less likely since Luke here so explicitly names Joseph (v. 23), without any reference at all to Mary.

- Another possibility is that Luke traces the direct bloodline of Joseph to David
- The genealogies in Matthew and Luke provide the legal (Matthew) and biological (Luke) claim of messiah
 - Joseph gives Jesus a legal claim to the throne of Israel
 - Joseph is Jesus's legal father, and Joseph is in the line of the kings
 - Matthew's genealogy: Abraham → David → line of kings → Joseph (who is in the line of kings)
 - Mary gives Jesus the biological link to Adam, Abraham, and David
 - With a virgin birth, the only way that can be is through the mother
 - Luke's genealogy: Mary → David (Nathan) → Abraham → Adam
 - Need both
- Difference in order and endpoints
 - Matthew
 - Old → New
 - Focus is on Joseph
 - Starts with Abraham (the father of the Jewish people) – Matthew is writing to Jews
 - David (through Solomon and the line of the kings)
 - Joseph (who is in the line of the kings) to Jesus
 - Luke
 - New → Old
 - Focus is on Mary – Mary was probably one of Luke's sources
 - Mary went to Ephesus, both Paul and Luke spent a lot of time in Ephesus
 - David (through Nathan)
 - Adam (the son of God) - showing Jesus' relationship to the whole human race

Matthew

- Matthew's genealogy accomplishes 4 things:
 - It places Jesus as a direct descendent of Abraham and David, positioning him to fulfill both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.
 - It establishes Jesus' legal claim to the throne of Israel by positioning him as a direct descendent of David, through the line of the kings.
 - It links the entire linear narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures to the birth of Jesus, making the birth of Jesus the culminating event in Jewish history.
 - It initiates the final step in God's plan of redemption, the introduction of Jesus into the world as Redeemer, the one who will "save his people from their sins" (1:21).
- Abraham → David (Solomon) → Joseph (Mt 1:1)
 - Matthew is writing to the Jews, who want to know how Jesus is related to Abraham (the father of the Jews)
 - In one deft movement Matthew not only links the entire linear narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures to the birth of Jesus, but he also makes the birth of Jesus the culminating event in Jewish history.
- Matthew introduces a genealogy that includes 3 sets of 14 generations:
 - Abraham through David (14 generations)
 - David through the Babylonian captivity (14 generations)
 - Babylonian captivity through the birth of Christ (14 generations)
 - 14 is the numerical value of the Hebrew letters forming the name "David"
 - 14 = 2 sets of 7
 - 7 is the number of completion
 - Genealogy give 6 sets of 7 – cries out for the 7th 7 to bring completion
 - Jesus is completion

- We know that there are more people involved in the sequential genealogy, but the Bible gives us the information that we need to know, not necessarily all the information that is available.
 - The authors are crafting stories with deliberate narrative techniques
 - That's how we should approach the Gospels – as narratives written by individual people, for an individual audience, for an individual purpose

<i>Jesus Christ's Genealogy</i> <i>Matthew 1:1-17</i>		
Patriarchs	Monarchy	After Deportation
Abraham Isaac Jacob Judah Perez by Tamar Hezron Ram Amminadab Nahshon Salmon Boaz by Rahab Obed by Ruth Jesse David the king	Solomon of Uriah Rehoboam Abijah Asa Jehoshaphat Joram Uzziah Jotham Ahaz Hezekiah Manasseh Amon Josiah Jeconiah . . . at the time of the deportation to Babylon.	Jeconiah Shealtiel Zerubbabel Abihud Eliakim Azor Zadok Achim Eliud Eleazar Matthan Jacob Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

Luke

- Mary → David (Nathan) → Adam (Lk 3:23)
 - Luke is writing to the Gentiles – they would not care about the father of the Jews – they want to know how Jesus is related to mankind (Adam)
- Davidic Covenant
 - 2Ch 6:16 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me according to my law, as you have done.'
 - One of your own flesh will sit upon the throne of Israel forever – that means that Jesus has to be physically related to David
 - We get that through Luke's genealogy of Jesus' biological mother, Mary

Jesus as our Kinsman Redeemer

- The kinsman-redeemer is a male relative who, according to various laws of the Pentateuch, had the privilege or responsibility to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger, or need.
 - Qualities of the kinsman redeemer:
 - Next nearest relative of the person being redeemed
 - He must have the resources to redeem the person
 - He must be willing to redeem the person

- The Hebrew term (go el) for kinsman-redeemer designates one who:
 - Delivers or rescues (Ge 48:16; Ex 6:6)
 - Redeems property or person (Leviticus 27:9–25,25:47–55).
- The kinsman who redeems or vindicates a relative is illustrated most clearly in the book of Ruth
 - The kinsman-redeemer is Boaz.
 - The story of Ruth and Boaz begins when Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, return to Bethlehem from Moab where they had been living. Naomi's husband and both sons, one the husband of Ruth, had died, leaving the women penniless and without a male protector. Upon arriving in Bethlehem, Naomi sends Ruth to glean in the fields of Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi to whom they, through a series of divinely appointed circumstances, appeal as their go el.
 - Boaz acquiesces, willingly takes Ruth as his wife, and together they bear a son named Obed who became the grandfather of David, the forefather of Jesus.
- Jehovah is Israel's Redeemer, the one who promises to defend and vindicate them.
 - He is both Father and Deliverer (Exodus 20:2).
 - There are numerous Old Testament appeals to God as rescuer of the weak and needy (Psalm 82:4; Daniel 6:27; Jeremiah 20:13) and preserver of the sheep of Israel (Ezekiel 34:10–12,22).
- Jesus is our Kinsman Redeemer
 - In the New Testament, Christ is often regarded as an example of a kinsman-redeemer because, as our brother (Hebrews 2:11), He also redeems us because of our great need, one that only He can satisfy.
 - In Ruth 3:9, we see a beautiful and poignant picture of the needy supplicant, unable to rescue herself, requesting of the kinsman-redeemer that he cover her with his protection, redeem her, and make her his wife. In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ bought us for Himself, out of the curse, out of our destitution; made us His own beloved bride; and blessed us for all generations. He is the true kinsman-redeemer of all who call on Him in faith.
 - Christ fulfills all of the requirements:
 - Next nearest relative – Jesus must be fully man and fully God in order to redeem us
 - He must have the resources – If He is going to pay the penalty for our sin, then He must be sinless himself. Otherwise He wouldn't have the resources to pay the penalty for our sins.
 - He must be willing – He had to willingly go to the cross. He's not caught in a trap of political and religious intrigue. He willingly goes – and He is the one controlling all of the events, right to the very end.

Mary and Joseph

Lk 1:26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37 For nothing is impossible with God."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Nazareth

- On a finger ridge in the Jezreel Valley
- Never mentioned in the OT
- Village – 20 extended families – couple of hundred people
- Via Maris (way of the Sea)
 - Originates in Egypt
 - Comes through a narrow path at Megiddo and opens into the Jezreel Valley
 - Nazareth is just a truck stop on the Via Marisa
- Nazarene comes from the same root word as shoot
 - Jesus was called a Nazarene because he was the shoot that allowed the new growth

Engagement / Betrothal

Engagement

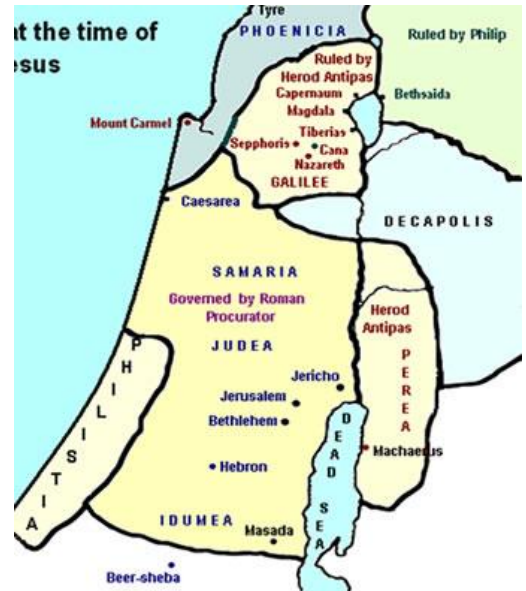
- An “engagement” in biblical times was much like an engagement today.
- Two people met, fell in love and agreed to marry.
- The engagement gave the bride time to prepare for her new role and adjust relationships within her family and with her future in-laws.
- The engagement gave the groom time to do the same, plus build a house (or make other arrangements) in which he would raise his family.

Betrothal (arranged marriages)

- In biblical times—and today in many cultures—arranged marriages were common.
 - Often, families would make such arrangements when children were very young, even at times before they were born. Such an arrangement is a “betrothal.”
- A betrothal involved a formal, binding contract between two families that included a “dowry” or “bride price”
 - A broken contract involved repayment of the dowry and restitution to the aggrieved family.
- A betrothal carried much more weight than a simple engagement; breaking a betrothal required the legal process of a formal “divorce.”
- He makes everything ready (house built, preparations) – Marriage is then consummated

Joseph

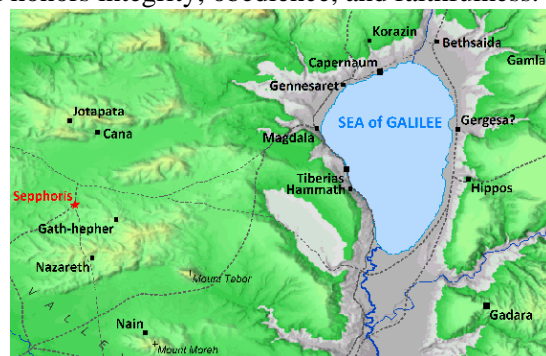
- Boys typically married around 18 years old
- Joseph is in the line of the kings from Judea
 - The bloodline of David
- Both Mary and Joseph are good Jews – we assume that they know the OT prophecies
- Joseph of the OT is very similar to Joseph of the NT
 - Both had strong conviction to always do what was right
 - Both had dreams as their communication from God
 - Both had great integrity
 - Both men were tried and tested by events in life that could have left them bitter or angry. Instead, they had close relationships with God in which they remained steadfast, regardless of the undeserved adversities and trials they were forced to endure.



- Both Josephs were men of great faith and open to hearing in their spirits what God intended for them and their lives to come.
- God proved through them that social position is of little importance to God, bringing them each from a meager standing to roles of great importance and example. God honors integrity, obedience, and faithfulness.

Joseph is living in Nazareth

- Carpenter = construction worker – working in stone, not wood
- People don't leave home – Why was he in Nazareth?
 - Construction worker and there is work in Sepphoris
 - Sepphoris
 - A wealthy Roman town between Cana and Nazareth
 - Was being built at the time of Jesus



Mary

- Girls married between 13-16 years old
- Both Mary and Joseph are good Jews – we assume that they know the OT prophecies

Gabriel speaks with Mary (Lk 1:26-38)

- 400 years since any word from God (prophets) – then Gabriel shows up out of nowhere
 - Angels – Literally translated as ‘You have received God’s grace’ – unmerited favor
 - You have found favor – better translation is you have found grace – that word is translated as grace everywhere else
- Mary is probably terrified – Angels are huge, magnificent warrior-like creatures and she is very young
- The offer (Lk 1:31-33) – You will be with child and give birth to a son
- Mary’s question (Lk 1:34) – Asking about the mechanics of how it is going to work
- Gabriel’s response (Lk 1:35-37) – Gabriel blushes, answers, and changes the subject immediately
 - Lk 1:35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
 - Not a sexual act – other gods (Zeus) fathered human children
 - Impossible for a virgin to have a baby – it has to be a miracle
 - Hannah – name means grace – foreshadows Mary
 - The shadow/spirit of the Holy Spirit is always used in connection with creation
 - Creation of everything – Ge 1:2 ...the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters
 - Creation of Jesus – Lk 1:35
 - Creation of our life in God (Baptism) – Lk 3:21 ...heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove
 - Between verses 37 and 38, there is a ‘pregnant pause’ where Mary considers the offer

Mary’s decision

- Mary had a decision/choice to make – she could have said no – not an easy choice
 - Risk of death
 - She is engaged to Joseph, but is going to be pregnant by someone other than Joseph
 - Dt 22:23 If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, 24 you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death
 - However, the Jews were not allowed to enforce capital punishment in the Roman occupation
 - Why Jesus had to be found guilty of breaking a Roman law
 - Risk of losing Joseph
 - Risk of family scandal

- Small town – everyone knows everything
 - You can't hide the fact that you are pregnant and you're not married to the guy that you are supposed to be married to
- The result (Lk 1:38) – Mary says yes
 - I am the Lord's servant – she is very humble
 - God brought down (humbled) the proud & exalted and exalts the humble
 - Jas 4:6 ... Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- James 4:6
 -
 - Great statement of faith and courage
 - Mary is the first person to say yes to Jesus

Mary visits Elizabeth

Mt 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

- Mary tells Joseph – How does Joseph respond?
 - Joseph probably talks to the Rabbi at the Synagogue who was going to marry them
 - Joseph had the right to accuse her and stone her to death
 - He loved her – he didn't want to publically humiliate her or have her dead
 - They could end the betrothal – which is what he did – initiated a divorce
 - Joseph ended the engagement
 - Mary couldn't stay in her village
 - The only place that Mary could go is to Elizabeth and Zechariah
 - Because they are part of the plan
 - The only person that would understand any of this is Elizabeth
 - Joseph had no idea where she was going – he never thought that he would see her again
- Mary visits Elizabeth
 - Mary lives in a small town (~250 people) – everyone knows everyone
 - She can't hide the pregnancy
 - Joseph has told her to leave while he files the divorce
 - Elizabeth lives in the hill country of Judea – 100 miles, 3 days journey
 - Mary is young, pregnant and alone
- Mary's greeting

Lk 1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

 - The prolonged period of silence given to Elizabeth and Zechariah has born fruit – they understand the plan
- Mary's song (*Magnificat*) (Lk 1:46-55)
 - Mary has had a lot of time to think on the journey
 - God has certainly spoken to her along the way
 - Song of praise
 - Mary recognizes that this is an act of God, not of herself – Mary gives glory to God
 - Very similar to the song of praise by Hannah, who was barren with a miraculous pregnancy, Samuel
 - Good song of praise for all women to know

- This hymn of praise is known as the Magnificat because in the Latin Vulgate the opening word is Magnificat, which means “glorifies.” This song is like a psalm, and should also be compared with the song of Hannah (1Sa 2:1-10 ; see note on 1Sa 2:1).

- Mary stays for 3 months
 - Gabriel visits Mary in Elizabeth’s 6th month of pregnancy, Mary goes home when John is born
 - Elizabeth is an older lady (advanced in years) and Mary is a teenager
 - They are both intimately involved in the plan of salvation
 - What did they talk about?
 - At some point, Elizabeth must have told Mary to go back to Joseph
- Mary goes back to Joseph when John is born
 - Joseph has a dream
 - Mt 1:20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."
 - Joseph wakes up
 - He now understands the plan, but he has lost her – he has no idea where she is
 - Mary comes knocking at the door, 3 months pregnant

Jesus' Birth and Youth (2:1-52)

- D. Jesus' Birth and Youth (2:1-52)
 - a. Jesus born (2:1-7)
 - b. Shepherds visit (2:8-20)
 - c. Jesus presented in the temple (2: 21-40)
 - 1. Jesus' circumcision (2:21)
 - a). Simeon's song (*Nunc Dimittis*) (2:29-32)
 - 2. Mary's purification (2:22-38)
 - d. Return to Nazareth (2:39-40)
 - e. Jesus at the temple at twelve years old (2:41-51)

Mary and Joseph return to Jerusalem

- Augustus issues a decree that causes Joseph to return to Bethlehem, thereby fulfilling the prophecy
 - Joseph returns to Jerusalem for the census – Mary is 9 months pregnant
- Bethlehem
 - City of David – where David was born to Jesse
- Donkeys – Don't ride on them. They are used for pulling carts or hauling cargo
 - Roman roads were made of paving stones
 - Mary had a bumpy ride in a donkey cart for 100 miles
- Remarkably humble circumstances (unlike Caesar) – Mary traveling to Bethlehem when her baby was due to be born

Jesus born (4/6 B.C.)

- Miracle of the incarnation – the greatest miracle of the Christian faith
 - Virgin birth is needed to be a Christian
 - Unless Jesus is God and man, he cannot redeem us
 - The incarnation is a microcosm of the Gospel
- The son of God exists for all eternity – he united with the human to become the man God
 - Muslims teach father (God), Jesus (son), and mother (Mary)

Name – Jesus

Lk 1:30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

- Jesus means 'the Lord saves'
- Jesus is the Hebrew name for Joshua
 - Very common name
- Christ is a title which means the anointed one, or Messiah
 - Christ is not his last name.
 - It is the Greek word "Christós" meaning "anointed," which is the translation of the Hebrew word "Māšîaḥ", meaning "the Messiah, the anointed one"
- Paul almost always refers to the Lord as Christ Jesus, as opposed to the other Apostles refer to him as Jesus Christ
 - The Apostles knew Christ in a very personal, intimate way – they refer to him as Jesus, the Messiah
 - Paul never knew Jesus on earth. He persecuted the followers of Christ, then had a dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus.
 - He refers to him as the Messiah Jesus. It's almost like he saying 'Sir' with a salute.
 - It's a different relationship that Paul has with Christ than the other Apostles had

Inn

- Greek word translated "inn" here is kataluma
 - It means a place of rest, usually a guest room.

- Luke uses this very word later where it clearly refers to a guest room and not an inn. Notice Luke 22:11, where Jesus said to His disciples, “Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room [kataluma] where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’””
- In Luke 10:34, Luke uses a different Greek word when he writes about an actual inn— not the word kataluma. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus mentions that the injured man in the story was taken to an inn—and here Luke translates using the Greek word pandokheion, the normal word for an inn.
- Inn – Guest room in a home
 - “Was the 'inn' at Bethlehem, where Joseph and Mary sought a night's lodging, an upper guest room in a private home or some kind of public place for travelers? The question cannot be answered with certainty. It is thought by some that it may have been a guest chamber provided by the community. *We know that visitors to the annual feasts in Jerusalem were entertained in the guest rooms of private homes*” (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1982, Vol. 2, “Inn,” p. 826).
- Inn – Open air courtyard
 - Wall-in open air courtyard with a big gate
 - No individual rooms, you camped in the courtyard
 - Around the courtyard were shops – Kitchen, blacksmith, etc
 - Slept 100-150 people comfortably
 - Medieval caravan stop in Iconium, Central Turkey
 - Medieval caravan stop very similar to what Joseph and Mary would have stayed at
 - Stable
 - Stable was private and enclosed
 - The inn-keeper probably sent his wife out to help – very generous

Manger

- Manger is a feeding trough
- This is not what Mary would have expected at all

Angelic Host (Song of the Angels) (Lk 2:14)

- Song of perfect peace – peace between men & God – everlasting peace
- An army of angels
- Gospel = Good news
 - Send important people to deliver important messages
 - Angels were sent
- Recipients were a bunch of shepherds

Shepherds visit

- Shepherds are the societal low of the low
- Sign – Shepherds are given a sign
 - Lk 2:12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."
- Shepherds response – They obey
 - They do as the angels told them – they go and see, then praise and glorify Him, then spread the good news
 - They demonstrate obedience, trust, faith

Mary

Lk 1:19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

- Stranger in a strange land and gave birth in a manger
- Not treasured so much as gathered and struggled with everything, trying to come to terms with it all

- Pondered in Greek is _____ symbolion
 - ‘bol’ means to throw
 - Has the same root
 - Turbulent word
- What did she ponder?
 - The bumpy 100 miles donkey ride
 - The birth in a stable, in a feeding trough
 - Visit of the shepherds
- She must have had expectations of what it would be like to be the mother of God, and this was nothing close

Jesus is dedicated to God (Lk 2:21-38)

Circumcision

- Performed by a Rabbi on the 8th day
- Incorporates a person into the covenant community

Dedication

- Dedicated to God at the Temple in Jerusalem
 - After the time of purification – 40 days (Lv 12)

Simeon

- Simeon was expecting him
 - Knew the rough time
 - Daniel 9 dated the coming of the Messiah to AD 32
 - Expect him to become publically known at 30 years old. That’s the age that:
 - Priests take on full responsibility
 - David and Solomon became kings
 - Knew the place
 - Bethlehem, because Joseph was from the house and line of David
 - When the child is born, he will be dedicated at the Temple
 - Simeon see them and knows immediately

Simeon’s song of praise (Nunc Dimittis)

Lk 2:29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.
 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

Simeon’s prophecy

Lk 2:34 ... "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

- Tells Mary that Jesus is going to break her heart
 - Not the normal ‘what a cute baby’ that Mary was expecting
 - More things for her to ‘ponder’

Magi (wise men) visit (Mt 2:1-12)

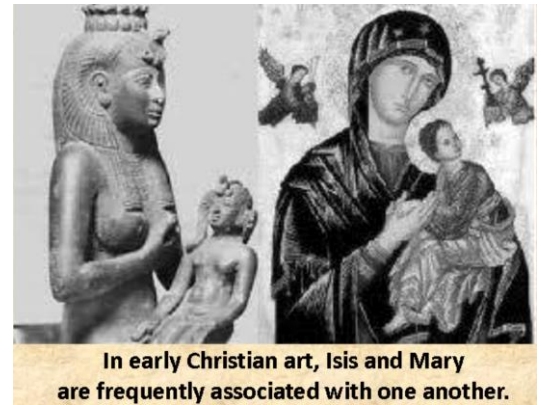
- Magi
 - Wise men from the east (Persia? – about a 4 month journey); Pagan astrologers
 - Or descendants from Daniel

- Historical book that discusses the Eastern Magi as the ‘good’ Magi – May explain why they were said to come from the east
- Get there sometime around November
- The coming of the Magi to visit the infant Jesus in Bethlehem fulfilled 2 prophecies:
 - Marks the recognition of the Messiah by the Gentile world, thus fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 49: 6—“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”
 - Identifies the Magi as “kings,” fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 60: 3—“Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.”
- Tradition holds there were three Magi
 - Based upon the three gifts they presented: gold, frankincense and myrrh
 - Tradition names the Magi: Melchoir, Caspar and Balthasar
 - No one knows exactly how many there were
- Tradition goes on to say that Saint Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, discovered the bones of the Magi on her famous pilgrimage to Palestine (A.D. 326-328), and that upon her return to Constantinople she deposited them at the great 4th-century church of Hagia Sophia.
 - Later, tradition holds, the bones were moved to Milan. In A.D. 1158 the remains of three bodies—said to be the Magi—were found in the Church of St. Estergio.
 - Emperor Frederick Barbarosa captured Milan in A.D. 1164 and moved the remains to Cologne, where today they are said to rest at the magnificent Gothic cathedral of Hohe Domkirche St. Peter und Maria in Cologne.
 - In Chaucer’s “Prologue” to the Canterbury Tales, we are told that the Wife of Bath visited the three kings on a pilgrimage to Cologne!
- Feast of the Epiphany – We remember the Magi liturgically on January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany
- *Theory*
 - The Magi were not from the East - they saw the star rise in the east (like most stars do because of the rotation of the Earth)
 - They were the descendants of Daniel, who never left Babylon
 - Explains why they were so eager to worship the newborn King!

Star of Bethlehem

- Many have attempted to explain the “Star of Bethlehem,” the phenomenon that directed the Magi to Bethlehem.
- Explanations range from:
 - A miraculous event, fulfilling prophecy (Numbers 24: 17)
 - An astronomical object, such as a planet, comet or meteor
 - An astrological event, such as the convergence of two planets
 - A pious fiction.
- Sirius / Isis

- In the ancient literature of Egypt, Greece and Rome, astrological phenomenon were routinely associated with the birth of important people.
- Sirius is the brightest star in the eastern sky in Egypt
 - Starting in April, for a period of 70 days, Sirius disappears below the horizon, not emerging until the beginning of the summer solstice at the time of the Nile River's inundation, bringing renewed life to Egypt.
- Sirius was the star of the virgin goddess Isis
 - Consort of the great god Osiris and mother of Horus
 - Triumphs over evil and ushers in a new beginning.
- The rising of the star Sirius recalls the story.



- Astronomy
 - <http://www.bethlehemstar.com/>
 - 2 BC, the stars Jupiter (king planet) and Venus (mother planet) came together so close that they could not be separated by the naked eye
 - What John saw in his visions in Revelation, is exactly what happened at 2 BC at the birth of Jesus
 - 9 Points that the Bible states:
 - Lion of Judah
 - Birth of a King
 - Brightest star
 - Southern star
 - Coronation – Jupiter makes a halo around the lion constellation before it continues
 - Retrograde rotation – Stars are not moving, we are. Because of that, sometimes start appear to go backwards before continuing forwards
 - Sept 3BC
 - Star stopped over Bethlehem
 - Retrograde rotation – Stars are not moving, we are. Because of that, sometimes start appear to go backwards before continuing forwards
 - 12/25/2 BC – The point at which Jupiter/Venus ‘stopped’ and changed direction for the retrograde rotation
 - Date that the wise men showed up in Bethlehem, not the date the Jesus was born
 - Happened 9 months after the coronation
 - Moon will be turned to blood
 - Blood moon – earth eclipses the moon, so the only light that the moon gets is refracted around the earth and has a reddish color
 - Happened at Pentecost
 - Acts 2:19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

[Flight to Egypt \(Mt 2:13-18\)](#)

- An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream
 - Herod is going to search for Jesus and destroy him – flee Bethlehem and take refuge in Egypt.
 - Recall that Abraham and Sarah flee the Promised Land to take refuge in Egypt.
- Mary and Joseph are poor
 - We know this from their sacrifice at the Temple
 - How do they afford a trip to Egypt? The gifts from the Magi!
- How long do they stay? Couple of years probably
- Prophecy fulfilled – Hos 11:1 “out of Egypt I called my son.”
- Coptic church

- Dates itself back to the flight to Egypt
- “Coptic” means “Egyptian,” and Christians living in Egypt identify themselves as Coptic Christians.
- Originated in the city of Alexandria
 - As a denomination they originated in the city of Alexandria, one of the most faithful, respected, and fruitful cities during the Apostolic Period.
- Founded by John Mark
 - Proudly, the Coptic Christians acknowledge and herald John Mark, (author of the Gospel of Mark), as their founder and first bishop sometime between A.D. 42 - A.D. 62.
 - When John Mark arrived on a missionary journey to Egypt, the Coptic form of religion of that day was god-centered worship, but focused upon the pyramids. However, John Mark and the Gospel message were well received by the Coptic people as they also believed in “eternal life.”
 - The Coptic Christians were originally well founded in theology, and other churches in cities throughout the Roman Empire looked up to them with great admiration and respect, willingly following their lead in doctrinal like-mindedness and unity.
- Conversion to Islam
 - It is interesting to note that when the Coptics were under the rule of the Roman Empire, they suffered severe persecution and death for their steadfast faith and beliefs in Christ while refusing to worship emperors.
 - However, by A.D. 641, yet another tribulation began when the Arab conquest took place, overthrowing the Romans’ rule in Egypt and, at first, relieving the Coptic Church from persecution.
 - What appeared to be their liberty and freedom became yet again bondage.
 - The societal strength and control of the Arabs caused the Coptics to endure a major language and culture change as well as confront the Islamic faith.
 - Unfortunately, over the centuries, Christianity lost foothold and most Coptics converted to Islam.
- Coptic Christians today
 - Today, there is a small population of Coptic Christians remaining in Alexandria, but most are located elsewhere.
 - Estimates of the current population of the Coptic Church range from 10 million to 60 million members worldwide.
- Theology
 - Coptic Christianity is very similar to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.
 - They profess to be genuine followers of Jesus Christ and a part of His worldwide Church.
 - But, as with Catholicism, they tend to emphasize meritorious works in salvation along with liturgical ritual rather than salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Murder of the Innocence (Mt 2:16-18)

- The Massacre of the Infants
 - Herod the Great orders that all boys under 2 years old in Bethlehem be killed
- Recalls the story of Moses
 - The “Massacre of the Infants” recalls the story of Moses as an infant in Exodus 1, when Pharaoh orders that all the newborn male Hebrew children be drowned in the Nile River.
 - It is Moses through whom God will redeem his people from slavery in Egypt.
 - Likewise, it is Jesus through whom God will redeem all of humanity from slavery to sin and death.
- Herod dies in 4 BC. How does he order this 4 years before Christ was born?
 - Calendar change – the Julian calendar was changed to the Gregorian calendar
 - The Julian calendar was replaced because it did not properly reflect the actual time it takes the Earth to circle once around the Sun, known as a tropical year or solar year.
- Prophecy fulfilled – Jer 31:15
 - Mt 2:17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: 18" A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

Return to Nazareth (Mt 2:19-23)

- An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in 2 dreams – once to leave Egypt, and another to leave Bethlehem
- Prophecy fulfilled - "He will be called a Nazarene."
- Recall that Moses also leaves Egypt to lead his people to the Promised Land.

Jesus at the temple at 12 years old

- Jesus is 12 years old – Becomes an adult
 - Bar Mitzvah
 - Bar Mitzvah – Son of the Commandments
 - Transition from child to man – you are now responsible for your relationship with God
 - The custom of bar mitzvah for a thirteen-year-old Jewish boy was not in place at this time (Fitzmyer 1981:440).
 - If the Mishna is relevant to the first-century Jewish practice, which is likely in this case, then religious instruction would have become more intense for Jesus upon his reaching twelve (m. Niddah 5:6; m. Megilla4:6; m. `Abot 5:12).
- Jesus now speaks for himself for the first time.
 - Shows the sense of mission and self-awareness Jesus possesses
 - Jesus has a unique relationship to God and a clear sense of his calling, one that transcends his relationship to his earthly parents.
- As Luke's infancy overture comes to a close, he makes a transition to John and Jesus' ministry through a single incident from Jesus' adolescence. This is the literary climax of Luke's initial section
 - Inclusio with Temple
 - Though strictly speaking not an infancy account, that this belongs in this initial literary division of Luke is indicated by the fact that it takes place in the temple, which is where the section started in Luke 1:5.
 - The note on Jesus' growth parallels the close of the discussion of John the Baptist in Luke 1:80.
 - Lk 1:80 And the child [John the Baptist] grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.
 - The Problem: Jesus Is Missing (2:41-45)
- Annual Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem
 - The parents of Jesus were devout Jews. The Old Testament commanded such a trip for three festivals a year (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles; Ex 23:14-17; 34:22-23; Deut 16:16).
 - But by the first century, God-fearing Jews made only one journey a year because of the distances involved (Josephus on Passover--Life 345-54; Antiquities 17.9.3 213-14; Jewish Wars 2.1.3 10-12; 2.14.3 280; Brown 1977:472).
 - The Passover was the major feast celebrated at the beginning of the Jewish year, Nisan 15, which falls in our month of March or April (Fitzmyer 1981:339-40).
 - Only men were required to make the journey, so Mary's presence shows her commitment (Preisker 1964:373).
 - Jerusalem was eighty miles from Nazareth, so the trip would take three days.
 - Though some have argued that women and children traveled separately from the men as a way to explain how Jesus got lost, there is no ancient text that describes this practice.
- After the seven days of celebration, Jesus' family returns home.
 - The text does not say why his parents fail to make sure that he was present in the caravan. Possibilities:
 - As verse 44 suggests, they assume he is with friends or relatives.

- Jewish children did not associate with the Jewish men, they stayed with the women. Perhaps Mary thought that he was with Joseph (now that he was a man) and Joseph assumed that Jesus wanted to walk back with his childhood friends and Mary.



- On the first evening of their homeward journey they notice that he is missing.
 - The road is marked by a steep vertical drop-off on 1 side into a wadi qelt below. Joseph and Mary must assume that he has fallen into the canyon and they check every nook and cranny. Takes 3 days to get back to Jerusalem.
 - They have searched everywhere, and are back at the Jerusalem. What do you do now? Your child is missing. You go to the Temple to pray.
- Jesus is at the Temple
 - Perhaps he ran back to ask 1 last question and when he came back, everyone is gone.
 - What do you tell your children to do if they become separated and lost – stay put and we will find you.
 - Jesus may have been doing what he was told by staying at the Temple.
 - Listening to and asking questions of the teachers
 - Jesus' discussion with the officials leaves those who listen amazed at his understanding and his answers.
 - At the tender age of twelve, Jesus already shows signs of possessing great wisdom.
 - Clearly Luke wants the reader to develop a sense of respect for this amazing, blessed child.
- Mary asks Jesus - "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."
- Jesus' self-declaration of mission
 - The mild parental complaint leads to Jesus' self-declaration of mission.
 - With the reply appears the first of many dei ("it is necessary") statements in Luke
 - 4:43; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 19:5; 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44
 - The key phrase in verse 49 is elliptical, making its meaning disputed.
 - (1) I must be about my Father's affairs (L. T. Johnson 1991:61)
 - (2) I must be in the house of my Father (Stein 1992:123; NIV).
 - This view also means that Jesus must be engaged in teaching God's ways, since for Luke the temple is a place where Jesus instructs (20:1--21:4).
 - Greek idiom supports this second view.
 - Jesus' parents--and Luke's readers--need to appreciate that Jesus understood his mission.
 - From the very beginning he is reflecting on the will of God.
 - He starts revealing himself right in the center of Judaism's religious capital.
- There is a second key detail. Jesus refers to God as his Father.
 - This alludes to the sense of family relationship and intimacy Jesus has with his heavenly Father (10:21-22).
 - Such closeness to God not only is something Jesus' parents need to appreciate but also is a point the disciples will struggle to grasp (9:59-62; 14:26; Mk 10:29-30).
 - In fact, Luke makes this the first note in a series of revelations that will build the case for who Jesus is.
 - The infancy material stresses Jesus as Messiah
 - This text is one of two hints early in Luke's Gospel that he is also much more. Luke reveals Jesus' identity gradually, bringing the reader along in an understanding of who Jesus is. So this first clue comes from Jesus himself. The other major clue comes in the infancy section, where Jesus' divine origin is tied to the Spirit (1:31-35).
- Jesus is breaking new ground with his parents here, and they need to understand who he is, just as Luke's readers do.
 - The text makes it clear that at the time they still did not understand what he was saying to them.

- But Mary treasured (or pondered) all these things in her heart, an appropriate response to Jesus' somewhat enigmatic remarks.
 - Mary does what Luke wants his readers to do as well. It is good to pause and contemplate who Jesus is and the mission he performs. Even two thousand years of history does not do away with the need for such reflection.
- Obedient to his parents, Jesus goes home with them to Nazareth.
 - While there he grows in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Lk 1:80; 2:40).
 - There he awaits God's timing to begin the ministry associated with God's house.
 - In the meantime he shows respect for his parents through his obedience, a model for us in a world where teenage rebellion is all too common.

Christmas

J Jesus
O Others
Y Yourself

Advent

Advent – Coming or looking forward to the 2nd coming of Jesus

- 4 weeks before Christmas – begins 4 Sundays before Christmas and ends on December 24
- The Season of Advent: Anticipation, hope, and preparation
- Advent is a season about John the Baptist more than Jesus – it's a season of preparation for the birth of Jesus
- Before the incarnation, Jesus was spirit. After the incarnation, Jesus was flesh.
 - Christmas is the celebration of Jesus taking on flesh so He could die for us

Advent wreath

1. Prophecy / Hope
 - Old Testament prophets, esp Isaiah
 - Is 2:1-5
2. Bethlehem / Preparation
 - John the Baptist
3. Shepherds / Joy
4. Angels / Love
5. Christ candle

Purple & yellow

Purple – Royalty and repentance

The Meaning of the Advent Wreath

Advent, from the Latin word *adventus* meaning arrival, is the 4-week period prior to Christmas. It is a time to ponder the great sacrifice that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, made for us by coming to earth as an infant. He lived a perfect life, died a sacrificial death, and rose from the dead for us. He saved us from our sins and eternal damnation because of his great love, and adopts each person individually into his family through baptism and faith in him.

An advent wreath can be a teaching tool and a reminder for Christians of the true meaning of Christmas.

Traditionally, the Advent wreath symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent. It is typically a circular candle holder that holds five candles. During the season of Advent one candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday until all of the candles, including the fifth candle, are lit on Christmas Day. Each candle customarily represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Most Advent wreaths use three colors of candles – purple, pink, and white. However, some may use blue in place of the purple. The Bible readings below can be read as each candle is lit.

1st CANDLE – (purple) THE PROPHECY CANDLE or CANDLE OF HOPE

We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God!

“And again, Isaiah says, ‘The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.’ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” ~ Romans 15:12-13

2nd CANDLE – (purple) THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF PREPARATION

God kept his promise of a Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. Preparation means to “get ready”. Help us to be ready to welcome you, O God!

“As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: ‘A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God’s salvation.’ ~ Luke 3:4-6

3rd CANDLE – (pink) THE SHEPHERD CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF JOY

The shepherds received a message of joy!

“...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ ~ Luke 2:7-15

4th CANDLE – (purple) THE ANGEL CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF LOVE

The angels announced the good news of a Savior!

“...I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord” ~ Luke 2:10b-11
God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because he loves us!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” ~ John 3:16-17

5th CANDLE – (white) CHRIST CANDLE

The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins. His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth!

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” ~ John 1:29

Church calendar

- Advent is the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition.
- It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30
- It ends on Christmas Eve (Dec 24). If Christmas Eve is a Sunday, it is counted as the fourth Sunday of Advent, with Christmas Eve proper beginning at sundown.

The Meaning of "Advent"

- The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival."
- The focus of the entire season is preparation to:
 - Celebrate the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent

- Anticipate the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent.
- Celebrates the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God
 - Advent is far more than simply marking a 2,000 year old event in history. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God.
 - That is a process in which we now participate, and the consummation of which we anticipate.
 - Scripture reading for Advent will reflect this emphasis on the Second Advent, including themes of accountability for faithfulness at His coming, judgment on sin, and the hope of eternal life.
- Symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and a congregation
 - In this double focus on past and future, Advent also symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and a congregation, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power.
 - That acknowledgment provides a basis for Kingdom ethics, for holy living arising from a profound sense that we live "between the times" and are called to be faithful stewards of what is entrusted to us as God's people.
 - So, as the church celebrates God's in breaking into history in the Incarnation, and anticipates a future consummation to that history for which "all creation is groaning awaiting its redemption," it also confesses its own responsibility as a people commissioned to "love the Lord your God with all your heart" and to "love your neighbor as yourself."

The Spirit of Advent

- Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing.
 - There is a yearning for deliverance from the evils of the world, first expressed by Israelite slaves in Egypt as they cried out from their bitter oppression. It is the cry of those who have experienced the tyranny of injustice in a world under the curse of sin, and yet who have hope of deliverance by a God who has heard the cries of oppressed slaves and brought deliverance!
 - It is that hope, however faint at times, and that God, however distant He sometimes seems, which brings to the world the anticipation of a King who will rule with truth and justice and righteousness over His people and in His creation. It is that hope that once anticipated, and now anticipates anew, the reign of an Anointed One, a Messiah, who will bring peace and justice and righteousness to the world.
- Part of the expectation also anticipates a judgment on sin and a calling of the world to accountability before God.
 - We long for God to come and set the world right! Yet, as the prophet Amos warned, the expectation of a coming judgment at the "Day of the Lord" may not be the day of light that we might want, because the penetrating light of God's judgment on sin will shine just as brightly on God's people.
 - Because of this important truth, especially in the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Season of Advent has been a time of fasting and penitence for sins similar to the Season of Lent.
 - However, a different emphasis for the season of Advent has gradually unfolded in much of the rest of the church.
 - The season of Advent has come to be celebrated more in terms of expectation or anticipation.
- Longing for redemption, not from personal guilt and sin, but from the systemic evil of the world
 - The anticipation of the Coming of the Messiah throughout the Old Testament and Judaism was not in connection with remembrance of sins. Rather, it was in the context of oppression and injustice, the longing for redemption, not from personal guilt and sin but from the systemic evil of the world expressed in evil empires and tyrants. It is in that sense that all creation groans for its redemption as we witness the evil that so dominates our world (Rom 8:18-25).
 - There is the problem of longing for vindication from an evil world when we are contributors to that evil.
 - This is the power of the images of Amos when he warns about longing for the "Day of the Lord" that will really be a day of darkness (Amos 5:18-20).
 - Still, even with Amos' warning the time of Advent is one of expectation and anticipation, a longing for God's actions to restore all things and vindicate the righteous.
 - This is why during Advent we as Christians also anticipate the Second Coming as a twin theme of the season.

- So, while some church traditions focus on penitence during Advent, and there remains a place for that, the spirit of that expectation from the Old Testament is better captured with a joyous sense of expectancy. Rather than a time of mourning and fasting, Advent is celebrated as a time of joy and happiness as we await the coming of the King. There will be time enough during the rest of the journey through the Church Year to remember our sins. It begins in Epiphany when we hear about the brotherhood of the Kingdom, and realize our failure to effect it. Then as we move toward and through Lent we realize that the coming of Jesus served more to lay bare our own sin than it did to vindicate our righteousness. There will be time to shed Peter's bitter tears as we realize that what started with such possibility and expectation has apparently ended in such failure.
 - It is only as we experience that full cycle, beginning with unbridled joy in Advent that slowly fades into the realization of what we have done with and to the Christ, that the awful reality of Good Friday can have its full impact. And in that realization we can finally be ready to hear the Good News on Resurrection Sunday! That is the journey that the disciples took. And so there is value in taking the same journey beginning with the anticipation and joy of Advent!
- So, we celebrate with gladness the great promise in the Advent, yet knowing that there is also a somber tone as the theme of threat is added to the theme of promise. This is reflected in some of the Scripture readings for Advent, in which there is a strong prophetic tone of accountability and judgment on sin. But this is also faithful to the role of the Coming King who comes to rule, save, and judge the world.
- Advent is a time of preparation marked by prayer
 - Because of the dual themes of threat and promise, Advent is a time of preparation that is marked by prayer.
 - Advent's prayers are prayers of humble devotion and commitment, prayers of submission, prayers for deliverance, prayers from those walking in darkness who are awaiting and anticipating a great light (Isa 9)!
 - The spirit of Advent is expressed well in the parable of the bridesmaids who are anxiously awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom (Matt 25:1-13). There is profound joy at the Bridegroom's expected coming. And yet a warning of the need for preparation echoes through the parable. But even then, the prayer of Advent is still: Come, O Come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel!

4 songs of Advent

Mary's song (Lk 1:46) - Magnificat
 Zechariah's song (*Benedictus*) (Lk 1:67-79)
 The Angelic Host (Luke 2:14)
 Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32)

12 days of Christmas

- December 25th → January 5th (beginning of Epiphany on January 6th)
- In some places it is traditional to give Christmas gifts for each of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

The song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is an English Christmas carol.

- From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly.
- Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church.
- Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. To fit the number scheme, when you reach number 9, representing the Fruits of the Holy Ghost, the originator combined 6 to make 3, taking the 6 fruits that were similar: the fruit in each parenthesis is the that was not named separately. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost.

According to Ann Ball in her book, *HANDBOOK OF CATHOLIC SACRAMENTALS*:

- 1 "True Love" = Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day.
 - The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

- 2 turtle doves
 - Old and New Testaments
- 3 French hens
 - Theological Virtues: Faith, hope, and love
- 4 calling birds
 - 4 gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- 5 golden rings
 - The first 5 books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Savior
- 6 geese a-laying
 - 6 days of creation
- 7 swans a-swimming
 - The sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- 8 maids a-milking
 - 8 beatitudes
- 9 ladies dancing
 - The 9 fruits of the Holy Spirit
 - Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity].
- 10 lords a-leaping
 - 10 Commandments
- 11 pipers piping
 - 11 faithful Apostles
- 12 drummers drumming
 - 12 points of belief in The Apostles' Creed
-

Epiphany (January 6th) – Wise Men

- Epiphany is the climax of the Advent/Christmas Season. Celebrates:
 - The time the Wise Men or Magi arrived to present gifts to the young Jesus (Matt. 2:1-12)
 - Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the Jordan River
 - Jesus's 1st miracle at the wedding at Cana
- The term epiphany means "to show" or "to make known" or even "to reveal."
 - In Western churches, it remembers the coming of the wise men bringing gifts to visit the Christ child, who by so doing "reveal" Jesus to the world as Lord and King.
- Adore
 - Adore – Pay divine honor; worship
 - Why adore
 - He was humble – He left perfection to come to our broken world
 - He came to save us – He came to serve us, when we should be serving him
- 3 Magi?
 - Traditionally there were three Magi, probably from the fact of three gifts, even though the biblical narrative never says how many Magi came.
- Three Kings Day, or simply the Day of the Kings
 - In some cultures, especially Hispanic and Latin American culture, January 6th is observed as Three Kings Day, or simply the Day of the Kings.

- Even though December 25th is celebrated as Christmas in these cultures, January 6th is often the day for giving gifts.
- Since Eastern Orthodox traditions use a different religious calendar, they celebrate Christmas on January 7th and observe Epiphany or Theophany on January 19th
- Gifts of the Magi
 - Myrrh
 - Used as an embalming spice in those days
 - It pointed to the death Jesus would die on our behalf, the payment for our sins.
 - Gold
 - So valuable that many commentators believe Joseph used it to cover the costs of traveling to Egypt, following the angel's command and keeping Jesus safe after Herod ordered the slaughter of all baby boys.
 - Frankincense
 - It's mentioned in the book of Exodus when God reveals His design for the tabernacle — the place where He would be present with His people. Exodus 30:22–38 has specific instructions about an incense that was to be offered to the Lord: “Never use this formula to make this incense for yourselves. It is reserved for the Lord, and you must treat it as holy. Anyone who makes incense like this for personal use will be cut off from the community” (Exodus 30:37–38). This incense was to be burned in front of the Ark of the Covenant at the place where God would meet the high priest.
 - Clearly, this incense signified the presence of God with His people. And what exactly was in this special incense? God instructed them to gather fragrant spices and “mix these fragrant spices with pure frankincense” (Exodus 30:34).
 - As the Magi placed their gifts before the Christ Child, the message was loud and clear: God has come to us!
- For many Protestant church traditions, the season of Epiphany extends from January 6th until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent leading to Easter.

Xmas (X=Christ)

In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the word Christos (Christ) begins with the letter "X," or *chi*. Here's what it looks like: Χριστός

So how did that word get abbreviated?

In the early fourth century, Constantine the Great, Roman Emperor from 306-337, popularized this shorthand for Christ. According to legend, on the eve of his great **battle against Maxentius**, Constantine had a vision that led him to create a military banner emblazoned with the first two letters of Christ on it: *chi* and *rho*.



These two letters, then, became a sort of shorthand for Jesus Christ.

When did the Greek letter start to be used in the word "Christmas?"

Most scholars agree that the first appearance of this abbreviation for Christmas dates to 1021, "when an Anglo-Saxon scribe saved himself space by writing XPmas," reported **First Things**. Parchment paper was quite expensive, so any techniques for saving space were welcome. The abbreviation stuck and eventually was shortened to Xmas.

The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge used it in a **letter**, dated December 31, 1801, for instance: "On Xmas day I breakfasted with Davy." The verb "xmassing" was also used in the magazine *Punch* in 1884, according to **The Guardian**.

Are there any other Christian examples of this?

There's an ancient acronym many of us are familiar with, even if we don't realize it. Have a look:

IXΘΥΣ

It's pronounced Ich-thus, and it's the Greek word for fish. You may know it better as the so-called "**Jesus fish**" of bumper sticker fame. Early Christians used it as an abbreviated form of one of their creeds: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

These shorthands happen in seminaries all the time. As they do with Christ, seminarians write a similar shorthand for the Greek word God, which is θεός (theos). When abbreviating the word, they'll just jot down the first letter, θ (theta).

Jesus' Public Ministry in Galilee

Jesus launches his public ministry when he is “about thirty years old” (Luke 3: 23); it lasts three years. During that time “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matthew 4: 23).

Jesus never travelled much more than about 100 miles from home (journey to Jerusalem)

Nicodemus

- Wants a private conversation, and Jesus is always surrounded by people
- Read the gaps
- What must I do to have eternal life?
- I am who I am as a result of my accumulated experiences of my life within a community

Solomon rides into Jerusalem as king on a mule – the same way that Jesus did

- People shake palm branches as Jesus rides in – symbolic swords – represent the Kerethites and the Pelethites (mercenaries) who were there when Solomon rode into Jerusalem as king on a mule
- He is not entering Jerusalem in humility – he is entering as a king.
- It is a replica of Solomon’s entrance into Jerusalem as king (1Ki1) – he rides into Jerusalem exactly the way that Solomon did to assume the kingship
- All the people recognize it and do proclaim him king

Long days

- Mt 14:3-23
- Mk 1:21-35
- Lk 6:12-16
- Lk 22:39-46

John baptizes Jesus

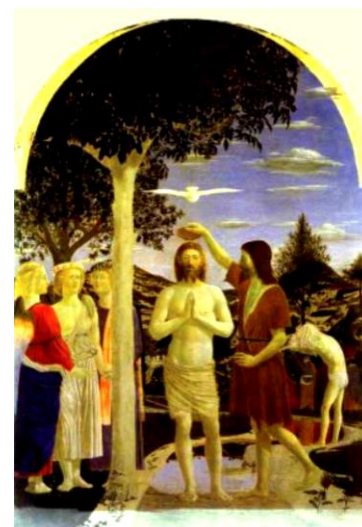
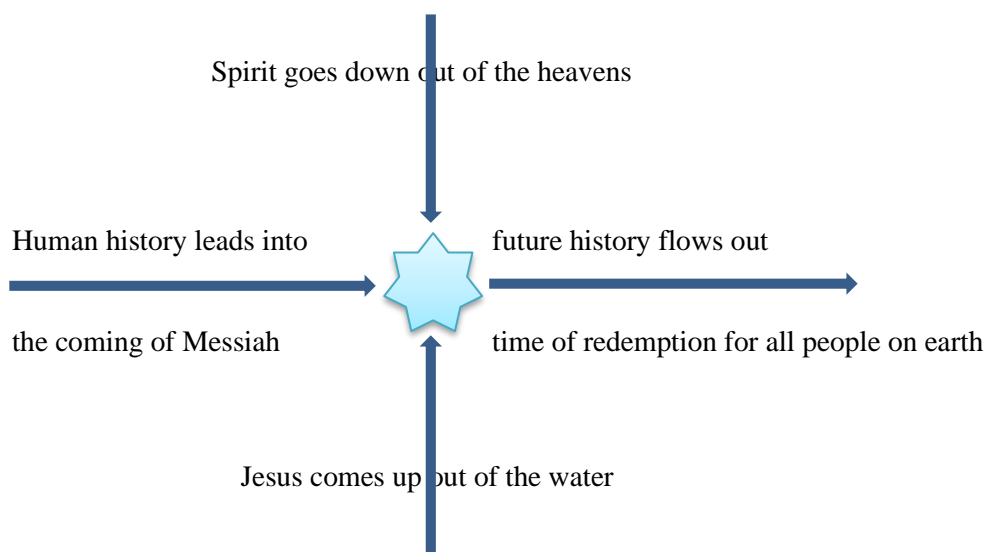
- John baptizes Jesus at Passover

Jesus is commissioned as Messiah

Mk 1:9 and immediately coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn apart and the Spirit like a dove descending into him 10 and there was a voice out of the heavens: “You are my Son, the Beloved; in you I am well pleased.”

- At Jesus’ baptism three things occur:
 - John baptizes him
 - When Jesus passes through the waters of the Jordan, he is identified with Israel and sinful humanity
 - The Spirit descends into him
 - When the Holy Spirit descends into him, he is equipped for his task as the Christ
 - We should understand “Spirit” as “Holy Spirit.” As Mark drops the initial inscriptions of “Christ, Son of God” from Jesus (v. 1) and “the one baptizing in the desert” from John (v. 4), so does his drop “Holy” from Spirit (v. 8)
 - God proclaims him as his Son
 - God proclaims Jesus’ authority for executing that role
 - From this point on, Jesus is fully acknowledged as commissioned to act with the authority and power of God, as God’s Spirit-filled, Spirit-led Son.
- The sequence and symbolism establish Jesus’ commission as Messiah, and they are rooted in the Old Testament:

- At Aaron's commissioning as high priest he is publicly washed with water and anointed with oil, just as Jesus is publicly washed in the waters of baptism and filled with the Holy Spirit;
- As Aaron has the turban placed upon his head with the sacred diadem reading "Sacred to the Lord," so does Jesus have the title placed upon him, "my Son, the Beloved"
- As Aaron is consecrated to the high priesthood, so is Jesus consecrated to his role as Messiah.
- Robert Tannehill notes that we are "to understand the baptism scene as the communication of this commission, for here we have a rare type of story, one in which God speaks directly to Jesus and declares who Jesus is."
- As readers, we have now been told of Jesus' identity twice in eleven verses:
 - Once by the narrator
 - Once by God himself
 - Lest we have any doubt, the narrator has provided the evidence of two credible witnesses.



Piero della Francesca. *The Baptism of Christ* (egg on poplar), c. 1450. National Gallery, London.

- Picture:
 - Horizontal plane:
 - All human history leads into this moment, to the coming of Messiah
 - All future history flows out of this moment, a time of redemption for all people on earth.
 - Vertical plane
 - Jesus comes up out of the water
 - The Spirit goes down out of the heavens.
 - As the horizontal and vertical intersect
 - God announces, "You are my Son, the Beloved; in you I am well-pleased."
 - When God promised Abraham back in Genesis 12: 3 that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you," he spoke of this moment when his Son would step onto the stage of history.
 - In a stroke of narrative brilliance, Mark captures the dramatic moment.

3 texts knitted together from the OT

Mk 1:9 and immediately coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn apart and the Spirit like a dove descending into him 10 and there was a voice out of the heavens: "You are my Son, the Beloved; in you I am well pleased."

- Psalm 2
 - Presents the clearest allusion.
 - Here “the kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One” (Psalm 2:2). God rebukes the kings and he says to them: “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill” (2:6), and then he turns to his King and says: “You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession” (2:7-8).
 - In Psalm 2, God appoints his anointed one king over the rulers of the earth, and he confers on him the title of Son.
- Genesis 22
 - The sacrifice of Isaac – with its emphasis on the sacrifice of “the only son.”
 - Here Abraham takes his only son Isaac to Moriah to sacrifice him to God as a burnt offering. Once they arrive at the site, not knowing that he is to be the offering, Isaac asks his father for the sacrificial lamb. Abraham replies, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” Later, as Abraham is about to plunge the knife into Isaac, the angel of the Lord stays his hand, saying: “Do not lay a hand on the boy . . . Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son” (22: 12-13).
 - Significantly, God does not provide a lamb for the sacrifice, but a ram.
 - In the New Testament he provides the lamb, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1: 29).
 - As John the Baptist tells us himself, “This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me’” (John 1: 30).
- Isaiah 42:1
 - “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.”
 - Isaiah 42 records the first of four servant songs in Isaiah.
 - Here Isaiah tells us that the servant will become “a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness” (42: 6-7).
 - “servant”
 - In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for “servant” is linked to the phrase “servant of God”
 - In the four servant songs of Isaiah, it comes to denote the Messiah.
 - In the New Testament the phrase is normally rendered “Son of God,” where it refers to Jesus.
 - Important shift in terminology
 - It links Jesus with the servant in Isaiah
 - It links Jesus with the Son in Psalm 2:7
 - In Isaiah 42:1 God says, “I will put my Spirit on him [my servant/Son]”
 - At the baptism of Jesus, he does exactly that.
 - The phrase “servant of God” encompasses both a collective & individual understanding
 - In the collective understanding, “servant of God” refers to Israel as the “servant of God”
 - In the individual understanding—especially in Isaiah 52:13-53:12—it also refers to an individual: the Messiah
 - Although one can debate whether “servant of God” should refer to collective Israel or to the person of Messiah in any given context, clearly the New Testament read it as the latter
- C.S. Mann
 - C.S. Mann remarks that when God declares: “You are my Son, the Beloved; in you I am well-pleased” (Mark 1: 11), its importance “can hardly be exaggerated, since it combines motifs from the soteriological ideas of Genesis 22, a messianic designation in Psalm 2, and the Servant of Isaiah 42. The combination of motifs is startling, yet all the elements are at home in Palestinian Judaism.”
 - When the motifs converge, they clearly present Jesus as Son and Lord, acknowledged by God and commissioned for the task at hand.

Dove

- When we are told that Jesus “saw the Spirit like a dove descending into him,” it is the Spirit that is like a dove, not the manner in which the Spirit descends.
 - Placing “like a dove” after “the Spirit” instead of after “descending” in the Greek syntax favors “like a dove” modifying “Spirit,” not “descending.”
 - The phrase creates a striking and memorable image.
 - Leander Keck says: “Probably no detail of the account of Jesus’ baptism has evoked so diverse a range of suggestions as has the dove.”
- Use of the dove in the OT – A dove appears or is used as a literary device in five distinct ways in the OT:
 - Genesis 1:2 - “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”
 - Just as the Spirit of God hovered over the waters at the creation, so does the Spirit of God hover over the waters at Jesus’ baptism, ushering in a new era of creation.
 - The Genesis reference draws on the same bird imagery explicit in Deuteronomy.
 - Dt 32:11 God compares himself to “an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young”
 - “Hovering” is the same verb used in Deuteronomy 32:11
 - A recently published Dead Sea scroll fragment confirms this link between the bird imagery in Genesis 1:2 and the dove at Jesus’ baptism.
 - In the “Messianic Vision” fragment, line six reads: “And over the Poor will His Spirit hover and the Faithful will He support with his Strength.”
 - Dale C. Allison, Jr. says, “This text strengthens—indeed, all but confirms—the judgment of those who understand the baptismal dove as an allusion to Genesis.”
 - In Genesis 1:2, then, we find the same three elements that appear at Jesus’ baptism:
 - the Spirit of God
 - water
 - the image of a bird implied in hovering.
 - This is the second allusion Mark makes to Genesis 1. In the first, he begins his gospel “Beginning the gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God . . .,” recalling Genesis 1: 1, “In the beginning . . .”
 - Genesis 8 – Noah sends out a dove to see if the waters have receded from the flood
 - Delightful play on words – In Hebrew, “Noah” is no’-akh and “dove” is yo-naw’.
 - A careful reading of the story reveals a deep tenderness between Noah and the dove
 - When Noah releases the dove the first time, she returns to him, for she “found no resting place for her foot” (Genesis 8: 9).
 - “Resting place” is maw-no’-akh.
 - The word-play of “Noah-dove-resting place” links the three, suggesting that the dove looked for another Noah outside the ark, but finding none, she returned to the Noah she knew.
 - When she returned, Noah “reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself.”
 - G.W.H. Lampe suggests that as Noah’s dove was “the harbinger of the first covenant,” so the dove at Jesus’ baptism “opens the way toward the new covenant in which all Israel will ‘know the Lord’ through the indwelling presence of the Spirit.”
 - The psalms identify both David and Israel with the dove in vivid and beautiful terms:
 - Once as David says, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest” (Ps 55: 6)
 - Once again as a figure of Israel – In Psalm 68:13, David pictures God scattering Israel’s enemies, and while Israel herself sleeps among the campfires, God sees “the wings of my dove . . . sheathed with silver, its feathers with shining gold.” The psalms identify both David and Israel with the dove in vivid and beautiful terms.
 - In the Song of Songs, the dove provides a lovely metaphor for both the beloved and the lover:
 - “How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are doves” (1:15),

- “My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face; let me hear your voice . . .” (2:14),
- “I slept but my heart was awake. Listen! My lover is knocking: ‘Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one . . .’” (5:2).
- Dove references:
 - The immediate reference is to the lover and his beloved
 - One may also read the Song of Songs as an allegory of God’s love for Israel.
 - The dove, then, provides a beautiful and gentle metaphor on both levels.
- In the prophets, the dove continues as a symbol of Israel, principally in her distress.
 - In the prophets, Israel moans like a dove and hides trembling in the rocks.
- Outside the Bible another important reference adds to our understanding of the dove at Jesus’ baptism.
 - “24th Ode of Solomon” - “The dove fluttered over the head of our Lord Messiah,/ because he was her Head./ And she sang over him,/ and her voice was heard” (vv. 1-2).
 - Although composed sometime around A.D. 100, the Odes of Solomon probably reflect the earlier pre-Christian motif that we see present in the Dead Sea scroll fragment.
- As we can see, the dove imagery draws on a rich fabric of allusion.
 - It would be too simplistic to trace its origins to one particular reference
 - When the Spirit descends into Jesus like a dove, it brings with it an entire complex of Scriptural allusion
 - Suggests the Spirit of God hovering over the waters at creation
 - Suggests the tenderness of Noah and his dove at the dawn of a new beginning
 - Recalls the intimate imagery inherent in God’s love for Israel, and it suggests Israel herself, vulnerable and broken.
 - When the Spirit descends into Jesus at his baptism like a dove, picture its wings “sheathed with silver, its feathers with shining gold” as it embodies the entire history of salvation tightly woven into the fabric of Scripture.
- In the presence of such beautiful imagery it is important to keep in mind that the dove is not a literal creature, but a simile: “. . . he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit like a dove descending into him.”
 - The Greek preposition is properly translated into, not “on,” and it suggests that the Spirit descends into him and disappears into him.
 - The fact that Jesus sees its descent into him suggests that he is aware of what he has received. Filled with the Holy Spirit he is equipped for the task at hand and will use the Spirit’s power throughout the rest of the story.

Jesus is tempted by Satan

Mk 1:12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, 13 and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

A John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan (v. 9)

B The Spirit descends into him (v. 10)

C God proclaims Jesus as Son (v. 11)

D And immediately the Spirit drives him into the desert (v. 12)

C’ Satan tempts Jesus (v. 13a)

B’ The wild beasts are with him (v. 13b)

A’ Angels minister to Jesus in the desert (v. 13c)

- The symmetry of the two events, linked together as they are with “and immediately” in verse twelve, suggests an intimate connection between the two
 - The 3 events of verses nine through eleven are mirrored by their opposites in verse thirteen:
 - A/A’ – John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan, and angels minister to Jesus in the desert
 - B/B’ – The Spirit descends into him, and wild beasts are with him

- C/C' – God proclaims Jesus as his Son and Satan tempts him.
- The whole structure turns on verse twelve, moving Jesus from commission to action.
- Imbedded chiasm – Top half is mirrored by the bottom half
 - Common feature of both Hebrew poetry and narrative
 - Important element of Mark's narrative strategy

In the desert

- Parallels the 40 years of wilderness wanderings in the desert
 - Punishment for not trusting God
- God brought Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted
 - Jesus has declared/identified himself with sinners
 - He has to prove that he can resist the same temptations that we have
- 40 – Period of testing
 - 40 days and 40 nights of tempting
 - 40 years in the wilderness
- “the Spirit drives him out . . .”
 - The Greek word suggests strong—even violent—action.
 - Mark also uses the word for:
 - the expulsion of demons
 - the forceful removal of people
 - the plucking out of an eye.
- When Mark says: “the Spirit drives him out . . .,” it is in sharp contrast to:
 - Matthew's passive, “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert . . .” (Matthew 4: 1)
 - Luke's, “Jesus . . . was led by the Spirit in the desert” (Luke 4: 1).
 - Placing such a strong, vigorous word in the historical present intensifies the drama
 - The Spirit drives Jesus into the desert to demonstrate who he was.
- As Jesus moves into action, it is significant that his first encounter as Messiah is with Satan.
 - The verb being tempted suggests hostile intent – In the sense of “to wage war.”
 - Although the verb can mean “to test” (Mark uses it this way in 8: 11, 10: 2 and 12: 15), the fact that Satan initiates the testing suggests that he does so with the hostile intent that Jesus fail the test. The traditional translation, “tempted,” therefore, captures the meaning nicely.
 - In a very real sense, Mark portrays Jesus' temptation as the first engagement in a war.
 - The scene is set in the desert with the wild beasts, and it is fraught with danger.
 - Several scholars see the reference to animals as an allusion to Isaiah 11: 6-8; 65: 25 and Hosea 2: 18, saying that it is a restoration of paradise when “the wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat.” In this view “Jesus is the promised deliverer whose ministry begins under the control of the Spirit (1: 12) in the wilderness (1: 12-13a) where he resists Satan (1: 13a) and lies in harmony with creation (1:13b, c) befitting the presence of the new age of salvation” (Guelich, p. 40). In my opinion, though, the scene is much too ominous for such an interpretation. We have already noticed in Psalm 74: 19—“do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts.” And one may well think of the desert as the haunt of jackals and the home of owls. When the Israelites spent forty years being tested in the desert, all but Joshua and Caleb were buried there.

Temptations

- Every one of Jesus' answers is the word of God – all from Deuteronomy
 - IF you are the son of God – introduces doubt
 - 2nd – Satan quotes Ps 91 – misinterpretation of the Scripture

- 3rd – Jesus does not deny that Satan has the ability to give him the kingdoms of the world
 - Jesus will already have dominion over the whole world after the crucifixion and resurrection – Satan is offering him a shortcut that doesn’t involve all the horrors that He will have to endure
 - Wouldn’t you rather take the easy path . . . one of Satan’s most common temptations
- Resist the devil and he will flee from you
 - Satan left after the 3rd temptation
 - It’s hard, but don’t surrender and Satan will leave you
- The temptations is not restricted to the three temptations that are presented - they are continuous, extending throughout the forty days
 - Know this by the grammar – Written as a passive present participle
- We should not read into “being tempted” the possibility that Jesus could have failed under Satan’s onslaught.
 - He could not.
 - The Spirit did not drive Jesus into the desert to risk failure; it drove him there to demonstrate who he was.
 - As the narrator tells the reader who Jesus is in the first eleven verses of the prologue, so does Satan learn who he is in the temptation scenes.
- Notice how the demons respond to him after this:
 - “Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” (Mark 1:24),
 - “The unclean spirits whenever they saw him were falling down before him and were crying out, saying, ‘You are the Son of God!’” (Mark 3:11),
 - “What do I have to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore you by God, do not torment me! . . . and he was begging him earnestly not to send them out of the region” (Mark 5:7, 10).
 - The demons’ words reflect the outcome of Jesus’ encounter with Satan in the desert.
 - When the demons meet Jesus, there is never any question of who Jesus is or of who has the upper hand.
- Parallels between the Satanic temptations of Eve and Jesus
 - Genesis 3 / Matthew 4

<u>Eve</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
“Good for food”	stones into bread
“pleasing to the eye”	throw yourself down
“desirable for gaining wisdom”	kingdoms of the world



Duccio di Buoninsegna. *The Temptation of Christ* (tempera on panel), 1308-1311. The Frick Collection, New York.

Peter's Confession of Faith

Satan's theme – It's not proper for the Messiah to suffer

Mt 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

At the Mount of Transfiguration

In the Garden of Gethsemane

John is arrested, Jesus takes over

See John is arrested

Discipleship

- Talmide (Talmidim) – more than just students – they wanted to become the Rabbis
 - Consuming passion to be like their Rabbi
- Made a connection between religion and the way that they live
- Created a community – including accountability
- Faith – Passionate commitment to action

Jesus moves from Nazareth to Capernaum (Lk 4:31-9:50)

- Jesus rejected at Nazareth (Lk 4:14-30)
- Jesus relocates to Capernaum (Lk 4:31-9:50)

After Jesus' baptism and John's arrest, Jesus quickly relocates to Capernaum and chooses twelve disciples who will become his inner circle.

- Becomes known as Jesus of Nazareth
- About 1.5 hour drive north

Capernaum

- Relocates from the familiar village of Nazareth where he grew up, to Capernaum on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, a distance of 40 miles.
- Lives with Peter
- Becomes the headquarters for his public ministry

Galilee was the Berkley of Jesus' time – hotbed of radical thinking

Basalt base – unlike Jerusalem

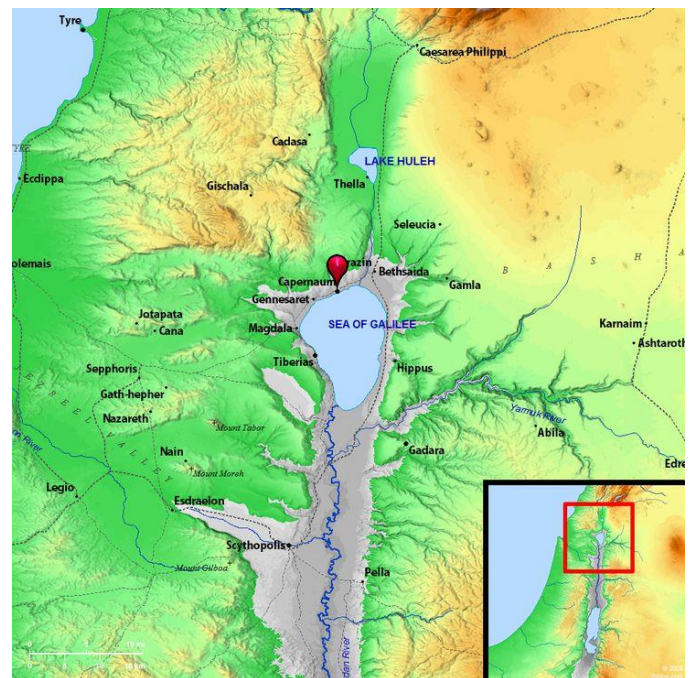
Along the Via Maris

Galilee was the source of basalt – needed for the olive press – exported throughout Israel

Olives were essential to the Jewish community

Anointing was done with olive oil

Used as fuel, food, skin care, etc.



12 Disciples/Apostles

12 Disciples represent the 12 tribes of Israel

- Jesus calls Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John as disciples (Mt 5:1-11)
- Jesus calls Levi (Matthew) as a disciple (Mt 5:27-32)
- Jesus calls Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas son of James and Judas Iscariot as disciples, completing the twelve (Mt 6:12-16)

2 stages of sending

- At first, He sends the 12 disciples to minister to Israel (Jews), not Gentiles
- During a 2nd stage, he sends them to the Gentiles

Jesus gave the 12 disciples His authority

- Mt 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,^[b] drive out demons.

Do not take any provisions – Teaching them to have full dependence on God

Sent them out as sheep among wolves – Sending us into a hostile world

- Shrewd as snakes, innocent as doves

The Disciples of Jesus Christ

Name	Details	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	Jude	James
Simon Peter	Andrew's Brother	10:2;	3:16;	6:14;	1:35-42;			
Andrew	Simon Peter's Brother, Disciple of John the Baptist	10:2;	3:18;	1:35-42; 6:14;				
James	John's Brother, son of Zebedee and Salome, Bornerges, Son of Thunder, nephew of Joseph and Mary, cousin of Jesus	10:2; 20:20; 27:56;	3:17; 15:40; 16:1;	6:14;	19:25;			
John	James' Brother, son of Zebedee and Salome, Bornerges, Son of Thunder, nephew of Joseph and Mary, cousin of Jesus	10:2; 20:20; 27:56;	3:17; 15:40; 16:1;	6:14;	19:25;			
Philip	from Bethsaida "of Galilee"	10:3;	3:18;	6:14;	1:44; 12:21;			
Bartholomew Nathaniel		10:3;	3:18;	6:14;	1:43-51;			

Name	Details	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	Jude	James
Matthew Levi	Son of Alphaeus, Step-Brother of Jesus, James the Less, Jude, and Simon, Step-Son of Mary	10:3; 27:56;	2:14; 3:16,18; 6:3; 15:40,47;	5:27; 6:14-15; 24:18;		1:13; 4:36;		
Thomas	Didymus	10:3;	3:18;	6:15;				
James the Less	Jesus' Half-Brother, Brother of Thaddaeus and Simon, Step-Brother of Matthew, Step-Son of Alphaeus	10:3; 27:56;	2:14; 3:16,18; 6:3; 15:40,47;	5:27; 6:14-15; 24:18;		1:13; 4:36;		1:1;
Thaddaeus Lebbaeus Judas Jude	Jesus' Half-Brother, Brother of James and Simon, Step-Brother of Matthew, Step-Son of Alphaeus	10:3; 13:55;	3:18; 6:3;	6:16;			1:1;	
Simon Zelotes	Jesus' Half-Brother, Brother of James and Thaddaeus, Step-Brother of Matthew, Step-Son of Alphaeus	10:4; 13:55;	3:18; 6:3;	6:15;				
Judas Iscariot	the Traitor	10:4;	3:19;	6:16;				
Matthias	Disciple of John the Baptist, replacement for Judas Iscariot				1:35-42;	1:20-26;		

Peter (Simon), Andrew, James, John

- Jesus chooses his inner circle in Capernaum – Peter, James and John

- All are originally from Bethsaida—a few miles northeast of Capernaum
- Together, with Zebedee, they were partners in a commercial fishing business on the Sea of Galilee
 - That Zebedee was a man of considerable wealth may be inferred from the fact that he had "hired servants" with him (Mark 1:20), and that his wife was one of those women who ministered of their substance to Jesus and His disciples (Matthew 27:55,56).
- Peter and Andrew
 - Brothers
 - Now live in Capernaum
- James and John
 - Brothers, the sons of Zebedee and Salome
 - Still live in Bethsaida
 - They may be the cousins of Jesus
 - Their mother, Salome, may be Mary's sister or sister-in-law
 - Many infer from John 19:25 that Salome was the sister of Mary
 - Comparison of Matthew 27:55,56 with Mark 15:40,41 identifies the wife of Zebedee, John's mother, with Salome, and it seems a fair inference from John 19:25, though all do not accept it, that Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Salome, the wife of Zebedee, were sisters. On this view, James and John were cousins of Jesus, and were also related to the family of John the Baptist.
- When Jesus calls them from the boat, they already knew him
 - Andrew was disciple of John the Baptist
 - Jn 1: 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ... 40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.
 - They would have walked back and forth between Jerusalem and Galilee for the 3 festivals every year
- In Mt 4, Jesus is calling them to a formal discipleship
 - Immediately, they left their business, Peter left his wife, everything . . .

Was Peter the first pope?

Was Peter the first pope? The answer, according to Scripture, is a clear and emphatic “no.”

The Roman Catholic Church sees Peter as the first pope upon whom God had chosen to build His church ([Matthew 16:18](#)). It holds that he had authority (primacy) over the other apostles. The Roman Catholic Church maintains that sometime after the recorded events of the book of Acts, the Apostle Peter became the first bishop of Rome, and that the Roman bishop was accepted by the early church as the central authority among all of the churches. It teaches that God passed Peter's apostolic authority to those who later filled his seat as bishop of Rome. This teaching that God passed on Peter's apostolic authority to the subsequent bishops is referred to as “apostolic succession.”

The Roman Catholic Church also holds that Peter and the subsequent popes were and are infallible when addressing issues “ex cathedra,” from their position and authority as pope. It teaches that this infallibility gives the pope the ability to guide the church without error. The Roman Catholic Church claims that it can trace an unbroken line of popes back to St. Peter, citing this as evidence that it is the true church, since, according to their interpretation of [Matthew 16:18](#), Christ built His church upon Peter.

But while Peter was central in the early spread of the gospel (part of the meaning behind [Matthew 16:18-19](#)), the teaching of Scripture, taken in context, nowhere declares that he was in authority over the other apostles, or over the church (having primacy). See [Acts 15:1-23](#); [Galatians 2:1-14](#); and [1 Peter 5:1-5](#). Nor is it ever taught in Scripture that the bishop of Rome, or any other bishop, was to have primacy over the church. Scripture does not even explicitly record Peter ever being in Rome. Rather there is only one reference in Scripture of Peter writing from “Babylon,” a name sometimes applied to Rome ([1 Peter 5:13](#)). Primarily upon this and the historical rise of the influence of the Bishop of Rome come the Roman Catholic Church's teaching of the primacy of the bishop of Rome. However, Scripture shows that Peter's

authority was shared by the other apostles ([Ephesians 2:19-20](#)), and the “loosing and binding” authority attributed to him was likewise shared by the local churches, not just their church leaders (see [Matthew 18:15-19](#); [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#); [2 Corinthians 13:10](#); [Titus 2:15](#); [3:10-11](#)).

Also, nowhere does Scripture state that, in order to keep the church from error, the authority of the apostles was passed on to those they ordained (the idea behind apostolic succession). Apostolic succession is “read into” those verses that the Roman Catholic Church uses to support this doctrine ([2 Timothy 2:2](#); [4:2-5](#); [Titus 1:5](#); [2:1](#); [2:15](#); [1 Timothy 5:19-22](#)). Paul does NOT call on believers in various churches to receive Titus, Timothy, and other church leaders based on their authority as bishops or their having apostolic authority, but rather based upon their being fellow laborers with him ([1 Corinthians 16:10](#); [16:16](#); [2 Corinthians 8:23](#)).

What Scripture DOES teach is that false teachings would arise even from among church leaders, and that Christians were to compare the teachings of these later church leaders with Scripture, which alone is infallible ([Matthew 5:18](#); [Psalm 19:7-8](#); [119:160](#); [Proverbs 30:5](#); [John 17:17](#); [2 Peter 1:19-21](#)). The Bible does not teach that the apostles were infallible, apart from what was written by them and incorporated into Scripture. Paul, in talking to the church leaders in the large city of Ephesus, makes note of coming false teachers. To fight against their error does NOT commend them to “the apostles and those who would carry on their authority”; rather, Paul commends them to “God and to the word of His grace” ([Acts 20:28-32](#)). It is Scripture that was to be the infallible measuring stick for teaching and practice ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)), not apostolic successors. It is by examining the Scriptures that teachings are shown to be true or false ([Acts 17:10-12](#)).

Was Peter the first pope? The answer, according to Scripture, is a clear and emphatic “no.” Peter nowhere claims supremacy over the other apostles. Nowhere in his writings (1 and 2 Peter) did the Apostle Peter claim any special role, authority, or power over the church. Nowhere in Scripture does Peter, or any other apostle, state that their apostolic authority would be passed on to successors. Yes, the Apostle Peter had a leadership role among the disciples. Yes, Peter played a crucial role in the early spread of the gospel (Acts chapters 1-10). Yes, Peter was the “rock” that Christ predicted he would be ([Matthew 16:18](#)). However, these truths about Peter in no way give support to the concept that Peter was the first pope, or that he was the “supreme leader” over the apostles, or that his authority would be passed on to the bishops of Rome. Peter himself points us all to the true Shepherd and Overseer of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ ([1 Peter 2:25](#)).

Matthew the tax collector (Levi)

- Tax collector
 - Jewish people that have gone to work for the Roman government
 - Viewed as traitors and collaborators with the military occupation of this land
 - Very profitable to the tax collector because of the allowance to greed
- Per person example
 - \$50 – Rome
 - \$50 – Roman primary collector
 - \$50 – Jewish primary collector
 - \$50 – Jewish primary collector
 - \$200 per person per year
- Matthew obeyed immediately
- Jesus then shared a meal with tax collectors and sinners
 - Sharing life with them – he’s saying to them “I’m not ashamed of you, embarrassed of you, I love you”
 - Caused a scandal with the most religious people
 - The religious leaders did not recognize that they were also the sick people that Jesus came for
 - Religious people were all outward appearance, dying on the inside
 - The religious people did not have mercy or compassion for sinners like Matthew
 - Mt 9:12 ...Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick...'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Philip and Bartholomew

Thomas

James son of Alphaeus

Thaddaeus

Simon the Zealot

Judas Iscariot

Martyrdom

All the Apostles were martyred except John. The details of the martyrdoms are found in traditional early church sources. These traditions were recounted in the writings of the church fathers and the first official church history written by the historian Eusebius in AD 325.

- Matthew was martyred in Ethiopia, killed by a sword
- Mark died in Alexandria, Egypt after being dragged by horses through the streets until he was dead
- Peter was crucified upside down on a X-shaped cross, according to church tradition, because he told his tormentors that he felt unworthy to die in the same way that Jesus Christ had died
- Luke was hanged in Greece as a result of his tremendous preaching to the lost
- James the just – the leader of the church in Jerusalem – was thrown over a 100' down from the South East pinnacle of the Temple when he refused to deny his faith in Christ. When they discovered that he survived the fall, his enemies beat James to death with a fullers club. This was the same pinnacle where Satan had taken Jesus to during the temptation.
- James the greater – a son of Zebedee, a fisherman by trade when Jesus called him to a lifetime of ministry. He was a strong leader the church and was ultimately beheaded at Jerusalem.
- Bartholomew – also known as Nathaniel – was a missionary to Asia. He witnessed about our Lord in present day Turkey. Bartholomew was martyred for his preaching in Armenia when he was flayed to death by a whip.
- Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross in Patras, Greece. After being whipped severely by 7 soldiers, they tied his body to the cross with cords to prolong his agony. His followers reported that when he was lead down toward the cross, Andrew saluted and in these words “I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it.” He continued to preach to his tormentors for 2 days until he expired.
- Thomas was stabbed with a spear in India during one of his missionary trips to establish the church in the subcontinent
- Jude – the brother of Jesus – was killed with arrows when he refused to deny his faith in Christ
- Matthias – the apostle chosen to replace the traitor Judas Iscariot – was stoned and then beheaded
- Barnabas – one the group of 70 disciples – preached throughout Italy and Cyprus. Barnabas was stoned to death at Salonika
- Paul was tortured and then beheaded by the evil Emperor Nero at Rome in AD 67. Paul endured a lengthy imprisonment which allowed him to write his many epistles to the churches he had formed throughout the Roman Empire. These letters – which taught many that foundational doctrines of Christianity – form a large portion of the New Testament.
- John face martyrdom when he was boiled in a huge basin of boiling oil during a wave of persecution in Rome. However, he was miraculously delivered from death. John was then sentenced of the mines on the prison island of Patmos. He

The 12 Apostles

1. Andrew - crucified
 2. Bartholomew - beaten then crucified
 3. James, son of Alphaeus - stoned to death
 4. James, son of Zebedee - beheaded
 5. John exiled for his faith; (after a failed attempt to fry him in cooking oil) died of old age
 6. Judas (not Iscariot) - stoned to death
 7. Matthew - speared to death
 8. Peter - crucified upside down
 9. Philip - crucified
 10. Simon - crucified
 11. Thomas - speared to death
 12. Matthias - stoned to death
- (Source Fox's book of Martyr's)

wrote his prophetic book of Revelation on Patmos. John was later freed and returned to serve as Bishop of Adicia in modern Turkey. He died as an old man – the only apostle to die peacefully.

How Did the Apostles Die?

Reports and legends abound and they are not always reliable, but it is safe to say that the apostles went far and wide as heralds of the message of the risen Christ. An early legend says they cast lots and divided up the world to determine who would go where, so all could hear about Jesus. They suffered greatly for their faith and in most cases met violent deaths on account of their bold witness.

Peter and Paul

Both martyred in Rome about 66 AD, during the persecution under Emperor Nero. Paul was beheaded. Peter was crucified, upside down at his request, since he did not feel he was worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.

Andrew

went to the "land of the man-eaters," in what is now the Soviet Union. Christians there claim him as the first to bring the gospel to their land. He also preached in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, and in Greece, where he is said to have been crucified.

Thomas

was probably most active in the area east of Syria. Tradition has him preaching as far east as India, where the ancient Marthoma Christians revere him as their founder. They claim that he died there when pierced through with the spears of four soldiers.

Philip

possibly had a powerful ministry in Carthage in North Africa and then in Asia Minor, where he converted the wife of a Roman proconsul. In retaliation the proconsul had Philip arrested and cruelly put to death.

Matthew

the tax collector and writer of a Gospel, ministered in Persia and Ethiopia. Some of the oldest reports say he was not martyred, while others say he was stabbed to death in Ethiopia.

Bartholomew

had widespread missionary travels attributed to him by tradition: to India with Thomas, back to Armenia, and also to Ethiopia and Southern Arabia. There are various accounts of how he met his death as a martyr for the gospel.

James

the son of Alphaeus, is one of at least three James referred to in the New Testament. There is some confusion as to which is which, but this James is reckoned to have ministered in Syria. The Jewish historian Josephus reported that he was stoned and then clubbed to death.

Simon the Zealot

so the story goes, ministered in Persia and was killed after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god.

Matthais

was the apostle chosen to replace Judas. Tradition sends him to Syria with Andrew and to death by burning.

Bartholomew

There is a non-Biblical document called the "Martyrdom of Bartholomew," which claims that Bartholomew was martyred by King Astyages in Armenia:

"And when he had thus spoken, the king was informed that this god Baldad and all the other idols had fallen down, and were broken in pieces. Then the king rent the purple in which he was clothed, and ordered the holy apostle Bartholomew to be beaten with rods; and after having been thus scourged, to be beheaded." - Martyrdom of Bartholomew.

Bartholomew was one of the Twelve Apostles and is mentioned in the Bible's New Testament, in Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; and Acts 1:13.

According to Eusebius, Christian writer who lived during the 4th Century of this era (about 1600 years ago), Bartholomew traveled to India to preach to the people there, leaving behind a copy of the Gospel of Matthew: "Pantaenous is said to have gone among the Indians where a report is that he discovered there the Gospel according to St. Matthew among some who knew Christ; Bartholomew, one of the Apostles had preached to them and had left them the writings of St. Matthew in Hebrew letters."

James son of Alphaeus

James son of Alphaeus, according to Foxs' Book of Martyrs, was beaten, stoned and clubbed to death.

Andrew

Andrew might have been martyred in Achaia or Patrae, both of which are places in the western part of Greece. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "It is generally agreed that he was crucified by order of the Roman Governor, Aegeas or Aegeates, at Patrae in Achaia, and that he was bound, not nailed, to the cross, in order to prolong his sufferings. The cross on which he suffered is commonly held to have been the decussate cross, now known as St. Andrew's, though the evidence for this view seems to be no older than the fourteenth century. His martyrdom took place during the reign of Nero, on 30 November, A.D. 60); and both the Latin and Greek Churches keep 30 November as his feast."

Peter

It is believed that Peter was crucified upside down in Rome during the 60s.

Judas

Judas Iscariot was not a martyr. He killed himself after betraying Jesus.

John

John is believed to have died of natural causes, and he might have been the only Apostle to have done so.

Thomas

Thomas was killed with a spear, according to Foxs' Book of Martyrs: "Called Didymus, preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where exciting the rage of the pagan priests, he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear."

James son of Zebedee

The martyrdom of James son of Zebedee is recorded in the New Testament of the Bible, in Acts 12:1-2. He was executed, with a sword, by order of King Herod Agrippa I in the year 44 AD:

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. - Acts 12:1-2.

We also learn in Acts, chapter 12, that King Herod Agrippa I also imprisoned Peter for a while.

Philip

Philip was crucified, according to Foxs' Book of Martyrs: "He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54."

Matthew

Matthew was killed with a spear, according to Foxs' Book of Martyrs: "The scene of his labors was Parthia, and Ethiopia, in which latter country he suffered martyrdom, being slain with a halberd in the city of Nadabah, A.D. 60."

Thaddeus (Jude)

Jude was crucified, according to Foxs' Book of Martyrs: "The brother of James, was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Edessa, A.D. 72."

Simon

Simon was crucified, according to Foxs' Book of Martyrs: "Surnamed Zelotes, preached the Gospel in Mauritania, Africa, and even in Britain, in which latter country he was crucified, A.D. 74."

The Twelve Disciples

Who Are the Twelve Disciples?

THEIR BACKGROUNDS

- They were twelve Jewish men whom Jesus called to follow him during his 3-year ministry on earth.
- The twelve disciples were from the Galilee region in the north except for Judas Iscariot, who was from Judea in the south.
- Their occupations ranged from fisherman to tax collectors and revolutionaries.
- Some were married. (Mark 1:29-31; 1 Cor. 9:3-6)
- Some were well-versed in Scripture. (John 1:46)

THEIR PURPOSE

- After being baptized by John the Baptist and spending 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus started teaching and many people started following him.
- After a night of prayer and meditation, Jesus chose twelve men out of all those who were following him.
- These twelve men would be Jesus' main focus of instruction.
- These disciples were selected to let the world know of God's love, that God sent Jesus to redeem the world. (see John 17:23)

THEIR MISSION

- These are the twelve men who, for the most part, would prove to be valuable companions to Jesus.
- Their instruction and conversations would become the teachings, knowledge, and instruction for the church that would later grow and spread.
- Jesus knew their personalities, both strong and weak.
- Jesus knew that these men would disappoint him, desert him, deny him, and betray him.
- Jesus knew that these men, once filled with the Holy Spirit, would be the first witnesses of the Gospel, carrying God's message of redemption to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.
- The twelve tribes of Israel were blessed in order to be a blessing to all nations. In a similar way, these twelve men, along with all disciples of Jesus who follow their lead, were to bless all nations. (Galatians 3:8) Followers of Christ are commanded to go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Being a Disciple of Christ

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY: COUNT THE COST

- Jesus said that whoever wants to follow him, that person must deny himself and take up his cross. He said that if one wants to save his life he will lose it, but if he loses his life for Jesus and for the gospel he will save it.
- When Simon Peter, James and John encountered Jesus, they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

FOLLOWING CHRIST TOGETHER: FELLOWSHIP

- Jesus prayed that his followers would be brought to complete unity.
- The followers of Jesus were not to give up meeting together and were to encourage one another.

SERVING CHRIST AND OTHERS

- Jesus said that whoever wants to become great among his disciples must be a servant, just as Jesus himself did not come to be served, but to serve, and "to give his life a ransom for many."

FAILURES AND FORGIVENESS

- When Jesus was arrested all the disciples deserted him and fled, and Peter denied knowing him because he feared for his life.
- Later Jesus said that the disciples would receive power when the Holy Spirit came to them and that they would share the good news in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and all over the earth.

IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

- Jesus promised the disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to them, and that the Holy Spirit would guide them and provide them with gifts that would help them carry out their mission.
- Paul wrote to the Corinthian church informing them that there is only one Spirit, but different kinds of gifts. There is only one God, but several kinds of good works.

(Mark 8:34, 35; Luke 5:11b; John 17:23a; Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 20:26-28; Matthew 26:56b; Mark 14:71, 72; Acts 1:8; John 16:5-16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-12)



Peter



Philip



James



James



Bartholomew



Thaddeus



John



Matthew



Simon Zelotes



Andrew



Thomas



Judas Iscariot



Peter



James, son of Zebedee

Other Names

General Information

Personality & Character

Encounters with Jesus

Key Lesson

Stories

- Simeon bar Jona (Simon, son of Jona)
- Cephas ("rock" or "stone")
- Simon Peter
- Simon

- Son of Jona and born in Bethsaida. (John 1:42-44)
- Lived in Capernaum. (Matthew 8:5-14)
- Fisherman. (Matthew 4:18)
- Brother of Andrew. (Matthew 4:18)
- Partner with James and John. (Luke 5:10)
- Married. (Matthew 8:14)
- One of the pillars of the Jerusalem church. (Galatians 2:9)
- Boldly preached, healed, and ministered to Jews and Gentiles after Pentecost. (Acts 2-12)
- Imprisoned by Herod for preaching and rescued by an angel of the Lord. (Acts 12:3-19)
- Wrote 1 Peter and 2 Peter.

- Impulsive (Matthew 14:28), yet cowardly. (Matthew 14:30; 26:69-74)
- Hot tempered (John 18:10), yet tenderhearted. (Matthew 26:75)
- Insightful (Matthew 16:16), yet dense. (Matthew 16:21-23)
- Courageous and solid after Pentecost. (Acts 5:27-30)

- Was called to be a fisher of men. (Matthew 4:19)
- Left everything to follow Jesus. (Luke 5:11)
- One of the three disciples in the core group of disciples. (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33)
- Simon said Jesus is the Christ, Son of the living God. Jesus names him Peter (rock) and said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:16-19)
- Was reprimanded because he refused to accept that Jesus had to die. (Matthew 16:23)
- Witnessed Jesus' Transfiguration (where Jesus' divinity was revealed). (Mark 9:2-8)
- Was sent to prepare the upper room for the Last Supper. (Luke 22:8)
- Jesus predicted that Peter would deny knowing him three times. (Luke 22:31-34)
- Was with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:36-46)
- Jesus instructed Peter after his resurrection. (John 21:15-19)

God can forgive sins and strengthen the faith of those who love him.

Papias (second-century Christian) recorded that Mark served as Peter's scribe and wrote the Gospel of Mark based on Peter's testimony. According to some stories, Peter asked to be crucified upside down. Peter may have been crucified during the reign of Nero in Rome. Symbols for Peter are sometimes keys, representing the keys to the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 16:19)

- Son of Zebedee
- Boanerges (Son of Thunder)
- "James the Elder"
- "James the Great"

- Son of Zebedee. (Matthew 4:21)
- Son of Salome. (Matthew 27:56; Mark 16:1)
- Fisherman with his father and his brother. (Matthew 4:18-22)
- Brother of John. (Matthew 4:21)
- Partner with Peter. (Luke 5:10)
- Put to death by the sword by Herod Agrippa I. The only one of the twelve disciples who died for his faith that was recorded in Scripture. (Acts 12:2)

- Vengeful and fiery. (Luke 9:54)
- Selfish and conceited. (Mark 10:35-37)
- Committed to Christ and courageous to the end. (Acts 12:2)

- Was called to be a fisher of men. (Matthew 4:19)
- Left everything to follow Jesus. (Luke 5:11)
- One of the three disciples in the core group of disciples. (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33)
- Jesus named him and John "Sons of Thunder." (Mark 3:17)
- Was rebuked with his brother John for requesting God to rain fire on a Samaritan village. (Luke 9:54, 55)
- Witnessed Jesus' Transfiguration (where Jesus' divinity was revealed). (Mark 9:2-8)
- Jesus responded to James's and John's request to sit at his right and left in the Kingdom. (Mark 10:35-43)
- Was with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:36-46)
- Witnessed the miraculous catch of fish on the Sea of Galilee after Jesus' resurrection. (John 21:2-7)

Stand firm in the face of persecution.

Some claim he was the first bishop in Spain. Symbols of James sometimes include the bishop's hat and the sword, which is in reference to his martyrdom.



John

- Son of Zebedee
- "The Evangelist"
- "The Beloved Disciple" (The disciple whom Jesus loved)
- Boanerges (Son of Thunder)
- "The Revealer"

- Son of Zebedee. (Matthew 4:21)
- Son of Salome. (Matthew 27:56; Mark 16:1)
- Fisherman with his father and his brother. (Matthew 4:18-22)
- Brother of James. (Matthew 4:21)
- Partner with Peter. (Luke 5:10)
- One of the pillars of the Jerusalem church. (Galatians 2:9)
- Healed and preached. (Acts 3-4; 8)
- Exiled to the island of Patmos. (Revelation 1:1, 9)
- Wrote the Gospel of John, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation.

- Vengeful and fiery. (Luke 9:54)
- Judgmental. (Mark 9:38)
- Selfish. (Mark 10:35-37)
- Bold, loving and compassionate after Pentecost. (Acts 4:13; 1 John 4)

- One of the three disciples in the core group of disciples. (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33)
- Suggested that driving out demons could only be performed by those who follow Jesus and his disciples. (Mark 9:38)
- Witnessed Jesus' Transfiguration (where Jesus' divinity was revealed). (Mark 9:2-8)
- Was sent to prepare the upper room for the Last Supper. (Luke 22:8)
- Reclined next to Jesus during the Last Supper. (John 13:23)
- Was given the responsibility at the cross to take care of Mary, Jesus' mother. (John 19:26, 27)
- Ran ahead of Peter to see Jesus' empty tomb and expressed faith by "seeing and believing." (John 20:2-8)
- Witnessed the miraculous catch of fish on the Sea of Galilee after Jesus' resurrection. (John 21:2-7)

God's love, evident in Jesus Christ, saves, transforms, and unites all believers.

Some stories suggest that John was released from exile on the island of Patmos and returned to Ephesus (Turkey today).
Stories suggest that John died in Ephesus around ad 100. Symbols of John sometimes include the eagle (Revelation 4:7) and a book.



Andrew

- "Protokletos" (First Called)

- Son of Jona. (John 1:42)
- Born in Bethsaida. (John 1:44)
- Lived in Capernaum with Peter. (Mark 1:29)
- Fisherman. (Matthew. 4:18)
- Brother of Simon Peter. (Matthew 4:18)
- Disciple of John the Baptist. (John 1:35-40)
- Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16)
- The name Andrew derives from Greek, meaning "manly."

- Enthusiastic about Christ. (John 1:35-42)
- Inquisitive. (John 1:35-38)
- Resourceful. (John 6:8, 9)

- First to follow Jesus. (John 1:35-40)
- Called to be a fisher of men. (Matthew 4:19)
- Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
- Informed Jesus that several Greeks wanted to see him. (John 12:20-22)
- Told Jesus of the boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. (John 6:8, 9)
- Was present when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection. (John 20:19-25)
- Was present for the Great Commission when Jesus sent his disciples to all nations. (Matthew 28:16-20)
- Witnessed Jesus being taken up into heaven. (Acts 1:8, 9)

Go out and eagerly share the good news about Jesus Christ.

Some suggest that Andrew preached in Greece, Asia Minor, and Russia.
A seventh-century story suggests that Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross by a Roman proconsul.
The symbol for Andrew is sometimes the X-shaped cross.



Philip

- None

- Born in Bethsaida. (John 1:44)
- Well versed in Scripture. (John 1:45, 46)
- Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16)
- The disciple Philip is often confused with Philip the evangelist found in Acts.
- The name Philip derives from Greek, meaning "he who loves horses."
- Philip probably spoke Greek. (John 12:20, 21)

- Practical. (John 6:7)
- Helpful. (John 12:20, 21)
- Literal and confused. (John 14:8)

- The third disciple Jesus called. (John 1:43)
- Brought Nathanael (Bartholomew) to Jesus. (John 1:45, 46)
- Jesus tested him regarding the feeding of the multitude. (John 6:5-7)
- Informed Jesus that several Greeks wanted to see him. (John 12:20-22)
- Asked Jesus to show him the Father. (John 14:8, 9)
- Was present at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:20)

All the knowledge in the world does not compare to the truth found in Jesus.

Tradition suggests that Philip lived and preached in Scythia (Ukraine today).
Some stories suggest that Philip was crucified on a tall cross at Hierapolis of Phrygia (Turkey today).
Symbols for Philip sometimes include loaves of bread (John 6:5-7) and a tall cross.



Bartholomew



Matthew



Thomas

Other Names

General Information

Personality & Character

Encounters with Jesus

Key Lesson

Stories

- Nathanael

- Born and/or raised in Cana of Galilee. (John 21:2)
- Well versed in the Hebrew Scriptures. (John 1:46)
- Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
- The name Bartholomew derives from Greek, meaning "son of Tolmai."
- The name Nathanael derives from the Hebrew, meaning "God has given."

- Skeptical. (John 1:46)
- Honest. (John 1:47)
- Faithful. (John 1:49)

- Jesus told Nathanael that he was an honest Israelite and informed him that he saw him sitting under the fig tree. (John 1:47, 48)
- Nathanael said that Jesus was the "Son of God" and "King of Israel." (John 1:49)
- Jesus enlightened Nathanael with what to expect (John 1:50, 51)
- Witnessed the miraculous catch of fish and ate breakfast with Jesus after his resurrection. (John 21:2-7)

Believers are called to test all things with Scripture and remain true to its principles.

Some suggest that Bartholomew ministered to Asia Minor and India and the Armenian church claims Bartholomew as their founder. Tradition suggests that Bartholomew was flayed alive in Armenia. The symbol for Bartholomew is sometimes a blade.

- Levi
- Levi the son of Alphaeus

- Son of Alphaeus. (Mark 2:14)
- From Capernaum. (Mark 2:1-17)
- Tax collector in Galilee. (Matthew 9:9)
- Possible brother of James son of Alphaeus. (Mark 3:18)
- Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
- Wrote the Gospel of Matthew
- The name Matthew derives from Hebrew, meaning "gift of God."

- Penitent. (Matthew 9:9; 10:2)
- Hospitable. (Matthew 9:10)

- Matthew left his tax collector booth to follow Jesus. (Matthew 9:9)
- Matthew invited Jesus over to dine with him and his corrupt friends. (Matthew 9:10)
- Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
- Was present at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:20)

Jesus Christ is for everyone, even sinners and outcasts.

Some stories suggest that Matthew ministered to Persia, Macedonia, Syria, Parthia, Media, and Ethiopia bringing the good news to kings. Some stories suggest that Matthew died a martyr. The symbol for Matthew is sometimes a bag of coins in reference to his occupation as a tax collector before he encountered Jesus.

- Didymus (Twin)
- Judas Thomas
- "Doubting Thomas"

- He was a twin. (John 20:24)
- Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16)

- Inquisitive. (John 14:5)
- Doubtful. (John 20:24, 25)
- Courageous. (John 11:16)
- Faithful. (John 20:24-29)

- Courageously encouraged disciples to go to Bethany. (John 11:16)
- Asked Jesus how to know where Jesus was going. (John 14:5)
- Doubted Jesus' resurrection saying he would have to touch his wounds in order to believe. (John 20:25)
- Affirmed that Jesus was Lord and God. (John 20:28)
- Witnessed the miraculous catch of fish and ate breakfast with Jesus after his resurrection. (John 21:2-7)

Jesus can overcome doubts and lead believers to faithfulness.

Stories suggest that Thomas traveled to India and founded the Christian church there. Some suggest Thomas was killed by a spear for his faith, and was buried in India. Some say Thomas was a carpenter. Symbols for Thomas include the spearhead and the T-square.



James, son of Alphaeus

- James the son of Alphaeus
 - "James the Younger"
 - "James the Less"
-
- Son of Alphaeus. (Mark 3:18)
 - Possible brother of Matthew (Levi) the tax collector, also the son of Alphaeus. (Mark 2:14)
 - Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matt. 10:3; Acts 1:13)
 - James the son of Alphaeus is often confused with James the brother of Jesus (who wrote the book of James) or James the brother of Joseph.
-
- Unknown.
-
- Selected as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:14-16)
 - Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
 - Was present at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:20)
 - Was present when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection. (John 20:19-25)
-
- All followers of Jesus can still accomplish the work of God without being in the limelight.
-
- Some suggest that James, son of Alphaeus, belonged to the revolutionary group known as the Zealots.
- Some say that James was arrested by the Jews, thrown off the Temple, and then beaten to death by a club.



Thaddaeus

- Jude
 - Judas the son of James
 - Lebbaeus
-
- Son of James. (Luke 6:16)
 - Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
 - The Aramaic meaning of both Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus is the same, "beloved" or "dear to the heart."
 - The name "Judas" derives from the Hebrew name Judah, meaning "praise."
 - Jude is sometimes confused with Judas the brother of Jesus, Judas Barsabbas, and Judas Iscariot.
-
- Inquisitive. (John 14:22)
 - Confused. (John 14:22)
-
- Selected as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
 - Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
 - Asked Jesus how he would reveal himself to his followers and not to the world. (John 14:22)
 - Was present at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:20)
-
- Jesus will reveal his truths to believers who follow him.
-
- Some suggest that Thaddaeus belonged to the revolutionary group, the Zealots. Some scholars believe that Thaddaeus authored the book of Jude, although most believe the author is Judas, the brother of Jesus.
- The symbol for Thaddaeus is sometimes a gold ship with silver sails before a red horizon, which is a reference to the ship he took on missionary journeys.



Simon the Zealot

- Simon the Cananaean
-
- Was a Zealot. (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13)
 - Listed as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
 - The name Simon derives from the Hebrew name Shimon, meaning "hearing."
 - The word "Cananaean" derives from an Aramaic word meaning "zealous one."
-
- Patriotic. (Matthew 10:4)
 - Loyal. (Mark 3:18)
 - Passionate. (Luke 6:15)
 - Sacrificial. (Acts 1:13)
-
- Selected as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:2-4; Acts 1:13)
 - Sent out on a mission to the Jews to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5-8)
 - Was present at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:20)
 - Was present for the Great Commission and Jesus' Ascension into heaven. (Matthew 28:16)
-
- One should be willing to sacrifice his or her politics to follow Jesus.
-
- One story suggests that Simon was the bridegroom at the wedding in Cana. Some stories suggest that Simon was a missionary to Persia.
- The symbol for Simon is sometimes a book resting on a fish, which is a reference to Simon fishing for people.



Judas Iscariot

- "Judas the Betrayer"
 - Judas the son of Simon
-
- Judas was the treasurer for the group of disciples; was a thief. (John 12:5, 6; 13:29)
 - Judas betrayed Jesus, felt remorse, threw the blood money in the temple and hanged himself. The chief priest used the money to purchase the potter's field, fulfilling prophecy. (Matthew 27:3-10)
 - Judas purchased the Field of Blood and fell headlong and "burst open..." (Acts 1:18-20)
 - Judas was replaced by Matthias who was added to the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:26)
-
- Greedy. (Matthew 26:14-16)
 - Deceitful. (Matthew 26:25)
 - Treacherous. (Matthew 26:47-50)
 - Remorseful. (Matthew 27:3-5)
-
- Selected as one of Christ's twelve disciples. (Matthew 10:4; Luke 6:15)
 - Jesus referred to Judas as the devil. (John 6:70, 71)
 - Criticized Mary for anointing Jesus with expensive perfume. (John 12:4-8)
 - Conversed with Jesus during the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:23-25; John 13:27, 28)
 - The devil entered his heart at the Last Supper. (John 13:2)
 - Betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. (Matthew 26:14-16; 47-51)
-
- Not all who claim to follow Jesus are faithful to him and his goals.
-
- Judas was possibly from Kerioth in Judea.
- Some scholars suggest that Judas was a member of the Zealot sect known as the Sicarii, who were dagger-bearing assassins.

Other Disciples in the New Testament

Other Followers of Jesus

Apostles, Evangelists and Teachers

Important Leaders

Cleopas: Follower of Jesus who spoke with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. (Luke 24:18)	Apollos: Missionary. (Acts 18:18-27; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13)	Ananias: Disciple and healer. (Acts 9:11)
James: Brother of Jesus, leader of Jerusalem church, and author of James. (Matt. 13:55, 56; Acts 12:17)	Aquila: Teacher and missionary. (Acts 18; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19)	Archippus: Leader of house church. (Colossians 4:17; Philemon 2)
Joanna: Follower of Jesus. (Luke 8:3; 24:10)	Barnabas: Missionary, apostle, and partner with Paul. (Acts 4:36; 9-15; 1 Cor. 9:6; Gal. 2:1, 9, 13; Col. 4:10)	Aristarchus: Missionary and fellow prisoner with Paul. (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Col. 4:10; Philemon 24)
Joseph of Arimathea: Follower of Jesus. (Matthew 27:57; John 19:38)	Junia: Apostle. (Romans 16:7)	Epaphras: Preacher, fellow worker and prisoner with Paul. (Colossians 1:7; 4:12; Philemon 23)
Joseph Barsabbas: Follower of Jesus. (Acts 1:23)	Luke: Physician, worker, and prisoner with Paul, and author of Luke. (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11)	Epaphroditus: Fellow worker with Paul. (Philippians 2:25; 4:18)
Judas (Jude): Brother of Jesus and author of the book of Jude. (Matthew 13:54, 55; Mark 6:3; Jude 1)	Mark (John Mark): Missionary, cousin to Barnabas, and author of the Gospel Mark. (Acts 12; 1 Peter 5:13)	Judas Barsabbas: Prophet. (Acts 15:22-35)
Lazarus: Friend and follower of Jesus. (John 11-12)	Paul (Saul): Apostle, missionary, and author of Romans to Philemon. (Acts to Philemon; 2 Peter 3:15)	Lucius of Cyrene: Prophet and teacher in the church at Antioch. (Acts 13:1)
Mary, the mother of James and Joseph: Follower of Jesus. (Matthew 27:55; 28:5, 7)	Philip the Evangelist: Deacon and missionary. (Acts 6:5; 8)	Manaen: Prophet and teacher of the church in Antioch. (Acts 13:1)
Mary of Bethany: Friend and follower of Jesus. (Luke 10:38-42; John 11-12)	Priscilla: Teacher and missionary. (Acts 18; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19)	Mnason: An early disciple. (Acts 21:16)
Mary Magdalene: Follower of Jesus. (Matthew 27, 28; Mark 15, 16; Luke 8:2; 24:10; John 20)	Silas: Missionary. (Acts 15-18; 2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:12)	Philemon: Leader of a house church. (Philemon 1)
Matthias: Follower who replaced Judas Iscariot. (Acts 1:15-26)	Stephen: Deacon, missionary, preacher, and martyr. (Acts 6-8; 11:19; 22:20)	Phoebe: Deacon and helper of Paul. (Romans 16:1, 2)
Salome: Follower of Jesus. (Mark 15:40)	Timothy: Pastor and teacher. (Acts 16-20; Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 4:17; Philippians 2:19-22; 1 and 2 Timothy)	Simeon (Niger): Prophet and teacher in the church at Antioch. (Acts 13:1)
Susanna: Follower of Jesus. (Luke 8:3)	Titus: Pastor and teacher. (2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:6; 8:6-23; 12:18; Galatians. 2:1-3; Titus 1:4, 5)	Tychicus: Pastor and fellow worker with Paul. (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7)

Jesus sends out the disciples

Once Jesus' disciples have witnessed his teaching, preaching and healing, Jesus sends them out to do the same, but he does so with a dire warning: You won't be welcomed; you will be hated, persecuted and killed!

- Jesus sends out the 12 (Mt 10; Lk 9:1-9; Lk 10:1-24)
- Jesus sends out seventy-two disciples (Lk 10:1-24)

After 2,000 years of Christian history, during which Christianity became the dominant world religion and profoundly shaped western civilization, it is easy to overlook how radical Jesus' message was, not only in his own time and culture, but also in ours. For the first 300 years after Jesus' life on this earth, Christianity was a persecuted, minority religion in the Roman Empire, triggering wave after wave of brutal persecutions; only in the 4th century did Christianity gain legitimacy, and by the end of the 4th century it became the official religion of the Roman Empire. By A.D. 1000, Christianity ruled all of Europe and the remains of the Roman Empire with absolute authority in both secular and religious affairs, at every level in society. Yet, Jesus was first and foremost a radical reformer, a revolutionary living on the bleeding edge of the apocalyptic vision. He made people—especially those in power—extremely uncomfortable.

Cost of Discipleship (Mt 8:18-22; Lk 9:57-62)

Discipleship requires a big commitment

Jesus wants followers that have counted the costs and have decided that they are willing to pay the costs of discipleship

We are Living Stones (disciples) once we are born again

1Pe 2:4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Heb 13:1 Keep on loving each other as brothers. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Lev 19: 18 " 'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Lev 19:34 The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Lev 23:22 " 'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.' "

Ro 12: 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

God's Temple is Us

1Co 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

Eph 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

“Why do your disciples not fast?” (Mt 9:14-17; Lk 5:33-39)

Questions about what is appropriate

Ecc 3:1-8 – A time for everything – There is an appropriate time to do things

You have to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason

Appropriate actions

- Guests do not mourn while the bridegroom is still with them
- You feast at a wedding, not fast

Examples used to illustrate:

- New patch on old clothes
- New wine in an old wineskin

What is appropriate for us now?

- Live lives as if Jesus is returning at any moment
- We need to be watchful and wakeful

“Why do your disciples work on the Sabbath? (Lk 6:1-11)

Jesus’ foundational message – Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is near

Mk 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

- Jesus’ message picks up where John’s left off.
 - When John is arrested, Jesus steps in and takes his place, not simply continuing John’s work, but expanding it from Judea north to Galilee, the hotbed of radical thinking and revolutionary movements. Mark’s readers would have sensed the danger immediately, trembling at the inevitable conflict they knew would follow.
 - John came in from the desert “proclaiming a baptism of repentance toward the forgiveness of sins”
 - Lays the groundwork for Jesus’
 - John proclaims the need for a radical turning away *from* sin and *to* God as preparation for the forgiveness of sins
 - Jesus comes in from the desert “proclaiming the gospel of God.”
 - Jesus proclaims “the gospel of God,” which brings with it the forgiveness of sins and a fundamentally new relationship with God.
- Repent
- “the gospel of God”
 - The term “the gospel of God” is the gospel that *proceeds* from God; it is not a gospel that Jesus invents
 - Jesus is the messenger from God who both *announces* the gospel and who *embodies* it.
 - Verse fifteen presents the content of the gospel that Jesus proclaims: “The appointed time has been fulfilled and the kingdom of God is fast approaching; repent and believe in the gospel.”
 - As the preface starts with “Beginning of the *gospel* of Jesus Christ, Son of God . . .,” so it ends with “Repent and believe in the *gospel*,” framing the preface with an *inclusio*.
- “the appointed time”
 - The term “the appointed time” has deep biblical roots.
 - Though a common phrase, it is frequently used throughout the LXX in the specific sense of a decisive, God-ordained point in time. In context, it is also one of the chief eschatological terms in the Bible.
 - When Jesus says, “The appointed time has been fulfilled . . .,” he reaches deep into Scripture and draws all the threads of prophecy together into his own hands. With this proclamation, Jesus boldly declares: “the

appointed time is *now*; prophecy has been fulfilled before your eyes.” It is a startling declaration that brings in its wake the fast approaching kingdom of God.

- Gerhard Delling observes that by the New Testament “the appointed time” has obviously become an established term in salvation history”
 - Ezekiel 7: 12: “The [appointed] time has come, the day has arrived. Let not the buyer rejoice nor the seller grieve, for wrath is upon the whole crowd”
 - Daniel 12: 4: “But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the [appointed] time of the end.”
- “is fast approaching”
 - The Greek verb which I’ve translated “is fast approaching” carries a sense of urgency that is hard to capture in English.
 - The single word creates a remarkable tension: the context suggests “fast approaching,” while the verb itself denotes spatial or temporal nearness.
 - The verb is in the perfect tense, suggesting an action completed in the past, but with present effects.
 - The tension is deliberate.
- “kingdom of God” / “kingdom of Heaven”
 - Central theme of Jesus preaching and teaching
 - Lord’s prayer – Let thy kingdom come – that is, let Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven
 - Jesus is crucified as King of the Jews
 - The “kingdom of God” follows fast upon Jesus’ footsteps: it is both present in him and about to impact the world around him, changing it irrevocably.
 - Jesus never says *precisely* what the kingdom of God is
 - He always portrays it in simile: “the kingdom of God is *like* . . .”
 - What, where, when is the kingdom
 - What is it?
 - Not a kingdom with defined territories
 - It is not a place, it is the place where God reigns
 - Where is it?
 - My kingdom is not of this world
 - The kingdom of God is among you – it’s in you – a heart in submission to God
 - When is it?
 - It is near – it is now
 - Mt 12:28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you
 - It has already come, but it is not yet here in its fullness
 - The kingdom of God will:
 - Establish the kingship, rule and sovereignty of God in the hearts and minds of men and women who open their lives to him
 - This is an *immediate* effect.
 - Enable complete salvation
 - Since Adam, men and women have languished in sin, alienated from God and from each other. In the kingdom of God, men and women will be reconciled to God and to each other once and for all.
 - This, too, is an *immediate* effect.
 - Usher in a community of men and women upon whose hearts God will inscribe his words and into whose hearts he will pour his Spirit.
 - This is an effect in the *near* future.
 - Result in a redeemed universe, a new heaven and a new earth that will witness the final realization of God’s saving power.
 - This is an effect in the *distant* future.
 - As a means of preparing to receive the kingdom of God, Jesus repeats John’s message: “Repent!”
 - He adds, “and believe in the gospel!” — In the person and work of Jesus

- Both messages are in the imperative, stressing their importance.
 - “Believe in” is unusual, occurring only here in the New Testament: it conveys the sense of “put your trust in” the gospel—in the person and work of Jesus.
- Jesus of Nazareth
 - Virgin-born, sinless son of God
 - Took our sins upon himself and bore the weight of those sins upon the cross and enabled our salvation
 - God enfleshed

Teaching and preaching

- Public ministries lasted 3 years – Johns mentions Passover 3 time
- Teaching, preaching and healing formed the core of Jesus ministry.
 - Mt 4:23 Jesus “went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people”
 - 204 cities and villages in Galilee (The Life of Flavius Josephus, [235])
- Teaching and preaching are 2 very different things
 - Teaching –
 - Preaching –
- Jesus’ teaching, preaching and healing forms a major component of Matthew’s gospel
 - Spans 9 chapters in Matthew (5-13)
 - Establishes his credentials as Messiah
- Jesus uses 3 types of teaching
 - Expository teaching
 - Ex – Sermon on the Mount
 - Didactic
 - Parables
- Jesus preaches at synagogue and drives out an unclean spirit (4:31-37)
- Jesus complements a Centurion’s faith (7:1-10)
- John the Baptist’s disciples question Jesus (7:18-35)
- Jesus dines with Simon the Pharisee (7:36-50)
- Jesus’ mother and brothers visit (8:19-21)
- Jesus dines with Mary and Martha (10:38-42)
- Jesus teaches on prayer (11:1-13)
- The sign of Jonah (11:29-36)
 - “Your eye is the lamp of your body” (11:33-36)
- Jesus dines with another Pharisee (11:37-12:12)
- Jesus teaches about worry (12:22-34)
- Jesus encourages watchfulness (12:35-48)
- Jesus brings division, not peace (12:49-53)
- Signs of the times (12:54-59)
- “Who will be saved?” (13:22-30)
- Herod hunts for Jesus (13:31-33)
- Jesus laments over Jerusalem (13:34-35)
- Jesus dines with yet another Pharisee (14:1-24)
- The law stands (16:16-17)
- Divorce (16:18)
- The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)
- Sin, faith and duty (17:1-10)

- gg. Jesus teaches on the kingdom of God (17:20-18:30)
- 1. “When will it come?” “You don’t know.” (17:20-37)
- 2. “What should we do in the meantime?” “Pray.” (18:1-8)
- 3. “What about our righteousness?” “Don’t count on it.” (18:9-14)
- 4. “Who will be in the kingdom?” “Those like little children.” (18:15-17)
- 5. “What must we do to enter the kingdom?” “Eliminate what stands in the way.” (18:18-30)
- hh. Approaching Jerusalem, Jesus predicts his death (18:31-34)
- ii. Up from Jericho (18:35-19:27)
- 1. Jesus heals the blind beggar in Jericho (18:35-43)
- 2. Jesus meets with Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector (19:1-10)
-

Sermon on the Mount (Expository teaching) – Great Discourse #1

- Deals with hypocrisy in the church
- Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” is the first of five “discourses” that comprise the basic structural framework of the Gospel according to Matthew and they provide the foundation on which Matthew builds his theology:
 - A** Narrative: **Jesus as Messiah**, Son of God (1-4)
 - Minor discourse: John the Baptist identifies the authority of Jesus (3:7-12)
 - B** Great Discourse #1: Demands of true discipleship (5-7)
 - C** Narrative: The supernatural authority of Jesus (8-9)
 - D** Great Discourse #2: Charge and authority of disciples (10)
 - E** Narrative: Jews reject Jesus (11-12)
 - F** Great Discourse #3: Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven (13)
 - E’** Narrative: Disciples accept Jesus (14-17)
 - D’** Great Discourse #4: Charge and authority of church (18)
 - C’** Narrative: Authority and invitation (19-22)
 - B’** Great Discourse #5: Judgment on false discipleship (23-25)
 - A’** Narrative: **Jesus as Messiah**, suffering and vindicated (26-28)
 - Minor discourse: Jesus identifies the authority of the church (28:18-20)
- The Sermon on the Mount is a brilliant teaching, perfectly structured, consisting of four perfectly balanced parts:
 1. The “Beatitudes” (5:2-12) – A clever and memorable introduction
 1. 8 counter-intuitive statements, capped by a 9th
 - All linked together by a repetitive syntactic pattern and the repetition of consonant and vowel sounds
 2. Closed by two dazzling metaphors of responsibility (5:13-16).
 2. 6 propositions that exceed the Law (5:17-48)
 1. Presented as 6 counterintuitive statements, linked by a repetitive syntactic pattern.
 3. 6 concrete actions to implement the Law (6:1-34), presented again as six counter-intuitive statements.
 4. 9-part “call to action,” capped by the astonishment of the crowd (7:1-29).
- This hillside forms a natural amphitheater with excellent acoustics

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and
shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.

Matthew 5:3-12, The Holy Bible

What Do the Beatitudes Mean?

Jesus surprised His disciples by telling them what kind of people would be blessed by God. His list of traits are called Beatitudes, meaning "to bless" or "to make happy."

Poor of Spirit

This word was taken from a Greek word meaning "to crouch." It can mean lowly, afflicted, helpless, powerless to solve a problem, lacking wealth and education, or begging. Is there a problem or situation in your life that is beyond your control? Are you reduced to begging God for help? God promises to help the poor of spirit.

Mourn

This word means "to wail." This is deeper than sadness; it is despond and despair. Do you know anyone who is crushed with the disappointments of life? God promises to comfort.

Meek

Meekness means humility, a gentleness of spirit, or a mild disposition. A meek person is one who trusts God and accepts today's circumstances as God's best for them, even if situations in their lives are painful, frightening, frus-

trating, or annoying. Two of the most powerful people in the Bible, Jesus and Moses, were considered "meek." (Numbers 12:3, Matthew 11:29, 21:5)

Hunger and thirst after righteousness

These people eagerly desire (or crave) righteousness. Righteousness is holy and upright living, conforming to God's standard.

Merciful

These people are kind, even to those who treat them without respect. They forgive. God is kind to us, even though sometimes we treat Him and His commands without respect. Isaiah 55:7 says, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon." Is there someone you need to pardon? If we refuse to forgive, God will not forgive us.

Pure of Heart

This person approaches life with innocence and blamelessness. Psalm 73:1 says, "Surely God is good...to those who are pure in heart."

Peacemakers

These are people who want peace. They do not stir up fights or arguments. They do not look for reasons to complain or to say bad things about others. James 3:18 says, "Peacemakers who sow in peace, raise a harvest of righteousness."

Persecuted for righteousness

These people are teased, harassed, harmed or bothered by others because they choose to do what is right. Jesus said, "No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also." He said, "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven." You will have a great reward when you suffer for the Lord. (Luke 6:23; John 15:20)

- Beatitudes is Latin for “blessings”
- The “Beatitudes” introduce the “Sermon on the Mount”
 - 9 statements that are clever, counter-intuitive, and repetitive in pattern and sound
 - 8 statements structured syntactically as “Blessed is A, for they shall be B,”
 - Capped by “Blessed are you . . .”
 - All linked together by a repetitive syntactic pattern and the repetition of consonant and vowel sounds
 - Blessed are A, for they shall be B; Blessed are C, for they shall be D; etc
- What do we consider to be blessings – usually has to do with our own health and happiness
 - Jesus wants us to recalibrate how we think of blessings – none of these lead to health and happiness
 - We need to look at blessings in terms of eternity

Fruits of blessedness:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- The poor in spirit are those who have a gaping hole in their heart and know their utter need for God
- Blessed
 - The word means more than “happy,” because happiness is an emotion often dependent on outward circumstances. “Blessed” here refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God. See notes on Ps 1:1 ; Rev 1:3 .
- poor in spirit
 - Humility, humble in heart
 - In contrast to the spiritually proud and self-sufficient. theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom is not something earned. It is more a gift than a reward.

2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

- Not necessarily those who mourn as in bereavement, but rather those who mourn about the poverty of their spirit
- those who mourn – Over both personal and corporate sins (see Ezra 9:4 ; Ps 119:36)

3. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

- Meekness is knowing the poverty of your spirit, mourning over it, and yet knowing that you are you - you are not God and nothing you do can fill that hole.
- This beatitude is taken from Ps 37:11 and refers not so much to an attitude toward people as to a disposition before God, namely, humility. *the earth*. The new promised land (see Rev 21:1 ; cf. note on Ps 37:9).

4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

- hunger and thirst for righteousness
 - Have a deep longing for both personal righteousness and justice for the oppressed

5. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

- Mercy implies that someone has wronged you

6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

- heart. The center of one’s being, including mind, will and emotions (see note on Ps 4:7).

7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

- peacemakers. Those who promote peace, as far as it depends on them (Ro 12:18). In so doing, they reflect the character of their heavenly Father and so are called “sons of God” (see Jas 3:17-18).

8. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- Blessed. Because persecution provides an opportunity for believers to prove their fitness for the kingdom (see Heb 12:4-11 and notes). persecuted. Righteous living is often offensive to unbelievers (cf. v. 11). theirs is the kingdom of heaven. For the blessings of God's kingdom see 3:2 and note

9. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Responsibility of Blessedness (5:13-16):

- Closed by two dazzling metaphors of responsibility
- With blessedness comes responsibility

1. You are the salt of the earth (5:13)

- Uses of salt in the ancient world
 - Flavor enhancer – Food tastes better
 - Preservative of meat – can't eat a whole cow
 - Fertilizer – Makes the fruit grow better
 - Salt is the essential ingredient in all these that makes it better
 - We are the people that enhance, preserve, and make the world better
 - If we aren't doing that, then we have lost our saltiness
 - Our purpose – to be disciples in the world – When we've lost our saltiness, we do not bear fruit
- You are to make people thirsty for God
- Dead sea salt has magnesium – highly flammable
 - Used to spark up the fire for cooking
 - Once the magnesium is burned up, it's useless

2. You are the light of the world (5:14)

- Revelation – Lampstands – Light to the world
 - Ephesus – Jesus removed their lampstand – Turkey is 99% Muslim

6 propositions that exceed the Law (Mt 5:17-48)

1. The "Law" – A way to know God's character and will
 - The Old Testament
 - God's comprehensive teaching in both the Hebrew scriptures & in the oral & written Jewish traditions
 - More narrow → The Pentateuch (5 books of Moses)
 - More narrow → The 10 Commandments (Ex 20:1-17)
 - 613 specific *mitzvot*, or commandments
 - In the 3rd century AD, the Jewish Rabbi Simlai mentioned in a sermon (Talmud *Makkot* 23b) that Torah enumerates 613 specific *mitzvot*, or commandments.
 - The great medieval Spanish sage, Maimonides (AD 1125-1204), codified the commandments in *Sefer Hamitzvot* ("Book of Commandments")
 - Ceremonial law has been fully fulfilled by Jesus
 - This is why we do not have to follow these laws as Christians
- Jesus presents 6 propositions that exceed the Law with counterintuitive statements and repetitive syntactic structures
 - "You have heard it said A, but I tell you B; you have heard it said C, but I tell you D," and so on.

- Same as with the “Beatitudes”
 - He does so by probing the inner dynamics of the Law itself.
- Framed by a structural and theological Inclusio
 - until everything is accomplished (Mt 5:18)
 - Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48)
- More focus on the spirit of the law as opposed to the letter of the law
 - God cares about the heart, the motives, as much as whether you actually do the acts

Prologue (5:17-20)

- Jesus insists that the Law is the “gold standard,” the benchmark of behavior for God’s covenant people
- Mt 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law **until everything is accomplished**.
 - Opening statement of the Inclusio
- Jesus begins this section by saying that he in no way seeks to eliminate or diminish the Law; rather, he strives to elevate the Law to an impossibly high level. (Mt 5:17)
 - The six propositions do not abolish the Law
 - Each proposition explores the inner dynamic of a *mitavah* or commandment, fulfilling and transforming it
 - Going far beyond simple “thou shalt not” statements, Jesus examines the behavior addressed by the Law
 - Explores the psychology of a person who breaks the Law – dissecting his motives and examining the addictive attraction that sin exerts on one’s heart and soul.
- Antinomianism – It’s all about grace – now that you’ve accepted Jesus, you can do what you want
 - One who holds that under the gospel dispensation of grace the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary to salvation.
 - It’s all about grace – now that you’ve accepted Jesus, you can do what you want
 - We can sin all we want if we ask for forgiveness
 - We should live right because we are grateful for what Jesus did for us
 - False teaching – very common today
 - Cheap grace – Justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner – doesn’t take sin seriously
- Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

1. Murder (5:21-26)

21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. ... anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

- Most people think that if they are on safe ground, this is where it is
 - I haven’t killed anyone
 - This ‘murder’ also includes anger felt in your heart
- *retzach* – The unlawful, premeditated taking of another person’s life
 - The Hebrew verb *retzach* in Ex 20:13 has a wide range of meaning in Scripture
 - “break”, “smash”, “slay”, “kill”, and “murder”
 - Context determines how *retzach* is to be translated

- Mt 5:23-26 – Jesus is describing the dangers of hell unless we deal with the disease of the heart that is separating us from God

2. Adultery (5:27-30)

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

- Hyperbole to emphasize the importance of our sin nature
- Do whatever it takes to stop sin

3. Divorce (5:31-32)

31 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

- There were 2 schools of thought about divorce in Jesus' day
 - You can divorce for any reason at all – your wife burned your lunch
 - You can only divorce for serious reasons
- Jesus says that you should not divorce for any reason – that is the spirit of the law
- Addressed again in Mt 19

4. Oaths (5:33-37)

33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' 34 But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

- In normal everyday life, God's people are expected to be honest people all the time
 - People should trust you enough that when you say yes, you mean yes
 - Underlying law – love your neighbor as yourself
- The devil is the father of lies
 - If you are not honest, you are following Satan, not God
- The heart of the Law – Love God and love your neighbor
 - Lev 19:18
 - Dt 6:5

5. Conflict (5:38-42) – An Eye for an Eye

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

- An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth

- Ex 21:24, Lev 24:20, Dt 19:21
- What did it mean when it was given? Mitigation of vengeance – Revenge stops at justice
- How did it get jumbled? You're going to get yours
- How did Jesus try to fix it? Do not resist an evil person.
 - My love for my neighbor is greater than my desire to exact my allowed revenge
 - Take up our cross, die to ourselves and serve God
 - This is the farthest thing from our natural reaction – we can only do it with the help of God

6. Love (5:43-48) – Love for Enemies

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Love your neighbor
 - Lev 19:18 " 'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.
- Love in the Bible is a verb – less about how you feel, more about what you do
 - What does it mean to love your enemies – to pray for those who persecute you – pray for good things, for God to bless them
- John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
- James 4:8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.
- James 5:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Conclusion / Call to action (5:48)

- Mt 5:48 **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**
 - Perfect comes from the Greek work "telos". It carries a sense of the "end goal" or "completion"
 - We get the English word "telescope".
 - Closing statement of the Inclusio

6 concrete actions to implement the Law (Mt 6:1-34)

Beginning with the three pillars of devotional Judaism—almsgiving, prayer and fasting—Jesus explores the motives for devotional practices and for performing good works, or mitzvot, as well as what one might expect to get in return from doing them.

- Jesus now addresses the concrete actions demanded by the 6 propositions that exceed the Law
 - Probes the inner dynamics of each action, examining both the motive and means
- Almsgiving, Prayer and Fasting, the first three "Concrete Actions to Implement the Law,"
 - These are the three devotional pillars of Judaism

- They are also the three devotional pillars of Christianity during the Lenten season.
- All three express conversion in relation to others (almsgiving), God (prayer) and one's self (fasting).

Prologue (6:1)

Beware of hypocrisy – Doing good things for the wrong reasons

- Doing things with the wrong motivations
- What would be a blessing has now become sinful
- Calls for coherence between the inner man and the outer man

1: Almsgiving – Giving to the needy (6:2-4)

- Wealth is a blessing, a loan from God
 - According to Mosaic thinking, wealth is a blessing, a loan from God, and the poor have a spiritual claim on the possessions of the rich, while the rich are positively enjoined to share God's blessings with the poor.
 - For Greek-speaking Jews of Jesus' day, almsgiving meant offering charity to the poor out of a feeling of both compassion and righteousness (zedakah).
 - We need to help the needy because it is the right thing to do, not to be noticed by people

2: Prayer (6:5-15)

When you pray ... Jesus assumed that it was happening

Pray to God, to please God, not to impress men

The Lord's Prayer

See also: The Lord's Prayer

Meant to be a simple prayer – unlike the long, wordy prayers of the Pharisees

Part 1 – Glory to God

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Part 2 – Please help us

Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

Part 3 – Added after, not in the original manuscripts

For yours is the kingdom,
and power,
and glory
Forever and ever

14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

3: Fasting (6:16-18)

Prayer and fasting usually go together

Breakfast – Breaking the fast of overnight

Fasting – prayer amplifier – dependence on God

When you fast... Jesus assumed that it was happening g– normal practice

Fasting in Judaism

- Fasting means completely abstaining from food and drink, including water.
- Yom Kippur, the “Day of Atonement”
 - Scripture only requires fasting for Jews on one day each year: Yom Kippur (Lv 16)
 - It is the most important day of the Jewish year
 - Fasting is both an expression and means of repentance.
- Tisha B’Av
 - Today, traditional observant Jews observe a 2nd fast day: Tisha B’Av, which remembers:
 1. the destruction of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
 2. the destruction of the 2nd Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70
 3. the Jews banishment from Jerusalem after the Bar Kokhba revolt in A.D. 136
 4. the many tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people, including the Holocaust

Fasting in Christianity

- Only two days of fasting are obligatory: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday
 - Only applies in the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church in the United States
 - Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence: no meat on Fridays during Lent!
- Fasting may be part of one’s private devotion at any time during the year
 - Especially important when you are making significant decisions in life

4: Serving God (6:19-24)

- The things in this life don’t last
- By serving God, you will build up eternal treasures in heaven
- Treasures in heaven
 - 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
 - 24 ... You cannot serve both God and Money.
 - How do you do that?
 - Be generous
 - Spend a lot of time w/ people that have less than you – serve them
- 22 "The eye is the lamp of the body
 - The eye – our gateway to the world
 - Spiritual eye – the ways that we discern and understand the world
 - Do we have an eternal perspective or think/live in worldly terms?

5: Not Worrying (6:25-34)

6: Not Judging (7:1-6)

9-part “call to action” (Mt 7:1-29)

As the “Beatitudes” introduce the “Sermon on the Mount” with eight counterintuitive statements, structured syntactically as “Blessed is A, for they shall be B,” capped by “Blessed are you . . .,” so does the “Sermon on the Mount” conclude with a nine-part call to action, capped by the astonishment of the crowd.

1. Do not judge (condemn)

Mt 7:1 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

The judgment that Jesus is referring to is condemnation – do not pass final judgement

Jesus is the judge, not you

There is a day coming when every wrong will be righted

We should exercise moral discernment

2. Ask, Seek, Knock (Mt 7:7-9)

Mt 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?”

Ask, seek, knock = Pray

3 ways of saying the same thing

Pray with faith – know that God answers prayer

This 1st series of “ask . . . seek . . . knock” consists of present, imperative, plural verbs in the active voice, and the “you’s” are 2nd person plural pronouns. Grammatically, this sequence addresses Jesus’ *en=re* audience, forcefully commanding them to engage in a set of on---going, repetitive actions.

3. Golden Rule – Do unto others

Mt 7:12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

Ties to ask, seek, knock – Jesus is addressing the Pharisees in their prayer life and their treatment of one another

Jesus is the answer to everything addressed in the Sermon on the Mount

4. Choose the narrow path

Mt 7:13 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

- Choose the road and the gate that go to where you want to go, not the one that looks good
- Very exclusivistic statement
 - John 14:5 . . . how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
 - John 10:9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.

5. Beware of false teachers (Mt 7:15-20)

Many warnings in Scripture

- Every book in the New Testament has a warning about false teachers
- 1Jn 4:1

- 1Ki
- Rev 6 – 1st horseman of the apocalypse – false teachers

1Jn 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

Most false teachers do not know that they are false teachers, they think that they are sincere

6. Do not be self-deceived (Mt 7:21-23)

False teachers live godless lives – look at the character of the teacher's lives

7.

8.

9.

Fra Angelico

This is a very stylized fresco fraught with symbolism:

- Notice that Jesus is teaching on a rock. As Moses delivered the message of the Law of Mt. Sinai, so Jesus delivers the message of grace on a rock mountain.
- Jesus is dressed in a red undergarment with a blue garment on top.
 - Red suggests His shed blood on the cross
 - Blue suggests His heavenly origin
- Light in the fresco moves from bottom to top, drawing our eyes from earth to heaven. In addition, Jesus points upward, reinforcing this movement of light, and the circle of the disciples draws our eyes upward as well
- Jesus seemed to be addressing Peter on the left, reinforcing Jesus' later statement, "on this rock I will build me church."
- Judah sits 2nd from the right. His halo is black, appropriate for the betrayer.

Sermon of the Plain (Lk 6:17-49)



Kingdom of Heaven

- The kingdom of heaven is God's rule during this present age and after.
- The expression, "kingdom of heaven," used over and over my Matthew, comes by implication from Daniel where the messianic "Son of Man" came in "the clouds of heaven" to God the Father, "Then to Him was given...a kingdom" (Daniel 7:13, 14).
 - Dan 7¹³ "I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.
¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.
- A basic theme of the kingdom of heaven parables involves:
 - a king giving a marriage feast or taking a journey,
 - followed by a long period in which some come to the marriage feast or work diligently for the king;
 - then comes the king's surprise return, his reward of the faithful, and his punishment of the wicked.
 - Thus these parables show how Christ will administer the church and the world during this present age, and how He will judge all upon His return.

Sower and the soils (Mt 13:3-8, 18-23; Mk 4:3-8, 14-20; Lk 8:5-8, 11-15)

The Parable of the Sower

13 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. ² And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

³ Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁸ But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Parable of the Sower Explained

¹⁸ "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

- This parable is easy to understand, because the Lord Jesus interpreted it for His apostles:
 - The sower is one who sows the Word of the kingdom in the world.
 - The seed is the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; cf. John 3:17, 18).
 - 1Co 15¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

- Jn 3 ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
 - The soil/ground onto which the gospel seed is sown is the heart of man (Romans 10:9, 10).
 - Ro 10 ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
- 4 different responses to the gospel message – 4 different types of ground upon which the seed of the gospel falls.
 - Christ did not teach that all of the world would be converted during this age (Matthew 7:21-23).
 - Mt 7 ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’
 - The various reactions are not caused by different qualities of seed – for example, more thrilling or compelling preaching. Christ placed the responsibility for faith or unbelief on the soil – the hearer.
- 1. The first response comes from a hard heart (cf. John 12:37-41; Hebrews 3:7-13).
 - ⁴ And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.
 - Wayside soil is hard and unprepared for seed.
 - The fowls that devour the seed that fell on the hard ground are Satan and his demons.
- 2. The second response comes from a shallow heart
 - ⁵ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.
 - Such a person has no spiritual depth, no commitment to God’s Word.
 - He holds to his religious decision for a while; but when tribulation or persecution com, “because of the word” of God, he is offended and falls away from his profession of faith (cf. Matthew 7:21-23).
 - ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.
- 3. The third response comes from a worldly heart
 - ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.
 - A heart that loves this world system is a heart alienated from God (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).
 - 1Co 3 ¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and ^[a]behaving like *mere* men? ⁴ For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I *am* of Apollos,” are you not carnal?
 - The love of money, success, and the pleasures of this world choke out the influence of the Word of God in the life of the professing believer so that he becomes unfruitful (v. 22).
 - ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.
 - Many profess Christ but love the world and the things of the world more than they love God
 - 1Jn 2 ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
- 4. The fourth response comes from an understanding heart (vv. 8, 23).

- ⁸ But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.
 - ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”
 - Note that only one man understood the Word of God, and brought forth fruit (Acts 8:26-39).
 - Act 8 26-39 – Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian eunuch
- The parable of the sower will apply to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ until the harvest at the end of the present age (John 4:35-39).
 - This parable should warn unconverted people that they need to receive the “good seed,” the message of Christ’s forgiveness, into their hearts.
 - It also should encourage Christians to witness boldly, because the seed does produce fruit.
 - However, the parable also puts to rest the unbiblical expectation that everyone who “hears” will enter the kingdom. Only those who hear, understand, and believe will make the true entrance.

Wheat and the Tares (Weeds) (Mt 13:24-30, 36-43)

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷ So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’

The Parable of the Tares Explained

³⁶ Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

³⁷ He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. ³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰ Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

As He did with the parable of the sower, our Lord interpreted this parable for us:

- The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 24, 37).
 - ²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;
 - ³⁷ He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.
- The field is the world (vv. 24, 38).
 - ²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;
 - ³⁸ The field is the world
 - While here on earth He sowed the good seed in person
 - Before ascending into heaven, He commissioned His church to proclaim the gospel to every person in every nation (Matthew 28:19, 20).

- Mt 28 The Great Commission ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.
- The good seed in this parable is not the gospel, but rather the children of the kingdom (vv. 24, 38).
 - ²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;
 - ³⁸ ... the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom
 - He began to sow (scatter) the good seed (the children of God) first in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria;
 - He continues to scatter His children among all parts of the world.
 - The good seed, as they are sown, are to share their faith with that part of the world in which they have been scattered (Acts 1:8; cf. 8:1-4).
 - Act 1 ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- “The tares are the sons of the wicked one,” Satan (vv. 25, 38).
 - ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.
 - ³⁸ ... the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*.
 - Jesus said to the unsaved religious leaders of His day, “You are of your father the devil” (John 8:44).
 - Jn 8 ⁴⁴ You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.
 - Where Jesus sends His children, Satan also sends his. You will find in most churches, children of God and children of the Devil (Matthew 7:21-23).
 - Mt 7 ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’
- The enemy that sowed the tares is the Devil (vv. 28, 39).
 - ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’
 - ³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.
- The harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are the angels (vv. 30, 39)
 - ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”
 - ³⁹ ... the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.
 - Christ’s second coming will conclude this age.
 - He will send His angels to reap the harvest and separate the wheat from the tares.
 - He will rapture the “wheat,” the children of the kingdom, and burn the “tares,” the children of Satan.
- Note the contrast:
 - The children of the Devil will be cast into “the furnace of fire” (hell),
 - The children of God “will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”
 - ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”
 - ⁴⁰ Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!
 - Rev 20 ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, ³² which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

- “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field” (v. 31).
 - The mustard seed is one of the smallest of seeds.
- The mustard seed is the church in its numerically insignificant beginning – Christ and the twelve apostles.
 - On the Day of Pentecost, the small kingdom began its phenomenal expansion.
 - Like the mustard tree it continued to grow, branching out into other nations of the known world.
- The man who sowed the seed is the God-Man, Christ Jesus.
- His field is the world.
- The fowls of the air that lodged in the branches are probably the same as in the parable of the sower – Satan and his demons (Matthew 13:4, 19).
 - Mt 13 ⁴ And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ... ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.
- This mustard tree (the church), in its early existence, was pure and powerful – until Satan’s followers found a way to nest in its branches.
 - Christendom will continue with the true children of God, as well as the imposters who profess to be God’s children.
 - Just as the wheat and the tares will grow together until the harvest, so the saved and the unsaved will nest in the mustard tree until Jesus comes to separate the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, the saved from the unsaved (Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46).
 - Mt 25 ³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ... ⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ... ⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

The Parable of the Leaven

³³ Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

- This parable teaches that as the years and centuries roll on, the pure Christianity of the early church will become progressively corrupt until the entire lump (Christendom) is leavened.
- The woman is the harlot church
 - Revelation 17 – The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast
- The leaven represents the subtle working of evil
 - The same symbol is used elsewhere in Scripture (e.g. Exodus 12:15, 19; Matthew 16:6-12).
 - Ex 12 ¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that ^[d]person shall be cut off from Israel. ... ¹⁹ For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land.
 - Mt 16 ⁶ Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” ⁷ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “*It is* because we have taken no bread.” ⁸ But Jesus, being aware of *it*, said to them, ... ¹¹ How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—*but* to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ¹² Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - It is religious hypocrisy (Luke 12:1).
 - Lk 12 ¹ In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first *of all*, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.
 - The leaven is the evil doctrine of the apostate church.
- The three measures of meal represent Christendom from its inception through the Tribulation.
 - After the true church is raptured, Christendom will be totally corrupt (1 Corinthians 5:6-9).
 - 1Co 5 ⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.
 - The “mystery of lawlessness” (2 Thessalonians 2:7) has been working as leaven in the church from its early days (Revelation 2-3) and will continue to work until the whole of Christendom is evil.
 - 2Th 2 ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way.
 - Revelation 2-3 – 7 Churches

Hidden treasure (Mt 13:44)

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

⁴⁴ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

- This profound parable is one of the deepest and most misinterpreted of all the parables.
 - It involves both revelation and mystery (Romans 16:25, 26; cf. Mark 4:11, 12).

1) The revelation is that the hidden treasure is the kingdom of God, not specifically the church, although the church is part of God’s kingdom. This parable deals with the total kingdom, and not merely with a part.

2) The mystery is that when the Lord Jesus found the treasure in the field, He hid it. The kingdom of God in its totality is still a mystery, hidden from man. However, Christ has revealed to us the King’s manifesto, found in the Sermon on the Mount.

3) The treasure is hidden in the field (the world). When Adam and Eve sinned and were driven from the Garden of Eden and God put a curse upon the world (Genesis 3:4-19), Satan, the God of this age, attempted to usurp a kingdom (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan’s kingdom, the kingdom of evil, is seen everywhere. The treasure, the kingdom of God that is hidden in the world, will be revealed in all power when the King returns and establishes His kingdom. Jesus journeyed to Calvary with the promise of joy before Him (Hebrews 12:2). It was the joy of knowing that on the other side of the Cross was His purchased kingdom. After His resurrection He went back to heaven to await the Father’s time, when He will return to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords to claim the kingdom (Matthew 25:31-46; cf. Revelation 19:16).

Valuable pearl (Mt 13:45-46)

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47-6 The Pearl of Great Price

(Matthew 13:45, 46)

The “pearl of great price” (v. 46) is perhaps the easiest to understand of all of Jesus’ parables.

Again we have the merchant, representing the God-Man, Christ Jesus, who came into the world “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The merchant came seeking beautiful pearls, and found one pearl of exquisite beauty. This speaks of the church, the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18). It is a beautiful picture of the growth, unity, and purity of the church.

The seeking savior comes, and men, women, and children hear the gospel of how He was pierced, “wounded for our transgressions” (Isaiah 53:5). A pearl is formed in an oyster – a grain of sand lodged in the oyster’s shell causes irritation, triggering a secretion that surrounds the sand... and in time a pearl is formed. Similarly, through the centuries the Lord has been adding to the church those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). Thus, all born-again children of God together are valuable pearls in the eyes of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because we were spiritually shaped by the blood that came from the Savior’s pierced side.

This is a great mystery: that billions of individuals, living and dead, of differing backgrounds, cultures, customs, and languages, are one body. Tragically, sometimes differences in doctrine, opinion, and will are so pronounced between believers that it seems there will never be unity among them. Many refuse to “speak the same thing” and “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10). Nonetheless they are alone in “the unity

of the Spirit,” in “one body” (Ephesians 4:3, 4). And just as the merchant sold all that he had and bought the one pearl of great price, so “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” (Ephesians 5:25).

This pure, pearl-like unity of the church may never be visible on this earth, during this age. It will be realized, though, when the dead in Christ are raised and, with those who are alive, are caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). Then we will be perfect in body and mind – “conformed to His glorious body” (Philippians 3:21) and knowing ‘just as [we] also [are] known’ (1 Corinthians 13:12). Then we shall be revealed as one body, one bride, or, as in the parable, “one pearl of great price” – paid for by His death, burial, and resurrection.

Net (Mt 13:47-50)

The Parable of the Dragnet

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, ⁴⁸ which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

⁵¹ Jesus said to them, “Have you understood all these things?”

They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”

⁵² Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.”

47-7 The Net

(Matthew 13:47-50)

This parable depicts the consummation of what the foregoing parables describe, as the kingdom moves from mystery to open, visible presence.

- 1) The kingdom of heaven is a net filled with fish – a catch of all kinds.
- 2) The sea is the nations of the world who will come before the King to be judged.
- 3) The catch is made up of good and bad. Just as the King allows the tares to grow amid the wheat until He comes to establish His kingdom, so the good and bad fish will co-exist until the Master Fisherman casts his net and draws them into His presence at the end of the age (v. 49). The angels will then separate the good from the bad (Matthew 25:31-46). The good (the saved, who did the will of God – John 6:40) will be received God’s kingdom. The bad (the lost, who were disobedient) will be “cast... into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (v. 50).

Parables

- A New Testament parable is an earthly story that parallels a scriptural truth.
 - Why did Christ teach in parables?
 - He explained part of the answer in Matthew 13:10-17.
 - Parables vividly communicated from the known (earthly) to the unknown—unseen (spiritual), and providentially discriminated among the hearers.
 - Those whose ears had been opened by God would understand (Matthew 13:9) and be blessed (Matthew 13:16, 17), while the unsaved and uninterested would hear but not comprehend (Matthew 13:13-15; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14).

- Today these parables still help our understanding of what is going on in the world, what God is accomplishing, how He is working, how different segments of mankind will react to the gospel message during our age, and what God will do when Christ returns to set up His earthly kingdom. Each one is a rare beauty capable of unending study and admiration.

The Purpose of Parables

Mt 13 ¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

¹¹ He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
¹⁵ For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.’

¹⁶ But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; ¹⁷ for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

...

Prophecy and the Parables

³⁴ All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, ³⁵ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

“I will open My mouth in parables;
I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

- “Parable” is a compound of two Greek words
 - *para* – meaning “along side” (as in paramedic or paralegal)
 - *bollo* – from the Greek verb “to throw.”
- A parable is a succinct, didactic story thrown alongside a common, ordinary truth to illuminate that truth in a striking and memorable fashion.
 - A parable is something “thrown along side” to illuminate or bring into sharp focus a common truth in a new or memorable way.
 - Typically, a parable draws from everyday experience and introduces a surprising or extravagant twist that catches the hearer’s attention and brings into focus the comparison he is making.
 - Frequently a parable includes terms that have special or symbolic meaning to the world and culture of Jesus’ day or it gains meaning from the events or words that precede it.
- Jesus did not invent the parable as a teaching device.
 - Parables are a type of *mashalim*, a form of comparison used in the Old Testament

- Nathan's story of the ewe-lamb in 2 Samuel 12:1-7
 - The story told by the woman of Tekoa in 2 Samuel 14: 1-13.
- In a technical sense, "a parable is something like a metaphor expanded into a story."
 - Greek rhetoricians used the term to describe a brief fictional narrative used for comparison, much like an extended metaphor.
- Although Jesus did not invent the parable, he was a master in using it.
 - Jesus' parables are clever and memorable, often delighting his audience with surprise and insight.
- History of parable research and analysis
 - Parables have been the subject of an enormous amount of research and analysis.
 - Throughout the centuries the Church has read Jesus' parables primarily as allegories and has applied them to the lives of individual believers as such.
 - 1910 - Adolph Jülicher initiated a new period of parable study in 1910 when he demonstrated the inadequacy of the allegorical method in understanding the parables and suggested the necessity of developing other approaches.
 - Following Jülicher's thinking, a group of German scholars began investigating the Jewish background of Jesus' parables.
 - 1935 - C. H. Dodd launched a massive reappraisal of the parables.
 - In his work, Dodd points out that no one would have crucified an itinerant preacher who went about encouraging people with entertaining and memorable stories that encouraged them to embrace higher moral and ethical principles.
 - Clearly, said Dodd, there is more to the parables than that, and he set out to discover the original setting of the parables in Jesus' ministry.
 - For Dodd, his research led him to believe that the parables contained a revolutionary message regarding the coming eschatological "Kingdom of Heaven," and it was being realized through Jesus' preaching. For Dodd, the parables contained a radical and revolutionary message.
 - Paying tribute to Dodd, Joachim Jeremias moved parable research forward again when he launched a deep investigation into their Palestinian background, probing cultural and rabbinical sources, as well as literature contemporary with Jesus, such as the Dead Sea scrolls.
 - At the same time G. V. Jones began investigating the parables as art forms, loosening them from their historical and cultural roots and viewing them as distinct works of art, focusing on their structural elements.
 - Today, parable research tends to focus more and more on such cultural and literary issues.

Lamp under a bowl (Mt 5:14-15; Mk 4:21-22; Lk 8:16; Lk 11:33)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Wise and foolish builders (Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:47-49)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

New cloth on an old coat (Mt 9:16; Mk 2:21; Lk 5:36)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

New wine in old wine skins (Mt 9:17; Mk 2:23; Lk 5:37-38)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Sower and the soils (Mt 13:3-8, 18-23; Mk 4:3-8, 14-20; Lk 8:5-8, 11-15)

See [Sower and the soils \(Mt 13:3-8, 18-23; Mk 4:3-8, 14-20; Lk 8:5-8, 11-15\)](#)

Wheat and the Tares (Weeds) (Mt 13:24-30, 36-43)

See [Wheat and the Tares \(Weeds\) \(Mt 13:24-30, 36-43\)](#)

Mustard seed (Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18-19)

See [Mustard seed \(Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18-19\)](#)

Yeast (Leaven) (Mt 13:33; Lk 13:20-21)

See [Yeast \(Leaven\) \(Mt 13:33; Lk 13:20-21\)](#)

Hidden treasure (Mt 13:44)

See [Hidden treasure \(Mt 13:44\)](#)

Valuable pearl (Mt 13:45-46)

See [Valuable pearl \(Mt 13:45-46\)](#)

Net (Mt 13:47-50)

See [Net \(Mt 13:47-50\)](#)

Owner of a house (Mt 13:52)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Lost sheep (Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:4-7)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-34)

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. ²³ Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. ²⁶ The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ ²⁷ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

²⁸ “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down ^[e]at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ ³⁰ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. ³¹ So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. ³² Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ ³⁴ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

³⁵ “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother ^[g]his trespasses.”

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Workers in a vineyard (Mt 20:1-16)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Two sons (Mt 21:28-32)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Tenants (Mt 21:33-34; Mk 12:1-11; Lk 20:9-18)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Wedding banquet (Mt 22:2-14)

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

22 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: ²“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, ³and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. ⁴Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding.” ’ ⁵But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. ⁶And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them*. ⁷But when the king heard *about it*, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ ¹⁰So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹²So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

¹⁴“For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Fig tree (Mt 24:32-35; Mk 13:28-29; Lk 21:29-31)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Faithful and wise servant (Mt 24:45-51; Lk 12:42-48)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13)

See [Warning to Christians – Wise and Foolish Virgins – Matthew 25](#)

Talents (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:12-27)

See [Warning to Jews – Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25](#)

Sheep and goats (Mt 25:31-46)

See [Sheep and Goat Judgment \(Nations Judged\)](#)

Growing seed (Mk 4:26-29)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Watchful servants (Mk 13:35-37; Lk 12:35-40)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Money lender (Lk 7:41-43)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Friend in need (Lk 11:5-8)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Rich fool (Lk 12:16-21)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Repent or Perish – Unfruitful fig tree (Lk 13:1-9)

¹Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ²Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because

they suffered this way? ³I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

⁶Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. ⁷So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'

⁸" 'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.' "

Lesson

- As Jesus is teaching, someone in the crowd mentions a particularly heinous act committed by Pilate—the killing of a group of Galileans as they were offering sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem.
- Lesson – Death can strike anyone at any time, so you'd better repent while you still can.

Illustrations

- "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."
 - Jesus uses the comment to ask a question and to make a pronouncement (Jesus' typical pattern):
 - The question is rhetorical: he gives no time for an answer, nor does he expect one. Instead, he answers the question himself: "I tell you, no!"
 - He then follows his answer with an authoritative pronouncement: "But unless you repent, you too will all perish."
 - On the surface, comparing a group of Galileans deliberately and gruesomely murdered with the members of Jesus' audience seems odd.
- "...Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them, do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."
 - Even more oddly, Jesus quickly follows this comparison with another in the same rhetorical question/pronouncement pattern
- In both instances, Jesus stresses the tenuous nature of human life.
 - The murdered Galileans were not greater sinners than others present at the temple that day
 - The eighteen who died when a tower fell on them were not more guilty than others in Jerusalem.
 - In both cases, ordinary people were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.
 - The lesson Jesus drives home is this: Death can strike anyone at any time, so you'd better repent while you still can.

Parable

- Parable – Jesus then reinforces this lesson by introducing a parable, an extended metaphor "thrown along side" the two previous examples to illustrate and extend them in a memorable fashion.
 - In the parable the fig tree has born no fruit for three years. It is barren and worthless, so the owner of the vineyard tells the man who tends it to cut it down. Instead, the man asks for one more year, during which time he will "dig around it and fertilize it." If it does not bear fruit after that, he will cut it down.
- Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures Israel is compared to a vineyard planted by God in which each vine and fig tree is to yield good fruit.
 - The elements recall Micah 7:1—"What misery is mine! I am like one who gathers summer fruit at the gleanings of his vineyard; there is no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave."
- Elements of the parable:
 - Man = God

- Vineyard = Israel
- Fig tree = individual Israelite
- Fruit = good works of the individual
- Man who takes care of the vineyard = Jesus
- All of this would be clear to Jesus' audience, as it draws upon commonplace metaphors in Scripture.
- The parable achieves its full meaning by pairing it with the two illustrations that precede it.
 - Jesus has already made the point in the previous questions/ pronouncements that life is tenuous and that death can strike at any time, so one had better repent while he can.
 - In the parable, Jesus offers his listeners a final chance.
 - As the one who tends the vineyard, he is "digging around and fertilizing it" by his teaching.
 - If his listeners do not repent and produce fruit after that, they will be cut down posthaste.
 - In the previous illustrations, neither group is guilty of a greater sin than anyone else
 - In the parable, though, one who does not produce fruit after being "fertilized" by Jesus' teaching is guilty of "a greater sin," for he has chosen to do nothing after having been warned.

Lowest seat at the feast (Lk 14:7-14)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Great banquet (Lk 14:16-24)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Cost of discipleship (Lk 14:28-33)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Lost coin (Lk 15:8-10)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

son

Prodigal son / Lost son (Lk 15:11-32)

Luke 15:11 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ 28 “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

31 “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

God (father) helps to explain – I will always celebrate when a lost son is found

Not a problem with having a different perspective, but you need to understand the other perspectives

What is the father’s heart in reconciling the differences?

Jimmy Evans – The result of any argument will be determined in the 1st 3 minutes

*Ep 4: 31 Get rid of all **bitterness**, **rage** and anger, **brawling** and **slander**, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Forgiving – For giving ... grace, mercy, love

Younger son’s view

Luke 15:12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father. ... 21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

- Perspective – Pride

- Give me attitude – heart is full of ego, arrogance, pride – leads to entitlement
- When he came to his senses and repented, God gave him what he didn't deserve – to go home and receive better

Older son's view

Luke 15:25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ 28 “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’”

- Perspective – Pride
 - All about me attitude – Angry and frustrated that things are unfair
- Rebellious – wrong perspectives
 - Has been angry for a long time. When the hurt comes home, he explodes

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Shrewd manager (Lk 16:1-8:19-31)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Master and his servant (Lk 17:7-10)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Persistent widow (Lk 18:2-8)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

Pharisee and tax collector (Lk 18:10-14)

Lesson

Illustrations

Parable

End Times

Scripture

Matthew 24 – Signs of the End of the Age

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

³Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

⁴And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against

kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The Great Tribulation

¹⁵ “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

²³ “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.

²⁶ “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸ For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

³² “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

³⁶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will

come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25 – The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. ³ Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶ “And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹ “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹² But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

¹³ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴ “For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵ And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. ¹⁶ Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷ And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. ¹⁸ But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. ¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ ²² He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ ²³ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

²⁴ “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.’

²⁶ “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.

²⁹ ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink?’ ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*?’ ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to *You*?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:’ ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

⁴⁴ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to *You*?’” ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Luke 17 – The Coming of the Kingdom

²² Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*.’ ²³ And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after *them* or follow *them*.’ ²⁴ For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. ²⁵ But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. ³⁰ Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

³¹ “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. ³² Remember Lot’s wife. ³³ Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. ³⁴ I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵ Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. ³⁶ Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”

³⁷ And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?”

So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

Luke 21 – Signs of the End of the Age

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

⁵ Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ⁶ “These things which you see—the days will come in which not *one* stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.”

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

⁷ So they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?”

⁸ And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. ⁹ But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will not come* immediately.”

¹⁰ Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. ¹³ But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. ¹⁴ Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. ¹⁶ You will be

betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. ¹⁷ And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head shall be lost. ¹⁹ By your patience possess your souls.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. ²² For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴ And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁵ “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶ men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

The Parable of the Fig Tree

²⁹ Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰ When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

The Importance of Watching

³⁴ “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

³⁷ And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. ³⁸ Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

Mark 13 – Signs of the End of the Age

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

13 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*”

² And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”

⁵ And Jesus, answering them, began to say: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁶ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and will deceive many. ⁷ But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

⁹ “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to

all the nations. ¹¹ But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

The Great Tribulation

¹⁴ “So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁷ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ¹⁸ And pray that your flight may not be in winter. ¹⁹ For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. ²⁰ And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

²¹ “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, *He is* there!’ do not believe it. ²² For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²³ But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

²⁸ “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁰ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

³² “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”

Signs of the End of the Church Age

See MUCH larger discussion in [Prophecy](#)

These are only the highlights – Signs that Jesus himself told us to watch for

Not included here are many things that Paul added in his letters that we should watch for

Time of the End

- The GENERAL timing of His return was given – The season of His return

The Parable of the Fig Tree

³² “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. ³³ So you also, **when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!** ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.** ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

- EVERYONE (that means everyone) agrees that the fig tree represents Israel
 - Returned on May 14, 1948 – just as the Bible said it would – see [Ezekiel’s 2520 Prophecy](#)
- The question then becomes – What is a generation
- 4 Possible definitions of a generation
 - 40 years
 - 40 is a significant number in the Bible generally representing a generation
 - Nu 32:13 So the Lord’s anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them **wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation** that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone.
 - Many kings ruled for forty years and were considered a generation
 - 70-80 years
 - Ps 90:7 For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified.
8 You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.
9 For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh.
10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years,
Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
11 Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.
12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.
 - Joel 2:2 {The Day of the Lord} ...**A people come, great and strong,** The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations.
 - 100 years
 - Ge 15:12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and **they will afflict them four hundred years.** 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But **in the fourth generation** they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”
 - 120 years
 - Ge 6:3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; **his days will be a hundred and twenty years.**"
 - It has been 120 Jubilees since Adam and Eve
- ³³ ... **when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!**
 - EVERYTHING that we were told to watch for is happening NOW

WATCH!

- We are told to watch for these things that Jesus mentions

- Lk 21 ³⁴ “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”
- Mk 13 ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”

Olivet Discourse – Signs of the End Times

- Jesus told us to watch for these things to recognize the season of His return

Matthew 24 – Signs of the End of the Age

Mt 24 ³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All *these are* the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Luke 21 – The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

⁷ So they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?”

⁸ And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. ⁹ But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will not come* immediately.”

¹⁰ Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. ¹³ But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. ¹⁴ Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. ¹⁷ And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head shall be lost. ¹⁹ By your patience possess your souls.

Mark 13 – The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”

⁵ And Jesus, answering them, began to say: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁶ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and will deceive many. ⁷ But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

⁹ “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹ But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Birthpains

- These signs are equated to birthpains
 - Mt 24 ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

Life as normal

- Life will be going on as normal
 - Mt 24 ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Deception

- Mt 24 ⁴ “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.
- Mt 24 ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Wars and rumors of wars – World Wars

- Mt 24 ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Famines

- Mt 24 ⁷ And there will be famines.

Pestilences

- Mt 24 ⁷ And there will be ..., pestilences.

Earthquakes in various places

- Mt 24 ⁷ And there will be ... earthquakes in various places.

Persecution

- Mt 24 ⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.

- Lk 21 ¹² But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake.
- Lk 21 ¹⁶ ... and they will put *some* of you to death.

Lawlessness will abound

- Mt 24 ¹² And because lawlessness will abound

Hatred abounds – The love of many will grow cold

- Mt 24 ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.
- Mt 24 ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.
- Lk 21 ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends
- Lk 21 ¹⁷ And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.
- Mk 12 ¹² Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.

Fearful sights in heaven

- Lk 21 ¹¹ and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

Warnings

Unpreparedness – Wise and Foolish Virgins – Matthew 25

The final exhortation indicates the main point of the parable— one is to watch and be prepared!

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. ³Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶“And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹²But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

¹³“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

- As we take a good look at the Parable of the Ten Virgins, we must acknowledge up front that there has been much debate as to the meaning of these words of our Savior. At least one aspect of this parable can be known with absolute certainty – The bridegroom is Jesus Christ, and this parable describes His return.
 - In the Old Testament, God pictures Himself as the “husband” of Israel (Isaiah 54:4–6; 62:4-5; Hosea 2:19)
 - In the New Testament, Christ is pictured as the bridegroom of the Church (Jn 3:27–30; Mt 9:15; Mk 2:19–20)
 - The Church is described in Scripture as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25–32).
- The historical setting can also be known with a fair amount of certainty.
 - In describing a first-century Jewish wedding, D.A. Carson in the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* describes the setting this way: “Normally the bridegroom with some close friends left his home to go to the bride’s home, where there were various ceremonies, followed by a procession through the streets – after nightfall – to his home. The ten virgins may be bridesmaids who have been assisting the bride; and they expect to meet the groom as he comes from the bride’s house...Everyone in the procession was expected to carry his or her own torch. Those without a torch would be assumed to be party crashers or even brigands. The festivities, which might last several days, would formally get under way at the groom’s house.”
 - The torch was either a lamp with a small oil tank and wick or a stick with a rag soaked in oil on the end of it which would require occasional re-soaking to maintain the flame.
- Of interpretive significance is which return of Christ is this? Is it His return for the rapture of the Church, or is it His return to set up the Millennial Kingdom at the end of the Tribulation? Dispensational scholars divide over this issue, and no attempt will be made to answer that question here. Regardless of which return it is, the lessons to be learned are relevant to both.
- The overall and easily seen thrust of the parable is that Christ will return at an unknown hour and that His people must be ready.
 - Being ready means preparing for whatever contingency arises in our lives and keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus at all times while we eagerly await His coming.
 - As seen in the fact that all the virgins were sleeping when the call came indicates that it doesn’t matter what we are doing when Christ returns. We may be working, eating, sleeping, or pursuing leisure activities. Whatever it is, we must be doing it in such a way that we don’t have to “make things right” (get more oil) when He comes.
 - This would apply to either the coming of Christ for His Church or for the Tribulation saints as they await His second coming.

- Being ready for Christ's return ultimately involves one major thing which manifests itself in several areas of our lives – If we would be ready for Christ's return, we must be born again through saving faith in Jesus Christ...His death, burial and literal resurrection from the dead ([John 3:16](#); [14:6](#); [Romans 10:9](#) and [10](#); [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#); [Ephesians 2:1-10](#)). Saving faith in Jesus Christ will manifest itself in every aspect of our lives.
 - The fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22](#)) will begin to show.
 - A desire for greater holiness and less sin will be apparent.
 - And a consistent looking for His coming will mark our lives.
 - One of the best passages articulating what saving grace and faith look like in a believer's life is [Titus 2:11-14](#), "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."
- The five virgins who have the extra oil represent the truly born again who are looking with eagerness to the coming of Christ. They have saving faith and have determined that, whatever occurs, be it lengthy time or adverse circumstances, when Jesus returns, they will be looking with eagerness.
- The five virgins without the oil represent false believers who enjoy the benefits of the Christian community without true love for Christ. They are more concerned about the party than about longing to see the bridegroom. Their hope is that their association with true believers ("give us some of your oil" of verse 8) will bring them into the kingdom at the end.
 - This, of course, is never the case. One person's faith in Jesus cannot save another.
 - The "Lord, lord" and "I do not know you" of verses 11 and 12 fit very well with Jesus' condemnation of the false believers of [Matthew 7:21-23](#), "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"
- May we not be found "going away to make the purchase" (v. 10) when Christ returns. Take the time now to fill your lamp with oil and take extra along. Keep waiting and watching with joy and anticipation.

Be ready! The kingdom of heaven is coming!

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

- **Then the kingdom of heaven:** [Matthew 24](#) ended with a parable meant to emphasize the idea of readiness for the coming of Jesus. [Matthew 25](#) begins with another parable upon the same principle.
- **Then the kingdom of heaven**
 - This introductory formula is similar to [13:24](#); [18:23](#); [22:2](#) but here it is spoken of in the future tense.
 - [Mt 13](#) ²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;
 - [Mt 18](#) ²³ Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.
 - [Mt 22](#) ² "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,
- **To ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom:**
 - There were three stages to a Jewish wedding in that day.
 - *Engagement* – a formal agreement made by the fathers.
 - *Betrothal* – the ceremony where mutual promises are made.

- *Marriage* – approximately 1 year later when the bridegroom came at an unexpected time for his bride.
- “When the bridegroom came, the bride-maids, who were attending the bride, went forth to meet the bridegroom, with lamps lighted, to conduct him and his companions into the house, and to her who was to be the bride.”
- Some ask why Jesus described **ten virgins** and not another number. Reportedly, Talmudic authorities said there were usually **ten** lamps in a bridal procession. It was a common size of a wedding party.
- “The point is not these girls’ virginity, which is assumed, but simply that they are ten (a favorite round number...) maidens invited to the wedding.”
- **To ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom:**
 - The kingdom is compared to the story about ten “virgins” or “bridesmaids.” The word translated virgins is used in the general sense of unmarried maidens attending the bride. We should not press the term to find any other meaning (such as mature believers as opposed to carnal believers, those who are celibate, etc.). Neither should we attach any special meaning to the number ten. There does not seem to be any specific reason for this number. The analogy also breaks down when comparing the bridegroom to the character of God. As we saw with Jesus own interpretation of His parables (ch. 13) it was only the main details that had meaning.
- **Went to meet the bridegroom:** In this parable, the first two stages have already taken place. Now the wedding party (**the ten virgins**) waits for the coming of the **bridegroom** for the bride.
 - “To see the bridegroom as Jesus himself seems warranted in light of **Matthew 9:15**. This would be a bold figure for Him to use, as the Old Testament frequently describes *God* (not the Messiah) as the bridegroom, and Israel as the bride (**Isaiah 54:4-5; 62:5; Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 1-3, etc.**).”

Wise vs Foolish

² Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. ³ Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

- **Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish:** Some in the wedding party were **wise** and prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. Some in the wedding party were **foolish** and unprepared.
 - “Foolish, wise, not bad and good, but prudent and imprudent, thoughtless and thoughtful.”
- **Took their lamps and took no oil with them:** The five foolish virgins *appeared* to be ready for the bridegroom, because they had their lamps in hand. But they really were not ready, because they **took no oil with them**.
 - “It is apparently a torchlight procession, the *lamps* probably being ‘torches’ (of oil-soaked rags wrapped on a stick) rather than standing lamps, which are described by a different word in **Matthew 5:15** and **6:22**; the word used here regularly means ‘torch’.”
 - “Their *torches* consisting of a wooden staff held in the hand, with a dish at the top, in which was a piece of cloth or rope dipped in oil or pitch.”
 - **Oil in their vessels:** The wise maidens had an *extra supply* of oil.

They ALL slept

⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

- **While the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept:** All ten of the maidens slept, because the bridegroom was **delayed**. In this parable both the wise and foolish maidens slept, but the wise ones were prepared to act immediately when they were unexpectedly awakened. The foolish maidens were not prepared.
 - “They are waiting to escort the bridegroom in festal procession, probably in the last stage of the ceremonies as he brings his bride home for the wedding feast.” (France)
 - **Slumbered and slept:** “‘Nodded off and were sound asleep’ would get the sense of the Greek tenses.”

- In the traditional weddings, it would be possible for the messengers to repeatedly announce the coming of the groom, yet there could be a delay of hours. The delay of the bridegroom in the parable is linked to the uncertainty concerning the time of the return of the Son of Man (see also verse 19, “after a long time). The inference, therefore, is that mankind will wait for a long time before the return of the Lord.
- The hours wore on as the bridegroom was delayed and all of them began to nod off. There is no fault attached to them for sleeping. Their preparedness was seen in the extra oil they brought for the possible delay.

Prepare!

6 “And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ **7** Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

- **At midnight a cry was heard: “Behold, the bridegroom is coming”...all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps:** At an unexpected hour the bridegroom came for the wedding. The wedding party (**all those virgins**) immediately began to prepare their lamps for lighting.
 - “Trimmed their lamps is literally ‘put their torches in order’.”
 - “It is a warning addressed specifically to those inside the professing church who are not to assume that their future is unconditionally assured; all ten are expecting to be at the feast, and until the moment comes there is no apparent difference between them – it is the crisis which will divide the ready from the unready.”
- **‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ :**
 - This was the actual historical practice. The members from the party of the bride would meet the members from the party of the groom. These processions, accompanied by much singing and dancing, were generally held at night. Hence the need for the lamps or torches.
 - The groom would have his own procession with his male friends. Jesus has already been identified as the bridegroom in another parable in Matthew (9:15). Note that the bride is not mentioned, it is her attendants that are the focus of the parable, the groom is mentioned his attendants are not.

Oil = Holy Spirit

8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ **9** But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’

- The foolish ones were not prepared and they now notice they their lamps are becoming dim.
 - The image of the lamps of the wicked going out is used in Proverbs 13:9 and Job 18:5 and may lie behind the imagery of the parable at this point.
 - Pro 13 **9** The light of the righteous rejoices, But the lamp of the wicked will be put out.
 - Job 18 **5** “The light of the wicked indeed goes out, And the flame of his fire does not shine.
- **Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out:** The **foolish** virgins were unprepared because they lacked oil for their lamps. In many Biblical passages **oil**, is an emblem of the Holy Spirit (such as Zechariah 4:1-7).
 - Zec 4 **1** Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. **2** And he said to me, “What do you see?” So I said, “I am looking, and there *is* a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the *stand* seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. **3** Two olive trees *are* by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left.” **4** So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, “What *are* these, my lord?” ... **6** So he answered and said to me: “This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.
 - Zechariah is shown a seven branched menorah flanked by two olive trees which fueled the flames.

- To the discouraged governor, Yahweh reminds, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit." The power to rebuild the Temple came from God, and no man can stand against the Almighty.
 - God promises Zerubbabel that the project would indeed be finished, powered by "the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."
- Without **oil** the wedding party was not ready for the bridegroom. Without the Holy Spirit, no one is ready for the return of Jesus.'
- Olive oil is a good representation of the Holy Spirit for many reasons.
 - Oil *lubricates* when used for that purpose
 - There is little friction and wear among those who are lubricated by the Spirit of God.
 - Oil *heals* and was used as a medicinal treatment in Biblical times (**Luke 10:34**)
 - The Spirit of God brings healing and restoration.
 - Oil *lights* when it is burned in a lamp
 - Where the Spirit of God is, there is light.
 - Oil *warms* when it is used as fuel for a flame
 - Where the Spirit of God is, there is warmth and comfort.
 - Oil *invigorates* when used to massage
 - The Holy Spirit invigorates us for His service.
 - Oil *adorns* when applied as a perfume
 - The Holy Spirit adorns us and makes us more pleasant to be around.
 - Oil *polishes* when used to shine metal
 - The Holy Spirit wipes away our grime and smooths out our rough edges.
- No one can be a true Christian without the indwelling Holy Spirit
 - As it says in **Romans 8:9: *Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.***
 - In **this parable** Jesus probably did not intend a separation between "Spirit-filled" and "Non-Spirit-filled" Christians; the distinction is likely between true Christians and false believers.
 - Nevertheless, a key to Christian readiness is to be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 5:18**). Much of the weakness, defeat and lethargy in our spiritual lives can be explained if we are not constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- **but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'**
 - Buying oil late at night likely would not have been difficult, even in a little village, in full celebration of a wedding.
 - The fact that they were told to go out and buy the oil seems to indicate that oil is not symbolic of the Holy Spirit or of good works. We cannot buy the Holy Spirit neither can we be saved by our good works.

Those caught unprepared are denied entry.

¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. ¹¹ "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' ¹² But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

- **The door was shut... "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you":** The penalty was severe for the foolish maidens. They were not allowed to come to the wedding, and the **door was shut** against them in the strongest terms.
 - "The girls' appeal and the bridegroom's response recall the chilling words of **Matthew 7:22-23**; here, as there, *I do not know you* is a decisive formula of rejection, rather than a mere statement of fact."
 - **Mt 7 ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'**
 - The shut door points to the time when it is too late to alter the division between the saved and the lost

- Is 22 ²² The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.
- Lk 13 ²⁵ When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’
- Rev 3 ⁷ “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”’
- It also reminds us of God shutting the door to Noah’s ark (Genesis 6).
 - Ge 7 ¹⁶ So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.
- “When that door is once shut, it will never be opened. There are some who dote and dream about an opening of that door, after death, for those who have died impenitent; but there is nothing in the Scriptures to warrant such an expectation. Any ‘larger hope’ than that revealed in the Word of God is a delusion and a snare.”
- There are no last-minute conversions here. Instead, they hear the dreaded words that He does not know them. The foolish virgins, by being unprepared for the coming of the bridegroom with its unanticipated delay, are shut out from enjoying the wedding banquet and no appeal can change that reality.

Watch!

- ¹³ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.
 - **Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming:** The point of this parable is simple – *be ready*. The price for failing to be ready is too high.
 - The final exhortation indicates the main point of the parable— one is to watch.
 - The point is not the avoidance of literal sleep (the wise virgins did sleep) but spiritual wakefulness, that is, keeping in a state of constant readiness for the coming of the Son of Man.
 - The vigilance is required because the day and the hour cannot be known in advance.

Lessons of the Parable

We can learn the following lessons from this parable:

- There will be a long period of time between the First and Second Coming of Christ
 - Mt 25 ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.
 - Mt 25 ¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.
- Each one of us must be personally prepared for the coming of the Lord (25:7-9). We cannot expect the preparedness of those close to us to compensate for our lack of preparedness
 - Mt 25 ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’
 - Ps 49 ⁷ None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him—
 - Pro 9 ¹² If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, And if you scoff, you will bear it alone.”
- Because we do not know the time of His coming we must always be prepared
 - Mt 25 ¹³ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

- Ps 95 ⁷ For He *is* our God, And we *are* the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: ⁸ “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, As *in* the day of trial in the wilderness,
- 2Co 6 ² For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.
- Those who profess belief in Jesus are similar, in many respects. to those who truly believe
 - See the parable of the Sower in chapter 13
- There will be no doubt when Christ returns (25:6). It will be visible to everyone (24:31; Revelation 1:7).
 - Mt 25 ⁶ “And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’
 - Rev 1 ⁷ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.
- When the Lord returns, there will be no second chance for those who have not received Him.
 - This is an important theme in the New Testament
 - Mt 25 ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. ¹¹ “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹² But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’
 - Mt 7 ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’
 - Mt 10 ³² “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.
 - Mt 24 ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.
 - Mt 25 ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’
 - 2Co 5 ⁹ Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
 - Gal 6 ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.
 - 2Th 1 ⁸ in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,
 - Heb 9 ²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

Unfaithfulness – Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25

The idea behind the parable is that not everyone is entrusted with the same amount, but one must be faithful to that which he has been given

- This section of Scripture, including the Parable of the Talents, constitutes final warnings, prophecies, and encouragements to His people Israel prior to His departure.
 - He, who is their Lord, is leaving for an undisclosed period of time.
 - He is delegating to them the responsibility, as stewards, to care for His kingdom.
 - The Parable of the Talents impresses on them the weight of that responsibility and the serious consequences of neglecting to understand and apply His instructions.
 - This is also a message to all mankind
- In the larger context of Matthew 25, the main point of this parable is clear: our readiness for Jesus' return is determined by our stewardship of the resources that He has given us.
 - Some think that readiness for Jesus' return is a very spiritual and abstract thing. It really isn't – it is a matter of being about our business for the Lord.
 - In light of this parable, we must ask ourselves: What have we done with our knowledge? Our time? Our money? Our abilities? The sins of *omission* [what we don't do] may ultimately be more dangerous than the sins of *commission* [what we do].

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. ¹⁶Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. ¹⁸But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. ¹⁹After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

²⁰“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ ²²He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ ²³His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

²⁴“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

²⁶“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

²⁹‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

- Matthew here records the Lord's heart of compassion and love mingled with unwavering holiness.
- If the talents are talents of gold, the value of what the master entrusted to the stewards would be immensely high, in the millions of dollars. Since the Lord uses only the term "talents" we must make some assumptions, but it seems reasonable to assume that the owner of the talents, the man traveling into a far country, was a wealthy man.

- He is entrusting his wealth to three men who become stewards of his money. One receives five talents. Another receives two talents. A third steward receives one talent.
 - Each is given a significant amount of money.
 - These are stewards entrusted with the care of the money.
- The stewards must know the personality and character of their Lord.
 - He expects them to know Him well enough to apply the spirit as well as the letter of His instructions.
 - Those that do are richly rewarded. The others receive severe judgment.
- The amount given is based on each steward's ability.
 - The first two understand the spirit and letter of instructions and the character of their Lord. They both use the resources by "trading" to gain a profit. Each of them makes a 100 percent profit.
 - The profitable stewards are praised, given increased responsibilities and invited to enter into the joy of their Lord.
 - Fear and mistrust of his Lord motivate the third steward. He buries the money in the earth and returns the original amount.
 - The untrusting steward is scolded, rejected, and punished.
- The application of this parable must be understood within the context of the message of [Matthew 24-25](#).
 - It is first a message to the people of Israel that will live in the last days before the Lord returns.
 - The statement, in [Matthew 24:13](#), "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," is a key statement. This is the believing remnant that will receive the promise of the kingdom.
 - In [Matthew 24:32-34](#), the Lord states, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."
 - These will be alive when He returns and will have understood and believed their Lord.
 - The application to the people of Israel is graphic and relevant.
 - Those that believe Him will be rewarded in His kingdom. The basis of the reward will be their stewardship of His resources entrusted to them.
 - Those who fear and do not believe will be rejected and judged.
 - There is also a universal application to all mankind.
 - From the time of the creation of mankind, each individual has been entrusted with resources of time and material wealth. Everything we have comes from God and belongs to Him. We are responsible for using those resources so that they increase in value. As Christians, we have additionally the most valuable resource of all – the Word of God. If we believe and understand Him, and apply His Word as good stewards, we are a blessing to others and the value of what we do multiplies. We are accountable to the Lord for the use of His resources.

Kingdom of heaven is like a master departing on a long journey

- We (the servants) are given responsibilities until the Kingdom of Heaven (master) returns
 - The underlying theme of this parable is the absence of the master (the Son of Man) and the interim responsibility of the servants. He calls His servants together and puts them in charge of his possessions. This is a parable related to the commissioning in 24:45. Here the responsibility is in terms of money

Mt 24 The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

⁴⁵ "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' ⁴⁹ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹⁴“For *the kingdom of heaven* is like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

- **A man traveling to a far country, who called his servants and delivered his goods to them:** This was not a strange idea in the ancient world, where **servants** (slaves) were often given great responsibility. This was often the safest and smartest thing a man could do with his money.
 - “The best thing he could do with his money in his absence, dividing it among carefully selected slaves, and leaving them to do their best with it.”
 - “This parable takes up the question which that of the bridesmaids left unanswered: what is ‘readiness’?”
- **To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one:**
 - A **talent** was not an ability (though this parable has application to our abilities), but a unit of money worth at least \$1,200 in modern terms, and likely much more.
 - “The talent was not a coin, it was a weight; and therefore its value obviously depended on whether the coinage involved was copper, gold, or silver.”
 - The talent was a large amount of money, probably silver coinage. Our English word talent meaning “ability” is derived from this term.
 - “The English use of ‘talent’ for a natural (or supernatural) aptitude derives from this parable...But of course the Greek talanton is simply a sum of money...it was generally regarded as equal to 6,000 denarii.”
 - “If a talent were worth six thousand denarii, then it would take a day laborer twenty years to earn so much.”
 - The issue is not the amount of money given to each but what each did with that which was given to him.
 - In the application of this parable it is appropriate to see these **talents** as life resources – such as time, money, abilities, and authority.
- **To each according to his own ability:** The servants were given different amounts of money according to their ability. One servant only received one talent, yet we should see that this was not an insignificant amount. Some received more; but everyone received something and everyone received a large amount.
 - “The talent which each man has suits his own state best; and it is only pride and insanity which lead him to desire and envy the graces and talents of another. Five talents would be too much for some men: one talent would be too little.”
 - Since the amounts are different it probably refers to personal gifts and abilities rather than the gospel itself.
 - The key is that we are to be faithful with the gifts God has given us
 - 1Co 4 ¹ Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.
 - Lk 12 ⁴⁸ But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.
- **he went on a journey:** This represents the period of time between His ascension and return.

The servants manage the master’s money

¹⁶Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. ¹⁸But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.

- **He who had received the five talents went and traded with them:**

- Each of those who had received **talents** from their master did with them as they saw fit. Two of them **traded with** their talents and earned more talents (**made another five talents... gained two more also**).
- **Went and traded** implies direct action. “The point is that the good servants felt the responsibility of their assignment and went to work without delay.”
 - We aren’t told how they **traded with** their talents. Perhaps they loaned the money at interest, perhaps they used the money and bought things and sold them for more money. The point is that they used what they had and gained more by using.
 - The parable does not describe how the man doubled that which was given to him, because it is unimportant. It is important the he made good and effective use of what was given to him.
 - We can say many good things about the work of the first two servants:
 - They did their work *promptly*.
 - They did their work with *perseverance*.
 - They did their work with *success*.
 - They were *ready* to give an account to their master.
- **He who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money:** The third servant did almost *nothing* with his master’s money. He took some care that it would not be lost (by hiding it), but he did nothing *positive* with his master’s money, in contrast to the first two servants.

The faithful servants are judged.

¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ ²² He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ ²³ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

- **After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them:**
 - The master gave the slaves a lot of time to use the money.
 - The long delay would tempt the servants to think that they would *never* give an account for their management, yet they most certainly would.
 - The idea of settling accounts refers to judgment.
 - It also reflects the lengthy time before the Second Coming
- **You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things:** The reward was the same for both servants, even though one was given **five talents** and the other was given **two talents**. Each performed the same according to the resources they had received.
- **Well done, good and faithful servant:** This shows that the master looked for goodness and faithfulness in His servants. Whatever financial success these servants enjoyed came because they were **good and faithful**. The master looked first for these character qualities, not for a specific amount of money.
 - “It is not ‘Well done, thou good and brilliant servant;’ for perhaps the man never shone at all in the eyes of those who appreciate glare and glitter. It is not, ‘Well done, thou great and distinguished servant;’ for it is possible that he was never known beyond his native village.”
 - “It is better to be faithful in the infant-school than to be unfaithful in a noble class of young men. Better to be faithful in a hamlet over two or three score of people, than to be unfaithful in a great-city parish, with

thousands perishing in consequence. Better to be faithful in a cottage meeting, speaking of Christ crucified to half-a hundred villagers, than to be unfaithful in a great building where thousands congregate.”

- **Enter into the joy of your lord:** Refers to the final joy of the believer.
 - This has the echo of heaven in it. The idea is that there is a place of **joy** belonging to the master of these servants, and they are invited to join the master in that place. There is a sense of heaven about this destiny for the two faithful servants.
 - “This is not the servant’s portion, but the Master’s portion shared with his faithful servants...not so much that we shall have a joy of our own as that we shall enter into the joy of our Lord.” (Spurgeon)
 - We can say of the reward for the first two servants:
 - They received praise from their master.
 - They received a promise of future blessing.
 - They received glory, “**the joy of your lord.**”

The unfaithful servant gives account

²⁴ “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is yours.*’

- **Then he who had received the one talent came:** The master judged each of the servants *individually*. If they were taken as a group, they did very well: 8 talents given and 15 talents returned. Yet each one was judged on their individual faithfulness and effort.
 - Unlike the first two slaves, the third one does not give an account of what he has earned but rather begins by justifying what he did with his one talent.
 - “Remember, my hearer, that in the day of judgment thy account must be personal; God will not ask you what your church did – he will ask you what you did yourself.”
- **I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.**
 - The servant who merely buried his talent tried to excuse himself because of his master’s great power. In fact, he believed his master to be in some sense omnipotent: **reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.**
 - This means letting others do the work for him.
 - **A hard man:** “Grasping, ungenerous, taking all to himself, offering no inducements to his servants.”
 - F.B. Meyer expressed the thinking of this servant: “I can do very little; it will not make much difference if I do nothing: I shall not be missed; my tiny push is not needed to turn the scale.”
 - “It is the genius of wicked men to lay the blame of their miscarriages upon others, oftentimes upon God himself.”
- **And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground.**
 - Fear was the motivation for this man not increasing the master’s wealth. This man did nothing with his life.
- **Look, there you have what is yours:** The third servant seemed proud of himself. Because the master was so powerful and (in the mind of the servant) didn’t need his help, the third servant thought that the master would be *pleased* that he did nothing and could say, “**Look, there you have what is yours.**” He seemed to have no idea how much he had displeased his master.
 - We can say in the third servant’s favor that at least he still understood that what he had been given belonged to his master. He said, “**you have what is yours.**” Many modern servants of God think that when God gives them something, it no longer belongs to God; it belongs to *them* and they can do with it as they please.
 - Yet “albeit this man was doing nothing for his master, he did not think himself an unprofitable servant. He exhibited no self-depreciation, no humbling, no contrition. He was as bold as brass, and said unblushingly, ‘Lo, there thou hast that is thine.’” (Spurgeon)
 - We can say of the work of the third servant:

- He didn't *think*
- He didn't *work*
- He didn't even *try*
- He made *excuses*

The unfaithful servant is judged

²⁶ “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

²⁹ ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

- **You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown:** The condemnation of this third servant – here called a **wicked and lazy servant** – was strong. The sovereignty of the master never excused the laziness of the servant. It condemned that laziness all the more.
 - Those who don't work for the Lord, or pray, or don't evangelize because God is sovereign condemn themselves by their laziness. By their actions (or lack of action) they show that they are like the wicked servant in the parable. They do not know their Master's heart at all. “The lord of the unprofitable servant tells him, that the fault lay in his own sloth and wickedness, and his dread of his lord's security was but a mere frivolous pretence and unreasonable excuse.”
 - The charge against this servant who merely buried his talent was that he was **wicked and lazy**. We rarely see laziness as a real sin, something that must be repented of before the Lord. If laziness were a calling or a spiritual gift, this man would have been excellent.
 - “Not dishonest – the master had not misjudged as to that – but indolent, unenterprising, timid...Slothful, a poor creature altogether: suspicious, timid, heartless, spiritless, idle.”
 - We might say that this servant did not have a proper fear of his master, but an unfitting fear of risk and failure.
- **So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest:** This man could have done *something* with what he had. Even if it had not doubled, it would have gained some **interest** for the master's money.
 - “If we cannot trade directly and personally on our Lord's account, if we have not the skill nor the tact to manage a society or an enterprise for him, we may at least contribute to what others are doing, and join our capital to theirs, so that, by some means, our Master may have the interest to which he is entitled.”
 - “The Old Testament forbade Israelites from charging interest against one another (Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:35-37; Deuteronomy 23:19; cf. Psalm 15:5...); but interest on money loaned to Gentiles was permitted (Deuteronomy 23:20)...By New Testament times Jewish scholars had already distinguished between ‘lending at interest’ and ‘usury’ (in the modern sense).”
- **So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.**
 - This is the beginning of his judgment.
 - Note on a variant reading: One ancient manuscript has five instead of ten.
- **For to everyone who has, more will be given... but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away:** There are those who have things (like the servant with one talent), but hold them in such a way that it is as if they have nothing. These ones will find what they had **taken away**. Those who hold what they have received as faithful men and women, to them **more will be given**.
 - “See that ye receive not any grace of God in vain; neither envy those that have much; a proportion is expected.”

- “We need not wait for the great future, to obtain this multiplication or withdrawal of our talents. They are already waxing or waning in our hands.”
- **Cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness:**
 - Because he was **wicked and lazy**, the third servant demonstrated that he was not a true servant of his master at all. It is fitting that he (and those who show the same heart) was cast forever out of the master’s presence.
 - The evil slave is placed with those who are lost. He did not further the interests of his master.
 - Just as there was a sense of heaven in the destiny for the two faithful servants, there is a strong sense of *hell* in the destiny for the **wicked and lazy servant**.
 - In the larger context of **Matthew 25**, the main point of this parable is clear: our readiness for Jesus’ return is determined by our stewardship of the resources that He has given us.
 - Some think that readiness for Jesus’ return is a very spiritual and abstract thing. It really isn’t – it is a matter of being about our business for the Lord. In light of this parable, we must ask ourselves: What have we done with our knowledge? Our time? Our money? Our abilities? The sins of *omission* [what we don’t do] may ultimately be more dangerous than the sins of *commission* [what we do].

Lessons of the Parable

- Jesus did not expect to return immediately.
 - From this parable we learn that a long time will elapse before He comes again (Mt 26,41-45; James 4:17).
 - **Mt 25 ¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.**
 - **Mt 25 ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.**
- Believers should do everything with the view that there will be a day of judgment.
 - For the believer the judgment will be the receiving of rewards, not condemnation (Romans 8:1).
 - Therefore, all of our actions should be done in light of a day of reckoning (Mt 25:19,25-35; Luke 12:47; Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:13).
- On this earth we all have important responsibilities, however, their importance should be seen in light of eternity (Mt 25:21,23).
- God gives us opportunities to serve Him based upon the ability He has given us. But all people have not been given the same abilities. Since all of us will not have the same opportunities, each of us will be judged based upon our faithfulness with the specific opportunities that we have.
 - The key issue is, “Have we been faithful to the use the gifts, abilities, and opportunities that God has given us?” (see Mt 7:24-27; 25:15,16,19-23).
- Any abilities or gifts that we have ultimately belong to God. We are not our own, we are His property. Therefore we are to be good managers with the abilities that He has given us (25:14; Luke 16:2; 1 Corinthians 4:1,2; 6:19,20; 1 Peter 4:10).
- Sin consists of not only doing wrong things such as murder, adultery, pride, and stealing, it also consists of not doing good things. Sins of omission are just as wrong as sins of commission (25:18,26,41-45, James 4:17).
- In the afterlife, believers will share in the Lord’s joy (25:21,23; Ephesians 3:15; 2 Timothy 4:8).
- The evil and lazy person will not be faithful to the gifts that God has given him. When confronted with his sin he will make excuses rather than confessing his wrongs (7:22,23; 25:24-30,44,45; Luke 13:26,27). However no excuse will be accepted.

Evil – Caesarea Philippi

Prepared the disciples to go into Asia Minor

Caesarea Philippi – Gates of hell

- Worshipped the God Pan – sexually erotic – very pagan
 - Is 44 – Isaiah makes fun of worshipping dead gods
- Jesus teaching there – Who am I?
 - Living God – in contrast to the wooden idols
- On this rock, I will build my church
 - Represents everything evil, sinful, broken and wrong in the world – the rock of pagan values
 - The gates of Hades will not prevail
- Take up your cross and follow me
- What good is it to gain the whole world yet forfeit his soul
 - We need to be willing to lose our lives for the sake of the gospel
- If you are ashamed of me, I will be ashamed of you before my father

Judgment

- Woe on unrepentant cities (Mt 11)
 - Liked the miracles, but unwilling to submit themselves to Jesus as their savior
 - Doesn't pick on the obvious bad places (ex: Rome)
 - Uses His harshest words for those that are closest to Him
- Tyre – Jezebel was from there – introduced Baal worship
- Sodom & Gomorrah – Sexual misconduct
- You have to be faithful with what you have been given
 - Squandering much is worse than squandering little
 - Lk 12:48 From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Sheep and Goat Judgment (Gentile Nations Judged)

The core message of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats is that God's people will love others. Good works will result from our relationship to the Shepherd. Followers of Christ will treat others with kindness, serving them as if they were serving Christ Himself. The unregenerate live in the opposite manner. While "goats" can indeed perform acts of kindness and charity, their hearts are not right with God, and their actions are not for the right purpose – to honor and worship God.

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.'

⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

⁴⁴ "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

- After the tribulation (after His 2nd coming), the Lord Jesus will sit in judgment over the nations of the Earth.
 - Likely happens during the 45 days between the 1290th and the 1335th day (Dan 11:12)
 - They will be judged according to their treatment of Israel during the tribulation.

Joel 3 God Judges the Nations

3 "For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,

² I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.

³ They have cast lots for My people, Have given a boy *as payment* for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.

⁴ "Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?
Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me,
Swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head;

⁵ Because you have taken My silver and My gold, And have carried into your temples My prized possessions.

⁶ Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem You have sold to the Greeks,
That you may remove them far from their borders.

...

¹² "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down;
For the winepress is full, The vats overflow—For their wickedness *is* great."

¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

¹⁵ The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness.

¹⁶ The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.

- At the second coming, He is going to gather all the people on Planet Earth, and He is going to judge the Jews, and He's going to judge the Gentiles. There's a Jewish judgment described over in Ezekiel. This is the judgement of the Gentiles.
- And what is the purpose of that judgment?
 - This is a judgment to determine who's going to go into the Millennium in the flesh.
 - There are 3 groups that are associated here – Jesus talks about the sheep and the goats and the My brethren.
 - He's talking about a judgment of those Gentile nations that responded to the needs of His brethren, the Jews, during that Tribulation period, whether they responded in kindness, or in animosity. And they are going to be judged based upon what they did with the Jews during that time.
 - **Ge 12:3 God said to Abram, He said, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you."**
 - It also says that when He conducts this particular judgment, that those who are not found worthy to go into the Millennium in the flesh are going to be consigned to death. It says that they will be put where the vultures will eat their bodies, it's told over in Luke 17:37.
 - A lot of the decision is going to be based upon how they treated the Jewish people during the Tribulation period. Because the only people who are going to show any love and mercy toward Jews in the Tribulation period are going to be people who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nobody else would do it because they would be killed right away.
- This is called the judgment of the sheep and the goats because of the imagery Jesus uses in the Olivet Discourse
 - Those who showed faith in God by treating Israel favorably (giving them aid and comfort during the tribulation) are the "sheep" who will enter into the Millennial Kingdom.
 - Those who followed the Antichrist's lead and persecuted Israel are the "goats" who will be consigned to hell.
- Jesus begins the parable by saying it concerns His return in glory to set up His kingdom (Matthew 25:31).
 - Therefore, the setting of this event is at the beginning of the millennium, after the tribulation.
 - All those on earth at that time will be brought before the Lord, and He will separate them "as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left" (verses 32–33).
 - The sheep are those who were saved during the tribulation; the goats are the unsaved who survived the tribulation.
- Sheep
 - The sheep on Jesus' right hand are blessed by God the Father and given an inheritance.
 - The reason is stated: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me" (verses 35-36). The righteous will not understand: when did they see Jesus in such a pitiful condition and help Him? "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'" (verses 39-40).
- Goats
 - The goats on Jesus' left hand are cursed with eternal hell-fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels" (verse 41)
 - The reason is given: they had opportunity to minister to the Lord, but they did nothing (verses 42-43). The damned ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?" (verse 44). Jesus replies, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me" (verse 45).

- Jesus then ends the discourse with a contrast: “They will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (verse 46). In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, we are looking at man redeemed and saved, and man condemned and lost.
- A casual reading seems to suggest that salvation is the result of good works.
 - The “sheep” acted charitably, giving food, drink, and clothing to the needy.
 - The “goats” showed no charity.
 - This seems to result in salvation for the sheep and damnation for the goats.
 - However, Scripture does not contradict itself, and the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that salvation is by faith through the grace of God and not by our good works (see John 1:12; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:22-24; Romans 4:4-8; Romans 7:24-25; Romans 8:12; Galatians 3:6-9; and Ephesians 2:8-10).
 - In fact, Jesus Himself makes it clear in the parable that the salvation of the “sheep” is not based on their works—their inheritance was theirs “since the creation of the world” (Matthew 25:34), long before they could ever do any good works!
 - The good works mentioned in the parable are not the cause of salvation but the effect of salvation.
 - As Christians we become like Christ (see Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Colossians 2:6-7).
 - Galatians 5:22 tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.
 - Good works in a Christian’s life are the direct overflow of these traits, and are only acceptable to God because of the relationship that exists between servant and Master, the saved and their Savior, the sheep and their Shepherd (see Ephesians 2:10).

The nations are gathered before God’s throne and separated.

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

- **When the Son of Man comes in His glory:** This is not really a parable; it is a description of a future scene of judgment after the glorious second coming of Jesus (described in [Matthew 24:30](#)).
 - **Mt 24³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**
- **He will sit on the throne of His glory:** Jesus here was either guilty of megalomania (delusion about one’s own power or importance) or He is indeed the Lord of **glory**, who will judge the nations from His **throne**. Seemingly this throne is present on earth, because it happens when **the Son of Man comes in His glory**.
 - In three days He would be crucified; yet He spoke of **“When the Son of Man comes in His glory.”**
 - He had around Him a handful of disciples – one would betray Him, one deny Him, and the others forsake Him; yet He spoke of **“all the holy angels with Him.”**
 - He lived in utter simplicity, almost poverty – and was rejected by almost all the great and mighty men of the world; yet He said He would **“sit on the throne of His glory.”**
- **All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another:**
 - Though it speaks of the nations gathering together it is individuals that are judged.
 - The word translated them in Greek is in a different gender (masculine) than the word referring to nations (neuter).
 - This particular judgment seems distinct from the *great white throne judgment* described in [Revelation 20:11-15](#). This judgment of the nations is distinct from the final judgment for several reasons.
 - It happens at a different *time*. The Great White Throne judgment of [Revelation 20:11-15](#) clearly happens *after* the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ and His saints. The Judgment of the Nations of [Matthew 25](#) happens immediately after the glorious return of Jesus ([Matthew 25:31-32](#)).

- It happens at a different *place*. The Great White Throne judgment of [Revelation 20](#) happens in heaven; the Judgment of the Nations of [Matthew 25](#) happens on earth.
 - It happens unto different *subjects*. The Great White Throne judgment of [Revelation 20](#) emphatically includes all unredeemed men and women. The Judgment of the Nations of [Matthew 25](#) seems only to include the *nations* – that is Gentiles who are judged in large measure on their kindness and care towards [in part] the Jewish people (*My brethren*). It may be that Jewish people who survive the Great Tribulation will not be in this Judgment of the Nations.
 - It happens on a different *basis*. This is described in the following section.
- **He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left:** The Son of Man – Jesus Himself – has the authority to divide humanity in this judgment. There are not *three* categories, but only two: **sheep** and **goats**, **right** and **left**.
 - The right hand is the place of honor while the left hand is the place of dishonor
 - The shepherd separating the sheep from the goats would be a very common sight among those people.
 - “In the countryside sheep and goats mingled during the day. At night they were often separated: sheep tolerate the cool air, but goats have to be herded together for warmth.”
 - This is true of the final judgment, when humanity will be divided into two groups and only two. Yet in the opinion of this commentator (definitely a minority opinion), Jesus spoke here not of the final judgment, but of the separation that will happen after the glorious return but before the final judgment to deal with those who have survived the Great Tribulation.
 - By the end of the Great Tribulation (mentioned in [Matthew 24:21](#) and other passages), the population of the earth will be greatly reduced by several factors:
 - The rapture of the church (described in [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#)) will take many millions of believers from the earth.
 - The persecution and martyrdom of many of those who believe on Jesus after the rapture and during the Great Tribulation will take many from the earth.
 - The terrible death and destruction of the Great Tribulation will take many from the earth.
 - The catastrophe of the Battle of Armageddon and Jesus’ glorious return to the earth will take many from the earth.
 - Nevertheless, one can assume that even with the greatness of all these, that there will be many people – perhaps 3 billion or more – still remaining on the earth after Jesus returns in power and glory at the end of the last seven-year period.
 - Among these will be the 144,000 who were specially sealed and preserved through the Great Tribulation and who stand with the Lamb of God on Mount Zion at His glorious return ([Revelation 14:1-5](#)).
 - It is fair to ask, “What happens with all these people – perhaps 3 billion or more – who survive the Great Tribulation and Armageddon?” This judgment of the nations answers that question.

The judgment and reward of those on the right hand.

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

- **Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you:** The reward for **those on His right hand** (the sheep) is that they enter into the Father’s kingdom.

- **For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink:** They were approved on the basis of their works. There is no mention of faith or even forgiveness here. This judgment was based purely on their moral kindness.
- **Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me:** This is another clear distinction between this judgment of the nations and the final judgment. The Great White Throne judgment of **Revelation 20** is based on what is written in the Book of Life; the Judgment of the Nations in **Matthew 25** is based on the humane treatment of others, especially Christians and the Jewish people (who will be particularly hated and persecuted the last half of the Great Tribulation).
 - Though the Christian and Jewish **brethren** of Jesus may be first in mind, knowing the nature of Jesus, we can say that it does not exclude others. “The brethren are the Christian poor and needy and suffering, in the first place, but ultimately and inferentially any suffering people anywhere.”

The judgment and condemnation of those on the left hand.

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

⁴⁴ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- **Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me:** The charge against the lost ones did not concern any obvious moral violation, but their indifferent attitude toward Jesus (and His people). Their indifference sealed their doom. Throughout this chapter, the point has been emphasized: the price of indifference is too high to pay.
 - We cannot afford to be indifferent towards Jesus and His return.
 - We can’t afford to be indifferent towards the Holy Spirit who makes us ready for the return of Jesus.
 - We can’t afford to be indifferent towards the resources that God gives us.
 - We can’t afford to be indifferent towards the needy people all around us.
 - We can’t afford to be indifferent towards lost humanity that will stand in judgment.
 - “The ‘guilt’ of the cursed arises not so much from doing wrong things as from failure to do right...to do nothing is seen as the road to condemnation.”
- **Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:** Jesus clearly points out that hell was **prepared for the devil and his angels**. Men only go there because they have willingly cast their lot with the devil and his angels.
 - The place of judgment was not prepared for humankind, but rather for the devil and his angels.
 - “They had joined the devil in refusing allegiance to the Lord; so it was but right that, imitating his rebellion, they should share his punishment.”
 - **Everlasting fire...everlasting punishment:** The literal meaning of this ancient Greek word is “age-long.” As Bruce says, “The strict meaning of [everlasting]: agelong, not everlasting.” Because of this, some have thought that the suffering of the **cursed** is not eternal.
 - Some suggest that the **cursed** are eventually rehabilitated and brought to heaven (the *larger hope* idea)
 - Others believe they will eventually cease to exist (the *annihilation* idea).
 - Yet there are good reasons for believing that the sense of *aionion* in this passage is indeed **eternal**.
 - “*Aionion* can refer to life or punishment in the age to come, or it can be limited to the duration of the thing to which it refers (as in **Matthew 21:19**). But in apocalyptic and eschatological contexts, the word not only connotes ‘pertaining to the [messianic] age’ but, because that age is always lived in God’s presence, also ‘everlasting’.”
 - In addition, in **Matthew 25:46** **everlasting** and **eternal** both translate the exact same ancient Greek word. If the righteous experience **life** forever, then we must say that the guilty experience **punishment** forever.

- “But some are of opinion that this punishment shall have *an end*: this is as likely as that the glory of the righteous shall have *an end*: for the same word is used to express the *duration* of the punishment, as is used to express the duration of the state of glory.”
 - “They shall go into *everlasting punishment*, not a punishment for a time, as Origen thought.”
 - “But they have a will to sin ever; and being worthless they cannot satisfy God’s justice in any time; therefore is their fire everlasting.”
- **Everlasting punishment...eternal life:** This mention of **eternal life** makes most believe that Jesus spoke about the final judgment. But for those who survive the Great Tribulation, certainly entrance into the millennial kingdom *is the gateway* to eternal life. Those who do not enter the millennial kingdom will also certainly have **everlasting punishment**.
 - The purpose of this Judgment of the Nations is to separate peoples before the beginning of Jesus’ millennial kingdom. The wicked and cruel will not enter; the moral and good will enter.

Why the Sheep/Goat Judgment and Great White Throne Judgment Are not the Same Event

Amillennialists, Postmillennialists, and even some Premillennialists view the Sheep/Goat judgment of Matthew 25:31-46 and the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15 as being the same event. But a close examination reveals that these two judgments are not the same judgment.

1. The *timing* of the Sheep/Goat judgment happens in connection with the second coming of Christ (see Matt 25:31-32). Jesus comes in glory with His angels, sits on His glorious throne and all the nations are gathered before Him. The Great White Throne judgment takes place after the return of Christ (Rev 19) and the thousand year reign of Christ with the saints (Rev 20:4-7). After the thousand years are completed (20:7) the Great White Throne judgment takes place (20:11-15).
2. The *purpose* of the Sheep/Goat judgment is to see who will inherit the kingdom (Matt 25:34) and who will not (Matt 25:41). The purpose of the Great White Throne judgment is to see who will be sent to the lake of fire (Rev 20:15)
3. The *subjects* of the Sheep/Goat judgment are both believers and non-believers—sheep and goats (Matt 25:32). The subjects of the Great White Throne appear to be unbelievers. While Rev 20:11-15 does not exclude the presence of believers at this judgment believers are not mentioned as being at this judgment. But unbelievers who are sentenced to the lake of fire at the Great White Throne judgment are mentioned (Rev. 20:15).
4. The *basis* of judgment at the Sheep/Goat judgment is how the nations treated the “brothers” of Christ (Matt 25:40). The basis of the Great White Throne judgment is works (Rev 20:13).
5. The *subjects* of the Sheep/Goat judgment appear to be those alive at the time of the second coming of Jesus. There is no mention of a resurrection of the saved and unsaved dead. The Great White Throne judgment says it is the dead who are raised for this judgment (Rev 20:13). The sea and Hades give up their dead for this judgment.
6. The Sheep/Goat judgment does not mention a “Great White Throne” being present while the Great White Throne judgment does (Rev 20:11).
7. The Sheep/Goat judgment does not mention the “book of life” being present while the Great White Throne judgment does (Rev 20:12).
8. The Sheep/Goat judgment does not indicate that death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire while the Great White Throne judgment does (20:14).
9. The fact that there are two resurrections separated by a thousand years (see Rev 20:4b-5) strongly suggests that there can be two judgments separated by a thousand years.

Rest for the weary (Mt 11:25-30)

Mt 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

- Jesus starts with a prayer of praise
 - Little children – disciples of Christ – Simple faith and trust in God
 - Revealed the truth to those with faith as opposed to the learned people
- Jesus ties rest to your soul to the yoke of an ox
 - Yoke – Big, heavy wooden bar that holds 2 oxen together to do the work
- Weary and burdened
 - Probably a reference to the “heavy loads” the Pharisees placed “on men’s shoulders” by insisting on a legalistic interpretation of the law (23:4).
- Rest for your soul
 - Jer 6:16 This is what the LORD says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.
 - ancient paths - The tried and true ways of Judah’s godly ancestors (see 18:15 ; Dt 32:7).
 - walk in it. See Isa 30:21 .
 - you will find rest for your souls. Quoted by Jesus in Mt 11:29 (see Isa 28:12 ; cf. Ps 119:165).

Miscellaneous Teaching

- Jesus preaches at synagogue and drives out an unclean spirit (Lk 4:31-37)
- Jesus preaches the “Sermon of the Plain” (Lk 6:17-49)
- Jesus complements a Centurion’s faith (Lk 7:1-10)
- Jesus dines with Simon the Pharisee (Lk 7:36-50)
- Jesus travels about Galilee, “proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God” (Lk 8:1-9:50)

End of Days

Miracles

Mt 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

Surrounded by a massive crowd, Jesus says to a paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” The scribes—experts in the Mosaic Law—rightly point out that only God can forgive sins, triggering Jesus to heal the man instantly, and the crowds to gape in astonishment, saying: “We have never seen anything like this!”

We examined Jesus’ healing and his power over both the natural and the supernatural, elevating him far above the mundane. There have been many great teachers and preachers, and there have even been great healers—like Elijah and Elisha who raised the dead—but none who controlled nature and confounded the supernatural world as we see Jesus do. In this lesson Jesus rises above mere mortals, and we see the first signs of his divinity.

- Jesus always delivered benefits freely and never requested or accepted any form of payment for his healing miracles
 - Unlike some high priests of his time who charged those who were healed.
 - Mt 10:7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.
- Miracles – Only God can perform miracles
 - When He does it through a person, it suggests that person has a very intimate relationship with Him

- An outstanding miracle, it suggests that this person is really close to God
 - This is why Jesus' preaching and teaching is accompanied by miracles
 - The miracles validate His authority for what He is saying
 - He is so close to God, that God is working His miracles through Him
 - Jesus uses these miracles to confirm His identity for John the Baptist
 - Lk 7:20 When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?' " 21 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 22 So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.
- 2 Categories of miracles
 - Miracles affecting people (Healings)
 - Cures where an ailment is cured
 - Exorcisms where demons are cast away
 - Resurrection of the dead
 - Miracles controlling nature
 - The Kingdom of God vs the Kingdom of Satan – Jesus responds to the unbelievers
 - Mt 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."
 - Even his enemies couldn't deny that he worked miracles – strong evidence that the miracles were real
 - Mt 12:28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
 - The kingdom of God has come to take on Satan
 - Mt 12:29 "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.
 - The strong man is Satan
 - Satan's house is this world
 - By casting out demons, Jesus is giving notice that he has come to bind the strongman
 - Christ's death on the cross binds the strongman
 - Now the kingdom of God is advancing, and the kingdom of Satan is declining
 - How we speak matters – what we say about God matters
 - Only one unforgivable sin – Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit
 - Persistence in unbelief, refusing to believe in Jesus Christ as our savior
 - We come to judgement day with no forgiveness
 - Our words reflect the condition of our heart
 - Mt 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Healings

Mt 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. 25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

Every healing miracle has a lesson with it – it carries weight about deeper spiritual healing

5 ways in which the healings demonstrate the Gospel – the truth of who he is and what he's come to accomplish:

1. Demonstrates his identity – Identifies him as having a close relationship with God

- a. Miracles can only be done by God, not man
 - b. Jehovah Rapha – God the healer
- 2. The healings transform people
 - a. People a paralyzed one moment and healed the next – it transformed their lives
- 3. The power of God over the power of Satan
 - a. Casting out of demons
 - b. Every healing is a sign of God's dominion advancing, and Satan's retreating
- 4. Jesus is sovereign over our physical bodies
 - a. Resurrected bodies
- 5. Every healing miracle illustrates the healing of our souls
 - a. Mt 9:2 Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."
 - b. The outward healing illustrates the healing for the sin-sick soul

Blind

- Jesus teaching at the Synagogue in Nazareth
 - Lk 4:18 He [God] has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind
- Messianic secret – Don't tell about your miracle RIGHT NOW – you should tell about it later on, after His death
 - Jesus knows that once word gets out, the timetable of His death will come sooner

Blind Beggar Receives His Sight

- These could all be different versions of the same account
 - A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight (Lk 18:35-43) – On the roadside as Jesus approaches Jericho
 - Two Blind Men Receive Sight (Mt 20:30-34) – Sitting on the roadside as Jesus was leaving Jericho
 - Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight (Mk 10:46-52) – As Jesus is leaving Jericho

The Healing of a Blind Man at Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-26)

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind (Jn 9:1-12)

- Spit in dirt to make mud, put it on his eyes, and had him wash in the Pool of Siloam
- Festival of Tabernacles, about six months before Jesus' crucifixion

Jesus at the Temple (Mt 21:14) – The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.

Jesus made mud and opened a blind man's eyes on a Sabbath (Jn 9:13-34)

Lepers

- Leprosy
 - Hanson's disease today
 - In Biblical times, it was any skin disease
 - Ceremonially unclean – social outcast (Lev 13:45) – worse than the disease itself
- Jesus heals a man with leprosy (Mt 8:1-4; Mk 1:40-45; Lk 5:12-16)
 - Having cured the man, he instructs him to offer the requisite ritual sacrifices, and not to tell anyone who had healed him; but the man disobeyed, increasing Jesus' fame.
 - Indicates total faith that Jesus has the ability to cure him, but questions whether Jesus is willing to
 - Jesus touches the man – He doesn't have to – does it to heal his heart, demonstrates His love
 - Jesus is now ceremonially unclean – Demonstrating His love for the man was more important
 - Everyone of us is unclean before a Holy God – Jesus loves us enough to enter into our brokenness
- Jesus heals ten lepers (Lk 17:11-19)

- While on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus sends ten lepers who sought his assistance to the priests, and they were healed as they go, but the only one who comes back to thank Jesus is a Samaritan.

Paralytics

- Jesus heals a paralytic at Capernaum (Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26)
 - Jesus hometown (when he was living with Peter)
 - A paralytic was lowered through the roof by his friends to Jesus on a mat
 - Due to the crowds blocking the door
 - Jesus told him that his sins were forgiven
 - He wants to prove that He has the authority to forgive sins
 - The proof of the physical healing indicates that He also has the ability to heal spiritually
 - The man was told to get up and walk, and the man did so
- Healing the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda (Mt 12:9-13; Jn 5:1-18)
 - He had been an invalid for 38 years, but had no one to help him to the pool
 - Jesus also tells the man to take his mat and walk

Women

Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law (Mk 8:14-15; Mk 1:30-31; Lk 4:38-39)

- When Jesus was visiting Simon's house in Capernaum, around the time of Jesus recruiting Simon as an Apostle
- Fulfills Isaiah 53:4 – one of the servant songs
 - Matthew sees a connection between Jesus healing and the suffering servant that dies for us to heal us eternally
- Peter has a mother-in-law, therefore Peter was married – Marriage of a pastor is OK

Jesus heals the woman bleeding for 12 years (Mt 9:18-26; Mk 5:21-43; Lk 8:40-56)

- While heading to Jairus' house, Jesus was approached by a woman who had been suffering from bleeding for 12 years. She touched Jesus' cloak (fringes of his garment) & was instantly healed.
- She spent all of her money seeking help – she is now poor
- Bleeding makes her ceremonially unclean – nobody will touch her (or has touched her for the past 12 years)
- Example of big faith
- Your faith has healed you
 - Can also be translated as your faith has saved you – healed and saved are the same word

Jesus heals the woman bent double (Lk 13:10-17)

- While teaching in a synagogue on a Sabbath, Jesus cured a woman who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years and could not stand straight at all

Other healings

Healing a man with dropsy (Lk 14:1-6)

- At the house of a prominent Pharisee on the Sabbath

Healing of the man with a shriveled hand (Mt 12:9-13, Mk 3:1-6; Lk 6:6-11)

- Jesus entered a synagogue on Sabbath, and found a man with a shriveled hand there, and healed him
- Emphasizes that it is good to do good on the Sabbath
 - Pharisees spent their time and energy trying to make God happy by doing good – focused on themselves

Healing the deaf mute of Decapolis (Mk 7:31-37)

As Jesus passes through Gennesaret, all those who touch His cloak are healed (Mt 14:34-36 and Mk 6:53-56)

Healing the Centurion's servant (Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10; Jn 4:46-54)

- Jesus healed the servant of a Roman Centurion in Capernaum
- Servant is paralyzed and suffering
- Centurion does not ask for healing, he just makes the need known to the Lord
 - Guideline for prayer – just lay your needs before the Lord – He knows for to fix it better than us
- Doesn't want Jesus to come to his house
 - Doesn't want to bother Jesus with that – he knows that Jesus can heal from afar
 - Astonished Jesus by demonstrating amazing faith
 - Takes a lot to astonish Jesus
 - This man is a gentile – Centurion is the leader of 100 troops – head of the troops – very brave
 - Centurions are prevalent in the gospels
 - He has no background in faith – no knowledge of the promises – he had no reason to believe
 - Understands authority – authority is the right to command others
 - Jesus has the right and power to command healings because He is Lord – he has spiritual authority
 - Humility – a recognition of being under the authority of another
 - Jesus authority over us is always for our good

Exorcisms

There are 7 major exorcism accounts in the Synoptic Gospels which have details, and imply specific teachings, are:

Synagogue in Capernaum – Demons acknowledge Jesus (Mk 1:23-24; Lk 4:33-34)

- Exorcism at the Synagogue in Capernaum
- Jesus exorcises an evil spirit who cries out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!".

Gerasene demoniac man – Demons went into the pigs (Mt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-20; Lk 8:26-39)

- Jesus exorcises a possessed man (changed in the Gospel of Matthew to two men).
- Exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac
 - Gentile territory – They are raising pigs
 - Lived in the tombs with extreme self-infliction
- Demon's name
 - Finding the name of the possessing demon was an important traditional tool of exorcists
 - When Jesus asks the demon's name, he is given the reply Legion, "...for we are many".
 - Roman legion is 6000 soldiers
- Demons know who Jesus is
 - Demons call Jesus the son of God – the disciples just asked who Jesus is
 - Demons know who Christ is, but they don't submit to His authority
 - There is an appointed time for demonic affliction
- When the demons asked to be expelled into a nearby group of pigs rather than be sent out of the area, Jesus obliges, but the pigs then run into the lake and are drowned.
 - Foretaste of judgement day – they will be cast to the 'sea of evil'
- Demonic possession
 - The Holy Spirit will not share space with demons
 - Christians are not open to demonic possession. Non-Christians can be possessed by demons.
 - Western society is spiritually apathetic – not in the devil's best interest to make demons known
 - Don't have a conversation with demons – just tell them to be gone in Jesus name
- Men are instantly in their right mind

- God cares are people more than the animals
 - Men were made in the image of God
- Jesus was asked to leave town
 - Pleaded with him to go away because they were overcome with fear
 - Most important part of the text
 -

Canaanite woman's daughter (Mt 15:21-28 and Mk 7:24-30)

- Exorcising the Canaanite woman's daughter
- A Gentile woman asks Jesus to heal her daughter, but Jesus refuses, saying that he has been sent only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel". The woman persists, saying that "dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table". In response Jesus relents and informs her that her daughter has been healed.

Blind and mute man (Mt 12:22-32, Mk 3:20-30, Lk 11:14-23)

- Exorcising the blind and mute man
- Jesus heals a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. People are astonished and ask, "Could this be the Son of David?"

Boy possessed by a demon (Mt 17:14-21, Mk 9:14-29, Lk 9:37-49)

- Exorcising a boy possessed by a demon
- A boy possessed by a demon is brought forward to Jesus. The boy is said to have foamed at the mouth, gnashed his teeth, become rigid and involuntarily fallen into both water and fire. Jesus' followers could not expel the demon, and Jesus condemns the people as unbelieving, but when the father of the boy questions if Jesus could heal the boy, he replies "everything is possible for those that believe". The father then says that he believes and the child is healed.

Sunset (Mt 8:16-17, Mk 1:32-34 and Lk 4:40-41)

- Exorcising at sunset
- In this miracle Jesus heals people and cast out demons
- Day of many miracles – he is willing and able and wants to help
- Fulfills Isaiah 53:4 – one of the servant songs
 - Matthew sees a connection between Jesus healing and the suffering servant that dies for us to heal us eternally

Mute (Mt 9:32-34)

- Exorcising a mute and deaf man
- A man who is demon-possessed and could not talk is brought to Jesus, who exorcises the demon, and the man is able to speak.
- Pharisees respond, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."
 - Hardness of heart – words of disbelief

A Crippled Woman Healed on the Sabbath (Lk 13:10-17)

- Jesus heals the woman bent double
- While teaching in a synagogue on a Sabbath, Jesus cured a woman who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years and could not stand straight at all
- Notice that Jesus' speaks his pronouncement in plain words and that those words have power over the "spirit"—later identified as "Satan"
 - It is a pronouncement that establishes Jesus' authority, an authority so great that Satan himself bows to it.
 - When the synagogue ruler responds, Jesus uses this authority to silence and humiliate his opponents.
 - Notice, too, that "opponents" is plural. Apparently, Jesus targets the synagogue ruler and his supporters, that is, all those who wield influence in the synagogue, thus exercising his authority over them also.
- Consistent with his exercise of authority, Jesus' two questions are rhetorical: they are not meant to be answered, for the clear answer to each is "yes," and Jesus provides no time for a response.

- The questions are posed and phrased in such a way that they put the synagogue rulers in their place, which is clearly beneath that of Jesus.
- Our narrator confirms the fact by telling us “all his opponents were humiliated.”
- At the same time he reinforces Jesus as a man of the people, for they were “delighted” with what he had done.

Cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene (Mk 16:9, Lk 8:2)

- Jesus had cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene

Exorcism while Herod wanted to kill him (Lk 13:31-32)

- Jesus continued to cast out devils even though Herod Antipas wanted to kill him.

Raising the dead

Only God can perform miracles – raising the dead indicates a particularly close relationship with God

Raises Jairus' 12-year old daughter (Mt 9:18-26; Mk 5:21-43, Lk 8:40-56)

- Raises Jairus' twelve-year old daughter who just died
- Jairus – A major patron of a synagogue
- Asks Jesus to heal his daughter, but while Jesus is on the way, Jairus is told his daughter has died.
- Example of big faith – Take your problems that are too big to deal with to Jesus
- Jewish funerals are loud with wailing women and flute players
 - Sense of community with the loss and grief – everyone knows and shares
- Takes in Peter, James and John and her parents
 - Jesus tells him she was only sleeping, and wakes her with the words Talitha kum!
- Jesus has defeated death!

Raises son of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:11-17)

- Raises the son of the widow of Nain who was about to be buried
- A young man, the son of a widow, is brought out for burial in Nain. Jesus sees her, and his pity causes him to tell her not to cry. Jesus approaches the coffin and tells the man inside to get up, and he does so.

Raises Lazarus (Jn 11:1-44)

- Raises Lazarus from 4 days in the grave
- A close friend of Jesus who had been dead for four days is brought back to life when Jesus commands him to get up.

Control over nature

The Gospels include eight pre-resurrection accounts concerning Jesus' power over nature:

Jesus turns Water into Wine (Jn 2:1-11)

- At a wedding, when the host runs out of wine, the host's servants fill vessels with water at Jesus' command, then a sample is drawn out and taken to the master of the banquet who pronounces the content of the vessels as the best wine of the banquet.

The miracle of draught of fishes (Lk 5:1-11)

- Takes place early in Jesus's ministry and results in Saints Peter, James, son of Zebedee and John joining Jesus as his Apostles.

The Feeding of the 5000 men (Mt 14:13-21, Mk 6:30-44, Lk 9:10-17, Jn 6:1-15)

- Jesus, praying to God and using only a few loaves of bread and several fish, feeds thousands of men, along with an unspecified number of women and children; there are even a number of baskets of leftovers afterward.

The Feeding of the 4000 men (Mt 15:29-30, Mk 8:1-13)

- Jesus, praying to God and using only a few loaves of bread and several fish, feeds thousands of men, along with an unspecified number of women and children; there are even a number of baskets of leftovers afterward.

Walking on water (Mt 14:22-36, Mk 6:45-56, Jn 6:16-24)

- Jesus walked on a lake to meet a boat.

Transfiguration of Jesus (Mt 17:1-13, Mk 9:2-13, Lk 9:28-36)

- Jesus in his perfect humanity
- Jesus climbed a mountain and was changed so that his face glowed
- The Old Testament prophets Moses and Elijah appeared next to him.

Calming the storm (Mt 8:23-27, Lk 8:22-25)

- During a storm, the disciples woke Jesus, and he rebuked the storm causing it to become calm.
 - In the midst of the crisis, they go to Jesus
 - Jesus was sleeping – he was totally unconcerned
- Jesus then rebukes the disciples for lack of faith.
 - Ps 27 – Psalm of trust
- Jesus rebukes the wind and the waves
 - Control over nature
 - The wind and the waves stop and there was a great calm – same description in Jonah
- Parallels to the story of Jonah
 - Same
 - They were both sleeping in the boat when the storm came
 - Jonah calms the storm
 - Both lay down their life to calm the storms of life
 - Contrasts
 - Runs away from the will of God
 - Calms the storm by laying down his life
- Sea of Galilee
 - Very deep – hundreds of feet
 - Has severe winds that cross the lake without warning
 - Sea represents all the powers of evil and darkness – the abyss

Finding a Coin in the fish's mouth (Mt 17:24-27)

The Cursing of the Fig Tree (Mk 11:13-14; 20-21)

- Jesus cursed a fig tree, and it withered.

Catch of 153 fish (Jn 21:1-14)

- Post-resurrection miracle
- A similar miracle to the miracle of draught of fishes

- Called the catch of 153 fish, to distinguish it from the account in Luke
- Reported in the Gospel of John but takes place after the Resurrection of Jesus

Crisis

Jesus warned us that anyone who follows him will pay a price, and it will be a high price, indeed. After the interlude of parables in Lesson #13, we find that Jesus' reputation has spread, and in Lesson #14 mounting tensions escalate into crisis: Jesus is rejected in his hometown of Nazareth; Herod Antipas takes notice of him; John the Baptist is executed; and Jesus aggressively confronts the religious leaders who oppose him. Jesus' high profile and radical message are quickly leading him into deep trouble.

- w. Cost of discipleship (14:25-35)

Demands of discipleship

With Jesus' identity fully known, his disciples struggle with the implications of that identity, both for Jesus and for themselves. For Jesus, being "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" means suffering and death at the hands of the religious and political leaders; for his disciples it means taking up their own cross, being a servant of all and possibly being killed themselves.

All of this directly contradicts everything people believed about the Messiah. Jesus' disciples are left dazed and confused, while as readers we are left to ponder our own position in light of this startlingly new "Kingdom."

Peter's Confession of Faith

As we enter Lesson #9 the overwhelming question posed in the Gospel according to Mark has been: "Who is this man who can say and do such things?" At Caesarea Philippi Jesus poses this very question directly to his disciples: "Who do people say that I am" (8: 27). After some discussion, Peter replies on behalf of the disciples: "You are the Messiah" (8: 29). After Peter's response, the second half of the gospel will focus on the question: "What are the implications of Jesus being the Messiah, for himself, his disciples and for us, Mark's readers?" If Mark's gospel is addressed to Christians in Rome during a time of intense persecution (almost certainly during the persecution under the Emperor Nero, A.D. 64-68), then this is an urgent question, indeed.

From Jesus' return to Capernaum through his entry into Jerusalem, Jesus' conversation and teaching addresses the implications of Peter's confession of faith. What does it mean that Jesus is the Messiah? In a brilliant series of vignettes, Mark explores this question from multiple points of view.

Jesus takes his disciples 69 km (about 43 miles) north of the Sea of Galilee to Pnias, (renamed Caesarea Philippi in A.D. 14 by Phillip II, in honor of Caesar Augustus), a Greco-Roman town at the southwestern foot of Mt. Hermon. Since the 3rd century B.C. Pnias had been a cult center for worship of the Greek God, Pan.

Here, only one thing happens: Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (16: 13), and Peter replies on behalf of the group: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16: 16). Six days later on the Mt. of Transfiguration, the voice of God the Father validates Peter's confession of faith in the presence of two credible witnesses, Moses and Elijah (as required by Deuteronomy 19: 15).

With Jesus' identity confirmed, Jesus tells his disciples that they are heading immediately south to Jerusalem, where he will suffer, be killed and on the third day be raised. This is stunning—and dreadful—news, news his disciples cannot comprehend and refuse to accept.

Mt 16:18 Peter is the rock on which the church is built

Catholic - took this literally. They built the church on Peter's bones (Vatican)

Protestant - the confession is the rock.

- Confessions of faith (9:18-50)
 - Peter's confession: "The Messiah of God" (9:18-27)
 - Jesus transfigured; God's "confession": "This is my Son" (9:28-36)
 - Response #1: Jesus heals a very difficult case (9:37-45)
 - Response #2: Disciples argue over "which of them will be the greatest" (9:46-50)

??

Rather than being accepted, those closest to him—the people of Jesus' hometown of Nazareth—firmly reject him, attempting to toss him off a cliff to his death.

As our story progresses the conflict intensifies: Jesus calls Levi, a hated Jewish tax collector (and a Levite, at that!), to become one of his inner circle; Jesus banquets with tax collectors and "sinners," breaking bread with them and enjoying their company; Jesus breaks the Law by picking grain on the Sabbath (recall the young man in Numbers 15: 32-36 who is stoned to death for gathering wood on the Sabbath, a similar action); after being chastised for picking grain on the Sabbath, Jesus deliberately provokes the religious leaders by healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, resulting in the Pharisees and Herodians plotting his death; the huge crowds following Jesus continue to grow and become more threatening; demons flee before Jesus; Jesus' family arrives from Nazareth to "seize him," for they think he is out of his mind; Jesus rejects his family; and the scribes accuse him of being possessed by Beelzebub.

All the while people are astonished by Jesus' words and actions, prompting countless people to ask: "Who is this man who can say and do such things?"

Facing increasing opposition, Jesus sends his disciples, two-by-two into Galilee, giving them authority to teach and preach . . . and to drive out demons. While they are gone Jesus learns that Herod Antipas has murdered John the Baptist, beheading him and displaying John's severed head on a platter, as part of the entertainment at Herod's birthday party. The news delivers a stunning blow to Jesus. On the return from their mission, Jesus asks his disciples to accompany him to the east side of the Sea of Galilee—the Golan Heights side—to a remote area where he can pray and confer with God, where he can come to grips with John's murder, and where he can understand the implications of John's murder for himself and for his disciples. Arriving at a remote place on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, a crowd of thousands is waiting for Jesus: they saw him leave Capernaum and head for the far shore, so they followed him there, walking around the north shore of the lake. In his compassion, Jesus teaches them, heals them and feeds them, finally dismissing them and his disciples, as he goes up the mountain to pray. About the fourth watch (3:00 – 6:00 AM), Jesus comes back down the mountain, only to find that the crowd has stayed, milling about along the shore, and the disciples' boat is halfway out in the lake, 3-4 miles. Exhausted, Jesus wants to go home, so he simply walks on the water from point A (the Golan) to point B (the boat). The story adds comic relief to an otherwise grim scene. After spending the night on the mountain with God, Jesus knows what must be done: he must go to Jerusalem to die a brutal death on the cross.

The decision made, Jesus reengages the growing conflict that has accompanied his public ministry in Galilee. As we enter Lesson #8 we learn that Jesus' activities in Galilee have attracted the attention of the religious leaders in Jerusalem, for "when the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him . . ." they began to question him regarding details of the Law: "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands" (7: 1; 5)? Juxtaposed to the murder of John the Baptist and Jesus' night on the mountain, this otherwise appropriate question on a minor point of the Law ignites a deep rage within Jesus: "He responds, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites . . .'" (7: 6), and he goes on to savage the religious leaders, throwing gasoline on a smoldering fire. When his disciples question him about the encounter, Jesus blasts them, too: "Are you likewise without understanding" (7: 18)? Jesus' frustration and anger are visceral, virtually leaping off the page! Jesus then leaves Galilee and heads north toward Tyre (in modern-day Lebanon), where he encounters a Syrophoenician woman (whom he deeply insults!), and he then heads back by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee. Once home, nothing has changed. With that, Jesus

makes a decision. He takes his disciples 43 miles north of the Sea of Galilee to Caesarea Philippi, a Greco-Roman town at the southwestern foot of Mt. Hermon, where the turning point in our story takes place.

As we move deeper into Matthew, Jesus takes on a decidedly sharper edge, not suffering fools gladly. He seems deliberately to antagonize his opponents, escalating his encounters with them at every turn. What is going on here?

Holy Week – Jesus in Jerusalem

From the time they left Caesarea Philippi, Jesus said to his disciple 4 times that they were going to Jerusalem, I will be arrested, tried, crucified, buried and raised on the 3rd day.

- Mk 9:9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.
- Mk 9:30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." 32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.
 - Mt 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.
- Mk 10:32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."
 - Mt 20:17 Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, 18 "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death 19 and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"
 - Lk 18:31 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. 32 He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. 33 On the third day he will rise again." 34 The disciples did not any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.
- Mt 26:1 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 "As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

Journey to Jerusalem

- 3 day journey from Galilee to Jerusalem – 3500' elevation gain
 - Day 1
 - Sea of Galilee – 700 feet below sea level
 - Beth-Shan – Cross the Jordon River and spend the night
 - Day 2
 - Parallel the Jordon south to Jericho – 900 feet below sea level
 - Cross back over the Jordon and spend the night at Jericho
 - Slight downhill
 - Day 3
 - 17 mile climb up to Jerusalem – 2500 feet above sea level

Jesus tells the disciples that he will suffer and die 3 times
 James and John ask to be the most exalted among the disciples
 Peter says no to Jesus' plans at Caesarea Philippi
 These are the 3 top disciples – they don't understand humility and what Jesus really came

The date of Jesus' Triumphant Entry was given to us in the OT:

Dan 9:25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

The decree to rebuild Jerusalem came in 445 BC, in the month of Nissan

Ne 2:1 In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes (445 BC) ... 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." 6 Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

Decree is Passover 445 BC

7 weeks = 62 weeks = 69 weeks = 483 years

Jewish years were lunar = 360 days (not 365 days)

$69 \text{ weeks} \times \frac{7 \text{ days}}{\text{week}} \times 360 \text{ days/year} = 173,880 \text{ days}$

Passover 4/6/32 AD – the day that Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, right when the Bible said he would, in the way that the Bible said he would.

173,880 days	Days from the issuing of the decree until Messiah is cut off
<u>/ 365.25 days</u>	Convert to the Julian calendar (the .25 adjusts for the leap years)
476 years	Years from the issuing of the decree until Messiah is cut off
-445 BC	The decree to rebuild Jerusalem is passed on Passover 445 BC
+476 years	Years from the issuing of the decree until Messiah is cut off

+ 1 year
32 AD

There is no “0” BC or AD
Passover 4/6/32 AD

Palm Sunday – Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem

- Palm Sunday – people arrive in Jerusalem and choose the lamb to be sacrificed
 - 3:00 time to choose the sacrifice – same time as Jesus gave up His spirit on the cross
- Hosannas – means please save – political statement
 - "save, rescue, savior"
- Rode in on a colt
 - Zach 9:9 prophecy
“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.
 - This is way that Solomon rode in when he became king
 - When kings ride into a town:
 - donkey means that they are bringing peace
 - stallion means that they are bringing war
- Passover
 - The largest of three annual pilgrimage festivals
 - The population of Jerusalem swells from 100,000 to 1,000,000 people
- Jesus enters Jerusalem on the most crowded day of the year
 - Jesus enters Jerusalem, not as a humble servant, but as a king to the cheers of thousands: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come! Hosanna in the highest” (11: 9-10)!
 - Deliberately staged to invoke memories of Solomon entering Jerusalem when David elevates him to the kingship
 - The cheers of the crowd are incendiary, a call to arms, accompanied by the waving of thousands of palm leaves, symbolic swords
 - Viewed by the Jewish religious leaders and the Roman officials, Jesus “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem is nothing less than a blatant call to insurrection.

Jesus enters Jerusalem on the most crowded day of the year, the beginning of Passover—the largest of three annual pilgrimage festivals, during which the population of Jerusalem swells from 100,000 to 1,000,000 people. Jesus enters Jerusalem, not as a humble servant, but as a king to the cheers of thousands: “Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest!” (21: 9). At a time of escalating political tension; at a time of mounting religious turbulence; at a time of civil terrorism and treason— Jesus’ actions are utterly incendiary. And then he lights a match.

Luke 19:28-44
Matthew 24

- Before he enters Jerusalem, he stops at the Mount of Olives and weeps over the Israelites
- Enters on the donkey
 - Solomon enter Jerusalem on a donkey to claim the kingship
 - Fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy – Zec 9:9

- Zec 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
 - Nothing humble about it at all
- Palm Sunday
 - Lamb selection day for the sacrifice
 - Ps 118 – Jesus is our king
 - Palm – Symbolic swords

Conflict and Confrontation

With each passing day of “Holy Week” Jesus escalates his encounters with the religious leaders, culminating in seven scathing denouncements, calling them hypocrites, blind guides, a brood of vipers and murders—all this, as he whips the ever-growing crowds into a frenzy. Pontius Pilate, the Roman Prefect, along with a contingent of up to 3,000 Roman legionnaires, has moved up from their headquarters at Caesarea Maritima on the Mediterranean coast to the Antonia Fortress in Jerusalem, where they monitor closely Jesus’ activities—and go on high alert, fearing a revolt and the inevitable blood bath that would result. The religious leaders, too, fear that if Jesus continues down this path he will put Jewish religious freedom and the very survival of the nation at risk. As the physicist Carl Sagan once said of the 20th-century nuclear arms race: the United States and the Soviet Union “are like two sworn enemies standing waist deep in gasoline, one with three matches, the other with five.” And so it is with Jesus and the religious and political authorities.

Jesus enters the temple area and drives out the merchants (Lk 19:45-46)

Having attacked the merchants and money changers at the Temple, overturned tables and wreaked havoc, the religious leaders confront Jesus the next morning, demanding: “By what authority are you doing these things? Or who gave you this authority to do them” (11: 28)? Jesus rises to the occasion: “No, I’ll ask the questions around here!” And thus he engages the religious leaders in heated debate, besting them with each encounter, publicly humiliating them in the eyes of the ever expanding crowd. Day by day, Jesus ups the ante, fueling the anger and resentment of the crowds toward the religious leaders and the Romans. As the week progresses the possibility of a riot increases from a probability to a near certainty, and if such a riot occurs, thousands will die. Jesus plays a risky game, one designed to ensure his arrest, trial and crucifixion that very week.

Jesus heals at the Temple

Messianic secret – When Jesus healed people, he says ‘Do not tell anyone’ because the time had not yet come

- Now Jesus heals in the temple – when people know what happens, he knows that he will die
- In Jerusalem, the time has come

Jesus teaches at the temple (Lk 19:47-21:38)

Jesus' authority questioned (20:1-8)

Parable of the Tenants (20:9-19)

"Should we pay taxes to Caesar?" (20:20-26)

"Is there a resurrection?" (20:27-40)

"Whose son is the Christ?" (20:41-47)

The widow's offering (21:1-4)

Olivet Discourse

In the Olivet Discourse Jesus speaks of a time of tribulation, the destruction of the Temple, the end times and the coming of the Son of Man. Traditionally read as eschatological prophecy, the Olivet Discourse draws heavily on the Book of Daniel and it mirrors events at the time of the Gospel's composition.

After savaging the religious leaders in Matthew 23, Jesus abruptly turns his back on them and steams up the Mt. of Olives. His disciples—astonished and frightened—trail along behind him, speechless. Finally, one of them—to break the tension—points out how beautiful the Temple looks! Jesus spins around, jabs a finger at the Temple complex and explodes: "You see all these things . . . there will not be left here a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down" (24: 2). Jesus' disciples are dumbfounded, and they ask, stuttering: "Tell us, when will this happen . . .?" (24: 3). Jesus answers with the "Olivet Discourse," a profoundly disturbing insight into a time of "great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, nor will ever be" (24: 21). Indeed, within the lifetime of many who lived in Jesus' generation, the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-73 fulfilled Jesus' vision, resulting in the siege of Jerusalem and the total destruction of the Temple. The historian Tacitus writes that during the revolt of A.D. 66-73 no fewer than 600,000 Jews fought the Romans in Jerusalem; those captured were crucified, up to 500 per day; and historians today estimate that 1.2 million Jews died during the span of the Revolt. It was the greatest catastrophe in Jewish history until the Nazi holocaust of 1939-1944. Jesus' "Olivet Discourse" fits squarely into the genre of "apocalyptic literature," and foreshadows the masterpiece of that genre, the book of Revelation.

Signs of the end of the age (Lk 21:5-38)

Upper Room Discourse

John 13-17

Passover / The Last Supper

Passover Meal

- 3 hours
- 4 cups of wine
- Egyptian Praise (Hallel) Psalms sung during the meal
 - Psalm 118 – last Psalm sung

Did the Last Supper occur on Passover?

PASSOVER AND THE CRUCIFIXION

The death and resurrection of Jesus is central to the Christian faith. Christianity teaches that Jesus died to atone for our sins and because of this we have life beyond physical death. All four Gospels provide Scriptural accounts of the crucifixion and associated events. Yet, in reading the parallel accounts of events associated with the crucifixion, we find

differences between what the synoptic authors (Matthew, Mark and Luke) write and what John writes as to how these events unfold.

For example, we see John showing that Jesus appears before Pilate about the 6th hour while the synoptic writers show Jesus on the cross at the 6th hour.

- John 19:14: It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.
- Matthew 27:45: Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.
- Luke 23:44: And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.
- Mark 15:25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

John sees Jesus at about the 6th hour appearing before Pilate. This would be twelve noon according to Jewish reckoning of time. The synoptic Gospels show Jesus to already be hanging on the cross at the 6th hour as it is at the 6th hour that darkness covers the land and some standing near the cross are mocking Jesus as the context of Matthew 27 and Luke 23 shows.

Mark writes that "It was the third hour when they crucified him." The 3rd hour would be 9 AM according to Jewish reckoning of time. In looking at the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke, one could surmise that the crucifixion began at the 3rd hour (9:00 AM), was still going on at the 6th hour (12 noon), when darkness began to cover the land, and ended at the 9th hour (3:00 PM) when it is recorded Jesus died. John, however, seemingly has the crucifixion first starting sometime after the 6th hour, after 12 noon. Some see this as a major discrepancy between what the synoptic writers say and what John says.

In an effort to resolve this issue, some have proposed that an error in the translation of Mark 15:25 may be responsible for it being said Jesus was crucified at the 3rd hour. Some believe the Greek letter *digamma* was inserted in place of the letter *gamma*. *Digamma* was used for 3rd whereas *gamma* was used for 6th. However, there is no hard evidence for this. Furthermore, Matthew and Luke clearly show there was darkness over the land from the 6th to the 9th hour indicating Jesus was on the cross at the 6th hour and already had been on the cross for some time. Therefore, it is apparent Mark's account of Jesus being placed on the cross at the 3rd hour or 9:00 AM is correct. Can this apparent difference between Mark and John as to the time Jesus was nailed to the cross be in some way harmonized?

It is apparent Matthew, Mark and Luke were using Hebrew time in their writings. Hebrew time split the day and night into watches with the first day time watch beginning at 6 AM. The 3rd hour would be three hours removed from 6 AM which would be 9:00 AM. The 6th hour (twelve noon) would be six hours removed from 6 AM. and the ninth hour would be nine hours removed from 6:00 AM or 3:00 PM in the afternoon.

So why does John show Jesus appearing before Pilate at the sixth hour which would have been twelve noon when it is obvious Jesus was already on the cross and had been there for some time.

It is apparent John was using Roman time rather than Hebrew time. In Roman time a day begins at 12 midnight. Therefore, the 6th hour would have been 6:00 AM. When you read the Gospel of John, it appears he is using the Roman method of reckoning time in other of his writings. Therefore the 6th hour for John would be 6:00 AM. When reading through the events leading up to the crucifixion in all four Gospels, a 6:00 AM appearance before Pilate appears very likely.

Most Christian apologists see John's 6th hour as being Roman time a very reasonable solution to the apparent discrepancy between Mark's 3rd hour and John's 6th hour. This clearly allows for the crucifixion to have begun at the 3rd hour as seen in Mark and as indicated in Matthew and Luke. Therefore, this seeming discrepancy is easily resolved. Now let's turn to an issue that is not so easily resolved but, as you will see, can be resolved both from the Scriptures and by using a little common sense.

Passover and the Crucifixion:

Matthew, Mark and Luke show Jesus and His disciples eating the Passover the night before the crucifixion. John clearly shows the Passover being eaten after the crucifixion. Were their two Passovers eaten within a 24 hour period at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus?

It is generally believed within Christianity that the crucifixion of Jesus was foreshadowed by the Passover. We are all familiar with the account of the Israelites killing a lamb and spreading the blood from the lamb on the door posts of their homes so that the death angel would pass over their homes and not kill their firstborn as was the case with the Egyptian firstborn.

Jesus is seen as the ultimate fulfillment of the Passover. Jesus is seen as the lamb slain for the sins of the world. Just as the blood on the doorposts protected the Israelites from having their firstborn killed, the blood of Jesus is seen as protecting us from eternal death.

All four Gospels show that Jesus was crucified on the day of the Passover. However, if you carefully read the four Gospel accounts of the Passover during which Jesus was crucified, you will see what on the surface appears to be a conflict between what Matthew, Mark and Luke write and what John writes. Matthew, Mark and Luke have Jesus eating what appears to be the Passover meal the night before He is crucified. John indicates the time for the eating of the Passover meal was after Jesus was crucified. What's going on here?

Matthew 26:17-20: On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

Mark 14:12-17: On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

Luke 22:1, 7-16: Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching. Verse 7: Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there." They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

In reading these Scriptures, it certainly looks like Jesus kept the Passover with His disciples the night before He was crucified. Keeping of the Passover involved eating the meat of a slain lamb along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Is this what Jesus and His disciples did?

The synoptic Gospel writers all appear to equate the Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Luke actually calls the Feast of Unleavened Bread the Passover. The Hebrew Scriptures make it clear that the Passover is on the 14th day of the Hebrew first month and the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th of the first month.

Leviticus 23: 5-6: The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.

Now, it was customary in Israel to view the entire period of the Passover and the Day's of Unleavened Bread as the feast of Passover. After all, the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were closely associated with the same event, the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. During the Passover meal, unleavened bread had to be eaten and in preparing for the Passover meal all leaven had to be removed from the home. Since unleavened bread had to be prepared for the Passover meal, in a sense, the Feast of Unleavened Bread had already begun. This blending of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread is already found to be the case during the time of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 45:21: In the first month on the fourteenth day you are to observe the Passover, a feast lasting seven days, during which you shall eat bread made without yeast.

Even though there was this apparent blending of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Passover lambs were slain on the 14th of the month whereas the days of Unleaven Bread began on the 15th of the month.

Exodus 12:3, 6: Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

Verse 6: Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight (in the evening KJV, RSV)

We know that the Hebrew calendar has days beginning at sunset and ending at sunset. The Passover lambs were to be kept until the 14th and killed at twilight. When is twilight? Twilight is defined by some as the period of time between when the sun goes down and complete darkness occurs. This period of time is sometimes referred to as "between the two evenings." The view adopted by the Pharisees and the Talmudists is that the first evening is when the heat of the sun begins to decrease; roughly a period from 3-5 P.M. and the second evening begins at sunset. The Mishnah indicates the lambs were killed about 2:30 P.M. in the afternoon of the 14th.

Here is where the apparent disconnect occurs between the synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John. The synoptic Gospels show Jesus and His disciples eating the Passover at the beginning of the 14th. John shows the Jews eating the Passover at the end of the 14th.

John 18:28: Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.

Matthew, Mark and Luke have Jesus seemingly eating the Passover the evening before His trial and crucifixion. John shows the Passover as not yet having been eaten at the time of Jesus' trial. The eating of the Passover meal is seen as occurring subsequent to the trial and by implication, subsequent to the crucifixion.

It is believed by most Christians that Jesus was crucified and died at the exact time the lambs were being killed for the keeping of Passover. This conclusion is drawn from the fact John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29), Paul refers to Christ as "our Passover lamb" (1 Corinthians 5:7) and Peter refers to Jesus as a "lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:19).

If indeed Jesus kept the actual Passover the evening before his crucifixion as Matthew, Mark and Luke appear to indicate, the killing of the lambs and the eating of the Passover would have occurred before Jesus was crucified. The crucifixion would have occurred during the daylight part of the 14th after the lambs were killed and eaten the evening before.

John, however, indicates the eating of the Passover was to occur after Jesus died which allows for Jesus to be slain at the same time the Passover lambs were slain which coordinates with Scripture that pictures Jesus as our Passover lamb. So how do we resolve this apparent disconnect between the synoptic accounts and John's account?

Some Biblical scholars believe the synoptic Gospels were written much earlier than John and present a more accurate historical account of what took place at the time of the crucifixion. It is believed John wrote his Gospel much later than the synoptic writers and wrote from the perspective of a very high Christology. Therefore, some scholars believe John

wanted to show Christ as fulfilling the Passover by being killed at the exact time the lambs were being slain for the eating of the Passover. It is believed John forced this perspective into his recording of the crucifixion to make this point.

This explanation places the integrity of John in question as it virtually accuses John of fictionalizing some of what he wrote relative to the crucifixion of Jesus in order to coordinate the death of Jesus with the killing of the Passover lambs.

As already noted, we see Paul picturing Jesus as the Passover lamb and thus appearing to write from the same perspective that John did. Paul's letters appear to have been written many years before John's Gospel was written. The association between Jesus and the Passover lamb is evident before the writings of John. So it is unlikely John forced this perspective into his account of the crucifixion. So why is there this apparent discrepancy between the synoptic Gospels and what John wrote regarding at what point the Passover was eaten?

All four Gospels show Jesus to have been crucified on the preparation day. The preparation day was the daytime part of the 14th. It was the daytime part of Passover day. The 15th of the month would start the Feast of Unleavened Bread which was a special High Day Sabbath. Jesus died shortly before the beginning of the High Day Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Matthew 27:62-64: The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.

Mark 15:42-43: It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Luke 23: 52-54: Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

John 19:14, 31, 42: It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

Verse 31: Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath (NIV).

Verse 42: Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Matthew, Mark and Luke appear to teach that Jesus and his disciples kept the Passover at the beginning of the preparation day, the evening before the daytime part of the 14th. Matthew and Mark record that when evening came, Jesus and his disciples sat down to eat. Now we know the lambs for Passover had to be kept until the 14th and then slain. When was this done? The daylight part of the 14th is seen as the preparation day. What is it a preparation for? John sees it as a preparation for the Passover.

If indeed the daylight part of the 14th was the time of preparation for the Passover, how could Jesus and His disciples be seen as having made preparation for the Passover and as also eating the Passover the evening before the Passover was to be prepared?

John shows the Jews looking forward to eating the Passover after the crucifixion and Scripture indicates Jesus was crucified at the time the lambs were slain in preparation for the eating of the Passover. Therefore, it is evident the daylight part of the 14th was the preparation day for the eating of the Passover and it is during the preparation day that Jesus was crucified. So why do Matthew, Mark and Luke show Jesus keeping the Passover the evening before the preparation for the Passover?

How do we resolve the apparent contradiction between what Matthew, Mark and Luke write as to Jesus observing the Passover on the evening before His crucifixion and what John writes which shows the eating of the Passover to follow the crucifixion? It is apparent that the Preparation Day alluded to in all four Gospels is the preparation for the Passover.

In *The Wars of the Jews*, first century historian Josephus records that the Passover lambs were slaughtered on the 14th, "from the ninth hour till the eleventh" (*Wars* 6.9.3). This would correspond to our 3:00-5:00 P.M. This tells us the lambs were slaughtered during the afternoon of the 14th which means they were eaten near the end of the 14th or at the beginning of the 15th.

Yet Matthew, Mark and Luke indicate Jesus kept the Passover the evening before the Preparation Day. If this is the case, from where did they get a lamb for their Passover observance if the lambs weren't killed until the next day, the Preparation Day as John seems to indicate? More importantly, how would such a lamb have significance relative to the death of Christ if it was killed a day earlier than when Christ was killed?

So what are we to make of the synoptic writers showing Jesus to be observing the Passover at the beginning of the 14th, the evening before his crucifixion? Luke appears to clearly record that the disciples prepared the Passover. "So they prepared the Passover" (Luke 22:13). Mark records that Jesus told his disciples to ask "Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" Mark says, "So they prepared the Passover" (Mark 14:14, 15). Matthew records, "I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house" (Matthew 26:18).

From these statements it appears Jesus not only desired to eat the Passover with His disciples but actually did so. Yet how could this be if the Passover isn't eaten until after the crucifixion the next day as we plainly see in the Gospel of John?

Some have conjectured that Jesus kept the Passover at the beginning of the 14th according to how the Pharisees reckoned the time for eating the Passover while the Sadducees ate the Passover meal at the end of the 14th according to their tradition. There is no real evidence for this position. It is apparent from both the Scriptures and secular history that the lambs were killed during the daylight part of the 14th and all the Jews, regardless of doctrinal persuasion, kept the Passover at the same time.

In another effort to resolve the apparent discrepancy between the synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel, some have speculated that Jesus did not intend to eat the Passover with His disciples and plainly told them this was the case. Therefore it was not the Passover that Christ ate at the start of the 14th but simply a final evening meal before He was to die. The Fenton translation of Luke 22:15-16 is cited as support for this position.

Luke 22:15-16: And he said to them: 'I have longingly desired (Greek: *epithumia epethumesa*) to eat this Passover with you before my suffering; however, I tell you that I shall not eat of it, until it can be administered in the Kingdom of God.'

The Greek words translated here as "longingly desired" appear over fifty times in the NT. Their basic meaning is to desire, crave or long for something, often that which is forbidden. These words are often translated into the English word "lust." The thinking is that Jesus much desired to eat the Passover with His disciples but knew it was forbidden because he was going to die before the Passover was actually eaten and that is why He said he would not eat of it until the Kingdom is established.

Some scholars believe the wording of a number of Greek manuscripts such as Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus support this perspective. However, this approach to resolving this issue remains controversial as it is clear that the synoptic writers all indicate it was the Passover Jesus and His disciples ate. Is there another way to resolve this issue?

It is instructive that Matthew, Mark and Luke all show Jesus appearing to instruct his disciples to prepare for the Passover after the day of Passover has already arrived. The wording indicates the 14th had already arrived when Jesus gave instruction to His disciples as to where to prepare the Passover.

- Matthew 26:17: On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"
- Mark 14:12-17: On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

- [Luke 22:1, 7: Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching. Verse 7: Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."](#)

As already discussed, the Passover and the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread were blended together in Jewish thinking. Luke calls the Feast of Unleavened Bread the Passover. The synoptic writers make it appear that the 14th had already arrived when Jesus directed His disciples to prepare the Passover.

Preparing the Passover was a rather involved task. A lamb had to be killed and roasted to prepare it for the meal. This process would have taken several hours. Besides preparing a lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread were required for the Passover meal. When would this all have been done? The synoptic writers show Jesus and His disciples eating the Passover at the start of the 14th. We know this was the start of the 14th because it was dark when they all left to go to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Because of the obvious complications seen in concluding Jesus and His disciples were keeping the actual statutory Passover, it doesn't appear to be the actual statutory Passover they kept.

It is evident from John's Gospel that the eating of the Passover didn't take place until after the crucifixion which would place the eating of the Passover at the end of the 14th and not at the beginning of the 14th. So what was it that Jesus and His disciples were doing in having what the synoptic Gospels appear to show is a eating of the Passover the night before the day of preparation?

The disciple's preparations could not have included preparing a Passover lamb because the Passover lambs had not yet been killed. It is instructive that nothing is said in the four Gospel accounts about a lamb being eaten at the meal shared by Jesus and the disciples.

Matthew records Jesus saying, "As you know, the Passover is two days away--and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified" (Matthew 26:2). The indication here is that Christ was prophesying His death would take place on Passover. Therefore, he would not be keeping the Passover by eating it but by dying on it.

A number of scholars believe the meal He had with His disciples was not the Passover but a pre-Passover meal where He washed their feet, gave them much instruction and introduced the symbols of the bread and wine. It was a virtual memorial service in anticipation of his death. It's instructive that unlike the synoptic writers, John gives no indication it was the Passover that Jesus ate the night before His death.

[John 13:1: It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.](#)

John writes that it was just before the Passover Feast that Jesus shows His disciples the full extent of His love. John goes on to describe Jesus washing the disciple's feet. John 13:2 shows the washing of the feet was done either during or after the meal depending on what translation you read. John indicates it was before the Passover Feast that Jesus performed the foot washing. Yet John shows it was either during or after the meal when Jesus washed their feet. Therefore, it is believed the meal they were having was not the Passover Feast but simply an evening meal eaten the evening before the Passover Feast would be eaten which would be at the end of the next day after Jesus had died.

John clearly shows it was the Preparation Day when Jesus was crucified. This Preparation Day was the daylight part of the 14th and the High Day Sabbath was to follow on the 15th. As already discussed, in describing the events associated with Jesus' trial, John says the following:

[John 19:14: It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews \(NIV\).](#)

Some translations read, "[it was the preparation of the Passover,](#)" or "[it was the day of preparation for the Passover,](#)"(KJV, ASV, RSV, NET). It appears John is seeing the day Jesus died as the preparation day for the eating of

the Passover. Therefore the eating of the Passover would first take place at the end of the 14th and not at the beginning. All four Gospels show it was the Preparation Day on which Christ was crucified.

That it was during the day of the 14th when Jesus died is clearly born out by the Jews insistence on making sure Jesus and the two criminals crucified with Him were not left on the cross during the Feast of Unleavened Bread which began at the start of the 15th which would have been around sunset of the 14th. It would have violated Jewish law to have the bodies remain on the cross during the feast of Unleavened Bread (Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Joshua 8:29). They had earlier determined that Jesus should not be killed on the Feast. The Feast was considered a High Day Sabbath when no ordinary work could be done.

- Matthew 26:4-5: and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. "But not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."
- Mark 14:2: "But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may riot."
- John 19:31: Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away (NKJV).

It is apparent from a careful reading of all four Gospels that Jesus was tried during the night and early morning of Passover day and was placed on the cross around the 3rd hour which corresponds to our 9 A.M. He died at the 9th hour which corresponds to our 3 P.M. It was at 3 P.M. that the lambs began to be slain in preparation for the eating of the Passover which would have taken place at the end of the 14th and possibly at the beginning of the 15th which was the start of the High Day Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Remember, unleavened bread had to be eaten as part of the Passover.

In view of the foregoing, it can be safely concluded that what Jesus and His disciples ate at the beginning of the 14th was not the statutory Passover. John 13:2-4 shows it was a supper that Jesus and the disciples ate at the beginning of the 14th.

John 13:2-4: And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself (NKJV).

The Greek here translated "supper" is *dipnon* which the Greek lexicons define as an evening meal. Six days before the Passover Jesus had a *dipnon* with Lazarus, an evening meal. Paul references the meal Jesus had the night before He was crucified as a *dipnon*.

John 12:1-2: Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper (*dipnon*); and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him (NKJV).

1 Corinthians 11:20-21: When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper (*dipnon*) you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk.

Verse 25: In the same way, after supper (*dipneo*) he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The sixteen times the word *dipnon* appears in the NT, it is never associated with the Greek word for Passover (*Pascha*). The Passover was a one of a kind stand alone event that was very sacred to the Jews. It is never called the Passover supper or meal. It is simply called the Passover or Passover Feast. It appears to be quite distinct from a supper meal. It is instructive that Paul refers to the meal Jesus had the night before the crucifixion as a supper" (*dipnon*) and not Passover.

If Jesus and the disciples did not eat the actual Passover at the start of the 14th, why do Matthew, Mark and Luke make it look as though they did?

When all the Scriptures that bear on this issue are examined and compared, it is apparent that the synoptic writers were simply using the word Passover, Passover Feast or Days of Unleavened Bread as descriptive of the season they were

in. We saw that the synoptic writers refer to the entire period of the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread as the Passover even though the Passover was only a single day of that period of time.

The writers of Scripture take liberties with language just like we do. We may say, “I’m going to a Christmas party tonight even though the actual day of Christmas may be several days off. Nevertheless, it is the Christmas season. Well for Jesus and the disciples, it was the Passover season. While it wasn’t the statutory Passover that Jesus and His disciples ate, it was a Passover type meal inasmuch that Jesus was in essence substituting His body for the lamb by introducing the bread and wine as symbols of the sacrifice He would be making at the very time the Passover lambs were being slain the following afternoon.

It is important, when reading the Scriptures, that we don’t take too wooden of an approach to what is written. It is important we look at the Scriptures holistically which means we look at all the dynamics associated with an issue before drawing a conclusion. This is the approach we should always use in our study of the Scriptures or our study of anything.

The charge that there is some great inconsistency between the synoptic gospels and John regarding the time of the Passover relative to the crucifixion disappears when one looks at all the dynamics associated with these events.

Judas, the Betrayer

Judas is a much more complex character than we often experience in a liturgical context. A disciple from the start, Judas was with Jesus for his entire 3-year public ministry; Judas witnessed Jesus’ teaching, preaching and healing; Judas was present at Peter’s confession of faith, and Judas believed that Jesus was the Messiah. So why does Judas betray Jesus? In Lesson #15 we explore the character of Judas, drawing on Matthew, Luke and John—and a few outside sources—for additional information.

Judas is a far more complex character one might think. Judas was one of the original twelve disciples, part of Jesus’ “inner circle”; Judas witnessed the entire three years of Jesus’ public ministry, watching and listening to his teaching, preaching and healing; Judas was present at Caesarea Philippi, agreeing with Peter’s confession of faith; and Judas was told of the extraordinary events on the Mt. of Transfiguration, when God the Father validated Peter’s confession of faith in the presence of Moses and Elijah. Why would such a man “betray” Christ?

Garden of Gethsemane

Gethsemane means olive press

Prayer

“Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.”

Mark 14:32 Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.” 35 He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36 And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.” 37 Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” 39 Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. 40 And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

Arrest

Lk 14:27 And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Mt 16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Suffering

- 1Pe 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- 1Pe 4:12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.
- Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.
- James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Gethsemane – Olive press – Press the olives to get the oil out

The weight of what Jesus endured that night

- Mt 26:36 – Disciples fall into temptation
- Mt 26:47 – Betrayed by Judas
- Mt 26:56 – Deserted by his friends (disciples)
- Mt 26:57 – Trial by the religious leaders
- Luke 22:54-62 – Peter's betrayal
- Mt 26:65 – Tortured by the Jews
- Mt 27:27 – Brutally scourged
- Mt 27:32 – Jesus crucified
- 2Co 5:21 – Jesus suffered our punishment in hell – rejected by God

We need to rejoice that we share in the sufferings of Christ

- 1Pe 4:12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.
- Mt 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of

me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you

- Ro 5:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— 2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.
- Ja 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Peter's Denial

At Caesarea Philippi Peter said with great certainty, “You are the Messiah” (8: 29); across the three years of Jesus’ public ministry, Peter emerged as leader of the disciples; after the Last Supper Peter pledged with conviction: “Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be” (14: 29). And yet, Peter denies the Lord, not once, but three times.

The Trial

Mark gives us a terse version of Jesus’ trial before Pilate. In Lesson #17 we fill in the blanks, examining the issues involved in Jesus’ arrest and trial, as well as the possible motives of the principal characters in the story. Once again, we find that the issues are much more complex and layered than we typically experience liturgically.

The Jewish leaders accuse Jesus of blasphemy, a capital offense under Mosaic Law. But the trial must be kept quiet, lest it trigger the riot that the religious leaders and the Romans fear. Thus, Caiaphas the high priest calls an evening executive session of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Jewish body of elders. Key members of the Sanhedrin meet at the home of Caiaphas, where Jesus is found guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to death. Although the Jews are free under Roman rule to exercise their own religious laws and customs, they are not free to carry out capital punishment: that is the exclusive purview of the Roman government. The Jewish leaders therefore bring Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Prefect who has taken up residence in the Antonia Fortress during Passover, along with his troops, keeping a watchful eye on the crowds and maintaining security. As a Roman Prefect, Pilate has four primary responsibilities:

- 1) governance;
- 2) collecting taxes;
- 3) maintaining law and order; and
- 4) exercising criminal and civil judicial functions.

Wanting a death sentence, the Jewish leaders bring Jesus before Pilate and accuse him not of blasphemy (for blasphemy is not a capital offense under Roman law), but treason, claiming to be a king: that *is* a capital offense. Like Judas, Pilate is a more complex person than often thought. In this lesson we will not only follow the trial itself, but we will explore Pilate’s motives and actions as a Roman Prefect.

Death, Burial and Resurrection (Luke 19:28-24:53)

Jesus’ entire public ministry leads to his death, burial and resurrection. Indeed, Jesus tells us himself that he came “to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20: 28).

We often are given the impression that Jesus was the innocent victim of corrupt religious authority and political intrigue. That is wrong. Jesus knew exactly what he was doing when he left Galilee for Jerusalem on Passover in the third year of his ministry. He went to Jerusalem with the express purpose of being arrested, tried, convicted and crucified; and on the third day he would rise from the dead. He is in complete control of events, from his entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday through his resurrection on Easter morning.

The fateful time that we call “Holy Week” changes the world—forever.

Prophesies fulfilled
Isa 53:7 – Mk 15:3-5

Ps 22:16-18 – Mk 15:31, Jn 19:23-24

Ps 34:20 – Jn 19:31-37

Ps 69:21 – Mt 27:48

Isa 53:3 – Mt 27:27-31

3:00 the afternoon sacrifice is made – the lamb dies for the people's sins – darkness overtakes the land

Death – The Crucifixion

The King on a Cross

Luke 24²⁶ Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

²⁷ And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. ²⁸ But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!” ’ ³¹ For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”

³² There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. ³³ And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

And they divided His garments and cast lots. ³⁵ And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.”

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.”

³⁸ And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁹ Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ^[j]“If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”

⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Jesus Dies on the Cross

⁴⁴ Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. ⁴⁵ Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ ” Having said this, He breathed His last.

⁴⁷ So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, “Certainly this was a righteous Man!”

⁴⁸ And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. ⁴⁹ But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Crucifixion

The Persians introduced crucifixion as a capital punishment as early as the 6th century B.C., and the Carthaginians, Macedonians and Romans employed it until the Emperor Constantine outlawed crucifixion in A.D. 337, out of deference to Christ. The Greeks had an aversion to crucifixion, although the historian Herodotus tells of the crucifixion of the Persian General Artayctes, who commanded forces in the 2nd Persian invasion of Greece under, Xerxes (a main character in the Book of Esther), 480-479 B.C.

The Romans used crucifixion frequently, however; indeed, Crassus, the Roman General who defeated Spartacus in the slave revolt of 73-71 B.C. crucified 6,000 captive slaves, lining the Via Appia with them, and the historian Tacitus tells us that during the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 no fewer than 600,000 Jews fought the Romans and those captured were crucified, up to 500 per day. Crucifixion involved a prolonged, excruciatingly painful death by being nailed to a cross with tapered iron spikes, 7-9" long, generally taking three or more days to die.

Crucifixion is a brutal and extraordinarily painful way to die. Persian impalement was its antecedent, but the Romans practiced crucifixion from the 6th century B.C. through the 4th century A.D., the practice being abolished by the Emperor Constantine in A.D. 337, out of reverence for Christ. Crucifixion was intended to punish an offender in the most painful way possible and also to terrorize and dissuade others from committing similar crimes. The historian Tacitus records that in Rome the place of crucifixion was outside the Esquiline Gate where there were upright beams permanently fixed in the ground. The convicted criminal would typically carry the crossbeam, which could weigh over 100 pounds. At the place of execution he would be tied or nailed to it through the wrists and the crossbeam would be raised and affixed to the upright; his feet would then be nailed to the upright. Crosses today have been stylized in paintings, sculptures and other forms of art. Josephus, the Judean historian of the generation immediately after Christ, writes in his *Siege of Jerusalem* that "the soldiers out of rage and hatred nailed those they caught, one after one way, and another after another, to the crosses, by way of jest," suggesting that there was no standardized way to crucify a person: whatever worked at the time and place would do. In this lesson we will examine Jesus' crucifixion in detail, not just the physical act of crucifixion, but we will examine crucifixion from the much more important perspective of seeing it through Jesus' eyes.

Veil was torn

The fact that this curtain was destroyed symbolized Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross that removed the barrier between sinful mankind and holy God by becoming the ultimate High Priest and the ultimate sacrifice. Further, the fact that the curtain was torn "*from top to bottom*" symbolized that it was torn by God himself, not by effort of any man.

Dead in Christ came out their graves

Matthew adds:

Mt 27⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

This is a fulfillment of Isaiah

Is 26¹⁹ Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise.

Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;

For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

It is finished

Finished - fully accomplished

Tetelestai - past completed act with present effect

Completely paid our penalty or debt

- Is 43:25 NLT "I—yes, I alone—will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again.

- Col 2:13 13 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. 14 He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

Burial

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

⁵⁰ Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. ⁵¹ He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. ⁵² This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³ Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was* hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. ⁵⁴ That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

⁵⁵ And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

Resurrection

He Is Risen

Luke 24 ¹ Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ ”

⁸ And they remembered His words. ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹ And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths ^[d]lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

Jesus resurrection is the single most important event in human history. In last week's lesson we followed Jesus through his death, burial and resurrection; this week we shall delve deeply into the resurrection, understanding it's full impact on both Jesus . . . and on us.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important event in Scripture. Indeed, in addressing the church in Corinth Paul writes: “*But if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, your faith*” (1 Corinthians 15: 12-14). Without the resurrection of Christ, our faith—no matter how authentic, how deeply felt, or how worthily expressed—is worthless.

The *Gospel according to Mark* gives only a brief account of Jesus' resurrection, but like the gospel itself, the *repercussions* of the resurrection—what it means to Mark's original readers and to us—is of enormous consequence. In Mark, after being told by an angel that Jesus has been raised, rather than telling the other disciples and the world, “[the women] said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid” (16: 8). And with that, the Gospel according to Mark abruptly ends. Mark's narrative erupts from the starting blocks, speeds forward at a lightening pace . . . and then slams into a wall! Mark's gospel simply stops at 16: 8.

What is going on here?

Mark's gospel ends at 16: 8, but a longer ending was appended later as an "epilogue," written in a very different vocabulary and style, sometime between the gospel's original composition and the end of the 2nd century. Although clearly a later addition to the gospel, the verses are mentioned by the Church Fathers: St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and Peter Chrysologus; they are included in St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate; and the Roman Catholic Church accepted the verses as canonical at the 4th session of the Council of Trent (1546) in the document "Decretum*de*Canonicis*Scripturis," ("Decree on the Canon of Scripture").

We will examine Jesus' resurrection from several perspectives:

- 1) the literal, bodily resurrection of Christ, as it is told in our four Gospels;
- 2) the central role that Jesus' resurrection plays in our salvation; and
- 3) the promise of resurrection that Jesus gave us.

Mood

Mk 76:10-14

Lk 24:11

Jn 20:19

Change

Jn 20:20

Lk 24:36-43

Impact

Lk 24:50-53

Better understanding

Rom 5:1-5

- 1st Resurrection - Believers
 - First Battalion: Christ's resurrection is first, "the firstfruits" of all who follow. Jesus Christ paved the way for the resurrection of all who believe in Him.
 - 1Co 15 ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming. ²⁴ Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.
 - Second Battalion: Resurrection of the Jerusalem saints
 - Mt 27 ⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.
 - Is 26 ¹⁹ Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Lent

The practice of observing Lent dates back to the early fourth century, where the term *tessarakoste* ("forty days," similar to *pentekoste*, "fifty days," or Pentecost) is first mentioned in the fifth canon of the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325). The term "lent" is an English word introduced during the Middle Ages to denote the forty days leading up to Easter. "Lent" originally meant "spring" (as in the German *lenz* and the Dutch *lente*), a period when the hours of daylight begin to lengthen.

Forty is a symbolic number of completion in the Bible: the flood lasts forty days and forty nights; Moses stays with God on Mt. Sinai for forty days and forty nights; the Israelite spies spend forty days exploring the Promised Land; the Israelites themselves spend forty years in the wilderness after the Exodus; Elijah spends forty days and forty nights traveling to Mt. Horeb; both David and Solomon reign for forty years, and so on. The forty-day period of Lent reflects the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness being tempted, prior to beginning his public ministry and the traditional forty hours he spent in the tomb, from 3:00 pm on Good Friday until 7:00 am on Easter morning.

In the Western Church Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, a total of forty-six days. The six Sundays of Lent are not counted among the forty days, for each Sunday is considered a “mini-Easter,” celebrating Jesus’ resurrection. That leaves exactly forty days of fasting during the Lenten season.

In the Bible, God only commands his people to fast one time each year, on the Day of Atonement, or *Yom Kippur* (Leviticus 16); it is a complete twenty-four hour fast: no food, no water. Fasting later becomes one of the three devotional pillars of Judaism: prayer, almsgiving and fasting. Jesus speaks of these practices in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6: 1-18).

Fasting continues as a devotional practice in the early church, especially during periods of preparation for rites such as baptism and receiving the Eucharist, or Holy Communion.

The three devotional pillars of Judaism—prayer, almsgiving and fasting—became dominant themes in the observance of Lent in the early church: prayer (discipline that focuses on God); almsgiving (discipline that focuses on others); and fasting (discipline that focuses on one’s self). All three serve as means to move into a closer and more intimate relationship with God.

The practice of observing Lent became universal in Christendom until the Reformation. Today the Roman Catholic Church, along with most Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican and Episcopalian churches continue to observe Lent with varying degrees of devotion, but many Protestant churches do not.

For those who do observe Lent, it is not an oppressive time of prayer and penance, nor a time of silly abstinence (“giving up” desserts for Lent), but a time set aside to reflect on who Christ is, on what he has done for us, on preparing for the joy of his resurrection and on living a life “worthy of the calling” we have received (Ephesians 4: 1).

Purple color – Repentance for sin

[Easter](#)

Evidence for the Resurrection

The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Son of God, and that he was crucified and died for the forgiveness of sin, was resurrected from the dead, and lives today.

Over the centuries, skeptics have developed several objections to the resurrection of Jesus and have proposed several alternative theories about what actually happened to the body of Jesus Christ. Many believe that Jesus' resurrection is too difficult to prove beyond a reasonable doubt. Here is evidence to answer those doubts.

Skeptics' Theories

OBJECTION 1: Jesus Was a Mythological Figure

OBJECTION 2: Jesus Was Just a Man

OBJECTION 3: Jesus' Followers Made It All Up

OBJECTION 4: The Witnesses Were Unreliable

OBJECTION 5: The Resurrection Is Not Important

Answers

Evidence for Jesus Christ comes from many written documents from the first century, including 39 ancient sources in addition to the New Testament and early church leaders. An early statement of faith was probably written 8-20 years after the death of Jesus. The creed states that Jesus "was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) Most critical historians agree that documents take more than 20 years to become corrupted by mythological development.

Evidence supports that Jesus was all he claimed to be. For over three years, Jesus performed many miracles and signs such as controlling the weather, walking on water, giving sight to the blind, healing the lame and diseased, casting out demons, and raising people from the dead. These miracles convinced people of his day that Jesus was all he claimed to be. More than one hundred prophecies found in the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus predicted he would suffer, die, and rise again, months before his crucifixion. C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity* that Jesus could not only be a good man. Because of Jesus' teachings, he could only be the Son of God, a liar, or a madman.

Evidence suggests that such a deception is highly unlikely. People will not knowingly die for a lie. The disciples were not fearless liars who wanted to fool the world. After the crucifixion, the disciples fled in fear for their lives. However, once they saw, touched, and spoke with the risen Lord, their lives were transformed. Furthermore, all of Jesus' followers doubted the resurrection until Jesus physically appeared to them; then they believed.

All four gospels agree that the first eyewitnesses to the proof of Jesus' resurrection were women. On the surface, this does not seem like a major proof for the resurrection. The significance of these eyewitnesses lies in understanding the role of woman in first century Judea. During the time of Jesus, a woman's testimony was considered worthless. In fact, a woman was not allowed to serve as a witness in court. If early believers wanted to fabricate the resurrection, they would have come up with witnesses who had political and religious influence in their community, not women who weren't even considered reliable witnesses. The greatest weapon against these early eyewitnesses would have been to produce the body of Jesus. The silence of those who opposed Christianity while Jesus' followers preached about the empty tomb only confirmed the fact that the tomb really was empty and its vacancy could not be explained otherwise.

The physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is important only if it is true. If Jesus did not rise from the grave, then the unbeliever is no worse or better off than before. However, if Jesus did rise from the dead, then it is reasonable to believe that everything Jesus claimed is true. If what Jesus claimed is true, then he died for the sins of the world and one receives eternal life by believing in Jesus.

Evidence for the Resurrection

Skeptics' Theories

Answers

THEORY 1: The Eyewitnesses Hallucinated

It is very unlikely, if not impossible for more than 500 people to have the same hallucination.

Those who saw Jesus after his death did not expect to see him and were surprised by his being there. Psychiatrists agree that hallucinations require expectation.

A psychiatric study performed in 1975 suggests that the content of the hallucination "reflects the efforts [of the one experiencing the hallucination] to master anxiety to fulfill various wishes and needs."

THEORY 2: Jesus Did Not Die on the Cross

If Jesus did not die, the Roman soldiers would have failed in their duties. Jesus had to survive massive blood loss, torture, and a stab wound in his side, and roll the stone away (which normally would take several men to accomplish).

Witnesses saw that when Jesus was stabbed in the side, water mixed with blood poured out, medically indicating that Jesus had already died.

According to studies of first century tombs, the tomb was likely sealed by a 2,000-pound rolling stone that fit in a sloping track, which would have been impossible for a sole individual to move from the inside of the tomb.

THEORY 3: Jesus' Body Was Stolen

The enemies of Jesus took several steps to prevent the disciples from stealing the body, such as sealing the stone and providing a guard of soldiers to watch the tomb. The soldiers at the tomb would not sleep for fear of death.

During the crucifixion, the disciples were cowards who had abandoned Jesus. One disciple denied that he knew Jesus to a young servant girl. The disciples did not understand his purposes, nor the importance of the resurrection. These men did not have the courage to pass by the guard at the tomb, silently move the extremely large stone, rob the grave, and leave undetected.

THEORY 4: Everyone Went to the Wrong Tomb

The women observed where Jesus' body was laid only a few days earlier.

After hearing the report from the women, Peter and John ran to the tomb without directions from the women. It is unlikely that Peter and John would make the same mistake as the women.

If Jesus' body were still in its correct tomb, his enemies could have produced the body immediately. Even if everyone went to the wrong tomb, Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the tomb, would have corrected them.

On Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus, Peter addressed the crowd and specifically pointed out:

- Everyone there knew that Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God by miracles and signs. (Acts 2:22)
- Everyone there knew that Jesus was crucified, and that his death was by God's set purpose. (Acts 2:23)
- Everyone there knew that David spoke about the resurrection of Jesus nearly 1000 years before. (Acts 2:24-31)
- Everyone there was a witness to the fact that Jesus was raised to life. (Acts 2:32)



Acts (of the Holy Spirit)

Acts (Act) Overview

ACTS

AD 30	The Church Established at “Jerusalem”	The Church Enlarged to “Judea and Samaria”	The Church Expanded to “the Ends of the Earth”	AD 60
	The church is . . .	The gospel is . . .	The witness is . . .	
	born	spreading	extended	
	tested	multiplying	received and rejected	
	purified	changing lives	changing lives	
	strengthened	breaking traditions	unifying Jews and Gentiles	
	CHAPTERS 1–7	CHAPTERS 8–12	CHAPTERS 13–28	
Leaders	The apostle Peter			The apostle Paul
Emphasis	Jewish evangelism	Transition		Gentile evangelism
Time	AD 33 (1:1–2:47)	AD 36 (8:1)	AD 40 (9:32)	AD 46 (13:1) AD 57 (21:18)
Scope	City evangelism	National evangelism		Cross-cultural evangelism
Theme	In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus’s followers carry the good news of Christ to the world.			
Key Verse	1:8			
Christ in Acts	Jesus is the glorified, enthroned Savior, who continues His ministry in the world by means of the Holy Spirit working through His disciples until He returns (1:7–9).			

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The genre of the book of Acts is Narrative History with several Sermons. Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke, was a doctor and Gentile. He wrote this book circa 60-62 A.D. It is Luke's sequel to the Gospel of Luke. It is titled "Acts" to emphasize that this book records the "Acts of the Apostles through the work of the Holy Spirit". The key personalities of Acts are Peter, Paul, John, James, Stephen, Barnabas, Timothy, Lydia, Silas, and Apollos.

Luke wrote the book of Acts (Acts of the Apostles) to record how believers were empowered by the Holy Spirit, worked to spread the Gospel of Christ, and are a model for the future church.

The book of Acts is also the history of the birth, the founding, and the spread of the Church from Jerusalem to Rome. It also records the transition of the Church from being almost exclusively a Jewish institution into becoming a Gentile and an international institution. Consequently, it records the transition of Christianity from a Jewish religion into an international faith. The Gospel of salvation is for all because Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

- Chapters 1-6:7, contains the events that surround Jerusalem and the infancy of the church. The contents of these passages surround the early evangelistic work in Jerusalem. It describes the events of Pentecost, and the amazingly bold sermon presented by the Apostle Peter to all the Jews who gathered for the Feast of Weeks. The result of this sermon was 3000 new believers surrendering to Jesus Christ.
- In chapters 6:8-9:31, there is a shift in the focus of evangelism to other areas. Although the ministry continued in Jerusalem, witnessing the Gospel also included those who were not completely Jewish (Samaritans and Proselytes). In 8:5, Philip traveled down to Samaria, "and began proclaiming Christ to them". Stephen is falsely accused and stoned to

death while he preaches to the religious leaders. As Stephen was dying, he prayed to Jesus Christ, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” (7:59). Stephen’s executioners laid their robes at the feet of a young persecutor named Saul, who would soon become known as “Paul the Apostle”. Saul spent his early days oppressing Christians and imprisoning them, until he had a life changing experience with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus in chapter 9:3.

- From chapters 9:32-12:24, evangelism of the gospel among the gentiles begins. Peter received a revelation that the gospel was also to be shared among the Gentiles. Cornelius, a Roman Commander and some of his men become followers of Christ. Saul (the persecutor) has become a passionate follower of Christ and immediately begins preaching the gospel. We also find that the term “Christians” is first used in Antioch.
- In 12:25-16:5 the gospel is shared geographically to the Gentiles in a different region farther outside Jerusalem. Saul changes his Hebrew name to Paul, a Greek name, to reach the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas begin their first and second missionary journeys to the Gentile world with both success and opposition. In chapter 15, the Jerusalem Council takes place to authorize spreading the gospel message to the Gentile nations.
- From 16:6-19:20, after they are forbidden to enter Asia, Paul receives a vision. He and Silas head farther West to Macedonia to preach the gospel message in the Gentile European regions. Lydia, a woman who sold purple fabric, became the first convert along with her entire household. Paul preached to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill and next sets out on his third missionary journey. “The word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing” (19:20).
- The final chapters from 19:21-28, describe Paul’s travel to Jerusalem where he was arrested, and then his difficult travel to Rome to be put on trial. When he arrives, he is imprisoned in house arrest and the book of Acts abruptly ends without describing the events of his trial before Caesar.

Outline

Continuation for Luke Outline

Prologue: (1:1-2)

E. Transitional introduction (1: 3-8)

F. Jesus ascends into heaven (1:9-11)

IV. Phase #1: The Church in Jerusalem (1:12-8:40)

A. Prelude: the disciples wait (1:12-26)

b. Disciples return from Mt. of Olives to Jerusalem (1:12-13)

c. Disciples replace Judas with Matthias (1:15-26)

B. The Holy Spirit arrives (2:1-13)

C. Peter’s Ministry (2:14-8:40)

a. Peter’s 1st sermon (2:14-40)

b. The community grows (2:41-47)

c. Peter heals a crippled beggar (3:1-10)

d. Peter’s 2nd sermon (3:11-26)

e. Peter and John arrested (4:1-31)

f. The community continues to grow (4:32-4:35)

g. Barnabas sells a field and gives the money to Peter (4:36-37)

h. Ananias and Sapphira sell property, too (5:1-11)

i. The Apostles heal many (5:12-16)

j. All of the Apostles arrested (5:17-42)

k. Division of labor: seven deacons chosen (6:1-7:60)

l. Steven (6:8-7:60)

a) Steven’s teaching (6:8-10)

b) Steven arrested (6:11-15)

c) Steven’s defense (7:1-53)

d) Steven stoned to death (7:54-60)

2. Great persecution begins, led by Saul of Tarsus (8:1-3)
3. Philip (8:4-40)
 - a) Leaves for Samaria (8:4-25)
 - 1) Simon the Sorcerer (8:9-25)
 - b) Encounters the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-39)
 - c) Leaves for Caesarea (8:40)

Interlude: Saul of Tarsus Converted on the Road to Damascus (9:1-31)

- g. Peter visits Lydda and Joppa (9:32-43)
- h. Peter converts Cornelius, the first gentile in the Church (10:1-11:18)
 1. Peter explains himself to the other Apostles in Jerusalem (11:1-18)
- i. The Church spreads as far as Antioch (11:19-30)
 1. Barnabas and Saul relocate to Antioch (11:25-26)
- j. Peter arrested by Herod Agrippa (12:1-24)
 1. Peter breaks jail (12:6-11)
 2. Peter meets the other believers at the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, and then leaves Jerusalem (12:12-19a)
 3. Herod Agrippa dies in the theater at Caesarea (12:19b-24)
- k. John Mark joins Saul and Barnabas at Antioch (12:25)

V. Phase #2: The Church Expands “to the Ends of the Earth” (13:1-28:31)

A. Prelude: Saul and Barnabas Teach at Antioch (13:1)

B. Paul’s Ministry (13:2-3)

- a. The Holy Spirit calls Saul and Barnabas as missionaries (13:2)
- b. The Church at Antioch commissions Saul and Barnabas (13:3)
- c. 1st Missionary Journey (13:4-14:28)**
 1. Saul, Barnabas and John Mark teach in Cyprus (13:4-12)
 2. Saul, Barnabas and John Mark go to Pisidian Antioch, where they teach (13:13-52)
 - a) John Mark leaves them in Perge and returns to Jerusalem (13:13)
 - b) Paul preaches his first recorded sermon (13:16-47)
 3. Saul (now called Paul) and Barnabas travel to Iconium (14:1-7)
 4. Paul and Barnabas visit Lystra and Derbe (14:8-20)
 5. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (14:21-28)

Interlude: The Council at Jerusalem (15:1-35)

d. 2nd Missionary Journey (15:36-18:22)

1. Paul and Barnabas have a falling out over John Mark (15:36-41)
2. Paul and Silas arrive in Derby and then Lystra (16:1-5)
 - a) Timothy joins Paul and Silas (16:1-3)
3. Paul, Silas and Timothy travel through Phrygia and Galatia, Mysia and Troas (16:6-10)
 - a) “Luke” joins the group in Troas (*the pronouns switch to “we”*) (16:10)
4. The group travels to Philippi (16:11-40)
 - a) Paul meets Lydia and her friends (13-15)
 - b) Paul and Silas land in jail, where they convert the jailer (16:23-34)
5. From Philippi they move west to Thessalonica (17:1-9)
6. Paul and company continue on to Berea (17:10-15)
7. Paul travels alone to Athens (17:16-34)
 - a) Paul preaches at the Areopagus, the “faculty club” of Athens (17:22-31)
8. Paul relocates to Corinth (18:1-17)
 - a) He meets Priscilla and Aquila (18:2)
 - b) Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul (18:5)

9. Paul sets sail from Cenchrea to Caesarea and he makes his way back to Antioch (18:18-22)
- e. 3rd Missionary Journey (18:23-21:16)**
 1. Paul travels throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, finally arriving in Ephesus (18:23-19:41)
 - a) Apollos teaches in Ephesus, where he is corrected by Priscilla and Aquila (18:24-28)
 - b) In Ephesus, Paul has “discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” for 2 ½ years (19:9-10)
 - c) Because of Paul’s teaching a riot breaks out in Ephesus (19:23-41)
 2. Paul leaves for Macedonia, stays for three months, and returns to Troas (20:1-12)
 - a) In Troas, Paul raises Eutychus (20:7-12)
 - 3 Paul bids farewell to the elders at Ephesus (20:13-38)
 4. Paul continues on to Jerusalem (21:1-16)
- f. On to Rome (21:17-28:31)**
 1. Paul arrives in Jerusalem (21:17-23:22)
 - a) A problem (21:17-26)
 - b) Paul arrested (21:27-23:22)
 - 1) Paul addresses the crowd (21:37-22:29)
 - 2) Paul addresses the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:11)
 - 3) The plot to kill Paul (23:12-22)
 2. Paul transferred to Caesarea (23:23-26:32)
 - a) Paul transported under armed guard (23:23-35)
 - b) Paul on trial before Felix (24:1-27)
 - c) Paul on trial before Festus (25:1-12)
 - d) Paul on trial before King Agrippa (25:13-26:32)
 3. Paul sails for Rome (27:1-28:10)
 - a) From Caesarea to Crete (27:1-12)
 - b) The storm (27:13-28:10)
 - 1) Caught in the “northeaster” (27:13-26)
 - 2) The shipwreck (27:27-44)
 - c) Ashore on Malta (28:1-10)
 4. Paul arrives in Rome (28:11-31)

Forty days after Jesus’ resurrection, he leaves Jerusalem and ascends back into heaven, leaving his Apostles with the command to be his witnesses “in Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). And that is precisely what happens. Ten days after Jesus’ ascension, the Holy Spirit descends from heaven and the Church begins moving out into the world, starting with Peter’s sermon on Pentecost at the temple mount in Jerusalem and moving with Paul through his first, second and third missionary journeys, each progressing farther and farther into the Roman world, ending with Paul in Rome awaiting trial before Caesar.

As Jesus is the driving force in Luke, the Holy Spirit is the driving force in Acts. The narrative begins with Jesus telling the Apostles to stay in Jerusalem and “wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about” (Acts 1:4). Ten days later, on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit arrives in Jerusalem and the job of being Jesus’ “witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” begins in earnest. As the Apostles wait for the Holy Spirit, the believers number “about a hundred and twenty” (1:15). After Peter’s sermon on the temple mount at Pentecost, “three thousand were added to their number” (2:41). By the time Peter and John appear before the Sanhedrin, “the number of men grew to about five thousand” (4:4), and as the Apostles continue teaching at the temple mount, “more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number” (5:14). As the narrative takes us from Jerusalem to “Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth,” the numbers steadily increase.

Although Acts highlights the work of Peter and Paul in the Church’s growth, the Holy Spirit is the engine driving events. As you read through the narrative, notice the pervasive presence of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost all of the Apostles “were filled with the Holy Spirit” (2:4); Peter tells his listeners on the temple mount to “repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:38);

when Peter addresses the Sanhedrin, he is “filled with the Holy Spirit” (4:8); Peter tells Ananias that he has not lied to him, but “to the Holy Spirit” (5:3); on his second appearance before the Sanhedrin, Peter affirms that “we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit” (5:32); and the seven deacons chosen to assist the community are “known to be full of the Spirit” (6:3). The list goes on throughout the narrative. In a very real sense, The Acts of the Apostles could be more aptly dubbed The Acts of the Holy Spirit.

Roman Empire

As we learned in Lesson #1, the Gospel according to Mark was written sometime during the second half of the 1st century, probably in the mid to late 60s, a time of great turmoil in the Roman Empire. The back-story begins with Julia Agrippina (A.D. 15-59), great granddaughter of Caesar Augustus; adoptive granddaughter of the Emperor Tiberius; sister of the Emperor Caligula; wife of the Emperor Claudius; and mother of the Emperor Nero. Through incestuous marriages, imperial intrigue and duplicitous assassinations, Agrippina engineered her son Nero’s rise to power in A.D. 54. A brutal sociopath, Nero murdered his mother Agrippina in A.D. 59, set fire to Rome in A.D. 64 (blaming the fire on the Christians) and began the first state sponsored persecution of the Church in Rome, A.D. 64-68.

During Nero’s reign the great Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-73 began, a revolt that resulted in the death of 1.2 million Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the Jewish exile from Palestine that lasted nearly 2,000 years, until the founding of the modern state of Israel on May 14, 1948.

This is the lived experience of Christians in Rome, the world from which the Gospel according to Mark emerges; this is the world that is the backdrop for the Olivet Discourse recorded in Mark 13.

Birth of the Church (Acts 1-9)

Acts opens as our author once again steps into the story with his first-person voice saying: “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven . . .” (Acts 1:1). If Luke tells what Jesus “began to do and to teach,” then Acts continues the story. In Luke, Jesus begins his ministry on earth; in Acts, the Holy Spirit continues it.

In Acts 1: 1 Luke writes: “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven . . .” In Acts, Luke tells us *the rest of the story*. Ten days after Jesus’ ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit enters Jerusalem in a very public manner, on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, A.D. 32. As Judaism was born as a covenant community under Law at the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai, so is the Church born as a covenant community under Grace at the coming of the Holy Spirit to Jerusalem.

The Church grows VERY quickly, from about 120 people (Acts 1: 15), to 3,000 (Acts 2: 41), to 5,000 (Acts 4: 4). Built on “the apostles’ teaching,” “the fellowship,” “the breaking of bread,” and “prayer,” the early Church is on fire, fueled by the Holy Spirit. It is a thrilling story!

Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit illuminates the Scriptures to the believer

Jn 16 The Work of the Holy Spirit ⁵“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ ⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴He will

glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

- Although Acts highlights the work of Peter and Paul in the early Church's growth, the Holy Spirit is the engine driving events.
 - In a very real sense, The Acts of the Apostles could be more aptly titled The Acts of the Holy Spirit.
- As we read through the narrative, notice the pervasive presence of the Holy Spirit.
 - At Pentecost all of the Apostles "were filled with the Holy Spirit" (2:4)
 - Peter tells his listeners on the temple mount to "repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (2:38)
 - When Peter addresses the Sanhedrin, he is "filled with the Holy Spirit" (4:8)
 - Peter tells Ananias that he has not lied to him, but "to the Holy Spirit" (5:3)
 - On his second appearance before the Sanhedrin, Peter affirms that "we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit" (5:32)
 - The seven deacons chosen to assist the community are "known to be full of the Spirit" (6:3)
 - The list grows throughout the narrative.
- As we study through the entire Bible, Genesis through Revelation, each person of the Trinity plays a specific role in our story:
 - God the Father is the main character in the Hebrew Scriptures, Genesis through Malachi
 - Genesis introduces God the Father:
Ge 1 ¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ... 2 ⁷ And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.
 - God the Son is the main character in the Gospels, Matthew through John
 - Luke introduces God the Son:
Lk 1 ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*"
 - God the Holy Spirit is the main character in Acts through Revelation
 - Acts introduces God the Holy Spirit:
Act 2 ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Pentecost (Acts 2)

- Pentecost – Holy Spirit is given to the church
- Before Jesus ascended to Heaven, He promised a helper, the Holy Spirit
 - Act 1 ⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."
- John the Baptist prophesied of the first Pentecost when Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire
 - Mt 3 ¹¹ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- Jesus confirmed this prophecy with the promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples
 - Jn 14 ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

- Jesus showed Himself to these men after His death on the cross and His resurrection, giving convincing proofs that He was alive. Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Father's gift of the Holy Spirit, from whom they would receive power to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth
 - Act 1 ⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
- After Jesus' ascension to heaven, the men returned to Jerusalem and joined together in prayer in an upper room. On the Day of Pentecost, just as promised, the sound of a violent wind filled the house and tongues of fire came to rest on each of them and all were filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - Act 2 ¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
 - In 20 ¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." ²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained."
- They were given the power of communication, which Peter used to begin the ministry for which Jesus had prepared him. After the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples did not stay in the room basking in God's glory but burst out to tell the world. This was the beginning of the church as we know it.
 - Mt 28 ¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.
- The celebration of Pentecost Sunday reminds us:
 - Of the reality that we all have the unifying Spirit that was poured out upon the first-century church in Acts
 - That we are co-heirs with Christ – to suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him
 - That the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7)
 - 1Co 12 ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: ⁸ for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by ^[1]the same Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.
 - That we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13)
 - 1Co 12 ¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.
 - That the Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead lives inside believers (Romans 8:9-11).
 - Ro 8 ⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹⁰ And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised

Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

- This gift of the Holy Spirit that was promised and given to all believers on the first Pentecost is promised for you and your children and for all who are far off whom the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:39).
 - Act 2 ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Trinity revealed

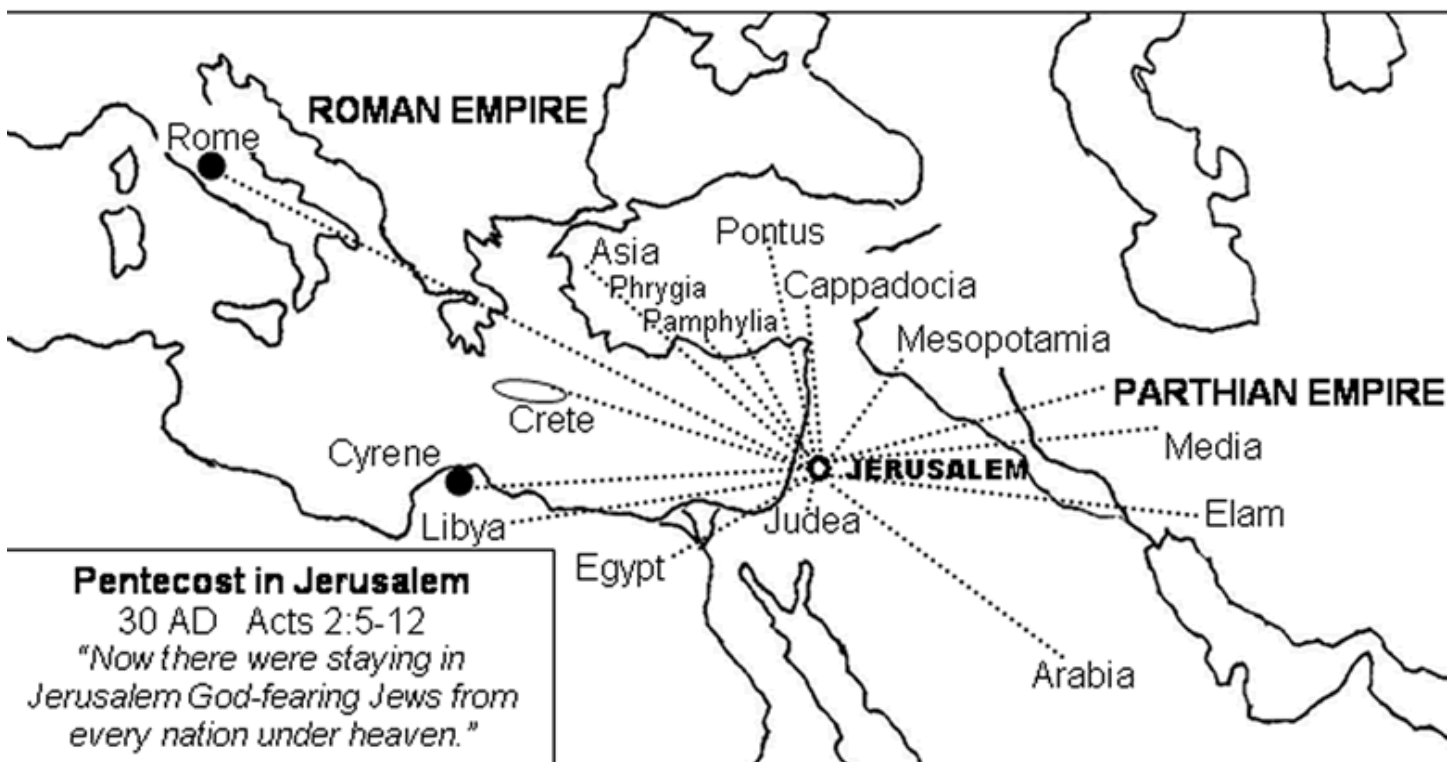
- John 14 ¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. ⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ 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.”
 - Counselor – Paracletos – Alongside
 - Counselor, helper, advocate, friend
 - Another – Jesus was also the counselor
 - The Holy Spirit will be with you – he is another like me
 - Holy Spirit – Spirit of Jesus, Spirit of God
 - These verses refer to all 3 of the trinity – father, son and holy spirit
 - Jn 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.
 - Jn 15:26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

Speaking in Tongues

Acts 2 ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?” ⁸ And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” ¹² So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?”

¹³ Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

Paul addresses “speaking in tongues” in 1 Corinthians 14, where he insists that if a person speaks in tongues, someone should interpret what he or she is saying, since such utterance is unintelligible speech. That is not what is happening here, for those who hear the Apostles are amazed because they understand.



Jesus and the Apostles’ native language was Aramaic, but when the Apostles “speak in tongues” others hear them in their own native language (Greek, Latin, Egyptian, and so on). Amazing!

Peter's Pentecost Sermon

- Peter stands up and speaks to the crowd, a crowd now numbering in the thousands.
 - This is the man who only 50 days earlier was afraid of a servant girl in the courtyard of the high priest!
- Peter's "sermon" at Pentecost consists of 5 parts:
 1. Announcement that the age of fulfillment has arrived (14-21)

¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. ¹⁵ For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Joel 2 – God's Spirit Poured Out
²⁸ "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
²⁹ And also on *My* menservants and on *My* maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
³⁰ "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.
³² And it shall come to pass *That* whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.
 2. The account of Jesus' death and resurrection (22-28)

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— ²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning Him:

Psalm 16 ⁸ I have set the LORD always before me; Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.
⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.
¹⁰ For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
¹¹ You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.
 3. The account of Jesus' exaltation (29-36)

²⁹ "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹ he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.
³⁴ "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

Psalm 110 ¹ The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 4. A dramatic call to action (37-39)

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy

Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

5. The result (40-41)

⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

- 3000

- If 3,000 were added to their number after Peter’s “Pentecost sermon,” there must have been considerably more than 3,000 who heard him speak! But I suspect there is more to it than that.
- After God raises up Moses to lead his people out of Egypt; after God slams Egypt with ten plagues; after God parts the Red Sea and saves his people; after God reaffirms his covenant with his people; and after God gives his two great gifts, the Law and the Tabernacle, the Israelites turn away from God and Moses to worship a golden calf!
- Exodus 32 marks the birth of Israel as a covenant community under Law, and 3,000 people die
 - While Moses was with the Lord, the people panicked and made a golden calf
 - Ex 32 ²⁵ Now when Moses saw that the people *were* unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, *to their* shame among their enemies), ²⁶ then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, “Whoever *is* on the LORD’s side—*come* to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. ²⁷ And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’ ” ²⁸ So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about **three thousand men of the people fell that day**.
- Acts 2 marks the birth of the Church as a covenant community under Grace, and 3,000 are saved!
 - Act 2 ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

- A description of what was happening in Jerusalem after Pentecost and a prescription of how life is to be lived under the new covenant of Grace

- Act 2 ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Acts 5

- Blessings of Jesus
 - Acts 5:12-16 NKJV Continuing Power in the Church
12 And through the hands of the apostles **many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord** in Solomon's Porch. 13 Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. 14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.
 - Acts 5:12 – The blessings/power of Jesus are always found through unity
- No Jesus allowed
 - People are afraid to share the good news
 - The government officials told the apostles not to preach Jesus
Acts 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, 18 and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. 19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." ... 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." 33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. . . . 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.
- Power of Jesus
 - There is great power when there is obedience
 - The enemy can do nothing unless Jesus allows it
 - Acts 5:19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."
 - Acts 5:39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."
- 4 Truths
 - Satan hates God
 - Satan uses people to accomplish his plans, but he's limited
 - The power of Jesus is much greater than Satan and those he influences, and he knows it
 - God also chooses people to keep sharing His good news!

Paul's conversion and missionary journeys (Acts 9-31)

Saul of Tarsus was one of the most brilliant young men of his generation. He was being groomed for leadership in the Jewish community, and he was destined for greatness. With the birth of the Church and its rapid growth, Saul saw the threat posed by this emerging, radical sect of Judaism, and he took it upon himself to lead a fierce persecution against it.

Confronted by the risen and glorified Christ on the Road to Damascus, Saul experiences a stunning conversion: from Saul of Tarsus, the great persecutor of the Church, he becomes St. Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles. With his conversion, Paul sets out to evangelize all of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey), a good chunk of Europe, and he 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament are attributed to him. No slouch, our Paul!

We continue our story of Paul as he begins his 2nd missionary journey, A.D. 50 – 52, leaving Syrian Antioch and making his way across Asia Minor, into Macedonia and finally arriving in Greece, where he spends 18 months at Corinth. Then it's on to his third missionary journey to Ephesus, A.D. 54 – 57, and finally he is caught in a thicket of legal problems that take him to Rome and an audience before Caesar himself. And what adventures he has along the way! Paul is beaten up, thrown in jail and run out of town on several occasions; he is shipwrecked on the island of Malta; he is bitten by a poisonous snake. And these are only a few of the highlights!

Damascus – Paul heads north to stop the message of the Gospel

He doesn't head south – that's the Negev desert

The 2 major trade routes merge at Damascus\

Ananias – Hebrew name Hananiah – means grace

The 1st thing that Paul saw when he opened his eyes was the grace of God.

Who was Paul

- Jew (Acts 22:3)
 - Hebrew, Israelite, Abraham's descendant (2Co 11:22)
- Pharisee (Acts 23:6)
- Educated (Acts 22:3)
 - Studied under Galatius (Acts 5) – Galatius was not only brilliant, but had common sense as well
 - Able to use the Hebrew roots (Old Testament) to teach the New Testament
- Roman citizen – Born in Tarsus (Acts 22:3)
- Zealous for God (Acts 22:3)
- Persecuted the church (Ph 3:4-6)
- From the tribe of Benjamin (Ph 3:4-6)
- Hebrew of Hebrews (Ph 3:4-6) – Colloquial expression
 - Unusual for a Roman citizen
- Compared to Moses
 - Paul was born in Asia Minor but grew up in Jerusalem
 - Moses was born a Hebrew but grew up in Pharaoh's household

Paul's Journeys

AD 46 Paul and Barnabas decide to make their 1st missionary journey from their home town in Syrian Antioch



1st Missionary Journey (Acts 13:4–14:26) – (Circa 46–47)

Barnabas and Paul first visited Barnabas's home region of Cyprus before sailing to the southern region of Asia Minor. When they reached Perga in Pamphylia, John Mark left the group and returned to Jerusalem. Making their way to Antioch (in Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, Paul and Barnabas were driven out of each city by jealous Jewish religious leaders. Later they returned by the same route, strengthening the new churches as they went. From Attalia they set sail for their home in Antioch of Syria.

AD 46-48

Paul, Barnabas, and Mark



Syrian Antioch → Cyprus → Attalia → Perga → Pisidian Antioch → Iconium → Lystra → Derbe → Turned around

City	Province/Region	Reference
Antioch	Syria	13:1–3
Seleucia	Syria	13:4
Salamis	Cyprus	13:5
Paphos	Cyprus	13:6–12
Perga	Lycia (<i>region of Pamphylia</i>)	13:13
Antioch	Galatia (<i>region of Pisidia</i>)	13:14–52
Iconium	Galatia	14:1–6
Lystra	Galatia (<i>region of Lycaonia</i>)	14:6, 8–19
Derbe	Galatia (<i>region of Lycaonia</i>)	14:6, 20–21
Lystra	Galatia (<i>region of Lycaonia</i>)	14:21–23
Iconium	Galatia	14:21–23
Antioch	Galatia (<i>region of Pisidia</i>)	14:24
Perga	Lycia (<i>region of Pamphylia</i>)	14:24–25
Attalia	Lycia	14:25
Antioch	Syria	14:26–28

- 2 Antiochs – Syrian Antioch and Pisidian Antioch – Towns were named after Antiochus Epiphanes IV

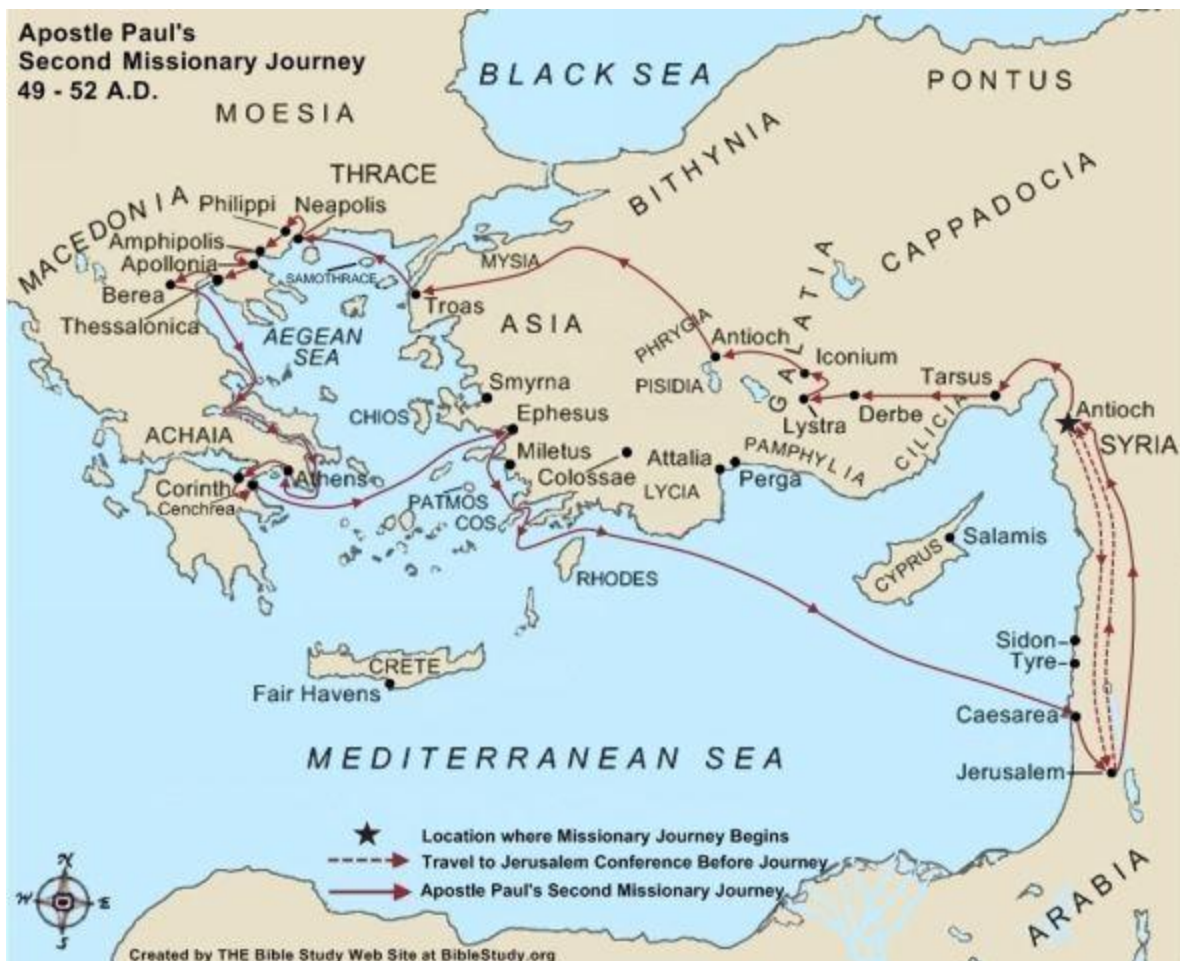
- Learn about Antiochus Epiphanes IV in 1st and 2nd Maccabees and Daniel
- In Daniel 11:21-35, the prophet reveals the rise and rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king who reigned from 175-164 B.C. Daniel's prediction involves the rise of Antiochus to power, the conflicts of Antiochus with Egypt (i.e., the king of the South), and his hostilities towards Israel.
- Attalia – Southern coast of Asia Minor (Turkey of today)
- Perga – Mark deserts them
-

2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36–18:22) – (Circa 49–51)

Paul and Silas revisited the places in Asia Minor where Paul had preached on his first journey (cf. map), while Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Paul and Silas visited Derbe, Lystra, and Antioch in Pisidia. From there Paul and Silas traveled to Troas, where Paul received a vision of a man from Macedonia calling to them. Crossing into Europe, they passed through several towns along the Egnatian Way and traveled to the cities of Athens and Corinth in southern Greece. Then, sailing to Ephesus and Caesarea, they visited the church in Jerusalem before returning to Antioch of Syria.

AD 50, Paul and Barnabas decide to revisit the churches that they had established on the 1st missionary journey

- Barnabas wants to take Mark again, but Paul says 'no way', and they go their separate ways
- Barnabas and Mark head for Cyprus, presumably retracing the 1st missionary journey
 - We never hear from Barnabas again
- Paul and Silas head north (in the opposite direction)



Syrian Antioch → Tarsus → Derbe → Lystra → Iconium → Pisidian Antioch → Galatia →

Naepolis → Philippi → Thessalonica → Berea → Athens → →

City	Province/Region	Reference
Antioch	Syria	15:35
	Cilicia	15:41
Derbe	Galatia (<i>region of Lycaonia</i>)	16:1
Lystra	Galatia (<i>region of Lycaonia</i>)	16:1–5
	Asia (<i>region of Phrygia</i>)	16:6
	Galatia	16:6
Troas	Asia (<i>region of Mysia</i>)	16:7–10
Samothrace	Thrace	16:11
Neapolis	Macedonia	16:11
Philippi	Macedonia	16:12–40
Amphipolis	Macedonia	17:1
Apollonia	Macedonia	17:1
Thessalonica	Macedonia	17:1–9
Berea	Macedonia	17:10–14
Athens	Achaia	17:15–32
Corinth	Achaia	18:1–17
Cenchreae	Achaia	18:18
Ephesus	Asia	18:19–21
Caesarea	Palestine	18:22
Jerusalem?	Palestine	18:22
Antioch	Syria	18:22

- Tarsus – Paul’s hometown
- Lystra – Timothy joins the group
- Pisidian Antioch
 - Something happens in Pisidian Antioch (Paul becomes ill?)
 - Instead of heading south, they head north over the big snowy mountains in the middle of Asia Minor into the territory of Galatia (to find medical care?)
 - From Galatia, they continue to move west to the west coast of Asia Minor to Troas (medical care in Galatia was not available or not adequate)
- Troas – Dr. Luke joins the group
 - Presumably, this is where Paul got the medical care that he needed, because we don’t hear anything more about his medical problem after this point
 - Luke joins the group in AD 50 and spends the next 18 years with Paul (until he is martyred in Rome)
 - Luke is Paul’s friend, travelling companion, personal physician, and biographer
- Naepolis – They cross the Aegean Sea to Macedonia (northern Greece of today)
- Philippi – Meet Lydia
- Thessalonica – Paul spends 3 weeks there and the church is formed in the flames of persecution
 - Within 3 weeks, people are dying in the name of Jesus
 - Paul has to get out of town quickly
- Berea – Little town nestled up against a mountainside
 - Things are really bad, and Silas and Timothy get Paul out of town quickly in the middle of the night
 - They take him (and Luke) to the coast and send him to Athens
 - Timothy and Silas stay in Berea and finish up the work in a very dangerous environment
- Athens

- One of the most glorious cities of its day
- Paul gives a short, but magnificent talk at the Areopagus – Paul at his best
 - Paul quotes from memory a 6th century BC Creten poet
- Had very little success in Athens and moves on
- Corinth
 - Paul continues 48 miles west to Cornith
 - Arrived in Corinth around mid AD50

3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 18:22–21:17) – (Circa 52–57)

Paul's third missionary journey traversed much the same ground as his second. Passing through Galatia and Phrygia, he proceeded directly to the great port city of Ephesus. After three years of preaching and teaching there, Paul traveled again through Macedonia and Achaia, strengthening the believers, and then finished with a visit to Jerusalem.



City/Island	Province/Region	Reference
Antioch	Syria	18:22
	Galatia	18:23
	Asia (<i>region of Phrygia</i>)	18:23
Ephesus	Asia	19:1–40
	Macedonia	20:1–2
Corinth?	Achaia	20:2–3
	Macedonia	20:3
Philippi	Macedonia	20:6
Troas	Asia	20:6–12
Assos	Asia	20:13–14
Mitylene	Asia	20:14
Chios/Samos	Asia	20:15
Miletus	Asia	20:15–38
Cos	Asia	21:1
Rhodes	Rhodes	21:1
Patara	Lycia	21:1
Tyre	Syria	21:3–6
Ptolemais	Syria	21:7
Caesarea	Palestine	21:8–14
Jerusalem	Palestine	21:15–17

Paul's Epistles/Letters

Epistle – Written to a group of people and meant to be read publicly to everyone (Romans, Corinthians, etc)

Letter – Written to an individual (Timothy, Titus, etc)

Themes – Ground everything that you say and do in scripture

Chronological order of writing:

56 A.D. 1st and 2nd Corinthians

56-57 A.D. Romans – Most important of the epistles

Paul often inverts Jesus Christ as Christ Jesus

- Christ is a title that means the ‘anointed one’ – to raise status for use by God
- Anoint – Take an ordinary thing and elevate its status
 - Hebrew word is meshiahh – Root of the word Messiah, meaning ‘the anointed one’
 - When you anoint someone or something, you set it apart for use by God
- You can anoint people (ex. Saul & David) or things (All the items in the holy place of the Tabernacle)
- This is a more formal address than the other Apostles – like saluting and saying ‘sir’
 - Suggests that he had a different relationship with Christ, which he did

Romans (Ro)

Romans Overview

Although not the first of Paul's epistles, his *Epistle to the Church in Rome* (or simply, *Romans*) takes the place of first importance. Written from Ephesus in A.D. 57, Paul crafts a formal argument in Romans, employing the structure of a "scholastic diatribe," stating and defending his theses that we are "saved by grace through faith." Romans is a brilliant work, and it is foundational for understanding the all that Paul has written.

ROMANS

	THE GOSPEL			
	Saving the Sinner	Concerning Israel	Concerning Christian Conduct	
Introduction—Personal (1:1–17)	Depravity of humanity	Divine sovereignty and human will	Social	
	Grace of God	Past, present, and future of the nation	Civil	
	Justification by faith		Personal	
	Sanctification through the Spirit			
	Security of the saint			
	CHAPTERS 1:18–8:39	CHAPTERS 9–11	CHAPTERS 12:1–15:13	
Emphasis	Doctrinal	National	Practical	
Response	Faith	Hope	Love	
Doctrine of God	Wrath	Righteousness	Glory	Grace
Doctrine of Humanity	Fallen	Dead	Saved	Struggling Freed
Doctrine of Sin	Exposed	Conquered	Explained	Forgiven
Scope	Dead in sin	Dead to sin	Peace with God	Love for others
Theme	God's righteousness is given to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.			
Key Verses	1:16–17			
Christ in Romans	Jesus is the focus of the gospel and the means of salvation by God's grace apart from works (1:1–4, 16–17).			

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The book of Romans is a Pauline Epistle (letter from Paul). The Apostle Paul wrote it roughly about 56-57 A.D. The key personalities in the book of Romans are the Apostle Paul, and Phoebe who delivered this letter. Paul wrote the letter to the believers in Rome, hence the name "Romans". He wrote it to give them a concrete theological foundation on which to construct their faith and to live for and serve God effectively.

The book of Romans reveals the answers to important questions and supplies information on many topics, such as salvation, the sovereignty of God, judgment, spiritual growth, and the righteousness of God. Many scholars also describe it as The Gospel and the Righteousness of God, which can be received only by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

The focus of the "righteousness of God" is foundational throughout the book of Romans. In fact, it is threaded through every section of the basic outline of this epistle. Paul reiterates this so that the reader may realize that salvation cannot be attained through man's good deeds but only through faith in God's righteousness: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes... For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith" (1:16-17). You cannot repair your relationship with God through your good deeds; this is only accomplished through faith in the perfect and finished work of Jesus Christ.

- In chapters 1-8, Paul explains the fundamentals and foundations of the Christian faith. This is the Gospel Message, which all believers are commanded to share with the entire world. Some of the most popular and precious memorization passages about Salvation can be found in the first several chapters of Romans, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:23). Paul teaches about the sinful nature of all men in the eyes of God, justification by faith in Jesus Christ, freedom from sin, and victory in Christ.
 - Chapter 1 – Paul addresses the unrighteous heathen – Creation around them condemns the unrighteous
 - Ch 2 – Paul deals with the self-righteous hypocrite – Conscience within them condemns the self-righteous
 - Ch 3 – Paul speaks to the super-righteous Hebrew – The commandments given to them condemn the super-righteous
- Chapters 9-11, Paul explains God’s sovereignty over salvation. He also spells out how an individual may come into a right relationship with God: “if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” (10:13). Place your faith and trust only in what Jesus Christ has already done on the cross and make Him the Master of your life and trust He raised Himself from the grave conquering death. His promise is “You will be saved”.
- In chapters 12-16, Paul gives instructions for all Christians about how to live a holy lifestyle. In the beginning of chapter 12 he writes, “Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice”, and “Do not be conformed to this world” (vss. 1-2). Much of the errors and trials that Paul dealt with in his “Epistles”, were because the believers had conformed their lives to the world and not to God.

This epistle lays the foundation for all the other epistles

- This book is a lynchpin for the New Testament
- It connects everything, it fills in all the blanks, it connects all the dots
- To understand this epistle is to understand the whole of the scripture

Rome

- Who started the church in Rome
 - Paul didn’t arrive in Rome until AD 60
 - Peter arrives in Rome sometime between 62-68 AD
 - The Holy Spirit
 - Acts 2: 1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ... [including] visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism);
 - On the day of Pentecost AD32, in Jerusalem, there were people visiting from Rome
- Paul knows Priscilla and Aquila from their time working together in Corinth
 - The church in Rome meets at the house of Priscilla and Aquila

Structure of Romans

Formal argument in the form of a scholastic diatribe

- I. Introduction (Ro 1:1-15)
- II. Thesis (Ro 1:16-17)
- III. Demonstration by Antithesis (Ro 1:18-3:20)
- IV. Thesis Restated (Ro 3:30-31)
- V. Demonstration of the Thesis by Example (Ro 4:1-25)

- VI. Exposition of the Thesis (Ro 5:1-21)
- VII. Objections to the Thesis (Ro 6:1-11:36)
- VIII. Practical Implications of the Thesis (Ro 12:1-15:13)
- IX. Conclusion (Ro 15:14-16:27)

I. Introduction (Ro 1:1-15)

Paul has never been to Rome – he is introducing himself to these people for the first time

- In a scroll, you have to introduce yourself first so the people know who the letter is from
 - You can't scroll down to the bottom to see – it needs to be at the top

Why Romans can change your life (Ro 1:1-7)

The reason why Romans needs to be both studied and taught, is the same reason why the Holy Spirit had Paul write it in the first place. "It's because of the profound impact this book has had on the lives of millions of people over the last two thousand years." Many a saint of old came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ because of this Epistle, and countless more will be saved yet future.

- Martin Luther, of the Book of Romans, said; "It is the chief part of the New Testament and the perfect gospel . . . the absolute epitome of the gospel."
- G. Campbell Morgan said that it was; "The most pessimistic page of literature upon which your eyes ever rested . . . the most optimistic poem to which your ears ever listened."
- Charles Spurgeon said: "The Epistle of Romans is one of the greatest of Paul's writings, and is rather a treatise than a letter."
- Another said: "When any one understands this Epistle, he has a passage opened to him to the understanding of the whole of scripture."

It's from somebody not just anybody (Verse 1)

Ro 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God

- Paul introduces himself first as a slave then an apostle because as a slave he's somebody sent out to reach everybody with the gospel.
- In other words, not just anybody can change my life. It will come from that somebody who's surrendered to God, and sent out by God.

Doúlos – Slave / Servant (Ro 1:1)

Ro 1:9 God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son,

1st Paul is a servant/slave, 2nd he is an apostle

- Doúlos – Someone who is utterly, totally, completely, with every fiber of their being, devoted to another person
 - doúlos (a masculine noun of uncertain derivation) – Someone who belongs to another; a bond-slave, without any ownership rights of their own
- A bond-slave became a slave of their own volition – it is by their own choice because of their love of their master
 - Doesn't carry the pejorative sense of a slave that we have in English
 - Ex 21:2 "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything. 3 If he comes alone, he is to go free alone; but if he has a wife when he comes, she is to go with him. 4 If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall belong to her master, and only the man shall go free. 5 "But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' 6 then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.
 - This is who Paul is to Christ – and he introduces himself first as a slave
- To be a slave means that you have no rights of your own

- Paul is not his own, he was bought at a high price – with the blood of Christ – He is owned by Christ
 - First and foremost, Paul is a bond slave – he is both set apart to and sent out for the gospel of God
- Ironically, *doúlos* ("bond-slave") is used with the highest dignity in the NT
 - Namely, of believers who willingly live under Christ's authority as His devoted followers.
 - Before God can set us apart, and send us out to further the Gospel, we must first, because of our love for Him, become a slave for life.
- Why does Paul identify himself 1st as a bond slave before identifying himself as an apostle
 - One would think that being an apostle would carry more weight than being a slave. However, that is not how it works in God's economy.
 - Paul knew that the source of greatness came from being a bond slave, not from being an apostle
 - One must first become a bond slave of his own volition before he can be sent out for the great commission
 - You can't be an apostle unless you first become a bond slave

Called

- Word order is not correct – should be Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, a called apostle
 - He's not called to be an Apostle, he's a called Apostle
 - A call implies a response
 - Paul had no intention of being an apostle – quite the opposite, he was a persecutor of the church
- Called appears over and over in the introduction
 - Paul was called
 - 1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God
 - Gentiles were called
 - 5 ... we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles
 - You, Gentiles, are called to belong to Jesus Christ
 - 6 And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ
 - Most of the church in Rome were Gentiles
 - Called to be saints
 - 7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints

Set apart

- Paul has been called and set apart to the gospel – the good news of the person and work of Christ, who He is and what He did
- The gospel will be the focus of all of his thought, all of his energy, all of the rest of his life

It's good news, not just good advice (Ro 1:2)

Rom 1:2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures

- Paul identifies his calling and purpose as the good news
 - When Paul went to a new town, he went into the Synagogue and preached the good news of the gospel from the OT, namely from the prophets
 - It was preached by the prophets, but the good news is here now – we are free now!
- Good advice can't change my life, it's the Good News that can.
 - It's the truth of the Good News of Salvation in Christ that sets me free.

Why is it good news? We are free now!

The good news of the gospel – why is it good news? We are free now!

- Before we accepted Christ, we were not free
- In order for you to be free, you have to be a slave
 - In order to preach the good news, the gospel, you have to become a slave
 - You have to be a slave to preach the good news which sets you free

- Jon Courson in his commentary said it this way; "The Greek word translated "gospel" is ...[where] we get our word 'evangelist.' In the Septuagint, this was the word used when the people of Israel were released from their Babylonian captivity. It meant, 'You can go home. You're free. Good news!' Truly, the gospel is Good News—not just good advice. A lot of preachers, authors, and speakers try to make Christianity a bunch of good advice. Most best-selling Christian books today are full of good advice about child-rearing, financial planning, or marriage counseling. ...Paul wasn't separated unto the good advice of Christian living. He was separated to the Good News of God."

Not just good advice – this changes your life

- Good advice would advise that you be free – it is just information
- The gospel (good news) says that you are already free if you accept the person and work of Christ
- The gospel has powerful ramifications

It's a Person, not just a principle (Ro 1:3-4)

Principles are just that, principles. They may help me to live my life, but it's only the Person of Jesus Christ Who can change my life.

- 25 years ago on that road to Damascus Paul met a Person, not a principle or principle.
 - As one so aptly worded it; "Paul had an encounter, not with a theological principle or a philosophical ideal, but with the risen Lord."

Ro 1:3 as to his human nature was a descendant of David

Ro 1:4 who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead

- The Holy Spirit gives the Paul the perfect words to introduce the perfect person of Jesus Christ, the son of God
 - From David He's the Son of Man
 - By his resurrection the Son of God.
- The "Person" of Jesus Christ was fully man, as a descendant of David, in his birth, and fully God in the resurrection after His death.
 - Charles Spurgeon said "As to His flesh, He was of the seed of David, but His higher nature was by His resurrection manifested most powerfully to be divine. Had He not risen He could not have been God; His resurrection by His own power has made His Godhead plain."

Human nature of Christ (Ro 1:3)

Ro 1:3 as to his human nature was a descendant of David

- Human nature – Very important for him to be a substitution for us – our kinsman redeemer
- Davidic Covenant
 - 1Ch 17:10 ... 'I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: 11 When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. 14 I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.'
 - Clearly not Solomon
 - His policies plant the seeds of its destruction – Taxation, slavery
 - His son, Rehoboam, triggers a civil war and the nation is divided
 - Must be referring to the Messiah
 - 1Ch 17 – The Messiah will be the son of David
 - Mt 1:1 Genealogy of Jesus
 - Matthew's genealogy accomplishes 4 things:
 - It places Jesus as a direct descendent of Abraham and David, positioning him to fulfill both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.

- It establishes Jesus' legal claim to the throne of Israel by positioning him as a direct descendent of David, through the line of the kings.
- It links the entire linear narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures to the birth of Jesus, making the birth of Jesus the culminating event in Jewish history.
- It initiates the final step in God's plan of redemption, the introduction of Jesus into the world as Redeemer, the one who will "save his people from their sins" (1:21).
- Abraham → David (Solomon) → Joseph (Mt 1:1)
 - Matthew is writing to the Jews, who want to know how Jesus is related to Abraham (the father of the Jews)
 - In one deft movement Matthew not only links the entire linear narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures to the birth of Jesus, but he also makes the birth of Jesus the culminating event in Jewish history.

Divine nature of Christ (Ro 1:4)

Ro 1:4 who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead

- Divine nature – the son of God
- Demonstrated by his resurrection
 - Many people were brought back from the dead – resuscitated, not resurrected
 - Resurrection different – Same DNA, different look
 - Acorn vs oak tree
 - 1Co 15: The Resurrection Body

35 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. 41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

- Charles Spurgeon "As to His flesh, He was of the seed of David, but His higher nature was by His resurrection manifested most powerfully to be divine. Had He not risen He could not have been God; His resurrection by His own power has made His Godhead plain."

It's a reality not just a theology (Ro 1:5)

Ro 1:5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

- Paul is making a very powerful distinction between the reality of Christianity, and the morality of a system of teaching theoretically.
 - He does this by saying it's through Jesus Christ that we receive the grace to, and are called to, the obedience that comes from faith.

Grace

- Why do we receive grace? For His sake
 - When the Lord protected Jerusalem and Hezekiah from Assyria, he said:
2Ki 19:34 I will defend this city and save it, *for my sake* and for the sake of David my servant."
- We receive grace for Him and by Him
 - Grace comes via Jesus – the conduit through which the grace passed
- Grace is what makes Christianity real and not just another theory.
 - The centrality of grace is the reality of the Good News.
 - Grace is received through Jesus Christ
 - Gayle Erwin once said; "Grace by its very nature is indefinable."
 - Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.
- The entirety of the book of Romans is about grace
 - One has very poignantly outlined the book of Romans, and in so doing revealed how beautifully God's Grace is just all over the place.
 - Ch. 1-4: Coming under grace
 - Ch. 5-8: Living under grace
 - Ch. 9-11: The overflow of grace
 - Ch. 12-16: The church changed by grace
- How does grace change my Christian life and make it real.
 - With grace in its proper place, I can now understand how it's possible for a life of obedience to become a reality and not just a theory.
 - With grace at home-base, my obedience to God is now based on what I don't deserve, and not on what my disobedience does deserve.
 - Grace – Here's how grace works; "it's infinitely more difficult to sin against God, when I have been the undeserving recipient of grace from God."
 - Works – Here's how "works," works; "it's infinitely more difficult living in obedience to God, when I'm the recipient of what I deserve from God."
 - With "works" when I mess up, I deserve the hammer to come down, conversely with "grace" when I mess up, more grace comes down.
 - Romans 5:20 NKJV Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,
 - This isn't theory, it's reality. God's grace doesn't just change me, it ruins me, even spoils me, making it difficult for me to hurt God's heart.

Apostleship

We received apostleship

- We have been sent to call people from among the Gentiles
- Great Commission – Mt 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

It's a relationship not just a religion (Ro 1:6)

Ro 1:6 And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

He specifically personalizes it by telling them that it is they who are also among those called to belong to Jesus Christ.

- In other words, this is a relationship not a religion.
 - This is you belonging to Him because of what He has already done for you.
 - Religion is what man does for God
 - Christianity is a relationship because of what God has already done for man
 - Grace-based relationship with Jesus Christ
 - Doesn't depend upon what I do or don't do
 - It's based on what He did do.
 - It changes your life when you no longer have to earn God's blessing
 - This is portrayed in the book of Numbers where Balaam and Balak who couldn't curse the Israelites.
 - Sadly, when the Israelites disobeyed God and committed sexual sin against God, they brought the curse of God upon themselves.
- When I'm saved by the grace of God, because of the love from God, I will be more likely to be obedient to God.
 - John 14:21 NIV Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

It's for Gentiles, not just Jews (Ro 1:7)

Ro 1:7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Saints

You're either a saint or you ain't

- saint – small 's' – One who is set apart to God
 - Anyone called out of the world and into the family of God and responds 'yes'
 - Not a perfect, pious person
- Saint – big 'S' – Heroic faith by a saint, and the church of God recognizes that heroism with a capital 'S'

Grace and Peace to you

Standard introduction from Paul in his letters/epistles

- Syntax is wrong – should say 'Grace to you and peace'
 - Grace and peace indicates equal importance
 - Grace to you and peace – You cannot have peace without first having grace
- Notice it's grace and peace and not peace and grace.
 - Why? You can't know the peace of God unless you first know the grace of God.
- It's important to understand that Paul is greeting them in the Greek way and not just the Jewish way.
 - To the Jews, it's always shalom.
 - To the Greeks it's "Charis" which means grace.
 - Why does Paul combine the Gentile and Jewish greeting?
 - "all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints," are both Jews and Gentiles alike.
 - Think about the enormity of this; if the Gospel was just to the Jews, and not the Gentiles, then it really wouldn't be the "Good News." What makes the Good News, the Good News is that it's to all, Jew and Gentile alike. We are all loved by God and called to be saints

How to love one another (Ro 1:8-15)

How can someone identify a spiritually mature and godly believer? By their love one for another

- John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
- In the text of Romans chapter one, it is abundantly clear that the Apostle Paul truly loved these people.
 - There are many who see the Apostle Paul as a hard driving evangelist with unflinching fearlessness.
 - While that may have certainly been who and how Paul was, I believe that he was also a very loving man, in that he truly loved people.
 - With that as the backdrop, he becomes an example to us, in how he, by the Holy Spirit, teaches us what loving one another looks like

"The churches of the land are sprinkled all over with bald-headed old sinners whose hair has been worn off by the constant friction of countless sermons that have been aimed at them and glanced off and hit the man in the pew behind." (Henry Ward Beecher 1813-1887)

This should be a template of sorts that we can place over our Christian lives to see how our lives really fit.

- In verses 1-7, we saw how the Book of Romans could change our lives
- In verses 8-15 can show us the love in our lives.

Paul is about to rise from the pages of scripture and show us how it is that we can be more loving towards one another. This letter to the Romans is really a love letter.

By being faithful to one another (Ro 1:8)

Ro 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.

- This verse would seem to indicate that word had spread all over the known world about the faith of these believers there in Rome. This is remarkable for a number of reasons:
 - Of all places, Rome was the most difficult to remain faithful
 - F. F. Bruce "The Christians of Rome were unpopular - reputed to be 'enemies of the human race' and credited with such vices as incest and cannibalism. In large numbers, then, they became the victims of the imperial malevolence - and it is this persecution of Christians under Nero that traditionally forms the setting for Paul's martyrdom."
 - We have no record in the scriptures of anyone planting this church there in Rome.
 - The thought amongst Bible commentators is that these Romans came to faith while in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.
 - It difficult to be of the faith in Rome, there were no Apostles there for them in Rome.
 - Perhaps it's for this reason that Paul was so eager to go to Rome, and furthermore, why it is that the Holy Spirit had him write to Rome.
 - The believers in Rome who were the recipients of this letter from Paul, had yet to meet Paul.
 - The Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans was written when he was in Corinth, during what is known as his second missionary journey. This will explain why the first three chapters Paul addresses some very serious matters as it relates to the immorality in that church.
 - When we are faithful in the faith, it will be celebrated throughout the community of faith.
 - Contrast this with what happens to the community of faith when we're unfaithful and falter or fall in our faith:
 - The message I communicate when I'm faithful is; "I love you."
 - Conversely, the message I communicate when unfaithful is; "I love self."

Adam Clarke "... [Their faith was spoken of and] ...celebrated, throughout the whole world - in every place where the Christian religion is professed, through all parts of the Roman dominions; for in this sense we should understand the words, the whole world.

By praying for one another (Ro 1:9-10)

Ro 1:9 God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10 in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

- This door was opened, and his prayers are answered, when, as a prisoner appealing to Caesar, he goes to Rome.
 - Charles Spurgeon "Little did he dream that his prayers were to be answered by his being conveyed in chains to the great city. Very mysterious are the Lords' ways of granting our requests.
- Have you ever noticed you only pray for people you love and care about? Have you ever wondered why?
 - It's virtually impossible to stay angry at, or dislike someone for whom you're praying for.
 - You may not pray for someone for whom you don't love, however, the more you pray for someone you don't love, the more you'll love.
 - Paul loved the Romans so much, he prayed for them so much.
 - It's because Paul loved them much, that he prayed for them much, and the more he prayed for them, the more love he had for them.
 - The more we pray for someone the more we love them - then, again the more we will pray for them.
 - If we don't pray for someone because we don't love them, perhaps we will start loving them, if we will actually start praying for them.

By giving to one another (Ro 1:11)

Ro 1:11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong

- Notice how Paul writes using verbs that express such desire & emotion – He longs to see them so he can give to them
 - In our day, we would say; "I can't wait to see you! I'm so excited about the gift I have for you. It's a spiritual gift, and you need this gift."
- Just as I pray for those I love, so too will I give to those I love.
 - The one to whom I give the most is the one for whom I love the most.
 - The one to whom I give the least is the one for whom I love the least.
 - I believe this is why Paul couldn't wait to see them. He loved them, and it was because of this love for them that he wanted to give to them.
- If I'm having a problem loving another, I need to first try giving to another.
 - Once I start giving to them, I'll start having more love for them.
 - One might argue that I don't give to them, or even pray for them, because I don't feel like it.
 - However, the feeling will follow the giving.
 - The fact of the matter is; that's how God wired us. He made us in such a way that our feelings will follow the act of giving, and even praying.
 - When you consider what Jesus said in Matthew's gospel, you realize that it's an astonishing revelation about how our feelings follow giving.
 - Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

By encouraging one another (Ro 1:12)

Ro 1:12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

- The "feelings" were mutual. Not only did Paul love them, they loved Paul. Therefore they would encourage each other
 - Once again, we see this common denominator in how it is that we will only encourage those for whom we love and care about.

- If you don't believe that, let alone do that, then just think about the people who you don't love or care about. Frankly, you don't even like them.
 - I would suggest to you that you are probably discouraging them, and you may even be very condescending in how you talk to them.
 - When we, like Paul, encourage others in the faith, we're making an investment, in that we have a vested interest in them doing well.
- The litmus test to know if you are doing this will be in how you respond and react to others when something good or bad happens to them.
 - Romans 12:15 KJV Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
 - The truth of the matter is, we are more prone to rejoice when others weep, and weep when others rejoice.
 - Paul emphasizes that the encouragement is mutual. In other words, they would encourage one another.
- The question becomes; how can I be more encouraging to others? What, and from where, do I find that source of encouragement?
 - I think we need look no further than the comforting and encouraging Word of God. That's how they both blessed and encouraged one another.
 - Let's be honest, sometimes we just need a hug from someone, vis-a-vis the Word of God. Often times it comes in the form of a specific word.
 - Here's how it works; a friend sees you're down, and in prayer will lift you up. They'll speak to God for you, then speak a word from God to you.
 - Psalms 119:50 AMP This is my comfort and consolation in my affliction: that Your word has revived me and given me life.

By accepting one another (Ro 1:13-14)

Ro 1:13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. 14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

Paul deems it his obligation to accept anyone so he can have a harvest among everyone.

- Jon Courson in his commentary put it best this way; "I'm a debtor to everyone," said Paul—"to the Greek and to the barbarian, to the sophisticated and to the simple, to the businessman and to the biker, to the housewife and to the hippie, to the jock and to the jailbird." Why did Paul feel this way? Because he was amazed at the goodness of God that saved him so radically at the very time he was erring so greatly.
- Charles Spurgeon "His office and his gifts placed him in debt to mankind to labor for their conversion and every Christian, according to his ability, is in the same condition. Are we paying the debts under which the Lord has laid upon us?"

The take away – your love for people will be predicated upon and proportionate to, your willingness to accept people.

- This is the 'why' behind the 'what' that Paul is writing – he himself had been the recipient of God's love when he met the Savior 25 years prior. Because the Lord would accept him and save him, he's now obligated to bring the gospel to them, that he might have a harvest among them.
- When you're the recipient of some bit of good news, don't you want to share it with the ones who are closest to you? You might even have a sense of obligation to do so. However, we only share it with those whom we love.

Romans 13:8 NKJV Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

- How are we going to meet our obligation to love one another, except we accept one another?"
- The problem is, we won't meet our obligation to accept one another, because we think that it's our obligation to find the faults in one another.
- We don't need police in the body of Christ, we need paramedics.
 - Police, as the law, find who's at fault
 - Paramedics minister care to the injured.

By taking risks for one another (Ro 1:15)

Ro 1:15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

- One can't help but feel the passion, the intensity, and the boldness in "how" Paul says "what" he says, in his unflinching fearlessness.
 - Much is missed in the written letter of God's Word.
 - Would to God we had the emotion and passion of how it was written, as if it were spoken.
- Paul was a risk taker for Jesus Christ, because of his love for Jesus Christ Who first loved him, while yet in his sin.
 - It's vital we understand how serious and even dangerous it was for Paul to go to Rome, let alone for anyone to be a Christian living in Rome.
 - Charles Spurgeon "He was not afraid of danger, and was willing to come right under the palace walls of Caesar. In due time his desire became a fact."
 - His desire to go and take this risk, was fueled by his love for God, and his love for God's people.
 - We will risk our lives for those whom we love.
 - In an instant, any fear of danger is quieted, even muted by the love we have for another.
 - To risk our life for another is the measure of our love.
 - John 15:13 KJV Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

William R. Newell

Rome was the center of the Gentile world: its emperors were soon to demand—and receive—worship; it was crowded with men of learning and culture from the whole world; it had mighty marchings;—great triumphal processions flowed through its streets. Rome shook the world. Yet here is Paul, utterly weak in himself, and' with his physical thorn; yet ready, eager, to go, to Rome! ... Talk of your brave men, your great men, O world! Where in all history can you find one like Paul. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, marched with the protection of their armies to enforce their will upon men. Paul was eager to march with Christ alone to the center of this world's greatness entrenched under Satan, with "the Word of the cross," which he himself says is "to Jews, an offence; and to Gentiles, foolishness." Yes, and when he does go to Rome, it is as a shipwrecked (though Divinely delivered) prisoner. Oh, what a story! ...And what is the secret of this unconquerable heart? Hear Paul: "Ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me." "To me, to live is Christ"; "It was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me"; "By the grace of God I am what I am"; "I labor, striving according to Christ's working, who worketh in me mightily"; "I am ready to spend and be spent out for your souls."

If I have this kind of love, it will be the motivation that propels me to spend and be spent for another, proportionately.

- In other words, the degree to which I am motivated to risk my life for another, will be directly related to how much I love others.
- While I believe that fear and hate are a powerful motivator, love is the more powerful motivator.
- Early church historian and theologian Tertullian once quoted a pagan author who wrote of his astonishment at the love Christians of his day had for one another. He writes; "See how they love one another, ...how they are ready even to die for one another, for they themselves will sooner put to death."

II. Thesis (Ro 1:16-17) – God saved us from His wrath

Ro 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

What is the gospel?

The person and work of Christ – Who He is and what He did – and we appropriate it by grace through faith

- 1Co 15:3 ... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

- The word “gospel” derives from the Old English *godspel*, which means “good news.”
 - *Godspel* is the Old English rendering of the Greek euangelion (eu = “good,” angelion = “message”).
 - Euangelion is the word Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15:1 when he reminds the church at Corinth of “the *gospel* I preached to you.”
- A “gospel” is an account of the “good news” of the coming kingdom of God and the redemption of humanity through the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, *as seen through the eyes of a living faith tradition, guided by the Holy Spirit, 30-60 years after the events it portrays.*

We are born into sin

We are born in a condition of sin and are, by nature, the objects of God’s wrath

Ep 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- We are born into a condition of sin
 - We are dead in our transgressions and sins
 - Because of this, we are alienated from God and have no interest in God, no capacity for God
 - Because we have no interest in God, we are subject to the fallen world and the powers that rule it
- We are by nature, the subject of God’s wrath
 - Jn 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for ***God’s wrath remains on him.***
 - We are born into this world in a condition sin and are, by nature, the objects of God’s wrath
- Although born in a condition of sin, living in a fallen world, and by nature objects of God’s wrath, God loved us so much that He made us alive in Christ, even while we were dead in our transgressions
 - Why does God do this? He loves us – the motive is love
- We are born into a condition of sin
 - We live in a fallen world and are subject to the powers that rule it
 - By nature, we are the objects of God’s wrath
 - God provides the grace that awakens us to His presence
 - We have to respond in faith to that awakening
- We are to live a life of active love or good works
 - Once we move into the family of God, the only thing that counts is our faith expressing itself in love
 - Good works will never get you into the family of God – that’s a response to God’s grace

Christ is our kinsman redeemer

- Christ fulfills all of the requirements to be our kinsman redeemer:
 - Next nearest relative – Jesus must be fully man and fully God in order to redeem us
 - He must have the resources – If He is going to pay the penalty for our sin, then He must be sinless himself. Otherwise He wouldn’t have the resources to pay the penalty for our sins.
 - He must be willing – He had to willingly go to the cross. He’s not caught in a trap of political and religious intrigue. He willingly goes – and He is the one controlling all of the events, right to the very end.

Why I'm Not Ashamed to be a Christian (Ro 1:16-17)

Ro 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

- This is the "great theme of this Epistle," or as one said it; "the headline manifesto," for the whole book.
 - Here, he ever so beautifully weaves this grand purpose into the fabric of this powerful letter.
 - One commentator, of Romans 1:16-17, wrote; "These two verses have an importance out of all proportion to their length."
 - William Newell in his commentary on Romans said this about these two verses; "Here we have the text of the whole Epistle of Romans: First, the words "the gospel"—so dear to Paul, as will appear. Next, the universal saving power of this gospel is asserted. Then, the secret of the gospel's power—the revelation of God's righteousness on the principle of faith. Finally, the accord of all this with the Old Testament Scriptures: "The righteous shall live by faith."
- Paul introduces the idea first, with the intention of preparing the reader for expanding on it later in the letter.
 - This is the inspiration & wisdom of the Holy Spirit, as this is one of the most effective ways to communicate
 - It fits with the logical reasoning with which we assimilate information, especially when it's huge like this is.
 - It's easier to understand when we're:
 - First told what's going to be said
 - Then to have it said
 - Then to be told what was just said
 - - Having said that, I think that we're now ready to open up these two big verses so the Holy Spirit can begin to minister to us the truths in them.
- As a whole, the body of Christ here in America is ashamed of Christianity, especially as it becomes more unpopular
 - We cower and falter in the face of a world that is fast becoming more and more hostile to the Gospel of salvation found only in Jesus the Christ.
 - William Newell - In these days of "respectable" Christianity, with its great cathedrals, churches, denominations, colleges, seminaries, "uplift movements," etc., you may say, Men no longer have any temptation to be "ashamed of the gospel." But lo, and behold, it is not!.
 - Matthew 10:32-33 KJV Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. (33) But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

1. It's truth (Verse 16a)

(16a) I am not ashamed of the gospel...

- Paul will now explain why he said what he said in verse 15 about being so eager to get to Rome, to preach the gospel to all that are in Rome.
 - The reason he's so eager to preach the Gospel, is because he's not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power and truth of God.
 - "ashamed"
 - The word "ashamed" as Paul is using it, carries with it the thought of not being embarrassed, or put to shame in having been proved wrong.
 - 2 Timothy 2:15 NIV Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.
- If we work hard and correctly handle God's Word, we'll approve it and even prove it to be the word of truth.
 - In so doing, we will never need to be ashamed, or put to shame, by being proved wrong, because the Word of God is the truth.

- It was for this reason that Paul could so eagerly and boldly declare that the Gospel is the truth, thus there is no reason to ever be ashamed.

2. It's power (Verse 16b)

(16b) ...because it is the power of God...

- He goes on to say that the reason he is not ashamed is because the gospel is the power of God.
- He doesn't say that the Gospel "can" have power, he says the Gospel "is" the power to save
 - Please don't see this as a play on words, it is not.
 - If the Gospel "can have" the power to save as opposed to "being" the power to save, then you have just introduced an uncertainty.
 - If the Gospel "is" the power of God to save, then you remove all uncertainty and ambiguity
 - Why the distinction as it relates to the "power."
 - It's vital we understand the "why" behind the "what"
 - Of all people, the Romans would have known a thing or two about this thing we call "power."
 - Truly, Rome was all about having power.
 - Warren Weirsbe; "Power is the one thing that Rome boasted of the most. Greece might have its philosophy, but Rome had its power."
- Here's the take away; I should never be intimidated or cower in the face of opposition to the Gospel because it is "the" power of God to save.
 - We have "the" power and it's infinitely more powerful than anything or anyone we may encounter.
 - Here's a question; am I too timid to share the gospel with someone in a position of power when the Lord presents me with the opportunity?

2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. 8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. 13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you— guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. 15 You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

3. It's for salvation (Verse 16c)

(16c) ...for the salvation...

- Paul says that the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of all people.
 - This is precisely what sets apart the Christian faith from every other religion of man, or philosophy of man.
 - Buddhism doesn't have any promise of salvation
 - Islam has no assurance of salvation, unless you murder Jews and Christians.
 - Christianity is virtually the antithesis of all these false religions,
- How it is that we can be so sure that Christianity is true and all the other religions are false? Because it's a relationship based on what God has done for me, not what I do for God.
- Christianity is a personal, saving relationship with the person of Jesus the Christ, Who saved my life eternally.

- A friend once said that he knows that the Bible is true because, in it, God spoke to him things only He could have known.
 - Then, the Word of God becomes 66 books filled with intimate love letters from my Father in Heaven, who loves me.
- In addition to all this, the Holy Spirit indwells me, and enables me to live a holy life, thus I am complete and fulfilled living a "whole" life.
 - Why would I ever be embarrassed as a Christian if my salvation is that God so loved me that He sent His only begotten Son to die for me?
- If I find myself faced with a God-given opportunity to share the Gospel, I should never be ashamed.
 - The eagerness and boldness comes from the Gospel as the power of God to save everyone including them because they need Jesus.

4. It's for everyone (Verse 16d)

(16d) ...of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

- Here Paul packs even more into the end of an already packed full verse by saying salvation is for everyone.
 - He even takes it a step further and says that it's for everyone who believes, then qualifies it as first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles.
- I think we take the everyone Gospel of Jesus Christ for granted.
 - The Gospel is good news because God will not withhold salvation from anyone, the only requirement is belief
 - It's not good news, and it's certainly not the Gospel, if it's not for everyone
 - Not just anyone can make such a claim that makes eternal salvation available to everyone
 - In all other religions, this would most certainly not meet the requirements for salvation.
 - This is where religion falls short
 - According to religion, it's only for those who are good enough to keep the rules and observe all the commandments – nobody can do that
 - That is why Somebody became man in order to do that for us – and instead of us – because of His infinite love for us
 - Taking the "everyone Gospel" for granted
 - Could this be the reason we're ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - I am the only one who has the good news for everyone, and not just anyone can offer that to someone.
 - When I come to the realization that this Gospel is that powerful and that's it's for all, then I'll have a sanctified strength and resolve.

5. It's for righteousness (Verse 17a)

(17a) For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed...

- Paul now takes it a step further – In the gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed and given to us who believe.
 - We, as sinners, can be recipients of this righteousness by putting our faith and trust in Jesus Christ.
- Have you ever had someone say something like this to you; 'and you call yourself a Christian?'
 - They are implying that you have just said something, or done something that, to them, is not very Christian.
 - In other words, they (as non-Christians) have this mistaken idea that Christians should always be and act perfect or they are just hypocrites.
- When you are accused of not being a very good Christian, are you manipulated into feeling guilt or shame?
 - There are most certainly times when we should feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit. However that's not what the text is talking about.
 - I am not and can-not be a perfect Christian but I am righteous as a Christian.

- It's not my own righteousness, lest it be as filthy rags
 - It's Christ's imputed righteousness because of the finished work on the cross at Calvary.
 - I'm declared innocent because the only One who was truly innocent became sin for me, and instead of me, when He did for me.
- Now, why would I ever need to be shamed, or intimidated?
 - God sees not my sin, God sees only His Son, in Whom righteousness is revealed
 - William Newell - ...This ... gives another reason why Paul was not ashamed of the good news: in this message concerning God's Son,—that He died for our sins, was buried, was raised,—there was brought to light,—made manifest—a righteousness of God which had indeed been prophesied...

6. It's by faith (Verse 17b)

(17b) ...a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

- Paul now qualifies this righteousness – by faith from first to last, saying that it was just as it was written: "The righteous will live by faith."
 - Paul is quoting the OT prophet Habakkuk as it relates to the prophesied righteousness of God being by faith.
 - Habakkuk 2:4b "...but the righteous will live by his faith—"
- William Newell - ...it is of imperative importance that we get the great fact quickly and forever fixed in our hearts that God declares men righteous ...wholly on the basis of Christ's atoning work,—to be believed in, rested upon, apart from all human works whatever. It was on the principle of faith by means of a message, and those exercising faith in the message that would be reckoned righteous,—apart from all "merit" or "works" whatever. This is the meaning of "from faith unto faith"—literally, out of faith [rather than works] unto [those who have] faith.
- By way of illustration, consider how we're quick to put our faith in modern medicine to cure all of the ills of society
 - In a spiritual sense, we have "the" cure for "the" birth defect, without which all of mankind will soon die
 - It's a blood born disease that we inherited when we were born
 - The cure for this disease, which leads to death, is to be born again.
 - To be born again, you need a blood transfusion from the one Who gave His blood for you, when He died your death for, and instead of, you.
 - Absent this, our incurable disease of sin will lead to your eternal death in hell forever and ever. You need to be "blood" born again to be saved.
 - If and when you are born again, you will live in heaven with Jesus in His Kingdom forever and ever, as the righteous who put your faith in Him.
- Have you put your faith in the great physician of physicians, the Lord Jesus the Christ as your Savior from the death sentence of sins disease?
 - If you answered that question with a yes, then here's another question for you; "are you ashamed of this? If so, why, and for what reason?"
 - Here's the take away – I won't be put to shame, or ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the following reasons: It's the truth, it's the power, it's for salvation, it's for everyone, it's for righteousness, and it's by faith.
 - God has said it, and that should settle it!

III. Demonstration by Antithesis (Ro 1:18-3:20)

There is no excuse for not knowing God (Ro 1:18-23)

- Paul looks at us in the fallen world and sees what things are like living in this condition of sin, prior to the thesis
 - Looking into the fallen world, we can see God's wrath against men
- There is no excuse for not knowing God – even without the gospel – because we have His creation

- You can know God through His creation – God’s creation is an intelligent design, not an incidental accident
- Ps 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Consequences for rejecting God (Ro 1:24-32)

- People are without excuse, but if they reject God anyway, there are consequences
- God gave them over (paradidomi)
 - In English, this has the sense of God doing something to them
 - In Greek, the word paradidomi has the sense of God taking his hands off, God lets go
 - to give into the hands (of another)
 - to give over into (one's) power or use
 - to deliver to one something to keep, use, take care of, manage
 - If you choose not to respond to God, God will respect that and he'll let go
 - Dr. John (Jack) Donne – 17th century poet
 - In a 1640 sermon, he states “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; but to fall out of the hands of the living God is a horror beyond our expression, beyond our imagination.”
 - If God punishes you for what you’ve done, that’s a fearful thing. But far worse is God taking His hands off and letting go.
 - In these verses, God takes His hands off and a natural sequence of events takes place
- Listed consequences
 - They exchanged the truth of God for a lie
 - They worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator
 - God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another – God gave them over to shameful lusts
 - They exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones
 - God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.
 - They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity
 - They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice.
 - They are gossipers, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful
 - They invent ways of doing evil
 - They disobey their parents
 - They are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.
- Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Why God is Right to Damn Wrong (Ro 1:18-32)

God's Wrath Against Mankind

Ro:1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23

and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

- This teaching should carry with it a warning, as it will neither conform to the politically correct, or appeal to, the cotton candy Christian.
 - To put it bluntly, it deals with abhorrent sexual sin, and unspeakable evil, in man, and why God will bring His wrath on this wickedness of man.
 - Our hypocrisy – Lest we be too quick to assign this wrath of God in judgment of other sinful people, we would do well to judge ourselves first.
- We, as Christians, are prone to sanitize sin.
 - Seemingly, this casual and careless brand of modern day Christianity has made for a lackadaisical, lukewarm, Laodicean, last days church.
 - The clarion call to the church is to turn from our sin, lest we be judged.
 - Chuck Swindoll
 - The message of Christianity is quickly becoming a system of enlightened thinking instead of a simple call to turn from sin and pursue a relationship with God.
 - William Newell – “So You Want to be Like Christ”
 - It will not only fail to help us, but will seriously harm us, to study the awful arraignment of God against human sin, unless we apply it to ourselves, thereby discovering our own state by nature. Therefore we have sought to make plain these terms which Paul uses, in view of today's sin. Christendom is rapidly losing sin-consciousness, which means losing God-consciousness; which means eternal doom...
 - I believe this is why we have passages like we do here, as gnarly as it is, in our Bibles.
 - God wants us conscious of the seriousness of our sin.
 - Absent this sin-consciousness, we lose sins-seriousness. Then, when God brings His wrath and damnation, He is deemed harsh and unjust.
 - It's my hope that this series will bring the seriousness of sin back to the forefront of our conscience so as to see the rightness of God's wrath.
- “God is right to damn sin, but He's also right to save the sinner.”
 - Charles Spurgeon
 - "God provided no sanctuary for real guilt, murder was not winked at, else had the land become both polluted and unsafe. Mercy to murderers would be cruelty to the innocent."
 - From a sermon by Charles Haddon Spurgeon delivered, December 24, 1871
 - "From this day forth, when God beholds the sinner, if his wrath should burn, he will remember that his own Son, as man, stood in the sinner's place, and bore the sinner's doom."

- Envision a courtroom setting
 - Picture Paul as the prosecuting attorney in a case where unthinkable crimes warranting the death penalty have been committed.
 - Paul will argue the case for God's righteousness and Man's sinfulness
 - To this point, God has been the one on trial, not man
 - God has been accused of unjust crimes against the innocence of man.
 - In the court of human sin, God has been unjust in damning sin.
 - If God was innocent, if God was just, then He wouldn't allow evil into the world
 - However, in this courtroom of eternity, God is not the one that's on trial, but man is
 - With that as the backdrop, this becomes Paul's opening statement in our courtroom, where he will persuasively present his compelling case.
 - Opening statement – man is guilty of crimes warranting the death penalty
 - The purpose of an opening statement is for counsel to communicate to the jury what they believe to be the truth about the crime committed.
 - Furthermore, counsel will summarize that which they will support during the trial with competent testimony and evidence admissible in court.
 - Paul, in this his opening statement, is already accusing the defendants of suppressing evidence.
 - In a criminal case, a motion to suppress is filed in order to bring a challenge to the truth of the evidence and whether it should be admissible.
 - In a sense, Paul is denying them the filing of this motion by virtue of their knowing they're guilty, which is why they are suppressing this truth.
 - It's extremely important to take note of how this suppressing of the truth would need to be a deliberate act, as it infers a premeditated crime.
 - We're about to see that they knew the truth, because God Himself made it known to them, which is why they deliberately suppressed the truth.
 - The rest of chapter one deals with abhorrent sexual sin and why God's wrath will come upon the wickedness of man

1. They deliberately suppress the truth (Verse 18) – “What”

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, NIV

18 the wrath of God being revealed against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Paul goes from God's revealed righteousness → the revealed wrath against all godlessness of men who suppress the truth by wickedness.

- wickedness
 - Ungodliness of men is understood to be sinning against God
 - Unrighteousness of men is understood to be sinning against man
 - We see this in various places throughout the scriptures, including the law of God, the Ten Commandments
 - The first 5 commandments deal with our sinning against or obedience to God
 - The second 5 deal with sinning against our fellow man
 - When we understand this delineation, it will enable us to get a better grip on the “why” behind the “what” of God's wrath and how it is just and fair.

2. They plainly know God's truth (Verse 19) – “What”

19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

The reason God's wrath is against them – What may be known about God was plainly made known to them by God.

- The crime committed was premeditated
 - The defendant can't use the insanity plea, because they knew what they were doing was wrong, because what's right was made plain to them.
 - Because the forensic evidence shows that this was a deliberate act, the death penalty is just.
 - The reason for deliberately suppressing the truth that was made plainly known about God, one is not guilty when not judged by God.
 - We're all guilty of all charges, listed in this chapter. If we plead guilty, and sentenced to death, we can accept Jesus' death and go free.

3. They clearly see, but reject, God (Verse 20)

Paul will go from the "what" to the "why" & "how" of man's ungodliness and wickedness deserving a guilty verdict and the death sentence.

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

- They're without excuse because God's invisible qualities, eternal power, and divine nature were clearly seen and understood since creation.
 - God made Himself visible to all thru His creation which displayed His power and His divine nature, thus man's wickedness is inexcusable.
 - It's this fact that will condemn everyone who, when standing before God, will have no excuse for rejection
 - Robert Jastrow – an Astrophysicist and the Director of NASA's Goodard Institute for Space Studies
 - "At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. ...Now we see how the astronomical evidence supports the biblical view of the origin of the world. The essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are now the same. Consider the enormity of the problem. Science has proved that the universe exploded into being at a certain given moment. It asks what cause produced this effect. Who or what put the matter and energy into the universe? And science cannot answer this question. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of his own reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance. He is about to conquer the highest peak. He pulls himself over the final rock, and he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been there for centuries."
<http://www.thoughtfulchristianity.net/?p=3139>
 - William Newell
 - "... the reason for God's wrath is stated: men are without excuse—Men had the light, and that from God. His eternal power and divinity were, from creation onward, plain to men, from His works. - Napoleon, on a warship in the Mediterranean on a star-lit night, passed a group of his officers who were mocking at the idea of a God. He stopped, and sweeping his hand toward the stars, said, "Sirs, if you wish to get rid the world of God, you must first rid of these stars!" Men secretly believe there is a Power above them, and that their evil deeds deserve the wrath of that Power."
- If man has clearly seen and understood, yet still rejected God (which they have), then what does this say about the fairness and justice of God.
 - Sadly, God is seen as being unfair in His judgment of sin because the implication is that man did not know or understand the nature of God.
- Man must come to the realization that God is not the one on trial, man is.
 - In our justice system, a man is presumed innocent until found guilty.
 - In God's system of justice, man is guilty until "pronounced" innocent, only through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Calvary cross.
 - When man understands, and knowingly rejects this, he stands in his own righteousness before the Judge of the universe pleading not guilty.

- This is why it is, and how it is that God, as the creator and judge of the universe, is right in pronouncing man guilty and damning him to hell.
- J.C. Ryle, "Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots" p. 209, 210.
 - "Hell, hell fire, the damnation of hell, eternal damnation, the resurrection of damnation, everlasting fire, the place of torment, destruction, outer darkness, the worm that never dies, the fire that is not quenched, the place of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, everlasting punishment—these are the words which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself employs. Away with the miserable nonsense which people talk in this day, who tell us that the ministers of the gospel should never speak of hell! They only show their own ignorance, or their own dishonesty, when they talk in such a manner. No person can honestly read the four Gospels and fail to see that they who would follow the example of Christ must speak of hell."
- William Newell
 - "Now if someone objects, saying, This is a strange introduction to the gospel of God's grace, we answer, It lies here before us, this awful indictment of Romans One, and cannot be evaded! Moreover, until man knows his state of sin, he wants no grace. Shall pardon be spoken of before the sinner is proved a sinner? While the evidence is being brought in, the whole attention of the court is upon that. If the evidence of guilt be insufficient or inconclusive, there is no necessity for a pardon! Preachers and teachers have soft-pedalled sin, until the fear Of God is vanishing away. McCheyne used to Say, "A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hands of God" A preacher who avoids telling men the truth about their sin as here revealed, is the best tool of the devil."
- Dave Hunt (Facebook Post, March 8th, 2011)
 - God's loving purpose was that man would forever dwell with Him in intimate fellowship and love—not that he would suffer forever in the Lake of Fire. God knew what Adam and Eve and their descendants would do—but He did not predestine man to sin nor to be in torment eternally. The Lake of Fire was "prepared for the devil and his angels." God ...desires all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is for "whosoever believeth on him." To forgive Christ-rejecters would undermine both God's integrity and His justice. No one who spends eternity in the Lake of Fire (and many will) can blame God.

4. They futilely become dark in their hearts (Verse 21)

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

- Paul now drives it home even further by saying that the problem isn't that they didn't know God, the problem is that they indeed did know God. He even takes it a step further saying this is why they didn't glorify or thank God, and their minds became futile, and their hearts became dark.
 - When man is willfully rejecting the glorifying and thanking of God, he will descend into the futility and folly of darkness.
 - By not giving the Glory to God, we become vulnerable to, and susceptible to, the lies of the Devil.
 - While not excusing it, this helps in explaining it, because what we see next is unspeakable foolishness, and wickedness of those in darkness.

5. They wrongly claim to be wise as fools (Verse 22)

22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

- Although they are wrongly claiming to be wise, that they had in fact actually become fools because of it.
 - Is this not what those who mock and deny God claim?
 - They fancy themselves of superior intelligence, and in so doing become ignorant fools.
 - Truly, there is no one more foolish than he who claims to be wise all the while ignorantly, and stupidly, denying God the glory due His Name.

- While it's not authenticated as being true according to the "Truth or Fiction," website, there's a great story illustrating this. "...An atheist became incensed over the preparation for Easter and Passover holidays and decided to contact the local ACLU about the discrimination inflicted on atheists by the constant celebrations afforded to Christians and Jews with all their holidays while the atheists had no holiday to celebrate. The ACLU jumped on the opportunity to once again pick up the cause of the godless, and assigned their sharpest attorneys to the case. The case was brought before a wise judge who after listening to the long, passionate presentation of the ACLU lawyers, promptly banged his gavel and declared, "Case dismissed!" The lead ACLU lawyer immediately stood and objected to the ruling and said, "Your honor, how can you possibly dismiss this case? Surely the Christians have Christmas, Easter and many other observances. And the Jews--why in addition to Passover they have Yom Kippur and Hanukkah... and yet my client and all other atheists have no such holiday!" The judge leaned forward in his chair and simply said "Obviously your client is too confused to know about, or for that matter even celebrate, the atheists' holiday!" The ACLU lawyer pompously said "We are aware of no such holiday for atheists, just when might that be, your honor?" The judge said, "Well it comes every year on exactly the same date---April 1st!" "April Fools Day"
- Psalms 14:1 Of David. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. 2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

6. They foolishly replace the immortal God (Verse 23)

23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

- In their foolishness, they replaced the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man, birds, animals, and reptiles.
 - Because man has rejected the God Who created man in His image, man is now in the market for a new god.
 - As man now shops for a new god, to replace the true God, he will opt for one made in his image instead of God Who made man in His image.
 - One commentator said it best when they wrote; "Man cannot seem to resist the temptation to create God into his own corrupt image, or even in an image beneath himself; the great tragedy in this is that we inescapably become like the God we serve. It is absolutely essential that we constantly compare our conception of God against the reality of who God is as revealed in His Word; lest we too become guilty of worshipping a self-made God."
- We as believers are prone to – ever so subtly – become guilty of worshipping other image gods.
 - By way of example, and you can fill in the blank, _____ is a priority to me.
 - What is it that you glorify? Whatever I glory, in turn glorifies me.
 - I too can exchange the God who created me in His image, for His good pleasure, for a god created in my image, and for my good pleasure.
- Charles Spurgeon
 - "They must have known better. No man in his senses can worship birds and beasts without feeling degraded by so doing. Natural reason rebels against such an insult to God, and as they would not listen to its voice, the heathen were left to fall into abominable vices. Let us never slight the checks of conscience, lest we should be given over to our own corrupt hearts. No doom could be more terrible."
- William Newell
 - The silliness of these "modern" shallow-pan days! How men are rushing back to the old pagan pit out of which God's Word and His gospel would have delivered them! They suck up sin; they welter in wickedness; they profess to be wise! They sit at the feet of "professors" whose breath is spiritual cyanide. They idolize the hog-sty doctrines of a rotten Freud:24 and count themselves "wise"! They say, "God is not a person; men evolved from monkeys; morals are mere old habits; self-enjoyment, self-expression, indulgence of all

desires—this,” they say, “is the path of wisdom.” It is the path of those who go quickly down to the pit and on to judgment! The very morals of Sodom, as our Lord foretold, are rushing fast upon us, and God will bring again the awful doom of Sodom.

7. They are given over to sexual impurity (Verse 24)

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

- It's important we have a correct understanding of what it means when God gives them over to their sin
 - God giving one over to sin carries with it the idea of God's wrath releasing and allowing one to freely sin to his own destruction and damnation.
 - Paul will say this two more times
 - God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts – not sinful desires of their flesh
 - When Paul writes, by the Holy Spirit, this letter to the Romans, he is actually still in the corrupt and perverted city of Corinth. All that Paul would have to do was look out his window, and he would have seen all forms of unimaginable sexual perversion and debauchery.
 - William Newell – This is deeper than the mere lusts of the flesh. Flesh has natural desires, which may or may not be yielded to. The lusts of the heart continue after the flesh is dissolved; and even when, in the tormented bodies of the damned, the lusts of the flesh cannot be conscious or controlling, “the lusts of the heart” will forever exist. Notice that when man is delivered from Divine restraint, the lusts of his heart plunge him into ever deeper bodily uncleanness, and bodily vileness. History backs up this fact with terrible relentlessness.
 - History backs up this fact with terrible relentlessness, and present day local news backs it up as well.
- If God is not right to damn a man who's been given over to unthinkable perversion, then He's not God.
 - The damning forensic evidence proves in the courtroom of eternity that God is right to judge the guilt of man, sentencing him to death.

8. They are guilty of replacing the truth for a lie (Verse 25a)

25a They exchanged the truth of God for a lie...

- They have become guilty of exchanging what they know to be the truth of God for a lie in place of God.
- When man rejects the true God, he is now in the market for a new god, thus he exchanges the truth for a lie.
 - Their replacement god is no god at all, in that this false god is a lie they've believed because they're deceived, explaining what we see next.

9. They are serving created things not the Creator (Verse 25b)

25b ...and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

- It's because of this lie that they are both worshipping, and serving, created things rather than the Creator Who is to forever to be praised.
- In replacing the truth of God for a lie, man opens himself up to, and is given over to, acting as an animal serving the created not the Creator.
 - Japanese Shintoists and Middle East Islamists
 - The Shinto worship created things from rivers to rocks
 - The Muslim worship of the moon god Allah
 - Martyrs – Kamikaze and Jihad suicide missions.
- In these last days, not much has changed since Paul's day, as history is married to prophecy.

- I believe that it will be this same delusion that causes mankind to worship and serve the Anti-Christ, who replaces Christ during the tribulation.
- Notice how Paul writes of Creator God, that he is forever praised
 - William Newell - "Paul's adding these humble, worshipful words after "Creator" both glorifies God and also differentiates Paul from the abandoned devotees of sin thronging the dark alley of human history; showing him to be a child of light, as is every real saint of God, though passing through a world of thick darkness."
- An application of this teaching about rejecting God and worshipping animals.
 - Have I rejected a truth that God has revealed to me, replacing it with something or someone else that has become the object of my devotion?
 - If so, could that be the reason I'm having emotional, physical, or even sexual problems. Is that why I don't worship or serve God as I once did?

10. They are given over to their shameful lusts (Verses 26-27)

26 Because of what they had done, God gave them over to shameful lusts, and even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural. 27 Likewise, men inflamed with lust, committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

- This is the second of three times that Paul will write how God is giving them over.
 - This time we read that they're given over to shameful lusts.
- Paul knows that the recipients of this letter there in Rome, are living in a culture that is steeped in the acceptable practice of homosexuality.
 - History tells us this was a normal way of life in Rome.
 - For 200 years, men who ruled the Roman Empire were open and flagrant homosexuals.
 - There were even taxes that would have to be paid on the income from legalized homosexual prostitution, and same sex marriage was legal.
- The translation of women and men should read female and male.
 - In describing homosexuals and lesbians as merely male and female, you rightly disconnect the human sexuality from animal acts.
 - One commentator wrote how that; "Paul doesn't even use the normal words for man and woman here; he uses the words for male and female, using categories that describe sexuality outside of human terms, because the type of sexual sin he describes is outside of human dignity."
 - William Newell - "...they forget not only the holy relations of marriage, but even the burnings of ordinary lust, and plunge into nameless horrors of unnatural lust-bondage, all, males and females,... What a fearful account is here! A lost race plunging ever deeper, by their own desire! Left in shameful, horrid bondage, unashamed,—not only immoral, but unmoral, hideous."
- F.B. Meyer - "The law of history, in virtue of which the forsaking of God is followed among men by a parallel growth of immorality, is not a purely natural order of things; the power of God is active in the execution of this law."

11. They are given over to a depraved mind (Verse 28)

28 God gave them over to a depraved mind to do what shouldn't be done, since they thought retaining the knowledge of God was of no worth.

- This is our third and last mention by Paul of God giving man over to his sin.
 - This time we read that God gives them over to a depraved mind.
 - There's been a progressive descent into unspeakable perversion and depravity

- Remember, Paul is arguing the case of man's sin deserving the death penalty, before the judge of the universe in the courtroom of eternity.
 - In order to achieve a guilty verdict, he must retrace every step, and even go back to the crime scene if need be, to find the smoking gun.
 - Paul's brilliance in how he does this comes from the wisdom of the Holy Spirit inspiring him to write this using this method.
- Because they didn't retain the knowledge of God, God gives them over to a depraved mind.
 - In other words, they saw fit to "cast-out" the knowledge of God, which is why God in turn then saw fit to give them over to an outcast mind."
 - Because God's on trial in the court of their own depraved minds, they reject and disapprove of God, thus they did not approve knowing God.
 - One commentator said it best when they wrote; "The human race has put God [on trial] for the purpose of approving Him should He meet the specifications which it laid down for a God who would be to its liking, and finding that He did not meet those specifications, it refused to approve Him as the God to be worshipped, or have Him in its knowledge."
- Homosexuality
 - Why is it sinful? Why does God condemn it? Why is God so intolerant of the alternative gay lifestyle?
 - It's been said, that sin isn't bad because it's forbidden rather, sin is forbidden because it's bad.
 - Homosexuality isn't only bad, it's deadly.
 - God is right to damn this sin because man disconnected himself from God and connected with animals.
- While I am keenly aware that this sin may not be committed amongst us, I want to close by looking at ourselves in this mirror of God's Word. What I mean by that is this; we are all too prone to quickly dismiss passages like this, and in so doing we become smug and self righteous.
 - If that's your response to this study, I want to encourage you to revisit that area of secret sin in your life, and how it could be destroying you.
 - William Newell - It will not do to hold up your hands in self-righteous dismay, and say, These verses do not in any particular describe me. For God will show you and me that this is exactly the race as we were born into it, and out of which the only rescue is being born again. All these things pertain to lost, fallen man. Man is a tenant of the earth only by Divine grace, since the Deluge.

12. They are filled with depraved wickedness (Verses 29-31)

29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

- There are a number of details that can be easily missed in reading this list
 - Paul says; "they have become filled..."
 - This implies that there is a descending into this evil and wickedness which further substantiates the evidence of God having given them over.
 - It's as if Paul paints a picture on the canvass of their depravity, portraying how they, of their own volition, have let go of, the hand of God. Once they let go, God let's go and gives them over to that which they become filled with as they descend into every kind of evil wickedness.
 - They go down into this dark abyss of greed, depravity, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, hatred, insolence, arrogance, etc.
- 21 things that man had become filled with, in that which Paul, by the Holy Spirit, lists here in this letter to Rome.
 - I would like to ask you to give the Holy Spirit permission to show you, you, in this list.
 - Envy: Has my heart been filled with hate towards someone else because of what they possess, who they are, or even the ease of their life?

- Murder: Have I become so filled with anger in my heart for someone, that I've secretly wished harm upon them, or even that they would die?
- Strife: Am I one who is given to arguing with others, or contentious and antagonistic towards others, even to the point that I like a good fight?
- Gossip: Am I nosy, and one who talks about people in ways I would never talk directly to the one I'm gossiping about, and even enjoying it?
- Slander: Do I assassinate the character and reputation of another with no regard to the harm I cause even bearing false witness in a rumor?
- Notice how gossip and disobeying parents is listed along with murder and being a God-hater.
- Also, this list may remind you of a similar list the Apostle Paul writes of when he pen's his second letter to Timothy describing the last days.
 - 2 Timothy 3:1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

13. They are knowingly continuing to do evil (Verse 32)

32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

- Here's another one of those places where we are able to discover the "why" behind the "what," of both doing the evil and approving of the evil.
 - The reason "why" they do "what" they do is because they've "disapproved" of God, and in so doing they have "approved" of unspeakable evil.
 - In other words, man has created an environment that will be conducive to his evil, in so much as to have it both approved of, and accepted in.
 - The seriousness of mans deliberateness cannot be overstated, in that man knows God's righteous decree is that such things deserve death. Yet, not only do they continue in it, they manufacture an infrastructure, issuing their own permit, giving approval to those who also practice it.
- One commentator aptly wrote; "Paul's punch-line is that not only do they do what they know they ought not to do, they create a society in which these things are accepted and approved. They want others to approve of them, and so they approve of others when they behave like this. Every time I condone behavior in others, I make it easier to do it myself, because I create a climate of public opinion in which this is acceptable.
- "have I become guilty of, what's been coined as, 'tabloid' Christianity?"
 - Tabloid Christianity is when I, as a Christian, love to read about the wicked behavior of others because it makes me feel better about myself.
 - Let's be honest shall we? If the truth be known, we are all prone to, and all guilty of, seeing this much the same way as a supermarket tabloid. There's a disconnect between us and God's Word because we derive a sick and sinful satisfaction in the smugness of our self-righteousness.
 - Isaiah 64:6a NKJV But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;...
 - Luke 18:9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The Law (Ro 2)

- We should not judge others because we all started at the same position – outside of the family of God
 - Be thankful for God's mercy and grace to others, because it was this same mercy and grace that saved you
 - We move into the family of God by grace through faith. We live in the family of God by a life of active love.
 - A genuine saving faith will ALWAYS produce a life of good works
 - James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.
- Good vs evil
 - 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.
 - 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.
 - 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil
 - 10 but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good
- 10 Commandments – The law sets the standard by which all will be judged
 - Why does God give the law? It is God's requirements
 - God's law is not given for people in the family of God (who have been forgiven through the blood of Christ), but people outside of the family of God. It provides the straight line by which God will measure them.
 - No one is rewarded for obeying the law – that's what is expected (example – driving laws).
 - You are only punished for disobeying the law.
 - The Law was never meant to save anyone – it's meant to show God's requirements
- First for the Jew, then for the Gentile – For God does not show favoritism
 - The Jews are under a covenant with God to obey the Law
 - No one is able to obey the law fully
 - Ro 2:25 Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. 26 If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised?
 - Gentiles do not have the law
 - Some people obey it without understanding it, others understand it but don't obey it
 - When they do by nature things required by the law, they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts
 - It is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.
 - All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law. All who sin under the law will be judged by the law
- What advantage is there to being a Jew?
 - Ro 3:1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? 2 Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.
 - Except for Luke and Acts, the Bible was written entirely by the Jews
 - God gives His Word through the Jews
 - God made 3 unconditional covenants with the Jews
 - Abrahamic Covenant
 - Land Covenant

We Need God's Leading (Ro 2)

God is leading all mankind to the conclusion that he is guilty before the Judge of the universe

- Thesis lynchpin: Romans 1:16-17 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."
 - "Romans 2 supports the manifesto message of Romans 1:16-17, [in that], the saving righteousness of God is revealed to anyone who bows the knee with the obedience of faith, but to no-one else."
- Paul, by the Holy Spirit, ever so beautifully, and brilliantly, moves from the guilt of the immoral to the moral.
 - In Ro 1:18-32, we saw God as right to damn the wrong of the evil practices of the immoral
 - Now it's those who fancy themselves as being moral.
 - It's for this reason, there is this need, for a righteous God to lead both the immoral and the moral to a plea of guilty in the courtroom of eternity.
 - The purpose is that **God is leading all mankind to the conclusion that he is guilty before the Judge of the universe** in the courtroom of eternity.
- William Newell - "We have traced the awful history of the human race in iniquity and idolatry, ...and have seen that fearful indictment of above twenty counts which ends Chapter One. We now enter upon the greatest passage in all Scripture as to the principles and processes of God in His estimate, or judgment, concerning His creatures. If God is 'Judge of all,' and if the whole world is to be 'brought under the judgment of God,' ...God will surely take pains to make known the great principles of His action, so that men may know beforehand how He will decide and act. Otherwise, men would 'imagine vain things' about the true God, and hug their delusions to their own damnation."
- religious morality vs spiritual maturity
 - As born-again Christian's, we tend to see ourselves as moral. Of course, morality should characterize the life of a believer but, it's when a religious morality becomes the replacement for a spiritual maturity.
 - The difference between religious morality, and spiritual maturity, is that one is plastic and manufactured, and the other is organic and grown.
 - By way of illustration, religious morality is the bowl of plastic fruit, whereas spiritual maturity is the real deal as the bowl of real delicious fruit.
 - I would suggest that the church today has become plastic, shallow, and fake. Outwardly, there's this morality, but inwardly, there's no maturity.
 - The danger for us as the church of Jesus Christ, is that we can misrepresent the grace we've been the recipient of when coming to Christ. Sadly, an un-Christian world sees this so called "religious morality" in the Christian world as judging, condescending, and even condemning.
 - I believe one reason we have chapters like this in the Bible, is so that the Holy Spirit can lead us back to that real deal Christianity of the Bible.
- What we're seeing is how that the beloved Apostle is ever so brilliantly, yet bluntly, leading those reading this Epistle to a critical conclusion. Namely, **the need for mankind to both recognize and conclude that the state of his sinful condition, deserves the wrath of a just and holy God.**

1. To Self-Judgment (Verse 1)

- 1) You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.
- Paul says they're without excuse even seeing themselves as moral. They pass judgment on those doing what they themselves are guilty of.
 - In effect, Paul is telling them that every time they condemn someone else, they are condemning themselves before God.
 - God judges me by the same standard that I judge.
 - This principle is echoed throughout the scriptures and is replete in the pages of Holy Writ.

- Matthew 7:1-2 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
- Luke 6:37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.
- 1 Corinthians 11:31-32 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.
- Does this mean we should never judge the sinful practices of another?
 - No, being judgmental isn't synonymous with having good judgment.
 - As one so aptly put it, we should be fruit inspectors with good judgment not judges in a court of law simply passing judgment and condemning.
 - This is yet another "why" behind the "what" of God's Word as it relates to the text we have before us.
 - Judge self - not others.

2. To Truth (Verses 2-3)

(2) Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. (3) So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

- It's vital we remember that Paul is still arguing his case for man's ungodliness and unrighteousness, and God's justice and righteousness.
 - God's judgment is based on truth
 - He asks them how, knowing God's judgments are based on truth, they will escape judgment when they do the very things they're judging.
 - If man does the same things, even if he disapproves of them, he will also be judged
- Here's a question; "In light of a just and righteous God, why does Paul make such a big deal about being so judgmental and condemning?
 - It's because we, like them, are prone to think we're justified in our disapproval of the practices mentioned at the end of the previous chapter.
 - The truth is, we are right to disapprove of evil but, we are most certainly wrong if we falsely think our disapproval means we won't be judged.
 - We're all prone to see ourselves as rather good people as compared to the depraved and wicked people in Ro 1
 - I suppose you could say that the Holy Spirit, through Paul's epistle, is making it very clear that this is not based in reality nor truth.
 - God does not grade on a curve

3. To Repentance (Verses 4-5)

(4) Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? (5) But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

- What Paul is not saying is that every single time we sin and don't repent, we're subject to God's wrath.
 - God's grace is not that ambiguous.
 - It is stubborn and unrepentant hearts that store up God's wrath, and they show contempt for God's kindness, which leads one to repentance.
- One commentator said it best when they wrote; "We must not misunderstand this - as those with sensitive consciences are likely to do - to mean that my security is only as strong as my most recent repentance, or that every time I sin, I place myself in danger of hell until I repent (because I fear that if I die with any unconfessed sin I will be condemned). That misunderstanding would be clean contrary to the gospel of grace which Paul expounds so wonderfully in this letter. Paul is not condemning shaky discipleship, but complacent and persistent hypocrisy, the pseudo-discipleship that thinks the need for repentance ended with my 'conversion.' What Paul wants to expose is not the life that sometimes falls into sin (and therefore needs repentance as an ongoing discipline), but rather the hard and

impenitent heart that systematically will not repent. Paul speaks not to the penitent heart that lacks assurance, but to the impenitent heart that has a false assurance."

- Paul is speaking of the false, or fake, Christians, if you prefer.
 - These are the ones who have contempt for, thus see no need for, repentance.
 - It is to these who have both a stubborn and unrepentant heart that will one day stand before a just and Holy God on this day of God's wrath.
 - Very soon, the day is coming, when the righteous judgment of God will be revealed.
- William Newell - So they are today, in these last days: "Treasuring up unto themselves wrath" for that fearful "day of wrath." Remember, if the goodness of God toward you is not leading you to repentance, then every day, every hour, you live, drops another drop into the terrible "treasure" of indignation which will burst the great dam of God's long-suffering—in the great Day of Wrath, when God shall reveal His righteous judgment! (Of course, if you flee to Calvary, you will "not come into judgment" (John 5:24): for Judgment has already struck there!)
- This brings us to two questions:
 - Have you been led and fled in repentance to Calvary escaping judgment day?
 - If you have and are truly saved then what did the Holy Spirit show you today that you're needing God's leading to do?
 - Am I needing to repent of my religious morality, because God is leading me to spiritual maturity?

4. To Eternal-Life (Verses 6-8)

(6) God "will give to each person according to what he has done." (7) To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. (8) But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

- It's important to note that the wrath of God here mentioned carries with it the idea of a heated anger.
 - Thumos in the Greek, thermos in English.
- God will give all of us either the gift of eternal life, or the wrath of His eternal anger, and the litmus test will be graded on the good we've done.
 - Herein lies the problem - no one, save One, has ever done good. The only way one who sees themselves as morally good is really good, is if they always do good, glorifying and honoring God.
 - William Newell - "Who will judge every one according to [what he has done?]." How could it be otherwise? You know that when a case comes to trial in courts of law, men first endeavor, through questioning witnesses, to discover the facts. Now God knows all the facts about every one of Adam's race, and His judgment must be in accordance with them. It is not that God desires you to be damned, but, contrariwise, to believe on His Son, upon Whom His judgment for human sin fell at Calvary."
- **God's purpose is to lead man to His need for eternal life, but He must first lead that man to his need for mercy, or he receives eternal wrath.**
 - If I don't see my need for it, I'll never allow you to lead me to it.
 - Conversely, if I see I'm guilty I'll throw myself before judge, begging for mercy.
 - However, if I see myself as not guilty, according to what I have done, then I will be deceived and believe that I deserve justice, and not mercy.

5. To Peace (Verses 9-10)

(9) There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; (10) but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

- Paul offers good, only to the good

- The Apostle Paul is doing the same thing here in verses 9 and 10, as he did in verses 6-8, by offering good, only to the good.
- In so doing, he makes it clear that God's bar of goodness is raised so much higher than their moral piety could ever reach.
- Then, Paul takes it a step further by contrasting the good with the evil, for Jew or Gentile, in that it's peace for the good, distress for the evil.
 - If man is not good, and the evidence proves he's not, then he will never drink from this cup of peace.
- Now, we still have a problem. If no one is good, save One, then why the contrast of good and evil?
 - Rather than Paul saying that it's sin versus sinlessness, he says it's an impenitent heart verses a repentant heart
 - Just as glory, honor, and peace will come by a repentant heart, so too does trouble and distress come by the impenitent heart.
- I've heard it said that one can never know the peace of God, until they have peace with God.
 - The antithesis of peace is turmoil and distress.
 - They need God's leading to that peace.
 - Maybe this would explain why it is that our lives are filled with turmoil and distress instead of peace. Maybe it's because of our impenitent hearts.

6. To Obedience (Verses 11-13)

(11) For God does not show favoritism. (12) All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. (13) For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

- It's only those who do what's right in the sight of God that will be declared as right before God.
 - Only those who are obedient to God, will be declared as righteous before God.
 - Conversely those who are disobedient to God, will not be.
 - Paul stays on message and never veers off – Man needs God's leading understand that he is guilty before the Judge of the universe.
- God doesn't show favoritism
 - Why does Paul preface the contrast of those right in God's site, and those not, in this way?
 - I believe that the answer is found in the context in which he writes it. He refers to Gentiles as apart from the law, and Jews as under the law.
 - In the context of this passage, Paul paints the colors of graphic and stark contrast, on the canvass of their perceived goodness and morality.
 - Contrasts:
 - Eternal life with eternal wrath
 - Good with evil
 - Distress with peace
 - Under the law with apart from the law
 - Jew with Gentile.
 - Unless that priceless diamond of God's perfect righteousness, is placed on the black cloth of our sin and unrighteousness, we will not see it.
 - Unless Paul, as the prosecuting attorney, contrasts the black of man's sin with the white of Christ's sinlessness, then the verdict is; "not guilty."
- Have you noticed that there is a very profound progression in how needing God's leading will lead one to the other.
 - Judging one's self leads me to God's truth about my sinful condition.
 - This in turn leads me via the kindness of God, to a genuine repentance.
 - Repentance before God leads me to eternal life from God
 - Then knowing I have peace with God and the peace of God, I'm led to obey God.

7. To Honesty (Verses 14-16)

(14) (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, (15) since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) (16) This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

- What Paul is not saying - to do what the law requires is to fulfill what it requires.
- Why does Paul make such a big deal about Gentiles doing things required by the law when they do not have the law?
 - The answer is found in verse 15 - though absent in writing, they have the writing on their hearts.
 - In concert with the law written on the tablets of their hearts, the conscience makes for a wonderful harmony bearing witness with obedience.
- People need to be honest with their selves and their God, whose law accuses otherwise.
 - **Until a man is honest about his need for the Lord, he will never have hope of being honest before the Lord,** and this only comes from the Lord.
- William Newell "...[The] Law [is] as an external revelation from God ...[and] does not mean that they are fulfilling the claims of the Law, for they do not have it, but that they are unconsciously aware, as moral beings, of what is right and wrong. ...God is describing how He has constituted all men: there is a "work" within them, making them morally conscious. ...Man's conscience bears witness to this law-work in his moral constitution; consequently men daily, hourly, constantly, are having "inward thoughts" which have voices of accusation or approval, according as a man's conduct may be."

8. To Integrity (Verses 17-21)

(17) Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; (18) if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; (19) if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, (20) an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— (21) you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

- Lest we see Paul as being seemingly sarcastic and even sort of caustic, we must remember what it is that he is needing to accomplish in this. Also, we must remember to whom it is he is needing to accomplish it with. He has to hit moral law-abiding Jews head on with their immorality. It's for this reason that he brings into question their integrity, by asking them in their piety how they can preach against stealing, while stealing.
- The only way man can hope to see himself as he really is before a holy God is to dismantle his self-perceived integrity
 - Integrity is defined as the adherence to moral and ethical principles.
 - Furthermore, and for the purpose of our study here, it's defined as the state of being whole, or undiminished, sound, or perfect in its condition.
 - In so much that, in the context of what Paul is writing, those adhering to the morality of the law are unable to preserve the integrity of the law.
- What's the difference between honesty and integrity?
 - The short answer is honesty tells the truth, integrity preserves the truth.
 - With honesty I can be faithfully trusted, with integrity I can be faithfully tested.
 - The integrity of God's Word exposes the dishonesty of man's words.
 - Honesty will say it, integrity will follow through and do it.
 - If I am honest with myself, and about myself, I will have integrity before God.
- Revelation 3:13-22 NKJV (13) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (14) "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: (15) "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were

cold or hot. (16) So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (17) Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— (18) I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (19) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. (20) Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (21) To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (22) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' ' "

- One cannot help but notice that there is an eerie similarity between the moral Jews there in Rome, and the lukewarm Christians in Laodicea.
- It seems they both did not see themselves as God saw them, which explains why they did not see their need for God to lead them to repent.
- There are many similarities, the most interesting of which is that their dishonesty, and their lack of integrity, was the thing that blinded them.

9. To Purity (Verses 22-24)

(22) You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? (23) You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? (24) As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

- Paul tells them the reason God is dishonored is because of them, quoting Isaiah
 - Is 52:4 For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them. 5 "And now what do I have here?" declares the LORD. "For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock," declares the LORD. "And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed.
- We, like them, are prone to see ourselves in a favorable light.
 - Because we see ourselves as pure and holy, we need to be exposed in our impurity, because we're unholy
 - When non-Christians hear Christians talk about purity, yet they themselves are riddled with impurity, then God is blasphemed.
 - When we won't, thus don't, see ourselves in this way, then we won't see our need, and don't allow God to lead, to repentance in godly sorrow. This is a rough way to live the Christian life.
 - The unrepentant life is a hard life. Conversely a repentant life is a blessed life.
 - Proverbs 13:15 KJV Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.
- When I see myself, and present myself, as being good, moral pure and holy, I put a crushing pressure on myself to maintain an image of piety. However, when I see myself as not being good, moral, pure and holy, not only is the pressure off, I won't blaspheme God in my hypocrisy.
 - I not only don't blaspheme God in my hypocrisy, I actually bring glory and honor to God in my honesty, because He's the source of my purity.
 - This is why I can not only tell people they shouldn't commit adultery, I myself won't and don't commit adultery, or even idolatry for that matter.
 - **The how of a holy life, is found in the purity, and the power, of the person of the Holy Spirit. Without Him, I'll never drink from the cup of purity.**

10. To Sanctification (Verses 25-29)

(25) Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. (26) If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? (27) The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. (28) A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. (29) No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and

circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

- What in the world is Paul saying? How in the world does what Paul is saying apply to my life, in my world?
 - Going to church outwardly does not make a Christian. Who I am outwardly, must be who I also am inwardly
 - Going to a gym makes a body builder not, as going to a church makes a Christian not.
 - William Newell – For he is not a Christian who is one outwardly, nor is that ‘church-membership’ which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly; and ‘church-membership’ is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.”
- Just as the Jews had the circumcision and the law outwardly, didn't mean that they were Jews inwardly though they most certainly thought so. So too is this true for Christians who, just because they act like it outwardly, doesn't mean they are Christians inwardly, though they think so.
 - How will one know? There will be a sanctification that comes from the cutting and removing of their flesh, in the circumcision of their heart. When one has circumcised their heart, it becomes an outward sign of an inward reality, as the evidence externally of sanctification internally.
 - Simply put, it's doing away with the flesh, without which we can never hope to experience a life of purification, consecration and sanctification.
 - A Jew is a Jew if he is one inwardly, so too is a Christian a Christian if he is one inwardly.
- This is a matter of eternal life and eternal death
 - The reason the Holy Spirit has Paul address this at length and with such strength, is that they thought circumcision guaranteed their salvation.
 - They were even affirmed outwardly by men praising them which is why Paul writes in verse 29 how that their praise came from men, not God.
 - Herein lies the problem, and it begs this question; "are men praising and affirming me outwardly, in the place of God affirming me inwardly?"
 - This comes from the pit of hell.
 - If I become like these Jews that Paul is confronting, and believe my salvation is guaranteed by my circumcision, I will go to hell for all eternity. If as a professing Christian I think I'm saved and affirmed outwardly, absent regeneration and sanctification inwardly, I'll go to hell for all eternity.
 - Just because you go to church, as a professing Christian, doesn't mean you're saved. Outward certainty, must come from the inward reality.
- Corrie Ten Boom - “If I’m at your house and I began to move from room to room straightening pictures on your wall, that’s commendable, but if your house is on fire, and I began to move from room to room straightening pictures, I’ve become evil, and wicked not choosing to use my time to save your life.”
- J.C. Ryle ~ A day will come when those who are not born again will wish that they had never been born at all.

Romans 1 – Sinful people are given over to a reprobate mind

God’s Wrath on Unrighteousness

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Should we be unrighteous to demonstrate His grace? (Ro 3)

- We are, by nature, under God's wrath
 - Once in the family of God, if we keep spiraling down instead of up, we will still be subject to God's wrath
- If our falseness enhances God's truthfulness, and so increases His glory, why are we condemned as sinners
 - The more we sin, the better His grace looks
 - Ro 3:8 Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.
- This is the Jewish thought process – You take a principle, then push it to its extreme edge, and see if it breaks down
 - Ex – Mt 22:28 Marriage at the Resurrection – The seven husbands

Why Christians Don't Study Their Bibles (Ro 3:1-8)

- Paul will now begin to round a corner by both asking, and answering, several questions.
 - Paul is taking this approach in order to strip them of everything they have held onto as being true, so as to replace it with what's really true.
 - In their self-perceived righteousness and their privileged circumcision, they saw themselves as being a true Jew, when in fact they were not.
- Jon Courson – "... in chapter 1, Paul addresses the unrighteous heathen. In chapter 2, he deals with the self-righteous hypocrite. And here in chapter 3, he'll speak to the super-righteous Hebrew. - - "Creation around them condemns the unrighteous," Paul declared in chapter 1. "Conscience within them condemns the self-righteous," he proclaimed in chapter 2. And in chapter 3, we will hear him say that the commandments given to them condemn the super-righteous."
 - Chapter 1 – Paul addresses the unrighteous heathen – Creation around them condemns the unrighteous
 - Ch 2 – Paul deals with the self-righteous hypocrite – Conscience within them condemns the self-righteous
 - Ch 3 – Paul speaks to the super-righteous Hebrew – The commandments given to them condemn the super-righteous
- Paul will use the commandments of God, as the Word of God (the Scriptures), to condemn them in this condition.
 - Were Paul not do this in this way, they would be left to being deceived in what they've believed would guarantee their salvation.

- As God's chosen people, they had erroneously fancied themselves as being super-righteous so now Paul has to dismantle that with the Word. Paul does this, this way, because he needs to show them, in the mirror of God's Word, how that everything they saw as being true, was not.
 - They saw themselves as righteous in their privileged circumcision and in so doing thought they were a true Jew, when in fact they were not.
 - Paul has been dismantling this notion of how they falsely fancy themselves being guaranteed salvation vis-a-vis their circumcision, as Jews.
 - He will use the toolbox of God's Law to condemn them in this condition. Absent this, they're left to their own perception, which is a deception.
- The main reason we don't open up and study our Bibles is because we don't want our Bibles to open up and study us.
 - It's uncomfortable for the comfortable (Verses 1-2)
 - It's faithful for the faithless (Verses 3-4)
 - It's righteous for the unrighteous (Verses 5-6)
 - It's sinless for the sinful (Verses 7-8)

1. It's uncomfortable for the comfortable (Verses 1-2)

(1) What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? (2) Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.

- After having confronted the Jews about being real Jews inwardly, Paul rhetorically asks what advantage or value there is in circumcision. He answers this question by saying there's much in every way, the first of which is that the Jews were entrusted with the very Word of God.
- They can no longer be comfortable and secure as Jews outwardly.
 - Paul has succeeded in making them very uncomfortable in that which they had become quite comfortable in, namely, outward circumcision as their assurance of salvation
 - He has to get them from Point A to Point B by showing them the fallacy of point A, and in so doing, discomfort them enough to consider Point B.
 - Point A represents the Jew in the circumcision outwardly
 - Point B represents the truly saved Jew in the circumcision of the heart inwardly.
 - This would explain why Paul says what he says in the way in which he says it.
 - He must shake their Jewish confidence to the core, outwardly. It's only then that they're unable to remain comfortable in their circumcision guaranteeing their salvation, as it's merely fleshly, only externally.
 - Now they're ready for that which is, instead, spiritual and internal – that being the double edged surgical knife of God's Word circumcising them.
- In application to us as professing Christians – "On which rack am I hanging the hat of my assurance that I'm saved?"
 - Are you comfortable with your church attendance, water baptism, or outward profession of faith as being enough to guarantee your salvation? It's not!
 - I'll go as far as suggesting that this should make you uncomfortable, if you've become too comfortable with this brand of Christianity.
- So, what then is the value in attending church or professing to be a Christian? There's much in every way!
 - First and foremost, the Word of God – When I get into God's Word, God's Word gets into me, and changes me from the inside out, by cutting away my flesh, circumcising my heart.
 - This is why it is so absolutely vital to study the Word of God, and allow God to make me uncomfortable by cutting between my soul and spirit.
 - Hebrews 4:12 NIV For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- Absent the uncomfortable cutting and judging of the thoughts and attitudes in and of my heart, I'm abandoned and destined to perish in hell.
- In the Devilish deception of comfortable Christianity, studying God's Word is dismissed
 - Thus the discomfort of God's Word studying me is disallowed.
 - Would to God that we would be numbered amongst those who've submitted and surrendered to the sharpness of God's double-edged sword.

2. It's faithful for the faithless (Verses 3-4)

(3) What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? (4) Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."

- Paul rhetorically asks another question, this time it's as it relates to those not having faith nullifying the faithfulness of God. He again answers the question saying; "not at all!" Then he tells them to let God be true and every man a liar and quotes David in Psalms.
 - Psalms 51:4 NIV Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.
- Paul uses David as an example because, in spite of David's sin and unfaithfulness, God was still faithful to him.
 - God's faithfulness to David was not contingent on David's faithfulness to God – God's Word to David remained faithful
 - William Newell - "That nation was entrusted with the oracles of God—inestimable, eternal advantage! despite their unfaithfulness. Every writer of the Bible is, we believe from this, an Israelite. Jewish faithlessness could not annul God's faithfulness in carrying out those oracles. God must be found true, though every man be false (to whatever God entrusts to him). Paul instances David's most humble confession and ascription of righteousness to God, after David's own great sin had shown David himself faithless to the royal covenant Jehovah had committed to him."
- Here's the take away from all of this and it's yet another reason why it's so critical for us as believers in Jesus Christ to study the Word of God:
 - If we don't know the Word of God, we won't know this truth about God.
 - If we don't know the Word of God, we can't know the God of the Word.
 - When I don't know that God, true to His Word, is faithful to me, even when I am faithless to Him, it's devastating to my relationship with Him.
 - Here's why – I will wrongly adopt and embrace a "when I - then God" Christianity, that believes this notion of God only being faithful, when I am.
 - This brand of the Christian faith not only have it wrong, they have it backwards – thinking when we do for God, then He will do something for us. That's not how it works, it's the other way around. When I'm the recipient of God's goodness and faithfulness I respond in kind by faith, to Him!
 - Just as God was still faithful when they were faithless, so too is God's Word faithful to study us and expose us in our faithlessness

3. It's righteous for the unrighteous (Verses 5-6)

(5) But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) (6) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?

- If God uses man's unrighteousness for the purpose of revealing His righteousness, then punishing man for it seems unfair.
 - Paul is arguing from a human standpoint
 - To avoid judgment by God's Word, man will pass judgment on God's Word.
 - In our unrighteousness in this fallen world, we seek to dismiss God's righteousness in His perfect Word, because we don't want to be judged.

- We then cling on to this false hope that somehow we're good, and for God's Word or God's people to convince me otherwise is judgmental.
- William Newell - "What the apostle is attacking is the false hopes of men to evade that judgment. Christ has been judged and smitten in our stead. But, alas, how a man hates to come to the cross as one "to whom that stroke was due" (Isa. 53:8). But if you manage to escape conviction of sin, and thus miss personal faith in the Crucified One, you will go to hell forever."
 - Is 53:8 NAS By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off out of the land of the living
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?

4. It's sinless for the sinful (Verses 7-8)

(7) Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" (8) Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

- It seems that Paul is asking and answering the same question in verses 5-6 in a different way here in verses 7-8. Why?
 - It's extremely difficult to communicate the Gospel of Christ to those who don't see themselves as sinners
 - People don't see themselves as sinners because they won't open up and study the mirror of God's Law within God's Word.
 - It's so crucial to study the scriptures so the scriptures can study us, and show us, "us," in our sinful state. If not, I'm not interested in salvation.
 - I can sin all I want because I'm saved by grace and God will always forgive me anyway
 - This has been the source of much debate and controversy within Christendom
 - Paul answers this quite bluntly at the end of verse 8 - their condemnation is deserved.
- Application to us in our lives – This applies to two groups of people, both of whom see themselves as good
 - The common denominator with both is that they live their lives with the presupposition that, though false, they're good enough to go to heaven.
 - The first group are those who profess to be Christians because they go to church, have a Bible, have been baptized, or they prayed a prayer.
 - To the first group, the beloved Apostle would say; "you think you're a Christian and that you're saved, but you're not, thus you're condemned."
 - The second group may be Christians however, by the fruit of their carnal and worldly lives, you would never know it, and you can't confront it.
 - To the second group he'd say; "you can't keep sinning thinking you're a Christian, as it may be that you weren't born again in the first place."
- William Newell - "...if we, professing Christians, consign this whole passage to the Jew, we fall directly into the same terrible trap. Whole multitudes today in Christendom, sheltered in their imagination by the fact that they have "joined" some church, resent the very doctrines that Paul here insists on. Thousands of so-called "church-members" not only have never been brought under real conviction of sin and guilt and personal danger, but rise in anger like the Jews of Paul's day when one preaches their danger directly to them! Now if God paid no attention whatever to the claim of the Jew to be exempt from judgment because he was a Jew, neither will He pay any attention to the claim of the "Baptist" or "Presbyterian," "Episcopalian" or "Methodist,"—as such. For all men are alike guilty, common sinners! What avails before a holy God the special religious names sinners may call themselves? This book of Romans will do you and me no good if we apply it to Jews or Mormons only!"
- I see all this as the "why" behind the "what" of Biblical illiteracy in Christianity today. I won't study the Bible, because I don't want to hear this.

- A recent Barna study shows that “60%” of American’s are unable to name either half (five) of the Ten Commandments or the Four Gospels.” - I’m too comfortable in my faithless self-righteousness, thus instead of the Bible keeping me from sin, my sin has in fact kept me from the Bible.
- It’s for this reason, sound doctrine isn’t tolerated. This brand of Christian will flock to a church that tells them what their ears are itching to hear.
- 2 Timothy 4:1-5 NIV In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: (2) Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. (3) For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. (4) They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Comparing Myself With Other People (Ro 3:9-20)

- If you wanted to subtitle this teaching, it could be something like
 - "The Problems it Causes in my Life"
 - "The Danger it Brings into my Life"
- Comparing myself with other people
 - This is one of the most serious problems in our lives
 - It’s the cause of marriage problems, financial problems, et al.
 - It causes problems for pastors and churches
 - It’s an enormous problem when we share the gospel, hoping to lead someone to Christ.
- Why is this such a problem?
 - Comparing myself to others causes financial problems because I buy things I don’t need with money I don’t have to impress people I don’t like.
 - Comparing myself to others causes marital problems because the grass will start looking greener on the other side of the fence, so-to-speak.
 - Comparing myself to others causes spiritual problems because I won’t see myself as being as bad of a person as the one I’m comparing to.
 - Comparing myself to others causes ministerial problems because the other church is larger with more to offer making me try to grow mine.
- This explains why we have this writing by Paul here in the Epistle of Romans.
 - He’s up against a Jewish constituency who are doing just that. —
 - This is precisely the problem that he will now address, as we see the first danger of comparing myself to other people beginning in verse nine.
- Comparing myself with other people - the problems that it caused, and the dangers that came packaged with it
 - I will see myself as better than others (Verse 9)
 - Paul rhetorically asks, then answers the question, by way of conclusion, that Jews are no better than the Gentiles because both are under sin.
 - I will see myself as a good person (Verses 10-12)
 - Paul quotes scripture saying; no one’s righteous, or understands, nor seeks God. All turned away, are worthless, and no one is, or does good.
 - I will see myself as someone I’m not (Verses 13-18)
 - Paul describes their self-deception in graphic detail. He likens how God saw them through His eyes to why there’s no fear of God in their eyes.
 - I will see myself as being owed something (Verses 19-20)

1. I will see myself as better than others (Verse 9)

(9) What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.

- It's important to understand, when the Jews compared themselves with the Gentiles, they saw themselves as being superior to the Gentiles. So much so that even to this day millions of Jews all over the world will pray a prayer out of the Sidur (Jewish Prayer Book) that goes like this:
"Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a Gentile. Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a slave. Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the Universe, for not having made me a woman."
- Paul's conclusion and charge – that Jews and Gentiles are all alike, under sin – would have been explosive
 - Paul is speaking as a Jew, to the Jew, so that the Jew won't see himself as being better than the Gentile.
 - Here-to-fore, the beloved Apostle has had to, by the Holy Spirit, ever so bluntly yet brilliantly, demolish the structure of their Jewish superiority. He doesn't use a wrecking ball, he uses explosives to implode their high minded tower, trapping them, with Gentiles under the rubble of sin.
 - This is what God does with us, when we do, as did the Jew, and compare ourselves with those whom we've fancied ourselves as better than.
 - If the truth be known, I will only compare myself with someone whom I perceive to be inferior to me,
 - If they're not, I will tear them down.
 - When I become caustic, cutting, and condescending to another, it only exposes the insecurity of my inferiority, and my quest for a superiority.
- Romans 12:3 NIV For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.
- Matthew 26:31-35 NIV Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' (32) But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." (33) Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." (34) "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." (35) But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.
 - Peter not only thought more highly of himself than he ought, he compared himself, seeing himself as better than the other disciples.

2. I will see myself as a good person (Verses 10-12)

(10) As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one (11) there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. (12) All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

- Paul now begins the quoting of seven Old Testament scriptures
 - Ps 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. 2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.
- This is straight up, and head on, and it needed to be – The Jews were smug in their self-perceived righteousness seeing themselves as good.
 - Not only are they not good, they do not understand, nor do they seek God. They've turned away, become worthless, and no one does good.
 - Like rotten fruit is worthless, so too are we rotten, and unrighteous, because everyone has turned away from God, and no one seeks God.

- William Newell - "No human being has in himself ever been [good]. Even Adam was not righteous: he was innocent—not knowing good and evil. Let us put far from our minds the fond falsehoods of philosophy, science, and human “religions,” that there have been men of our race who have attained to a standing before God in righteousness. ...Adam, sinning, turned his back and fled from a holy God. God had to take the place of the seeker: “Adam, where art thou?” So it has ever been. No human being has ever sought the holy God. ... Banish from your mind the idea that any human being has ever had a holy thought, or love for a holy God, in his natural heart! Grace is the old phrase expressing the truth that God Himself takes the place of the seeker, convictor, persuader, giver, and final perfecter of all man’s salvation. His sovereign grace goes ahead of, and brings into being, all human response to God."
- Question; "When you're sharing the Gospel with someone, don't they always say something like, I'm a good person, or, I'm still searching?" Or, they'll say something like; "I've never murdered anyone, or, I'm not as bad as some people are? Well, Paul just demolished all of them.
 - The fact of the matter is that when compared to others, I may think I'm good, but it's not good enough, and I'm not seeking or searching either.
- Seeing myself as good disables my ability to respond to God – I will see myself as being so good that I become a god
 - Then, when (not if) something bad happens, I will blame God, and accuse God, of allowing this bad thing to happen to me as a good person.
 - When I realize I'm not good, then, when something good happens, I'll thank God for allowing this good thing to happen to me as a bad person.
 - Seeing myself as a sinner, enables me to respond to other sinners, so when they do something bad, it's not so bad, because they're not good.
 - Conversely, when a bad person does something good, I will become enchanted with them, not disappointed in them, or worse, hurt by them.
 - Furthermore, when I compare myself with them, I will see that I'm a sinner, the same as them, and thus I am certainly not better than them.

3. I will see myself as someone I'm not (Verses 13-18)

(13) "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." (14) "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." (15) "Their feet are swift to shed blood; (16) ruin and misery mark their ways, (17) and the way of peace they do not know." (18) "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

- Paul gets quite graphic describing man’s condition out there in the world
 - 13 “Their throats are open graves; – Psalm 5:9
 - 13 their tongues practice deceit.” – Zephaniah 3:13
 - 13 “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” – Psalm 140:3
 - 14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” – Psalm 10:7
 - 15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood; – Psalm 14:3
 - 16 ruin and misery mark their ways – Isaiah 59:7
 - 17 and the way of peace they do not know.” – Isaiah 59:8
 - 18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” – Psalm 36:1
- Why do we have such detail in Paul's description of man’s condition? God is making a diagnosis to give the prognosis
 - Just as the physician will look down our throats so too does the Great Physician look down our spiritual throats to diagnose our state of health.
 - So, what does God find when He conducts this examination? Man is terminally ill, and beyond cure
 - His throat is like an open grave
 - His tongue practices deceit
 - His lips have the poison of a viper
 - His mouth is full of cursing and bitterness
 - His feet are swift to shed blood

- This is why there is no fear of God before his eyes – Man cannot see God with his eyes, because he sees himself as a god in his own eyes.
- God deals not with symptoms on the surface, only sin beneath the surface
 - The diagnosis is a heart of pride
 - The prognosis is death
- Notice how Paul uses throats, tongues, lips, mouths, feet, and finally, eyes. Why?
 - God is showing us how He sees us through His eyes.
 - God, Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, has been doing this with us since the beginning.
 - Genesis 3:1-7 NKJV Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" (2) And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; (3) but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " (4) Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (6) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. (7) Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.
 - Matthew 6:22-23 NIV "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. (23) But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!
- It starts with the eyes!
 - If I see myself through my own eyes, and not God's eyes, I'm deceiving myself, believing myself to be someone I'm not. How I see me, affects and infects every part of me metaphorically, spiritually.
 - Like Eve, I eat with my mouth, that which is pleasant to my eyes. Thus the infection in my throat, the deceit of my tongue, the poison on my lips, the curse from my mouth, leads to the blood, shed by my feet.
- Deuteronomy 8 and 9 speak to this, and of this.
 - God had to humble the Israelites by showing them the deceitful wickedness of their heart, so they would see themselves as God saw them.
 - Only God knows man's heart, and man looks only on the outward appearance and cannot see the heart, so God shows man what He sees.
 - He does this because man becomes proud outwardly, and in order to humble him, He must show him; "him," inwardly, as He sees him, truly.
- This is how – and why – man has the propensity to deceive himself into thinking more highly of himself, and in so doing puffs himself up in pride.
 - When I'm self-deceived in this way, I'm then disabled in every way, and my disabilities are many, the chief of which is, I'm visually impaired. My blindness, will be proportionate to my haughtiness. Because I've been disabled in this way, I'm not enabled in any way, to see my true self.
- It's for this reason that God must show me, me!
 - Left to my self-deceptive pride I have no hope of seeing myself nor my need to humble myself.
 - I suppose you could say this is the why behind the what of the strong words from the Apostle Paul. He gets to the heart of the matter, literally. He gets to, and puts His finger on, the root cause of seeing oneself as someone they're not, namely comparing themselves with other people.
- God deals not with symptoms on the surface, only sin beneath the surface, and the diagnosis is a heart of pride, and the prognosis is death.
 - Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?
 - As one commentator so aptly said it; "Pride is the ground in which all the other sins grow, and the parent from which all the other sins come."

4. I will see myself as being owed something (Verses 19-20)

(19) Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. (20) Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

- The owed reward of righteousness vis-a-vis observing the law
 - When I compare myself to other people – seeing myself as a good person (someone I'm not) and better than others, I'll think I deserve better. When I don't get what I think I deserve, I begin to complain because I see myself as being owed something, by virtue of who I see myself as.
 - Conversely, when I compare myself to the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ I realize I'm owed nothing, and am silenced about everything.
- Paul and Moses – The connection between Paul in Romans, and Moses in Deuteronomy, is utterly profound, and provocative, in how God does the same thing.
- Dt 9 – God gives the promised land to the Israelites – not for the Israelites righteousness, but the nations wickedness
 - Moses tells the Israelites why God dispossesses the Promised-Land of nations who were greater and mightier than the Israelites. He tells them why He's doing it, by saying why He's not doing it. God does it not for the Israelites righteousness, but the nations wickedness.
 - Israelites were righteous – Not only do they need to understand that it's not because of their righteousness, they also need to understand the extent of their unrighteousness.
 - Moses reminds them that they're a stiff-necked people in how they complained about anything, thinking that God owed them everything.
 - He does this by recounting the Israelite's unrighteousness and not the other nations wickedness, and by doing this, silences their complaining.
 - He tells them of how, after 40 days and nights of fasting, he comes down from Mount Sinai because of God's anger for their unspeakable sin – The Israelites gave up on God and Moses when they didn't believe he was coming back as he promised, so they made themselves a new god. When Moses sees the golden calf he becomes angry and throws down the tablets of stone, with the commandments of God and breaks them.
 - The stone tablets are broken, as God's law was broken, and this is what God, through Moses, needed to show the Israelites under the law. So too is this what the Apostle had to do. God through Paul needed to show the Jews in Rome, that under the law, they've broken the law. When we see that, and realize that, we are all unrighteous at Mount Sinai, we will then come to the only One Who is righteous at Mount Zion.
- Hebrews 12:(18) NIV You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; (19) to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, (20) because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." (21) The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." (22) But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, (23) to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, (24) to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
 - The writer of Hebrews compares their Mount Sinai with our Mount Zion and draws some interesting parallels between them then; and us now.

Mount Sinai	Mount Zion
They came to this mountain	We come to a different mountain
Was the Old Covenant	Is the New Covenant
God's Law	God's Grace
Condemnation	Salvation

There was fear and terror	There is love and forgiveness
Was in a dry and desolate desert	Is in the city of the Living God
Was earthly	Is heavenly
Only Moses could come and meet God	An innumerable company comes as a general assembly
There were guilty men in fear	There are just men made perfect
Moses is the mediator	Jesus is the mediator
Ratified by the blood of animals	Ratified by the blood of God's precious Son, Jesus
Excluded people with barriers	Includes people because the barrier has been torn
Meant death	Means life

Conclusion (Ro 3:9-20)

- Ro 3:9 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.
 - Out there in the world, we are all born into a condition of sin
- Ro 3:10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." – Psalm 14 and Psalm 53
- A whole list of things describing what people are like out there in the world
 - 13 "Their throats are open graves; – Psalm 5:9
 - 13 their tongues practice deceit." – Zephaniah 3:13
 - 13 "The poison of vipers is on their lips." – Psalm 140:3
 - 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." – Psalm 10:7
 - 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; – Psalm 14:3
 - 16 ruin and misery mark their ways – Isaiah 59:7
 - 17 and the way of peace they do not know." – Isaiah 59:8
 - 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." – Psalm 36:1
- Ro 3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.
 - God gave the Law as the straight line of God's requirements
 - Whether you have the Law or not, the Law is still the straight line and no one can keep it
 - Whether you are part of the Jewish Covenant or not, the Law is still the straight line
 - However, these requirements are unattainable
 - Even if you did – no one is saved by observing the Law – there's no reward, only punishment
 - If you try to be viewed as right by God by obeying the Law, you are not going to succeed
 - Every one of us can turn to God, even as we spiral downward
 - You can't take one step closer to a savior until you realized that you need to be saved
 - This is the purpose of the Law out in world, whether Jew or Gentile

Thank you Jesus!

God is known in our hearts and by what we see and what we know

- Where do we get truth from? Only from absolute truth – Jesus and the Bible

There is a depravity within all of our hearts – if it was up to us, we would always move away from God

- Entitlement – No responsibility for our actions, we just deserve everything just because
- Jewish entitlement to heaven
- The only thing that we are entitled to is condemnation and judgement by God

Thank you Jesus!

- The only way to be right with God is through Jesus
- Ro 3:25 – Propitiation – Jesus paid the price for us so that we can be right with God
- Jesus didn't wait for us to get it right through our own works, but rather through Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf

Make it personal – Jesus died for ME

- Belief in what Jesus did for us brings us forgiveness
- We aren't entitled, we are grateful and thankful
- We WANT to live lives dedicated to Jesus – our lives should be transformed
 - Our lives should not look like they looked before we were saved

IV. Thesis Restated – Salvation by grace through faith (Ro 3:21-31)

Righteousness Through Faith

21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. 29 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

- A righteousness from God, apart from law, comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.
- Ro 3:21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known
 - 21... to which the Law and the Prophets testify.
- 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.
 - 22 ... There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
 - 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
- 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.
 - The shed blood of Christ on the cross is what enables our salvation
 - Heb 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
 - God is a God of love, but He is also a God of justice, holiness and righteous. There must be a penalty paid for sin. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. Christ shed His blood on our behalf so that God could look at us and declare us righteous.
 - Why did God set it up this way?
 - To demonstrate that He is not only a God of love, but also of justice, holiness and righteous
 - Love is the motive for our salvation
 - Justice is important – who would want to live in a universe that was fundamentally unjust?
 - 25 ... He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—
 - God is patient with us – He gives us time to repent of our sins, therefore there are not always immediate consequences.

- 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.
 - There are eventually, however, consequences for all unrepented sin
- 27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded.
 - 27 ... On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.
 - God doesn't save anyone because they are good
- 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
- 29 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,
 - 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.
- 31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

God Centered Solutions to Man Centered Problems

"God Centered Solutions to Man Centered Problems," as it's the only way to resolve the divine dilemma.

- Paul turns a huge corner beginning here in verse 21 – everything up to this point, has been leading to the main point
 - "There's a glorious transition from the judgment of Romans 3:20 to the justification of Romans 3:21."
 - Another commentator likened it to unfolding Paul's manifesto back in 1:16-17, where he declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ because it is the power of God for salvation, by faith, and in it, a righteousness of God is revealed to those who believe by faith.
- There are some problems that have to be resolved in order for us to be the recipients of the power of God for salvation
 - All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God – there is no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles
 - All are law breakers, all have all sinned, all fall short of God's glory, so we all deserve condemnation under the law.
 - However, if you're self-righteous, and self-centered as these Jews in Rome were, and still fancy yourself as a law keeper, you've got a problem. Your problem is you've centered everything around your own righteousness. You have been deceived and believed that you're a good person.
 - The law is powerless to save us, yet because not one jot nor tittle can be done away with it, we're still condemned under it.
- God can't just "let us off the hook," because if He did, then He would cease to be just, and He would become evil. In other words, if the Judge of the universe, in the courtroom of eternity, let the guilty deserving the death penalty go free, He would be unjust.
 - That is the dilemma; how does a just and righteous God remain just bringing salvation when the law requires that we be condemned to death?
 - If God lets us off, then He's unjust
 - If God condemns us to death, He's deemed unfair or even worse yet, unloving.
 - It's a proverbial "Catch-22."
 - Divine dilemma – How does a righteous God remain both loving and just while keeping the law intact justifying the unrighteous man
- Any hope for any solution to this divine dilemma is lost by virtue of its sheer impossibility in the realm of our humanity. I believe this is precisely the point! **A man centered problem remains impossible, until it comes to a God centered solution where it is possible.**
 - This may explain, though not excuse, many of the problems in our lives today, even in the church today. We have become man/self-centered.
 - Replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ, we are given such horrific and graphic detail of great men of God, sinning so greatly against God.
 - Why? It's so I'll realize that my life is not centered on who or how I am, but rather, my life will be centered on Who God is, in spite of who I am.

- God reveals to me how good He is, by showing me how bad I am. In so doing He re-centers me from it being all about me, to being about Him.
 - Not only is this the solution to the divine dilemma, it can also be the solution to my problems if I'm centered on Him, and not made it about me. More specifically; if I've made it about me, then the solutions must come from me.
- Paul teaches us that it's not all about us, it's about God.
 - One commentator said it best this way; "The big danger in preaching this [passage] is that we treat it as if it were about us, when it is about God. It is not centrally about me... This God-centeredness is a problem for preachers, for we think people will pay more attention if the message is centered on human beings."
 - Actually, this is the problem! Man-centered problems are problems because they're man-centered, and this is the reason there are no solutions.
 - If we're wondering why it is that the church today is in such peril, perhaps we need look no further than to what's preached in the church today. There's no victory in our life, and there's no solutions to the problems in our life when all we ever hear are how to sermons on success in our life.
 - The problems get even worse when (not if) we fail after trying to keep the seven promises, or develop the seven habits of highly effective people. This brand of Christianity cannot work because the seed of its success was planted in the infertile soil of man-centeredness. It will not grow!
 - This is the reason the beloved Apostle writes this in this way in his epistle. It's not chiefly about me and salvation, it's about God and justification.
- Salvation
 - Comes from God apart from the law (Verse 21) – If it were under the law, and not apart from the law, then there can be no salvation, because according to the law, I receive only condemnation.
 - Comes through faith to those who believe (Verse 22) – It's not through self-righteousness. If it were, then instead of a righteousness from God through faith apart from the law, I could in self-righteousness, apart from God, keep the law.
 - The problem of our salvation comes vis-a-vis the solution of God's justification
 - Absent this, the divine dilemma of man's sin has no solution
 - As long as I insist and persist in trying to solve my problems, my way, there's no way.
 - The only way it comes is from the one Who is "the way."
- How is God going to bring about His solution to man's sin problem?
 - The solution comes vis-a-vis the one Who said; "I am the way, the truth and the life,"
 - There's no way I can do this, in my own way.
 - Salvation comes from God apart from the law
 - 21 – Now a righteousness from God apart from the law, testified to by both the Prophets and the law, has now been made known.
 - Salvation comes through faith to those who believe
 - 22 – This righteousness from God, comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. It's not through self-righteousness.
 - Salvation comes by grace for all have sinned
 - 23-24 – All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God – and are freely justified by His grace, through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
 - Christ comes as a substitute in our place
 - 25-26 – Jesus is the substitutionary atonement – and through faith in His blood, God demonstrates His justice while keeping the law intact.
 - The answer to the divine dilemma – How does a righteous God remains both loving and just while keeping the law intact in justifying the unrighteous man
 - Salvation comes at the expense of our own glory
 - 27 – Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded.
 - Salvation comes through the gospel while upholding the law
 - 28 – We are justified by faith apart from observing the law
 - 29 – He is the God of the Jews and the Gentiles

- 30 – Since there's only one God, He will justify the Jews and the Gentiles by the same faith
- 31 – Does faith nullify the law? Not at all! Rather, it upholds the law

1. Salvation comes from God apart from the Law (Verse 21)

21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

- God hasn't done away with the law – He's made known another way apart from the law
 - It comes vis-a-vis the only One Who fulfilled the law.
 - It comes by way, of the One Who said; "I am the way, the truth, and the life."
- There's no other way apart from this righteousness from God.
 - There's no way that I, in and of myself, can ever be righteous enough under the law to receive a verdict of "not guilty" according to the law.
 - Not only has God done this for me, He's done this instead of me, which is why this righteousness from God, has been made known by God.
- When Paul writes that the Law and Prophets testify to this, he is painting a portrait of Jesus Christ on the canvass of Old Testament scripture.

2. Salvation comes through faith to those who believe (Verse 22)

22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,

- It's important that we note the order in which Paul presents this. Paul tells them that it doesn't come through keeping the law, it only comes through faith in Jesus Christ Who fulfilled the law.
 - Here-to-for he's introduced man's problem, so as to present God's solution.
 - He goes from first telling them how it does NOT come, before he tells them how it does come.
 - Sometimes we must unlearn, in order to learn.
- He writes this in this way for a number of reasons
 - In their minds the jury is still out related to their keeping the law.
 - We can become guilty of doing the same thing, and we don't realize that when we do, we're subtly and satanically putting God on trial instead.
 - Have you noticed that virtually everything we see – especially as it relates to whether or not someone is guilty – Is decided by us now?
 - We can simply text our vote, voicing our opinion, and seemingly decide a death penalty case, which gives us the sense of being the judges.
- "If God exists, do you approve or disapprove of 'IT'S' performance?"
 - Recently, a secular polling organization in North Carolina by the name of "Public Policy Polling" released the results of several polls – one group of questions engaged Americans' current feelings toward God, asking; "If God exists, do you approve or disapprove of 'IT'S' performance?"
 - 52% approve of God's performance
 - 9% disapprove of God's performance
 - 40% were "not sure" if they approved of God's performance.
- What's interesting is, that this describes what the condition of the world
 - Sadly, the church will be in this, the last lukewarm Laodicean days.
 - The church "of the Laodicean's" had voted God out, which is why Jesus is on the outside of this church knocking on the door to come back in.
 - This last day's lukewarm Laodicean church was neither "faithful" nor "true," nor was it "hot" or "cold," because they as the "laity" would "decide."

- Laodicea
 - The name is the nature and the interpretation
 - The name Laodicea is derived by the combination of two English words, both “laity” and “decide.”
 - Laodicea
 - Wealthy banking center of the region at that time.
 - The entertainment capital of the world
 - With their 30,000 seat amphitheatre, they became the Hollywood of their day.
 - Known for their trend setting fashions
 - They would export their garments all over the known world.
 - Known for their cutting-edge medical breakthroughs
 - Created a sophisticated eye salve to improve vision.
 - Built a 6-mile aqueduct from Hierapolis (Col 4:13) to have the water from their natural hot springs.
 - This is why Jesus rebuked them and warned them to repent. They were blind to how wretched, pitiful, poor, and naked they were in God's eyes. So much so, He wanted to vomit them out of His mouth. They were as lukewarm as the water from Hierapolis was when it reached Laodicea.
- Romans and Laodiceans
 - If everything is centered on me, and is about me, then it will be up to me, to decide whether or not, the jury is still out, or the verdict has come in.
 - Instead of a righteousness from God, through faith, apart from the law, I decide in self-righteousness, apart from God, that I have kept the law.

3. Salvation comes by grace for all have sinned (Verses 23-24)

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

- All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God – there is no difference between the Jews, and the Gentiles
- All of our problems are because all are sinners!
 - Why do I have problems in the marriage? It's because there are sinners in the marriage!
 - It's not a marriage problem, it's a sin problem – and the only answer to this sin problem for man, is the grace solution from God. I am justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that comes by Jesus Christ. That's why it's not my salvation, it's His justification.
- Justification
 - As one so aptly put it; "Jesus writes the check of redemption to pay the price of propitiation."
 - This is the God-centered solution of salvation by way of justification. It's by the grace of God through the redemption of Jesus Christ
 - Jesus' redemption is how God solves man's sin problem
 - To define justification, by way of illustration; it would be like one of my sons hacking into my account and making exorbitant purchases online. Then, when the statement arrives, we have a serious problem. I see this enormous amount of debt that's owed, and my son cannot pay for it. Because of my grace he's justified freely, when I pay his debt in full, not requiring him to pay me back. He could say; it's just-if-I'd never done it.
 - In this illustration, were he under the obligation by law to pay in Paul's day, he would be sold into slavery for his debts. I redeem him by paying for him so he's freed from the slave market. Now, I've paid the debt of salvation at the cost of redemption.
 - The judge's wrath has been appeased – the debt that was owed has been paid for in full by another.
 - God's wrath was satisfied by Christ's sacrifice of atonement,
- Since God did all of this for our salvation eternally, will He not also take care of you in this world temporally?

- Psalms 55:22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.
- 1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
- Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

4. Christ came as a substitute in our place (Verses 25-26)

25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

- Jesus covered (atoned for) our sins by paying the penalty (expiation) and appeasing God’s wrath (propitiation)
- Definitions
 - Expiation – Removal of guilt through the payment of a penalty
 - *ex* means “out of” or “from” – Removing something or taking something away
 - Horizontal – Applies to things done on earth
 - Expiation is the act that results in the change of God’s disposition toward us
 - It is the act of what Christ did on the cross – His offering of an atonement on our behalf
 - Jesus covered (atoned for) our sins by paying the penalty (expiation) and appeasing God’s wrath (propitiation)
 - Propitiation – Satisfying God’s wrath against sin
 - *propitiation* has to do with the object of the expiation
 - *pro* means “for” – Propitiation brings about a change in God’s attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us.
 - Vertical – Applies to how the act of expiation applies to God
 - The result of Christ’s work of expiation is propitiation—God’s anger is turned away. Through the process of propitiation, we are restored into fellowship and favor with God
 - Jesus covered (atoned for) our sins by paying the penalty (expiation) and appeasing God’s wrath (propitiation)
 - Atonement – The foundational truth that Christ Jesus died on the cross for our sins
 - 1Co 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
 - In this way Christ fulfilled the old covenant sacrificial system and reconciled us to God
 - All men are sinners (Romans 3:9-18, 23). The penalty for our sinfulness is death (Romans 6:23).
 - Death in the Scriptures refers to a “separation.” Everyone will die, but some will live in heaven with the Lord for eternity, while others will live a life in hell for eternity. The death spoken of here refers to the life in hell. Without Christ, we are going to die and spend an eternity in hell as payment for our sins.
 - Eternal life in heaven is available through Jesus Christ – He is our substitutionary atonement
 - Jesus Christ died in our place when He was crucified on the cross. We deserved to be the ones placed on that cross to die because we are the ones who live sinful lives. But Christ took

the punishment on Himself in our place—He substituted Himself for us and took what we rightly deserved.

- Christ was our atonement, meaning He satisfied the payment due for the sinfulness of man
2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God
- 1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed
- 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit
- Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
- We can only pay the price of sin on our own by being punished and placed in hell for all eternity. But God's Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth to pay for the price of our sins. Because He did this for us, we now have the opportunity to not only have our sins forgiven, but to spend eternity with Him. In order to do this we must place our faith in what Christ did on the cross. We cannot save ourselves; we need a substitute to take our place. The death of Jesus Christ is the substitutionary atonement.
- Redemption – the price that was paid to redeem the debtor that's sold at the slave market
 - Redeem means “to buy out.”
 - The term was used specifically in reference to the purchase of a slave's freedom.
 - The application of this term to Christ's death on the cross is quite telling. If we are “redeemed,” then our prior condition was one of slavery. God has purchased our freedom, and we are no longer in bondage to sin or to the Old Testament law.
 - Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)
 - Galatians 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
 - Everyone is in need of redemption.
 - Our natural condition was characterized by guilt: “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
 - Christ's redemption has freed us from guilt, being “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).
 - The benefits of redemption:
 - Eternal life
 - Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song, saying:
“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;
For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.”
 - Forgiveness of sins
 - Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace
 - Righteousness
 - Romans 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
 - Freedom from the law's curse
 - Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)
 - Adoption into God's family
 - Galatians 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
 - Deliverance from sin's bondage

- Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.
- Peace with God
 - Colossians 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.
- Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
 - Ezekiel 36:27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.
- To be redeemed, then, is to be forgiven, holy, justified, free, adopted, and reconciled.
 - The streets of heaven will be filled with former captives who, through no merit of their own, find themselves redeemed, forgiven, and free. Slaves to sin have become saints. No wonder we will sing a new song—a song of praise to the Redeemer who was slain (Revelation 5:9). We were slaves to sin, condemned to eternal separation from God. Jesus paid the price to redeem us, resulting in our freedom from slavery to sin and our rescue from the eternal consequences of that sin.
- See also Psalm 130:7-8; Luke 2:38; and Acts 20:28.
 - Psalm 130:7-8 O Israel, hope in the Lord; For with the Lord there is mercy, And with Him is abundant redemption. And He shall redeem Israel From all his iniquities.
 - Luke 2:38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to [a]the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.
 - Acts 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church [a]of God which He purchased with His own blood.
- Justification – Declared righteous, to make one right with God
 - The action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God – “just-if-I’d” never sinned
 - We are justified, declared righteous, at the moment of our salvation. Justification does not make us righteous, but rather pronounces us righteous. Our righteousness comes from placing our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice covers our sin, allowing God to see us as perfect and unblemished. Because as believers we are in Christ, God sees Christ's own righteousness when He looks at us. This meets God's demands for perfection; thus, He declares us righteous—He justifies us. (gotquestions.org)
 - Romans 5:18-19 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”
 - It is because of justification that the peace of God can rule in our lives. It is because of justification that believers can have assurance of salvation. It is the fact of justification that enables God to begin the process of sanctification—the process by which God makes us in reality what we already are positionally. “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1) (gotquestions.org)
- Reconciliation – To be reconciled is to be restored to friendship or harmony
 - We are now reunited to God, because of the atonement – We are now "at-one-ment" with God
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”
 - Christ reconciled us to God

- Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,
 - Colossians 1:20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled
- The fact that we needed reconciliation means that our relationship with God was broken.
 - God is holy – we are the ones to blame for our separation from God. Our sin alienated us from Him.
 - Romans 5:10 says that we were enemies of God: “For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”
 - When Christ died on the cross, He satisfied God’s judgment and made it possible for God’s enemies (us) to find peace with Him. Our “reconciliation” to God, then, involves the exercise of His grace and the forgiveness of our sin.
 - The result of Jesus’ sacrifice is that our relationship has changed from enmity to friendship.
 - “I no longer call you servants ... Instead, I have called you friends” (John 15:15).
 - Christian reconciliation is a glorious truth! We were God’s enemies, but are now His friends. We were in a state of condemnation because of our sins, but we are now forgiven. We were at war with God, but now have the peace that transcends all understanding (Philippians 4:7).
- The only way there can be this justification, redemption, reconciliation, and atonement, is by means of the propitiation with a substitute sacrifice. There is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood, and Jesus became our substitute as the sacrifice. His blood was shed, in our stead.
 - One commentator explained it: Redemption is an act of God by which He Himself pays as a ransom, the price of human sin which the outraged holiness and government of God requires.
 - Redemption undertakes the solution of the problem of sin
 - Reconciliation undertakes the solution of the problem of the sinner
 - Propitiation undertakes the problem of an offended God.
 - Now there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus
 - The wrath of God has now been appeased vis-a-vis this propitiation
 - Only the shed blood of Jesus Christ, in His once and for all substitutionary sacrifice has the power to satisfy God's wrath for the sins of mankind.
 - If the law is powerless to save, then so too is any sacrifice I make powerless to appease God's wrath for breaking the law of God.
 - Ro 8:3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- Shouldn't God-centered solutions to man-centered problems come from Him by grace through faith in His blood?
 - We can use this template in our approach to the problems of this life.
 - Here's how it works
 - There's so much power in the blood of Jesus Christ that when I realize that I've been forgiven of much, I'll in turn love much.
 - No longer will I tie the hands of God's solutions with the ropes of my self-justified righteousness, and in so doing make my problems even worse.
 - God has permission to have the solution come from Him – by grace, through faith, in His substitutionary sacrifice with His blood shed in my stead.
 - Ex – Let's try using this template on a common man-centered problem – marriage

- For purpose of discussion, we won't define the problem, we'll just say that this couple has been experiencing a problem that they cannot solve. Here-to-fore, the problem has actually gotten even worse because everything they've tried to do in an attempt to resolve it is met with failure.
 - The husband blames the wife, and the wife blames the husband.
 - The husband argues that it's her problem, the wife argues that it's his problem.
 - The husband wants something from the wife, and the wife wants something from the husband
- Trying to get what they want just never works. They start losing hope in the marriage, and they begin to lose faith in each other.
- Then, it gets so bad that they start looking for a substitute.
 - Some turn to drugs and alcohol
 - Some turn to their career
 - Some turn to another person to get from them what they haven't had.
- At this point, the fate of this marriage has been sealed. It's doomed to fail and will end in divorce only to be repeated remarrying someone else.
 - I'm keenly aware, I've painted a very bleak picture of a very bad marriage however, that's precisely the man centered problem we can resolve. How? By now placing our template of the God centered solution onto this man centered problem.
- Let's see how this should play out instead.
 - First, the reason this couple has been powerless to save their marriage, is the same reason that the law is powerless to save us as sinners. Just as the law shows us that we are sinners, so too does the problem in this couple's marriage show them that they too are both sinners. They are both at fault, thus they are both to blame.
 - This will explain why the solution comes not from them, but from God (apart from the law).
 - This is why nothing they try works. It's not of works, it's all of grace, and it comes by grace from God. They don't deserve it, they receive it.
 - The reason this couple is losing faith in each other (ie, not getting what they needed from the other) is that the answer should come through faith in God, not from each other.
 - This presupposes that they're taking their needs to the Lord, Who is always faithful and from Whom there's no greater love that never fails.
 - By taking their needs to the Lord, they're acknowledging the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord, and the blood shed in their stead by the Lord.

5. Salvation comes at the expense of our own glory (Verse 27)

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.

- Why does God do it this way? It's really for our own good.
- Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded.
 - How then can one boast? Is it boasting about observing of law? No. You can only boast about your faith.
 - This reinforces the template of God's salvation solution – It comes from God, by grace, through faith, in Christ, our substitutionary sacrifice, so there's no grounds upon which man can stand and boast.
 - Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.
 - 1 Corinthians 1:26 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him.
- This explains why it is – and how it is – that God did what He did in the Old Testament
 - He's the same, yesterday, today and forever.
 - It's His M.O. – We see time and time again where God chooses the Gideon's of this world, and he chooses the David's of this world to defeat the Goliath's.

- The common denominator with them, and many others like them, is that there's no way that they could ever boast about that which God did.
- How is God glorified?
 - The problem is the motive of my heart – If I can figure it out, and work it out, in my own savvy and strength, then in spiritual pride, I'll get the glory.
 - Conversely, when God does it for me – by grace and instead of me, through faith – then there's no way I can take the credit even if It tried to.
 - James 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

6. Salvation comes through the gospel while upholding the law (Verses 28-31)

28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. 29 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

- 28 – A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law
- 29 – He is the God of the Jews and the Gentiles
- 30 – Since there's only one God, He will justify both the circumcised & uncircumcised by the same faith
- 31 – Does faith nullify the law? Not at all! Rather, it upholds the law
- This is how Paul seals the deal! Perhaps a better way of saying it would be; "the law is upheld, case closed!"
 - Justice has been served by establishing the law, upholding the law, and fulfilling the law.
 - Justice has come vis-a-vis the only one who kept the law.
- This was the purpose of the straight line of the law – It showed us our crookedness and need for a savior, Jesus Christ, who perfectly fulfilled the law.
 - Galatians 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. 20 A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one. 21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. 22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. 23 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. 24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.
- This is the Gospel
 - The word Gospel means good news. That suggests that in order for there to be good news, there must have been bad news.
 - By way of illustration, here's a simple graphic that communicates a simple message called; "the Gospel," which, again, means "Good News." In the beginning, God and man were together, but through Adam sin entered the world and separated man from God. (That's the bad news!) Because sin entered the world through Adam, Jesus entered into the world as the second Adam to die for and pay for our sin. (The good news!) The finished work of the cross, and the resurrection of the Christ, bridged the gap, and thus reunited man to God. It's for this reason the Christian faith is the truth, and all other religions are false. It's a relationship as opposed to a religion.

V. Demonstration by Example – Abraham & David (Ro 4)

Demonstration of the Thesis by Example – Abraham (Ro 4)

- Given the thesis and antithesis, what do we say? He goes back to the beginning – Abraham

Righteousness for all

- One becomes righteous by trusting God
 - Ro 4:4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.
 - Ge 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness
 - Ro 4:18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed
 - David – Ps 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him

Ro 4:19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22 This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." 23 The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

- Is the blessedness/righteousness only for the Jews (circumcised)? Or also for the Gentiles (uncircumcised)?
 - Was Abraham considered righteous before or after circumcision?
 - Does this crediting of righteous only apply to the Jews? Or to everyone who believes?
 - The covenant was made when Abram was 70
 - At this point, Abram is 86 and still has no children
 - Ge 16:16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Ge 15: 1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward. " 2 But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." 4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

- The sign of circumcision is not given until Ge 17 when Abraham is 99
- His faith was credited to him as righteousness before circumcision
 - Therefore, Abraham is the father of all who believe

Ro 4:9 Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 **Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!** 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. **So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.** 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

- There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile
 - Abraham did nothing to deserve the promises that God made
 - Law only brings wrath, not reward
 - This was pre-law – where there is no law there is no transgression

Ro 4:13 It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, 15 because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. 16 Therefore, **the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring**—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

- The Jews are natural children of Abraham, the Gentiles are adopted into the family
 - Natural – Isaac, Jacob, 12 sons
 - Adopted – People from all over the world that are adopted into the faith of Abraham

Grace Works

Here-to-fore, Paul's been dismantling their hyper-religious morality, with the hopes that they might realize it's grace, not works, apart from the law. He's got to get these Jews to abandon any notion that their good works under the law is good enough.

- Works won't work, because it's only grace that works.
 - It's for this reason that Paul, by the Holy Spirit, has been stripping these Jews in Rome of any notion that works, works.
 - It's important to understand that these Jews believed circumcision was synonymous with salvation – fancying themselves as religious and moral under the law. This explains why Paul has had to dismantle, and even demolish, their self-perceived piety so they will realize that **grace is apart from the law**.
 - Furthermore, in what would arguably be both explosive, and repulsive, he levels the playing field by saying this grace is for Jews and Gentiles.
- Why is it that grace works, and it is that it's not works that works?
 - Perhaps a better to say it would be; Paul has broken ground and the soil of their heart is now supple enough to receive the seed of God's grace. - This is where we see our first one found in verses one through three where Paul takes them back to the most esteemed figure in Israel's history.
- As one so aptly said it; "The Father thought it. The Son bought it. The Spirit taught it. The Bible brought it. Satan fought it. But, praise the Lord, by His grace, we got it!"
- In this chapter, Paul demonstrates grace (credited righteousness) through Father Abraham and King David
 - The reason he refers to the both of them – they share one thing in common, they were both recipients of God's credited righteousness.
 - It's not just *that* they were declared righteous, it's *how* they were declared righteous – Neither one of them were righteous vis-a-vis their works
 - These two men of God, who would have arguably been the most important figures in all Israel's history, had nothing to do with their credited righteousness.
 - They didn't do anything, or work for anything, that would have made them righteous before God, or pleasing to God, while under the law of God.
 - Paul communicates this, and illustrates this, by telling them that Abraham's credited righteousness came before the covenant of circumcision.
 - For Paul to say that Abraham's salvation, as it were, came not because of his circumcision but before his circumcision would've been explosive.
 - In effect, Paul has dismantled any hope of obtaining righteousness by their own works.
 - Paul knows he must do this first, by the Holy Spirit, because their works will not allow them to receive the message of the grace of God.
 - So too is this true for me and you. God's grace, in our lives, isn't even on the table, as long as our works have been given a place at the table.
 - Maybe another way of saying it is, works becomes the antithesis, even the enemy of grace, in that it strives and wars against all that grace is.

- Now that Paul has taken the works of Abraham's circumcision off the table of grace, they're ready to taste from the cup of God's amazing grace.

1. When it's not about what I am doing (Verses 1-3)

(1) What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? (2) If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. (3) What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

- Genesis 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
- Abraham
 - How was their forefather Abraham justified before God?
 - Genesis 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
 - It didn't have anything to do with Abram, nor did it have anything to do with what Abram did.
 - Abram was not justified by works
 - His willingness to leave Er of the Caldeas
 - His willingness to sacrifice his only begotten son Isaac.
 - Neither was it the covenant he had with God
 - God made a covenant with Abram, not vice-versa. Abram was in a deep sleep when God "cut-covenant" with Abram, so in effect, Abram didn't have anything to do with God's covenant
- It's not what we have done for God, it's what God has done for us.
 - If it had anything to do with what we've done, then we would be able to boast.
 - We're human beings, not human doings.
 - When Jesus preached His sermon on the mount, He gave us what are called the "beatitudes." They are not called the do-attitudes!
 - Replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ, "being" is woven into the fabric of scripture, not "doing."
 - Psalm 46:10 which says; "be still and know that I am God."
 - Notice that it's "be" still and not "do" still. You can't "do" still!
 - Grace works when it can "be" grace, and grace does not work when it has to "do" work.
 - In other words, grace is "being," and works is "doing."

2. When I'm not trying to earn God's blessing (Verses 4-5)

(4) Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. (5) However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

- By way of illustration, Paul uses an interesting analogy of an employer crediting his employers wages to him as a gift instead of an obligation. He contrasts this with the man who did not work to earn his paycheck, but rather trusts God to credit his account as righteousness by his faith. This in no way implies it was something this man did, i.e., working to have enough faith to justify his account being credited as righteousness.
 - William Newell - "To a man that works for wages, the wages are due as a debt. That is a simple enough principle. But do not seek to apply it to salvation! No one ever got righteousness by work or worth! Righteousness is not by doing right, strange and impossible as that may seem. ...to him who "casts his deadly doing down"; who, seeing his guilt, and his entire inability to put it away, ceases wholly from all efforts to [earn] God's favor by his own doings, or self-denyings,—even by his prayers: but believeth on the God that declareth righteous the ungodly—not the godly or the good!
- The greatest beneficiaries of God's grace are the ones who see it as unmerited, unearned and undeserved, because they're so utterly unworthy.

- Conversely, the ones who least benefit from God's grace do so because they see themselves as worthy having merited, earned and deserved it. If that's my posture before God, then I will ever be trying to "do" everything so as to merit, earn, and deserve the blessing of God in my life. It's as if we're working to give God every reason to bless us, and no reason not to bless us, based on our earning it, and or working hard for it.
 - If the truth be known, we really don't want to be in a position to earn God's blessing because if we had to work for it we would never be sure of it. If both salvation and sanctification were not grace based, then we would always be full of ambiguity and uncertainty based on if we earned it.
- As one so aptly said it; "The Father thought it. The Son bought it. The Spirit taught it. The Bible brought it. Satan fought it. But, praise the Lord, by His grace, we got it!"
- Grace works when I stop trying to work for it & earn it. That type of Christian life is a life that doesn't work – It can't
 - One of the characteristics of a Christian life of works is, it soon gives way to a life of legalism, which ultimately suffocates the joy out of that life.

3. When I receive God's credited righteousness (Verses 6-8)

(6) David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: (7) "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (8) Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

- Psalms 32:1-2. David writes; "Blessed are they whose sins are forgiven and covered, and never counted against them."
- King David
 - Paul now brings David in saying the same thing as Abram related to the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works.
 - Why did Paul go from Abraham to David? What is the common denominator between them?
 - To the Jew, Abraham was their father, and David their king.
 - Both of them shared one thing in common – God's credited righteousness.
- God's righteousness credited nullifies man's sinfulness debited.
 - God did not credit both their accounts because they worked for it and earned it.
 - If that were the case, then it would've been a debit instead of a credit. The wages or earnings of sin is death/works, but the gift is life/grace.
 - Grace works when I have been the recipient of God's credited righteousness and not debited because of my sinfulness.
- 2 Corinthians 3:6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- One commentator wrote; "No sinner, and try he ever so hard, can possibly carry his own sins away and come back cleansed of guilt. No amount of money, no science, no inventive skill, no armies of millions, nor any other earthly power can carry away from the sinner one little sin and its guilt. Once it is committed, every sin and its guilt cling to the sinner as close as does his own shadow, cling to all eternity unless God carries them away."

4. When I understand that it's unconditional (Verses 9-10)

(9) Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. (10) Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!

- Paul asks if Abraham's faith was credited to only the circumcised Jews, or is it also credited to the uncircumcised Gentiles as well? He then answers this by asking and answering two more questions about how Abraham's faith was credited to him "before" he was circumcised. Paul is going to great lengths to communicate that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness with no conditions.
- The grace of God is unconditional
 - The grace of God, in concert with the righteousness from God, is unconditional, as evidenced by Abraham receiving it prior to the circumcision.
 - There were no conditions that had to be met in order for Abraham, by faith, to be the recipient of God's credited righteousness.
 - This would have been a smack in the face of these smug Jews in Rome, by virtue of the supreme importance in their being of the circumcision.
 - Lest we be too quick in being too harsh towards them for this, we would all do well to check our own hearts as it relates to this type of mindset. - If the truth were known, we're all prone to the thinking that being the recipients of God's grace is predicated upon our meeting certain conditions. - Just as they were hanging the hat of their salvation on the rack of their circumcision, so too do we do the same in our affiliation or denomination.
 - I would suggest that we can become just as guilty as they were, thinking the grace of God, the blessing of God, comes vis-a-vis the conditional.
 - Ask this question; "absent my circumcision (affiliation or denomination), where would I be?" Would I be less righteous, less blessed, less of a believer? If the answer is yes, then it's a good indication that I see God's love as conditional.
 - If this attitude takes up residence in my Christian life, it will be characterized by a spiritual pride, and come packaged with a spiritual superiority. Just as the circumcised Jews fancied themselves as being superior over the Gentiles, who were not, so too do we look down on others as well.
- One commentator captured this best when they wrote that; "Paul has turned the Jew's boast upside down. It is not the Gentile who must come to the Jew's circumcision for salvation; it is the Jew who must come to a Gentile faith, such faith as Abraham had long before he was circumcised."
- Another commentator connects the dots to us as Christians when he writes; "The sacraments and ceremonies of the Church, useful when viewed in their proper light, become ruinous when perverted into grounds of confidence. What answers well as a sign, is a miserable substitute for the thing signified. Circumcision will not serve for righteousness, nor baptism for regeneration"

5. When I have the faith to believe God (Verses 11-12)

(11) And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. (12) And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

- We must see this as God's grace coming before any ritual, not because of any ritual.
 - It's for this reason, Abraham received that which he had by faith, while he was still uncircumcised, so now all can walk in those footsteps of faith.
 - If this were not so, we'd all have to do what the Galatians were told they had to do, which was to become circumcised, before coming to Christ.
- Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. 2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3 Again I declare to **every man who lets himself be circumcised is obligated to obey the whole law.** 4 **You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ;** you have fallen away from grace.

- Grace, not works
 - This falling away from grace can come under the banner of doing something (works), such as performing some ritual, like baptism – it is simply not Biblical.
 - It's called by a couple of different names today – “Baptismal Regeneration” and “Lordship Salvation”
 - The common denominator with both of these false doctrines is that the "uncircumcised sinner's," faith in Christ alone is insufficient for salvation.
 - Baptismal Regeneration says that you must do something to be saved
 - Lordship Salvation says you must stop doing something to be saved
 - This is why Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says that it was by Abraham's faith alone, by God's grace alone, that he or any of us, are saved. Were this not the case, then it would not be grace, it would be works.
 - It's only grace that works, because none of our works, works!
- William Newell - Abraham just believed God: gave Him the honor of being a God of truth. And be it so that God saw that one day He would make Abraham as righteous in glory as He in that past day reckoned him in grace; yet it remains that God reckoned him what he was not, as yet, in experience; and that Abraham stood before God thus righteous the moment he believed! And not what Abraham would become, but what Christ would do on the cross for him was the ground of God's reckoning.

6. When it's not brought under legalism (Verses 13-15)

(13) It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. (14) For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, (15) because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

- Now that Paul has taken the works of Abraham's circumcision off the table of grace, they're ready to taste from the cup of God's amazing grace.
- Verses 1-12 – We saw 5 answers to why it is that grace works
- Verses 13-15 – Paul rounds a corner by addressing legalism. If you want to kill grace, just invite legalism over for dinner
- If there's no such thing as the law, there's no such thing as breaking the law
 - Where there is the law, and the breaking of the law, you will then have the wrath, or punishment, for the transgression of the law.
- Parenting illustration
 - Let's say that my wife and I leave our children home alone.
 - Before we leave, we lay down the law, and tell them not to open up our bedroom door while we are gone. What do you suppose they will do? I would suggest, because they're sinners just as your children are, they'll transgress the law, and open the door, bringing upon them my wrath. Now, what if I never laid down that law? They wouldn't even be tempted to open the door, thus where there is no law, there is no transgression.
 - Let's take our illustration a step further – and instead of laying down the law and bringing them under legalism, we made them a promise instead. Before we leave, we tell our offspring, as our heirs, through the righteousness that comes by faith they'll receive the promise of lots of ice cream. That would change the whole complexion of it, because now, instead of being brought under the law, they are being brought into the promise.
- That's why Paul says it wasn't the through law, but through righteousness that comes by faith, that Abraham and his offspring received the promise.
 - What was the promise? That they would be the heirs of the world.
 - However, for those heirs living under legalism the promise became worthless.
- As one Bible commentator so eloquently said it; "This promise given to Abraham wasn't given because of the law. It was given before the law."

- Here's the take away for all of us here today; I have no hope of enjoying the sweet taste of God's grace if I live under the bitterness of legalism.

7. When I trust God's promise is guaranteed (Verses 16-17)

(16) Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. (17) As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

- Paul is quoting Genesis 17:4 “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.
 - In so doing, he gives them a solid foundation of faith upon which to build and guarantee that it is by grace
- God had already guaranteed that Abraham would be the father of many nations both physically, and spiritually, long before it actually happened.
 - In God's eyes, He had already given life to the death of Sarah's barren womb, and called that which was not, as though it had already existed
 - Also, God had already given life to the death of Isaac being sacrificed by Abraham, calling into existence, that which had not already existed. In the sight of God, Isaac already existed, and Abraham had already been given life to the dead, calling things that are not as though they were.
- Salvation is through faith, but one who is truly saved will demonstrate this through their good works
 - Abraham was justified by his faith, not his works, when he offered Isaac on the altar
 - It's in this context that James writes that faith works.
 - James 2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.
 - One said it's "faith alone that saves, but the faith that saves is not alone - it has good works with it."
 - Another said "What saves a man is not faith and works, nor is it faith or works. It is only faith that works."
 - If the truth be known we don't want it any other way. If works play a part, then I'm insecure with no guarantee, and I'll always be up and down.
 - William Newell - "Now if you introduce man's works (for man always says, "I must do my part"), you introduce an element of insecurity and uncertainty. For no man, trying to "do his part," is ever certain that he has done, or will do, his "part." Salvation is of God, not of man. It is of faith, and so, of grace; and thus, of God. For faith is unmixed with the vain promises and hopes of man to accomplish "his part"; but looks to what God has done, in sending His Son, to do a finished work on the cross; and to the fact that God has raised up Christ; and that Christ is our unfailing High Priest in heaven."

8. Grace works when my hope in God is unwavering (Verses 18-21)

(18) Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (19) Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. (20) Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, (21) being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

- Is there an impossible situation in your life right now that has become so bad that you're losing hope, and even losing your faith, because of it?
 - If so, then I'd encourage you to give the Holy Spirit permission to replenish your heart with that depleted hope from the passage that's before us.
 - God has given to us "the key," and all we have to do is accept it & put it on the keychain of our Christian lives
 - If we'll only take possession of that key, and the authority that comes with it, we can unlock the door of any impossible situation

- Much of the complexity and perplexity in our Christian experience is brought upon us, by us, and sadly, it's so unnecessary. We are truly our own worst enemy when it comes to simply believing God.
- Sometimes it's actually our unbelief that becomes the problem.
 - We tie the hands of God's grace, with the ropes of our unbelief.
 - We lose hope that God will do it, because we can't see how, or when, God will do it.
 - It's for this reason that now Paul can rise from these verses in this chapter, and demonstrate to us, how it is that God will do it for us.
- Didn't Abraham waiver in his faith?
 - At first glance, this may seem disingenuous at best, and dishonest at worst, by virtue of how Abraham did seemingly waver in his faith in God. Isn't his weakened faith the reason he and his barren wife took matters in their own hands with Hagar who as a surrogate gave birth to Ishmael?
 - It doesn't seem that Paul wants to draw too much attention to Abraham's unbelief when God comes to him after Ishmael had already been born.
 - Genesis 17:15 God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." 17 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" 19 Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.
 - It would seem from this account in Genesis, that Abraham is really wavering in his faith when he actually laugh's, to himself, about God doing this. You'd think that in light of Abraham's unbelief God wouldn't give him Isaac, and Paul certainly wouldn't portray Abraham as unwavering in faith.
- Matthew's gospel is of no help to us either – In it, we read of an account where Jesus seems to heal two blind men based on their faith.
 - Matthew 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" 28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. 29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; 30 and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this."
- James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.
- So how is it, and why is it, that Paul would paint Abraham on the canvass of unwavering belief and unflinching hope in Isaac's birth by Sarah? - The answer to this, just so happens to also be the lesson in this. It's woven into the tapestry of how we, like Abraham can in the end, have hope. - I would suggest that prior to the work of God's grace, at work, in their lives, Romans chapter four would have been written about someone else.
- The number 5 symbolizes God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans
 - Name changes – Five is the number of grace
 - God changes Abram's and Sarai's name, and in so doing He changes their nature – God takes the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet (Heh ה) and puts it in the fifth place in the name of Abram, and then of Sarai.
 - Abram (Noble Father) becomes Abraham (Father of many)
 - Sarai (Princess) becomes Sarahah (Mother of Nations)
 - God does this before Isaac is born miraculously by Sarah, when it would have been impossible at their age.
 - There's a perfect and supernatural order to how God does, what God does, and it's ever so beautifully portrayed in the power of God's grace.

Five is the number of grace which is why God changes Abram and Sarai's name, and in so doing He changes their nature. Five is the total number of the books of Moses, known as the Pentateuch, and they declare the nature of God's goodness and grace. Five commandments on two tablets with the fifth commandment being the only one with a promise of grace. Five fingers and toes on two hands and feet, along with our five senses denote man being created in the image and the nature of God. Five offerings were given on the Altar of Sacrifice in the Tabernacle. Five smooth stones saved the Israelites from the Philistines by the grace of God through David defeating Goliath. Five books are contained in the Psalms closing with the doxology and they parallel the five books of Moses proclaiming the grace of God. Five is the number that Noah, Ruth, and David are mentioned as it relates to finding grace in the eyes of God the fifth time their name is listed. Five women are listed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 1. Five books were written by the Apostle John, all of which are a declaration of God's grace towards those who believe in Jesus Christ. Five porches were at the pool of Bethesda found in John 5, where people came to be healed because of God's grace. Five ministries through which God's grace is revealed are listed in Ephesians 4:11. Five times only, in Romans 11:5-6, does the Apostle Paul use the word grace, and four times only the word works is used in just that chapter. Five virgins are saved in Matthew 25:1-13 when Jesus taught the parable of the ten Bridesmaids.

- Here's the bottom line; the reason that nothing we try works, and nothing changes, is because it's only God's grace that works when it changes. - Maybe you're like me and sometimes you feel like you don't have Abraham's faith. Abraham didn't have faith before receiving the grace of God. - We are saved by grace first, before it's through faith that we receive the gift of God, not of works lest any of us could boast that it was our works.

- This is how grace works and the way grace works. God's gift of grace changes me from the inside out. It comes packaged with unwavering faith. - This fills in more of the blanks, and connects more of the dots in what we saw in James 2:17 where he says that faith without works is dead. - It's not a contradiction, it's a confirmation in that, first comes the changing work of grace, through faith. When grace works, then faith works also.

1 Corinthians 15:10 NIV (10) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

- We are given this template of grace throughout the pages of Holy Writ. God's grace isn't based on my faith, God's grace is the base for my faith. - Let me say the same thing a different way; like Abraham, I too can have unwavering faith, when I too am the recipient of God's changing grace. - This explains why Paul writes this of Abraham. Grace changes me from unbelief to belief, from faithless to faithful, and from hopeless to hopeful.

- Looking forward to today's teaching which will be part six in a series I've titled; "Grace Works." Lord willing, we'll finally complete chapter four. - Last week, we failed in our attempt to get through to verse 25, however, in retrospect, I'm glad that we didn't rush through these last four verses. - Actually, verses 18-25 should be studied together by virtue of how the Apostle Paul ever so brilliantly uses the example of Abraham and Sarah.

- It's almost as if Paul is calling Abraham to the witness stand to testify how that God was, and always is, true to His Word in keeping His promise. - What was the promise? God promised Abraham something that in the arena of the natural, would have been utterly and absolutely impossible. - He miraculously gave them a son biologically, and He waited until Sarah was at the perfect child bearing age of ninety years old before doing it.

- Are you in an impossible situation? Perhaps the Holy Spirit will have permission to encourage your heart with Abraham and Sarah's testimony. - He was the recipient of a miracle from God, that came by the changing grace of God, and became the catalyst for his unwavering faith in God. - Absent God's changing grace, Abraham wouldn't have had unwavering faith. It was that faith that logged him into the account of God's grace.

- You'll forgive the use of the technology illustration, but I see God's changing grace as the user ID, and our unwavering faith as the password. - When you log into your account, you first need the name on your account. After that is entered you enter your password to access your account. - We'll see this next week, Lord willing, when we begin Romans chapter five. Paul describes the gaining of access by faith into the grace of God.

Romans 5:1-2 NIV (1) Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

- We can gain access by faith, into this grace, and the moment we do, we too will believe that God can and will do the impossible in our lives. - This is how grace works, and this is the way grace works. When grace works, then faith works also, and when it does, it changes everything. - This explains why Paul writes this of Abraham. Grace changes me from unbelief to belief, from faithless to faithful, and from hopeless to hopeful.

- So, if that's "how" grace works, and if that's the "way" grace works, then all I need now is the "why" grace works. Verses 22-25 gives us the why.

9. Grace works when I hope in Christ's resurrection (Verses 22-25)

(22) This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” (23) The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, (24) but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. (25) He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

-v22-23 Paul cites Abraham's unwavering faith as the reason why it was credited to him as righteousness, and that it wasn't written for him alone. -v24-25 It's also for us who believe in Him Who raised Jesus from the dead, delivered to death for our sins, and raised to life for our justification.

- Have you ever wondered why the graphic details of Old Testament saints sins are conspicuously absent from the New Testament scriptures. - Not only are they not present, any mention of them is always in the context of their great faith like that of Abraham here in our study of Romans. - Why? The reason is because of the resurrection, and the subsequent justification that comes as a result. Sin isn't just covered, it's removed.

- It's only when I understand that the finished work of the cross vis-a-vis the resurrection of Jesus Christ, explains why grace changes everything. - That's the power of, the resurrection of, the Savior of, the world. To say it's a game changer, or even a life changer, is really an understatement. - It would be the resurrection of Isaac, a type of the resurrection of Christ, that would change how everything works, making it grace that works.

- Grace so changed Abraham, that he believed by faith, God had the power to resurrect Isaac from the death of Sarah's dead and barren womb. - Grace so changed Abraham, that he believed by faith, God had the power to resurrect Isaac from the death of sacrificing his only begotten son. - Grace so changes us that we believe by faith God had the power to resurrect Jesus, greater than Isaac, from death as God's only begotten son.

- This is why the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, ever so beautifully and eloquently brings Isaac, who is a type of Jesus Christ, into the picture.

Isaac	Jesus
A miracle child, born out of an old barren womb.	A miracle child, born out of a young virgin's womb.
Father Abraham gives his only begotten son whom he loves.	Father God gave His only begotten son because He so loved the world.
Isaac is to be offered up, which is translated; "lifted up."	Jesus said, "I will be lifted up from the earth". (John 12:32)
There were two men taken up with Isaac.	There were two men crucified with Jesus.
Isaac was 33 years old at that time.	Jesus was 33 years old when He was crucified.
They went to "the place," which is an idiom meaning the exact spot.	They were come to "the place," which is called Calvary. (Luke 23:33)
Isaac walked with his father Abraham three days.	Jesus walked with the Father three years in His public ministry.
Believing a resurrection, to those who followed; "we go, but come again."	To all believers in the resurrection, who follow Jesus, He will come again.
Father Abraham put upon Isaac the wood to carry for the sacrifice.	The Father put upon Jesus who carried the wooden cross the curse of sin.
Abraham took the fire (wrath) in his hand to burn his son as a sacrifice.	God took the wrath in His own hands and put it upon His Son, the sacrifice.
A knife (sword) was taken to stab him to his death.	Jesus was stabbed by a sword to make sure He was dead.
Abraham says "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering".	God provides Himself, as a lamb, Jesus who is God as the offering.
Isaac was obedient and willingly bound, for his own death.	Jesus was obedient, and willingly bound, for His own death.

The Angel of the Lord calls from heaven.	This Angel of the Lord is Jesus Himself who calls from heaven.
All nations are blessed because of their obedience to sacrifice.	All are saved because of His obedience better than sacrifice. (1 Sam 15:22)
Isaac is not there when Abraham came back.	Jesus is not there in the tomb, when they came back.
After these things Abraham sees a bride (Rebekah) for the son Isaac.	After the crucifixion we see a bride (the Church) for His Son Jesus.

- I'll close with a question, and please know that I ask it of myself as well; "has my faith been weakening, and my hope been waning as of late?" - Wouldn't it stand to reason that God's changing grace works proportionate to our faith in the justification that comes from Christ's resurrection? - If God can resurrect Jesus from the grave, and for eternity I'm saved, then He most certainly can do for us that which is deemed impossible.

VI. Exposition of the Thesis (Ro 5)

Paul exposes the thesis – shines a light on it and analyzes it

Peace with God through Christ

Ro 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

- Ro 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith,
 - Paul feels very certain that he has demonstrated that quite soundly
- Ro 5:1 ...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.
 - We are now at peace with God – we have gained access to Him through Christ
 - Ro 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men
 - Ep 2:3 All of us also lived among them [the godless] at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.
 - We are, by nature, the object of God's wrath
 - We are born into a fallen world, in a condition of sin – In that condition of sin, we are, by nature, the object of God's wrath
 - But now, given the thesis, we have peace with God through Jesus – Christ enabled the peace

Rejoice in your suffering

Given that we have been justified through faith:

- We are at peace with God
- We have access to God through Christ
- We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God
- We can rejoice in our suffering because it shows God's endless love and faithfulness

As we grow in our faith, we move from putting out fires to walking through the fire and know that God is with you

- Faith triumphs in trouble (Ro 5:3-5) – Rejoice in your sufferings

Ro 5:3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

- Most of Paul's letter were written through times of trial
- Trouble + faith = endurance
 - He 11:1 faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
- Trouble + faith + endurance = Strength of character
 - Knowing the God is with you and will get you through the trial will give you strength of character
- Trouble + faith + endurance + Strength of character = confident hope of salvation
 - Hope is a certainty that we know for sure – Nothing that we do in this life will affect my eternity
 - I'm going to stay faithful to God because he has been faithful to me
- Trouble + faith + endurance + Strength of character + confident hope of salvation = never disappointed
 - Faith + Holy Spirit + any situation = God's endless love and faithfulness to me

- We've been totally justified/cleansed by the blood of Christ (Ro 5:8-9)

Ro 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

- Christ died for us while we were still sinners
 - While we were cursing Him to His face, giving Him the finger, ignoring Him, hating Him
 - Rarely will someone die for a good person, but Christ died for us who were sinners
- Justified – Just as if I never sinned
 - Jesus went to the cross for us and now God does not see our sin
 - It's the blood of Christ that saves us, not the love of God
 - The love of God is the motive for salvation
 - The shed blood of Christ on the cross is the operative active that enables salvation
 - God replaced our sin with Christ's righteousness
 - Similar to a pardon – Barabbas was pardoned – he was guilty, but let go
 - Points to Jesus as the sacrificial lamb to justify the world
 - We have been forgiven as far as the east is from the west
 - We did nothing to deserve this

- We've been reconciled to God (Ro 5:10-11)

Ro 5:10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

- We've been adopted into the family of God
- We are now a friend of God
- If Christ died for us while we were still sinners, how much more will He do for us now that we are part of the family!

- Grace (Ro 5:12-16)

Ro 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

- We will never fully understand grace
- It is a free gift of God, but you have to receive it
- When you receive grace, you will be victorious over sin
- My devotion to Christ
 - If you are thankful for what Jesus did for you, then you should respond accordingly
 - We are no longer slaves to sin/disobedience, we are now slaves to righteousness
 - We have been bought – at a high price – He is now our Lord to whom we have to be obedient
 - We are now children of God!

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ (Ro 5:12-21)

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— 18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. 20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Paul is drawing an analogy here
 - Sin entered the world through 1 person (Adam) → death
 - Salvation enters the world through 1 person (Christ) → eternal life
- 20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,
 - God gave the law so that might recognize how far short of it we fall
 - The greater the sin, the more grace was needed to counter it

Parenthetical remark inserted in the middle of a thought:

13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. 15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

- How do you know you are doing something wrong if there is no law? Yet there was sin in the world before the law.
 - 14 death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam
 - What's troubling Paul here – if you don't know sin unless there is law, then how is it that there was sin between the time of Adam and Moses?
- If the law enables us to recognize sin, what happened to the people between Adam and Moses?

- Answer – 15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!
 - All died because of the sin of 1 man (Adam)
 - Many are brought to life because of the righteousness of 1 man (Christ)
 - What Christ did is infinitely greater than what Adam did
- Another example – 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.
 - God's judgment for one sin brought condemnation to all
 - God's gift of grace and redemption for many sins brought justification
 - Adam sinned once and brought death to the world
 - We now have a gazillion sins, but the one act of Christ erased all of them for those that believe
 - What Christ did is infinitely greater than what Adam did
- Another example – 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.
 - Adam sinned, all men died – 1 sin, all die
 - Christ died for many sins – 1 died for all the sins of the redeemed
 - What Christ did is infinitely greater than what Adam did

VII. Objections to the Thesis (Ro 6:1-11:36)

- Paul is going to anticipate our objections to his thesis, state each objection, then answer it to eliminate it
 - It's a very systematic way of supporting his argument
 - If we're saved by grace through faith, and God provides the grace that enables us to respond, then why not keep on sinning even bigger so God can provide even more grace, thus demonstrating His faithfulness & love even more?
 - If we're saved by grace through faith, then why did God give the Law?
- Jewish Argument
 - Take an idea and push it to its farthest limit and see if the logic holds up
 - Ex. Mt 22:23-28 Marriage at the resurrection
 - Mt 22:23 That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 24 "Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. 25 Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. 26 The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. 27 Finally, the woman died. 28 Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"
 - It's not a ridiculous question – it pushes the logic of the thesis of resurrection to the limit

Obj 1 – Shall we go on sinning so grace may increase?

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

- Question – *Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?*
 - If we're saved by grace through faith, and God provides the grace that enables us to respond, then why not keep on sinning even bigger so God can provide even more grace, thus demonstrating His faithfulness & love even more?
 - If grace is a good thing, how do you get more of it? Keep sinning and He'll provide even more
- Answer – *Ro 6:2 By no means!*
- Why? – *Ro 6:2 ... We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*
 - Once we respond to God in faith, that whole life of sin is over. We died to sin and been reborn into a new life. We are now dead to sin and alive in Christ.
 - In a fallen world of death and sin, sin will master you. But being reborn into a new life in Christ, you leave sin and death behind and you move into eternity with Christ.
 - When we were baptized into (identified with) Christ, we were also baptized into (identified with) His death and resurrection to new life
 - Baptism identifies us fully with Christ's life, death, burial and resurrection
 - *Baptizo* – Greek word meaning 'to dip'
 - "Baptism" is an act signifying "repentance," or metanoia
 - It is a deliberate turning away from sin and toward God.
 - It is not a casual move but a deliberate one, accompanied by a cleansing with water.
 - First one repents; then one is baptized.
 - Baptism is an outward sign that incorporates a person into the covenant community
 - Circumcision is to a Jew what baptism is to a Christian
 - We dip into the water as our old selves. When we come back up out of the water, we are our reborn.
 - Our old self has been crucified with Christ and our new self is resurrected
 - In identifying with Christ's life, death, burial and resurrection we are freed from our sin
 - Death has been conquered – our death is simply a movement into a new stage of life
 - You must be born again – a new life in Christ
 - John 3:4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'
 - You can't erase the past and start anew
 - Only God can make that happen through the Spirit born in you
 - The old man of sin has died, the new man has been born in the Spirit
 - You are no longer a slave to sin, but a willing slave to God, who freed you through His grace
 - *11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus...13... [You] have been brought from death to life.... 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*
 - Therefore, do not:
 - *12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.*

- 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness,
- Do:
 - 13...offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life
 - 13...offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness

Obj 2 – Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?

Slaves to Righteousness

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

- Question – Ro 6:15 Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?
- Answer – Ro 6:15 ... By no means!
- Why? – Ro 6:16...when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey
 - If I'm under grace, then transgression doesn't matter because I'm under grace. The Law punishes sin, but if you're not under Law, but under grace, is sinning then OK?
 - Ro 6:16...slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness
 - If you give yourselves to sin, then sin will control you
 - If you give yourselves to righteousness, then righteousness will control you
 - 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - Fundamental profound change in position
 - We're born in a condition of sin into a sinful world. Death follows sin. We are, by nature, the objects of God's wrath.
 - When God provides the grace and we respond in faith, we move positionally into the family of God
 - Example – What is the result of your life choices?

Rom 6:19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Ro 6:19...you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness...
- Ro 6:20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.
 - Result? Shame and death
- Ro 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God
 - Result? Holiness and eternal life
- Another example – the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives

Ro 7 – An Illustration From Marriage

1 Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? 2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. 3 So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. 6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

- *Ro 7:1 ...the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives ... you also died to the law through the body of Christ*
- God gave the Law to show us the straight line against which we measure our crookedness
 - The Law is God's requirements
 - We recognize how far short of them we fall and our need for a Savior
 - Once we accept that salvation – and identify with Christ through his life, death, burial and resurrection – we move positionally into the family of God. The Law does not apply to us anymore.
 - *Ro 7:4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law ... that you might belong to another ... in order that we might bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature... we bore fruit for death. 6 But now ... we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*
- How do we know how to live if we have no Law? You live in a way that will honor Christ
 - The Law is not for the Christian, it is for the unsaved world against which they will be judged
 - In the family of God, we live a relationship with God through Christ
 - We live that relationship in a way that is consistent with the nature of the relationship in a way that honors Christ
 - The requirements of the relationship are much higher than the requirements of the Law
 - Ex – Since we are no longer under the Law, can I now murder?
 - No – it would not be consistent with our relationship with God – it wouldn't honor Christ
 - Mt 5:21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.
 - *Raca* comes from the Aramaic term *reqa*. It was a derogatory expression meaning “empty-headed,” insinuating a person's stupidity or inferiority. It was an offensive name used to show utter contempt for another person. Jesus warned that the use of such a word to describe someone was tantamount to murder and deserving of the severest punishment of the law.
 - *Ro 7:6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

Obj 3 – Is the law sin?

Struggling With Sin

Ro 7:7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin

sprang to life and I died. 10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.

11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. 12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

- Question – *Ro 7:7 Is the law sin?*
 - Does the Law make sin a reality – if there were no Law, would there then be no sin?
 - If there were no law that said to not steal, would it then be OK to steal?
- Answer – *Ro 7:7 ... Certainly not!*
- Why? – *Ro 7:7 ... I would not have known what sin was except through the law.*
 - Ex coveting
 - If it weren't for the law, then we would not know that coveting was against the law
 - Now that I know about it, it's all that I think about – thanks to our sin nature
 - Ex lust
 - For the next 30 seconds, close your eyes and whatever you do, don't think of the person next to you being naked.
 - Now that it's been put into your head, it's all that you can think about
 - The law is the same way – when the law says don't do something, I now know that I'm not supposed to do it, but it's the only thing that I think about!
 - Does the Law then create sin?
 - *Ro 7:8 ... For apart from law, sin is dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. 10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.*
 - The more that you understand the Law, the more that you recognize that you break it continually
 - The problem is not the Law, the problem is me
 - *Ro 7:11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. 12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.*

Obj 4 – Did the Law (which is good) produce death to me?

13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

- Question – *Ro 7:13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means!*
 - Is the Law good, but produces death?

- Answer – *Ro 7:13 ... By no means!*
- Why? – *Ro 7:13 ... in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.*
 - The Law produced in me a recognition of sin, and my own weakness in that sin.
 - Sin produces death
 - Through the Law, I can now understand the reality of sin and my inability to deal with it on my own
 - I need a savior!
 - *14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual,*
 - The Law is good, I am not
 - *14 ... I am unspiritual ... a slave to sin.*
 - *15 ... what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.*
 - *16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.*
 - *17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.*
 - *18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.*
 - *18 ... For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.*
 - *19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.*
 - *20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*
 - This is the very nature of being part of sinful humanity
 - Underlying principle – *21 I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.*
 - Good angel on one shoulder and the bad angel on the other – each whispering into my ear
 - *22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law;*
 - *23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am!*
 - *So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*
 - In my own natural condition, I can know from the Law what I should and should not do
 - Even though I want to do what is right, I am drawn to the wrong things
 - Irreconcilable conflict – This is a horrible, wretched way to live
 - *24 ... Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Obj 5 – There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Life Through the Spirit

Ro 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus

from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- Question – Ro
- Answer – Ro
- Why? – Ro

Life-changing question and answer

We are no longer bound by the Law – a visual example we can understand

Ro 7:1 Now, dear brothers and sisters—you who are familiar with the law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? 2 For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. 3 So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries.

4 So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. 5 When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. 6 But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.

The Law is the straight line to show us our crookedness – the battle within

Ro 7:7 Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin.

14 So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. 15 I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. 16 But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. 17 So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

24 ...Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

A life-changing question and answer

Ro 8:18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. ... 23 And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.

26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. 27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. 28 And we know that **God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.**

Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love

31 What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? 32 Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? 33 Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. 34 Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

35 Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? 36 (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") 37 No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ro 9

- Paul's burden – 9:2-3
 - Paul is a Jew
 - He as a Jew that was deceived – Ro 10:2
 - He ministered to the Gentiles and Jews
 - Ro 9:3-4 – Paul was willing to give up his own salvation for his (the Jewish) people

Ro 11

1-11 Part 1 of Romans

12-16 – Application in every day life

Did God reject the Jewish people? No

Ro 10:20 And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." 21 But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

Directed to the Jewish Christian – Has God rejected us?

God has revealed Himself to the Gentiles – they found him instead of the Jews

Elijah – felt alone – everyone turned their backs on God – God has a plan for the remnant

Ph 1:6

God preserves His people

What God starts, He promises to finish

Only by God's grace will you be able to stand – there's nothing that you can do

Gentile Christians have been grafted into the Jewish family tree

Ro 1:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. – God's promises do not expire

Doxology – 11:36 – God is in control of all things

Ro 12 – What do you do in response to the good news of Ro 1-11? Present your bodies as a living sacrifice

Conform your lives to God's plan, do not conform to the world

How do you live this out in everyday life? Ro 12

VIII. Practical Implications of the Thesis (Ro 12:1-15:13)

1. Submit to spiritual authority

Healing = forgiveness

Restoration = realization that you can trust again

Ro 13:1-2

1Co 16:3 – The Holy Spirit resides in us – our bodies are a temple – When there is something that does not belong, it is heart-wrenching

Do not fear submitting to authority – Why Ro 13:3-4

Hurt does not come from God, it comes from a fallen man who is abusing the authority given to him

If you carry the hurt forward, you will question all new relationships

Healthy authority will govern and serve

2. Love fulfills God's requirements

Ro 3:8-10 (Voice)

The only debt that we should have is love for one another

It's hard to live in love if you have a constant fear of the motives of others

3. Darkness is dissolving

The Kingdom of God is advancing

Ro 13:12-13

4. If it's not a salvation issue, it's a matter of conviction

Unclean meats and which day to keep the Sabbath

Ro 14:2-3

Personal freedom must always give way to corporate accountability

Ro 14:5

How do you live out your convictions – Ro 14:6-13

When we are critical, we are not showing love

VIX. Conclusion (Ro 15:14-16:27)

The church must stay unified

Main message – Accept one another, even in their differences – Ro 15:5-8

The order is important

Look at people the way that Christ looked at you

Satan wants division

Focus on a unifying factor, not the dividing factors

Accept and love one another, even in their differences

Hope – Ro 15:13

Ministry grit – Ro 15:20-23

The purpose of God is much more important than our desires

What has God called you to do? And is it work done?

Honor those who have blessed you with the Gospel – Ro 15:24

Ro 15:25-27

Gratitude for the church and saints – Ro 16

1 & 2 Corinthians (1Co, 2Co)

1st Corinthians Overview

FIRST CORINTHIANS

Introduction (1:1–9)	Rebuke for Sinful Conditions		Reply to Specific Questions		Conclusion (16:10–24)
	Divisions in the Church	Disorders in the Church	Difficulties in the Church		
	Exposition (1:10–17)	Moral disorder (5:1–13)	Domestic difficulty—marriage and divorce (7:1–40)		
	Explanation (1:18–4:5)	Legal disorder (6:1–11)	Social difficulty—liberty and license (8:1–11:1)		
	Exhortation (4:6–21)	Carnal disorder (6:12–20)	Ecclesiastical difficulty—women and worship (11:2–34)		
			Practical difficulty—gifts and body (12:1–14:40)		
			Doctrinal difficulty—death and resurrection (15:1–58)		
			Financial difficulty—gifts and body (16:1–9)		
	CHAPTERS 1:10–4:21	CHAPTERS 5–6	CHAPTERS 7:1–16:9		
Key	“I exhort you.” (1:10)		“Now concerning the thing about which you wrote.” (7:1)		
Need	Unity among the Corinthian Christians		Clarity regarding six areas of concern		
Theme	Christian conduct in the local church				
Key Verses	6:9–11; 13:1–38				
Christ in 1 Corinthians	Jesus is the source of unity among believers who are baptized into the body of Christ and the basis of their ultimate resurrection and glorification (12:12–13; 15:1–58).				

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The book of 1st Corinthians is a Pauline Epistle (letter from Paul). The Apostle Paul wrote it about 56 A.D. The key personalities of this book are the Apostle Paul, Timothy and also Chloe’s household. Paul’s purpose in writing this letter to the church in Corinth was to address and correct the immorality and divisions that had arisen among them.

- Chapters 1-4, Paul received reports of problems in the church in Corinth and therefore addresses their problems and disorders, “there are quarrels among you” (1:11). Paul asks believers to “consider your calling” (1:26-30). He then declares three times that God “has chosen” them and “because of Him you are in Christ Jesus”. This truth is joyful and relieving to believers that God is in control and is the orchestrator of our lives.
- In chapters 5-11, Paul exposes all of the immorality that was occurring in the church at Corinth. These include sexual immorality, issues of marriage, and lawsuits with other believers. “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God” (6:9). Paul warns believers to be careful how you live, “For you have been bought with a price” (vs 20),
- In chapters 12-14, he clears up some of the confusion about practices of worship. He corrects difficult doctrines that had caused divisions. Some of these differences were the role of women in worship, the use of spiritual gifts, and observing the Lord’s Supper. “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints” (14:33).

- Chapters 15-16 consist of Paul dealing with the topic of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the topic that is, “of first importance” to Paul. It is here we find the most important information on planet Earth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ in verses 1-4. “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (15:1-4).

1Co11:23-26

past -what Jesus did for us

Present – communing with Jesus as we partake in the lord.a supper

Future – anticipation of Jesus coming

27-30 judgment

Acknowledge that you are a sinner and come before god in repentance

have to approach god as holy

2nd Corinthians Overview

SECOND CORINTHIANS

Introduction — Greeting (1:1–2)	Crucial Concerns	Grace Giving	Apostolic Authority	Conclusion — Farewell (13:11–14)
	<u>Suffering and God’s comfort</u>	<u>Example of Macedonians</u>	<u>Reply to critics</u>	
	<u>New covenant ministry</u>	<u>Command to Corinthians</u>	<u>Justification of ministry</u>	
	<u>Persevering in godliness</u>		<u>False teachers</u>	
			<u>Visions, revelations, credentials, warnings</u>	
			<u>God’s power perfected in weakness</u>	
	CHAPTERS 1:3–7:16	CHAPTERS 8–9	CHAPTERS 10:1–13:10	
Scope	Past	Present	Future	
Issue	Misunderstandings, concerns, explanations	Financial project	Vindication of Paul’s ministry	
Tone	Forgiving, grateful, bold	Confident	Defensive and strong	
Theme	Paul’s defense of his apostleship and message			
Key Verses	4:5	9:7	10:8	
Christ in 2 Corinthians	Jesus is the One who comforts us in our suffering, reconciles us to God, and gives strength in our weaknesses (1:5; 5:17–21; 12:9).			

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The book of 2nd Corinthians is a Pauline Epistle (letter from Paul). The Apostle Paul wrote it about 56 A.D. The key personalities of this book are the Apostle Paul, Timothy, and Titus. Paul wrote this letter to the church in Corinth to defend and protect his Apostleship, and to teach and warn against false teachers who were spreading heresy.

- In chapters 1-7, Paul describes the characteristics of an Apostle. He explained that his ministry was to preach Jesus Christ alone and not himself, “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as bondservants for Jesus’ sake” (4:5).

Paul then explains that Christians will suffer. "we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed". It is promised to followers of Christ that they will suffer. Paul states that compared to eternity with Christ the sufferings of this world are temporary and have a purpose for us: "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

- In chapters 8-9, He urges the Corinthians to give the offering to the believers in Judea, as they had promised. He taught that if they gave generously they would also "reap generously" (9:6).
- Chapters 10-13 Paul defends his ministry and responds to attacks about his Apostleship. They had been questioning his authority and opposing him. Paul declares that if anyone preaches a different Gospel or a different Jesus, other than what Paul and the Apostles were preaching, they are false teachers and deceitful workers and should not be accepted.

In chapter 12 7-10, Paul explains a theology of his own suffering. He asks God to remove a suffering from His life but God refuses. God responds to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness". Paul understood that God is sovereign and in control over even his sufferings. Therefore, Paul embraces his suffering because God allows them into his life for a purpose regardless of how difficult they may be. In times of calamity, he understood that these were times when he depended on God's strength and mercy the most. Paul responds, "Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong". Paul knew he was the strongest when he felt the weakest because he depended on God, the one who has infinite strength.

- The last thing Apostle Paul teaches in 2nd Corinthians is how to test yourself. If you want to know if you are a Christian, if you want to know if you are a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, than you must test yourself, "to see if you are in the faith"; examine yourself with Scripture (13:5).

Corinth

Double sea-port town

- On the isthmus that links the Peloponnesian peninsula to the mainland of Greece
 - Rome → Northern coast of the Peloponnesian peninsula → Unload the ships on the west side of Corinth → Haul the cargo across the 4 mile isthmus → Reload the cargo onto a new ship on the east side → Continue onto Ephesus
 - This was the shortest, safest and fastest route to go
 - Many people tried to create a canal, but the ground was solid rock – wasn't built until 1893
- The double sea-port made it a wealthy city

Temple of Aphrodite (Goddess of Erotic Love)

- Corinth was the home of the Temple of Aphrodite – Goddess of erotic love
 - Stood on the top of a flat mountain
 - Double sea-post town – Sailors coming and going

2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 18)

- Paul leaves Athens and continues 48 miles west to Corinth
- Arrived in Corinth around mid AD50

Aquila and Priscilla

- Meets Aquila and Priscilla in the agora (open marketplace)
 - Claudius has ordered all the Jews to leave Rome
 - They are Jewish tent-makers – Not like Northface tents, but workers in canvas
 - Corinth is a good place for work – replacing and repairing the sails of ships
- Paul is a tent-maker by trade
 - He was one of the most brilliant men of his time
 - He was an adult student of Gamaliel – the greatest Rabbi of that century
 - He was being groomed for leadership in the Sanhedrin
 - Every Jewish boy learned a trade – All Jews knew everything can change in a heartbeat
 - After the formal education in a synagogue with the Rabbi – at about age 12 – the boys would apprentice with a relative (father, uncle, etc) to learn a trade
 - At about age 18, they would start working on their own – either in the family business or with someone else
 - Paul continued to study in Tarsus, and eventually moved to Jerusalem where he studied with the great Rabbis of the day – and eventually with the greatest Rabbi of the day, Gamaliel
 - When we meet Paul, he is in his early-mid 30s and he's still an adult student of Gamaliel
 - He essentially has a post-doctoral fellowship with a Nobel laureate
- Paul enters the community by helping Aquila and Priscilla until Timothy and Silas meet up with him
 - Doing something useful while he's meeting a lot of people as they came by
 - Teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath

Paul teaches the Jews

- When Timothy and Silas get to Corinth, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching
- 1Co 3 – 4 metaphors
 - Infant
1Co 3:1 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly —mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly.
 - Plants
1Co 3:6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.
 - Building
1Co 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- God's Temple

- Every you is plural

1Co3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

Paul teaches the Gentiles

The Corinthian Correspondence

Paul arrives in Corinth in mid-A.D. 50 and spends 18 months forming a church there. Of all the churches Paul founded, the Church at Corinth presented the greatest challenges and the most difficult problems.

When Paul finally leaves Corinth in A.D. 52 he sails home via Ephesus, recognizing an enormous opportunity in that city. In A.D. 54 Paul begins his third missionary journey, going directly to Ephesus and spending most of his time there, A.D. 54-57. In the winter of A.D. 54 a delegation "from Chloe's household" in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1: 11) arrives in Ephesus with distressing news: the church in Corinth has 1) fractured into factions and divisions; 2) believers are suing one another in the secular courts; and 3) there is rampant sexual immorality throughout the church. Along with the oral report the delegation brings a letter from the new leaders at Corinth, a letter with specific questions of a very troublesome nature. In 1 Corinthians Paul addresses the three issues brought to him from Chloe's household, and in chapter 7 he addresses "the matters you wrote about" (1 Corinthians 7: 1).

Thus begins a tumultuous correspondence between Paul and the church in Corinth. We explore Paul's relationship with the church at Corinth and the correspondence that results in this lesson.

In 1 Corinthians 15 St. Paul defines the "gospel"—the "good news"—as the death, burial and resurrection of Christ—who he is and what he did on our behalf.

The church is the body of Christ

Paul was pastor at the church in Corinth for 1.5 years – also had Peter, Apollos, Aquillas and Percilla

Church was a mess – Factions (1Co 1:10), pride (ch 2-3), worldly (shaped by culture), sexual immorality (ch 5 & 6)

Lawsuits instead of grace, love & forgiveness

1Co 5 - Pornea – OT considers this to be incest

1Co5:5 hand him over to Satan

You have to discipline the people that you - approach them in love and on humility

5:5 hand this man over to Satan. Abandon this sinful man to the devil that he may afflict him as he pleases. This abandonment to Satan was to be accomplished not by a magical incantation but by expelling the man from the church (see v. 13 ; see also vv. 2 , 7 , 11). To expel him was to put him out in the devil's territory, severed from any connection with God's people. so that the sinful nature may be destroyed. So that being officially ostracized from the church will cause the man such anguish that he will repent and forsake his wicked way. For an alternative interpretation see NIV text note. In the latter view, Satan is allowed to bring physical affliction on the man, which would bring him to repentance. his spirit saved. Cf. 3:15 . day of the Lord. When Christ returns (see 1:7).

It is your responsibility to judge those inside the church

5:12 judge those inside. The church is to exercise spiritual discipline over the professing believers in the church (cf. Mt 18:15-18), but it is not to attempt to judge those outside its membership. There are governing authorities in place to judge them (see Ro 13:1-5 and notes), and their ultimate judge is God (v. 13 ; cf. Rev 20:11-15).

Galatians (Gal)

Galatians Overview

GALATIANS

	Personal Words from Paul Defense of the True Gospel For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (1:11–12) <i>CHAPTERS</i> <i>1–2</i>	Doctrinal Teaching Freedom from Legalism Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. (3:24–25) <i>CHAPTERS</i> <i>3–4</i>	Practical Exhortations Freedom to Love and to Serve For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (5:13) <i>CHAPTERS</i> <i>5–6</i>
Style	Vigorous, blunt, direct, and brief		
Theme	Justification comes by faith in Christ Jesus, not by works of the Law.		
Key Verse	2:16		
Christ in Galatians	Jesus is the source and power of the believer's new life and the heir of the promises to Abraham's seed (2:20; 3:1–16).		

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The book of Galatians is a Pauline Epistle (letter from Paul). It was written by the Apostle Paul about 49 A.D. prior to the Jerusalem Council which had taken place in 50 A.D. This quite possibly could have been Paul's first letter. The key personalities of this book are the Apostle Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Abraham, Titus, and false teachers. Paul writes this book to deal with the problem of circumcision and Jewish legalism toward Gentile believers.

- In chapters 1-2, Paul's gives his testimony about how he had received the authentic Gospel message. He warns that if anyone presents another Gospel message other than the one he was preaching, that person is "As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!" (1:9). Paul was speaking of the one true Gospel that he had received; Please read 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

Paul then declares that Christ now lives within him, and directs, and empowers him to live as Christ's ambassador and instrument: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (2:20).

- Chapters 3-5:12, Paul begins by declaring that salvation is through faith and trust in Jesus Christ "Alone", and cannot be obtained through the keeping of the Law. "You foolish Galatians! Who put you under a spell? Was not Jesus the Messiah clearly portrayed before your very eyes as having been crucified? I want to learn only one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? Having started out with the Spirit, are you now ending up with the flesh? (Galatians 3:1-3). The Law (10 Commandments) is our tutor to lead us to salvation in Jesus Christ, "the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith" (3:24). No one can obey the 10 Commandments. It is impossible. Every person has broken them; therefore, we can only attain salvation through trusting in our Savior Christ Jesus.

- Chapters 5:13-6, He teaches the Fruits of the Spirit and tells us to “walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (5:16). Good works does not save, but a Christian must have the desire to produce good fruit, obey God’s Law and live a holy and righteous life in the eyes of God. Christians should live this redeemed life.

Territory of Galatia

While Paul is in Corinth, A.D. 50 – 52 he writes three epistles, two to the church in Thessalonica and one to the churches in Galatia.

Galatia is a territory in central Asia Minor, not a city, and Paul writes his epistle as a circular letter to be read to all the churches in the territory. Paul had not planned to travel through Galatia on his second missionary journey, but it was “because of an illness” (Galatians 4: 13) that he did, sometime in early A.D. 50. Once settled in Corinth in mid-A.D. 50, Paul receives word that the churches in Galatia have adopted a new gospel, different from the one Paul preached. In Galatians, Paul straightens them out—in no uncertain terms: “Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned” [in other words, tell him to “go to hell!”] (Galatians 1: 8).

Fruit of the Spirit (Ga 5:22-23)

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)	Descriptive Definition	Other Scriptures	Greek Definition
Love	Love is not based on emotions or feelings. It is a decision to be committed to the well being of others without any conditions or circumstances.	John 15:12-14	Agape: Love which seeks the highest good of others.
Joy	Joy is not based on financial success, good health, or popularity. By obeying God’s will, fellowship, ministering to others, and sharing the Gospel, believers will experience joy.	1 Peter 1:8, 9	Chara: Gladness, delight, a special presence of God.
Peace	Peace is a state of assurance, lack of fear, and sense of contentment. It is fellowship, harmony, and unity between individuals. Peace is freedom from worry, disturbance, and oppressive thoughts.	Philippians 4:7	Eirene: Peace between individuals, harmony, unity.
Patience	Patience is a slowness in avenging wrongs. It is the quality of restraint that prevents believers from speaking or acting hastily in the face of disagreement, opposition, or persecution.	1 Thessalonians 5:14,15	Makrothumia: Longsuffering, bearing trials without complaint.
Kindness	Kindness is an eagerness to put others at ease. It is a sweet and attractive temperament that shows friendly regard.	Proverbs 11:16,17	Chrestotes: Merciful, easy to bear. Morally good and upright.
Goodness	Goodness is the selfless desire to be open hearted and generous to others above what they deserve.	Titus 3:8	Agathosune: Useful, generous.
Faithfulness	Faithfulness is firm devotion to God, loyalty to friends, and dependability to carry out responsibilities. Faith is the conviction that even now God is working and acting on one’s behalf.	Revelation 2:10b	Pistis: Trust, conviction.
Gentleness	Gentleness is a humble non-threatening demeanor that derives from a position of strength and authority, and is useful in calming another’s anger. Gentleness is not a quality that is weak and passive.	1 Peter 3:15	Prautes: Humble, meek.
Self-Control	Self-control is to restrain one’s emotions, actions, and desires, and to be in harmony with the will of God. Self-control is doing God’s will, not living for one’s self.	Titus 2:11,12	Egkrateia: Being in control of one’s self.

1 & 2 Thessalonians (1Th, 2Th)

1st Thessalonians Overview

FIRST THESSALONIANS

	The Pastor's Heart			The Pastor's Burden	
	<u>Thanksgiving</u> <u>Remembering</u> <u>Affirming</u> <u>Reporting</u>	The pastor among the flock The flock's response to the pastor	<u>Personal concern</u> <u>Comfort and relief</u>	<u>Sexual purity</u> <u>Prophetic urgency</u>	<u>Stay alert!</u> <u>Encourage one another!</u> <u>Live in peace!</u>
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5
Perspective	Looking back			Looking ahead	
Subject	The church itself	The apostle himself	The report	The concern	The balance
Especially Appropriate for . . .	new converts	young pastors	suffering Christians	tempted and uninformed Christians	"sleepy" Christians
Theme	The hope of Christ's return comforts us and motivates us to godly living.				
Key Verses	1:8–10; 4:1, 13–18				
Christ in 1 Thessalonians	Jesus is our source of hope and comfort, the One who rescues believers from the coming wrath (1:10; 4:13–5:11).				

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The book of 1st Thessalonians is a Pauline Epistle (letter from Paul). The Apostle Paul wrote it about 52-54 A.D. and it was one of his earliest written letters. The key personalities in this book are the Apostle Paul, Timothy, and Silas. Paul wrote this letter to strengthen and encourage the church in Thessalonica. To encourage and hearten the believers, Paul chose to emphasize the second coming of Jesus Christ. Throughout this letter, Paul focused on the principles of Faith, Hope, and Love.

- In chapters 1-3, the first principle is seen as Paul accentuates and commends them for their faithfulness to the Lord. He wrote, "thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs it work in you who believe" (2:13).
- In chapters 4-6, Paul highlights Love and Hope. He encourages the church to walk in love; to (excel still more). He then expounds on the return of Jesus and "the day of the Lord". Paul teaches the church about the resurrection on the last day and that Christ will return in the clouds, this was exactly the encouragement that the church in Thessalonica needed. Lastly, before Paul finishes his letter he does not forget to add that they must pray constantly and "examine everything carefully". In today's world of lies, deception and carnival mirrors, everyone must apply these truths daily.

SECOND THESSALONIANS

	Affirmation amidst Affliction	Explanation of Prophecy	Clarification regarding Response
	"We ought always to give thanks to God for you." (1:3) "We . . . speak proudly of you . . . for your perseverance and faith." (1:4) "We pray for you always." (1:11) CHAPTER 1	"Let no one in any way deceive you." (2:3) <u>Secret power of lawlessness</u> <u>Restraint removed</u> <u>Man of lawlessness</u> "So then . . . stand firm." (2:15) CHAPTER 2	"We command you." (3:6) "If anyone does not obey" (3:14) "May the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace." (3:16) CHAPTER 3
Question	Why are we suffering?	What will occur?	How do I respond?
Contrasts	Peace amidst pain	Lawlessness versus restraint	Work while waiting
Statement	The Lord knows!	The "day of the Lord" has not yet come!	"Do not grow weary of doing good." (3:13)
Emphasis	Commendation	Correction	Clarification
Theme	The hope of Christ's return encourages us in our suffering and motivates us to live responsibly for Him.		
Key Verses	1:11-12; 2:13-15		
Christ in 2 Thessalonians	Jesus is the coming Judge who will reward the righteous and destroy the wicked, including the coming man of lawlessness in the end times (1:6-2:12).		

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The book of 2nd Thessalonians is a Pauline Epistle (letter from Paul). The Apostle Paul wrote it about 52-54 A.D., several months after his first letter to the church in Thessalonica. The key personalities in this book are the Apostle Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Paul wrote this letter to reemphasize the coming return of Jesus Christ. Some of the people in Thessalonica had thought that Jesus had already returned, this letter was written to correct any misunderstandings.

- In chapter 1, Paul highlights the great hope of Jesus' future return although the exact time is unable to be known by anyone. He commends the church in Thessalonica for their perseverance in the midst of persecution, "we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure" (1:4). Paul teaches that God will punish those who are persecuting on the last day. "Dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (1:8-9).
- In chapters 2-3, speaking of the return of Jesus Christ, Paul was sure to include the signs and setting that "the man of lawlessness" (the antichrist) had to arrive. For that to occur the "restrainer" (Holy Spirit) must be removed from restraining him. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers and when He is removed, all believers will be "caught up" in the clouds with the Lord Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Paul pushes them to pray and serve until this all transpires. "May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ" (3:5).

Thessalonica

- Thessalonica
 - In Northern Greece (Macedonia in Paul's day)
 - Major harbor in the northern Again

- Port city – one of Rome’s main thoroughfares

Paul spends only “three Sabbath days” in Thessalonica (Acts 17: 2) and he encounters such opposition that “as soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea” (Acts 17: 16), lest they be stoned. Very quickly persecution against the Church begins, yet in a mere six months the emerging church in Thessalonica becomes “a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia”; indeed, their “faith in God has become known everywhere” (1 Thessalonians 1: 7; 8). In 1 & 2 Thessalonians Paul addresses questions raised by the believers in Thessalonica, urgent questions asked by what is fast becoming a “martyr church.”

Three marks of true conversion: (1) turning from idols, (2) serving God and (3) waiting for Christ to return

Written in 49AD from Corinth

5 Characteristics of an Effective Preacher (1Th 2)

1. Courage to speak the truth

- 1Th 2:2 We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. 3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.
- Courage requires speaking the truth, not telling people what they want to hear
- Paul gives the Gospel truthfully and does not compromise it
- Be a God-pleaser, not a people pleaser
 - 1Th 2:4 we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.
- Don’t use flattery or be greedy
 - 1Th 2:5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed
- Don’t look for praise
 - 1Th 2:6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.

2. Gentleness in your relationship with the people

- 1Th 2:7 Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you.

3. Love as your motive

- 1Th 2:8 Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.
- The motive for Paul sharing the Gospel is love

4. Hard work

- 1Th 2: 9 Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.
- Temptations in ministry
 - Sexual scandal
 - Financial scandal
 - Laziness – most common – You can be as busy or unbusy as you wish to be

5. Holiness

- 1Th 2:10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.
- Setting your life apart to serving God

Community

Paul also needed encouragement from the church

- 1Th 3:5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.
 - Paul was being persecuted and needed to hear that his work was worthwhile
 - Overcoming the deception of the mind includes honest conversations with the head (Jesus) and the body (church)
 - We are not the only ones that have dealt with life

Abundant Life (1Th 3)

- 1Th 3:12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, 13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.
 - I want You to increase Lord – and me to decrease
 - Beware of common worldly practices
 - Passion/lust
 - Taking advantage or defrauding
 - Compromise and perversion
 - Aspire for these things (Th 4)
 - Love one another (1Th 4:5)
 - Lead a quiet life (1Th 4:11) – It's not all about us
 - Mind your own business (1Th 4:11) – No gossip
 - Work hard with your own hands for the Kingdom (1Th 4:11)
 - Be an example – be a doer, not just a sayer (1Th 4:12)

Sanctification (1Th 5)

1Th 5:12 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

1Th 5

- Honor your spiritual authority (1Th 5:12)
- Be at peace with one another (5:13)
- Warn and encourage (5:14)
 - Comfort the fainthearted
 - Uphold the weak
 - Be patient with all
- No one render evil for evil / pursue what is good for you and for others (5:15)
- Always rejoice / be joyful (5:16)
- Pray without ceasing (5:17)
- Give thanks for everything (5:18)
- Don't quench the Holy Spirit (5:19)
- Do not despise prophecy (5:20)
- Test all things (5:21)
- Abstain from every evil (5:22)

Evidence that you belong to the Lord (2Th 1)

- Manifest evidence – Proof that you belong to the Lord
 - How do you know? 2Th 1:4 we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for **your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations** that you endure
 - Faith – Believing in what you don't see (Hebrews)
 - Patient endurance and faith are evidence that you belong to God
- Rest for the weary
 - 2Th 1:7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
 - Rest from evil – there will be a day when there is no bad – all good, all the time
- Glorified in you ... and you in Him
 - 1Th 1:12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - He talks to God on our behalf every day

How to recognize the season of the 2nd coming (not rapture)

2Th 2 – The Great Apostasy

2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, **2** not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. **3** Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, **4** who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? **6** And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. **7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. **8** And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. **9** The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, **10** and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **11** And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, **12** that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

5 Reasons Why the Day of the Lord has not yet started

1. Apostasy – The spiritual falling away from the truth / physical departure
 - **3** Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first
2. Removal of the restrainer
 - **5** Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? **6** And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. **7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way.
3. The lawless one (Antichrist) is revealed
 - and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, **4** who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
 - Lawlessness – Sin is redefined as OK, therefore not sin
 - Deception
 - Counterfeits the gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - Happens after the Holy Spirit is removed
 - Exalts himself above all gods – Proclaims himself as god
 - Will sit in the temple as god

- He cannot live in believers as the Holy Spirit does – he will need to bring back the temple as a place of worship
- All powers, signs and lying wonders – magic – has been around forever
 - Deception
- Jesus wins in the end
 - 2Th 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

4. Destruction of the lawless one

- ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

5. Destruction of the lawless one's followers

- ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2Th 2 – The Great Apostasy (Physical departure)

2Th 2 – The Great Apostasy

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*

- The English expression “apostasy” or “falling away” comes from the Greek noun *apostasia*.
 - There are two major views on what is meant through the noun *apostasia*.
 - The majority view is that it is speaking of a spiritual departure, such as the unbelieving world embracing the Antichrist. Most Christians today believe that this is what is meant and that is the sign that Paul gives here.
 - Deception – False Gospel – Paul writes about deception in every letter
 - According to the second view, the *apostasia* is not a spiritual departure but rather represents a physical or spatial departure. If this latter view is accurate, Paul's simple point to the Thessalonian believers is that they could not possibly be in the Tribulation period because their physical departure, or the pretribulation rapture that he had already taught you about, has not yet transpired.
- Andy Woods – The Falling Away
 - Woods, Andy. *The Falling Away: Spiritual Departure or Physical Rapture?: A Second Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:3*. Dispensational Publishing House. Kindle Edition.
 - “I believe that what is being spoken of here is not a spiritual departure but rather a physical departure, which would be a great source of evidence favoring the pretribulation view. What I would like to present are ten reasons why I believe that the physical or spatial understanding of *apostasia* in Second Thessalonians 2:3a is the correct interpretation, and why the spiritual departure view is an inadequate interpretation.”
 - 10 reasons why the Falling Away refers to a physical departure instead of a spiritual departure
 1. There have always been Doctrinal departures
 2. 2 Thessalonians was an early letter
 3. The definite article before the noun *apostasia*
 4. The noun *apostasia* can refer to a physical departure
 5. The verb *aphistēmi* can refer to a physical departure
 6. The extended context favors a physical departure interpretation of *apostasia*
 7. The immediate context favors a physical departure interpretation of *apostasia*
 8. 2 Thessalonians 2:3a is part of a review course
 9. Early Bible translations favor the physical departure view

10. The physical departure view is held by credible scholars

- 1599 Geneva Bible translation of 2Th 2:3

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [speaking of the tribulation] shall not come, except there come a departing first, and that that man of sin be disclosed, even the son of perdition.

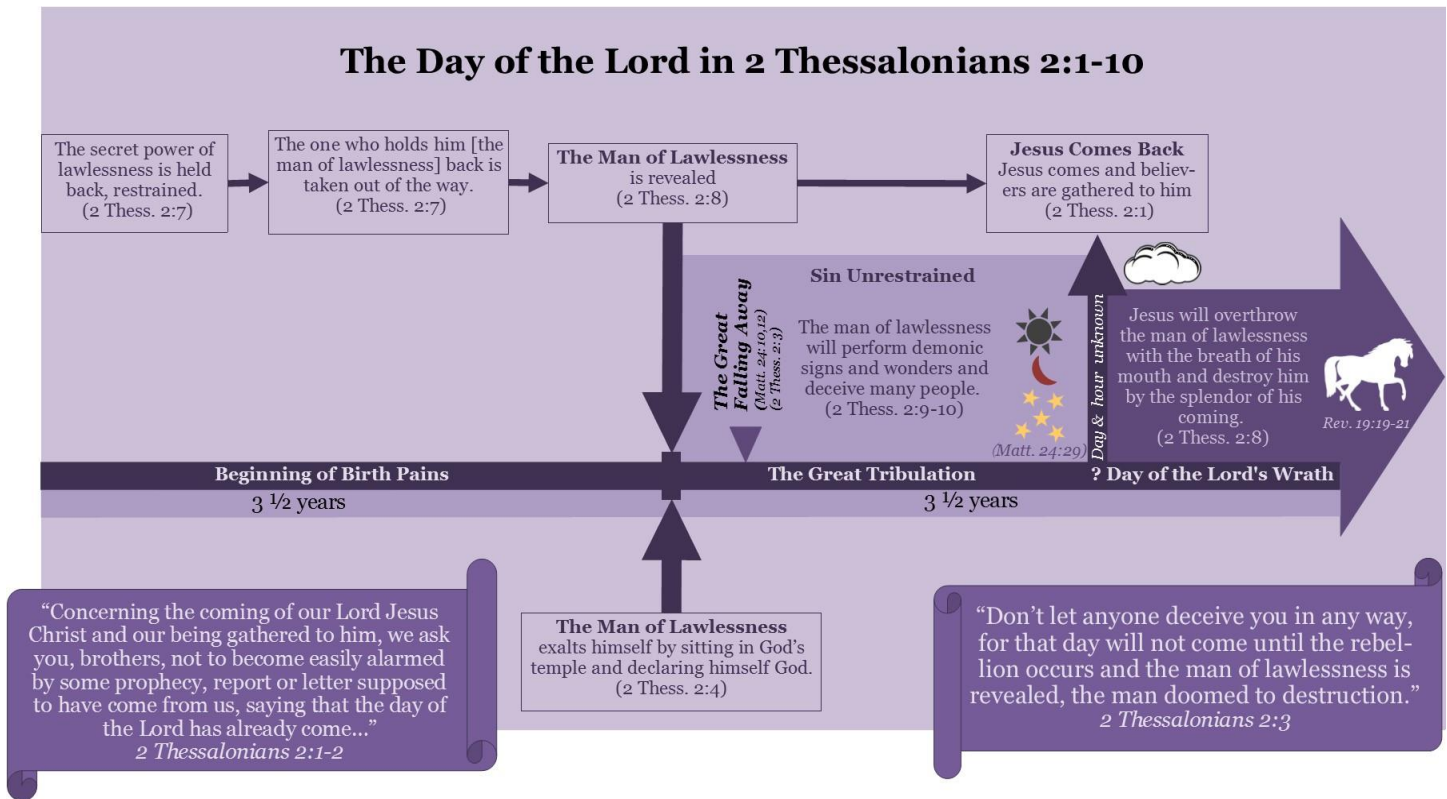
- When is it that the translators changed the noun apostasy from departure or departing to falling away in the later translations?
- Dr. Thomas Ice offers the following explanation:

Most scholars say that no one knows the reason for the translation shift. However, a plausible theory has been put forth by Martin Butalla in his Master of Theology thesis produced at Dallas Theology Seminary in 1998. It appears that the Catholic translation into English from Jerome's Latin Vulgate known as the Rheims Bible (1576) was the first to break the translation trend. "Apostasia was revised from 'the departure' to 'the Protestant Revolt,'" explains Butalla. "Revolution is the terminology still in use today when Catholicism teaches the history of the Protestant Reformation. Under this guise, apostasia would refer to a departure of Protestants from the Catholic Church." The Catholic translators appear eager to engage in polemics against the Reformation by even allowing it to impact Bible translation.

- Thus, the shift from a physical to a spiritual understanding of apostasia in Second Thessalonians 2:3a in the Roman Catholic Rheims Bible English translation appears to have been theologically rather than exegetically motivated.
 - Let me just insert parenthetically that the campaign now with a dying Catholic church in these last days is come back home.
- Furthermore, in 1611 the King James translators translated apostasia in Second Thessalonians 2:3a with the expression, "falling away." This is perhaps the second time that we begin to see a spiritual departure understanding of this verse enter an English translation. Why did the King James translators translate it as a spiritual departure when virtually everybody else, going back to Jerome, thought it was speaking of a physical departure? The answer most likely lies in the fact the KJV translation was created in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. Consequently, the translators wanted to apply the verse to the Roman Catholic Church, which represented a "falling away" from the truth. Thus, the translators of both the Rheims Bible and the KJV errantly embraced the theological interpretation "falling way" in lieu of the longstanding exegetical interpretation "departing" that had been faithfully handed down to them. Most modern translations follow the pattern established by the King James Version.

- What difference does it really make if Second Thessalonians 2:3a is speaking of a spiritual departure or a physical departure?
 - The reason it matters is because there has been for over at least the last century a vigorous debate amongst those who believe in a future Tribulation period and subsequent kingdom, concerning the question, "When the rapture will take place relative to the coming Tribulation period?"
 - Pre-tribulationists believe that the rapture takes place before the Tribulation period begins.
 - Mid-tribulationists believe that the rapture is going to take place in the middle of the tribulation period.
 - Post-tribulationists believe that the rapture will take place at the end of the tribulation period.
 - Prewrath rapturists contend that the rapture will take place at some point in the second half of the Tribulation period.
 - If verse 3a, is talking about a physical departure and not a spiritual departure, then the debate concerning when the rapture will transpire is all but over.
 - Paul says, "...that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first" (2 Thess. 2:3a).
 - The word translated "first" is the Greek adjective prōton, which means "first of all."

- If a physical departure must first transpire before the Day of the Lord can even begin, then it becomes a decisive victory for pretribulationism. Thus, how one interprets Second Thessalonians 2:3a is of grave consequence to the longstanding debate concerning the timing of the rapture.



Strong delusion (2Th 2)

2Th ⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Question: "Why is God going to send a strong delusion in the end times?"

Answer: The Bible makes it clear why God is sending a strong delusion in the end times: "They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Simply put, God sends a strong delusion to those who chose not to believe the gospel of Christ. Those who take delight in mocking and rejecting Him, He will condemn.

It is man's choice whether to accept and believe the truth of Jesus Christ as presented in the Scriptures. To receive the truth and the love God offers is in keeping with its teachings, "This is love for God: to obey His commands" (1 John 5:3). Conversely, to know the truth and not obey it is to face the wrath of God: "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness" (Romans 1:18). Frankly speaking, there is no more dangerous condition for man than to know the truth and refuse to obey it. To do so is to harden the heart and make God's condemnation sure.

When one knows the truth and refuses to obey it, he is subject to any lie, any deception, any untruth that man can conjure up. “For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:21-22). Paul goes on in the next few verses to describe the mindset and behaviors of those who disbelieve (see Romans 1:29-31). As a result of man’s foolishness and his arrogant disdain of the things of God, “God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done” (Romans 1:28). And correspondingly, “Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them” (Romans 1:32).

Isaiah puts it succinctly: “They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations; so I [God] also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in My sight and chose what displeases Me” (Isaiah 66:3-4).

When men know the truth and refuse to receive it, when they refuse to obey it and hold it in unrighteousness, “they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:12 NLT).

“God is love” (1 John 4:16). He is not some cruel monster who deliberately and inwardly delights in preparing people for everlasting condemnation. But He earnestly and lovingly proclaims the gospel of Christ, “not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Throughout the Scriptures, God urges people to accept the truth. But when people reject Him and spurn His message, then—and not until then—God hardens them and turns them over to a deluded mind to wallow in their wickedness to their eternal damnation. This is what the Lord says about those who choose to reject the truth: “They greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the Lord does not accept them; He will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins” (Jeremiah 14:10).

Alien deception

- There has been a lot of alien activity lately – very likely will be the explanation for the rapture
 - 2021 Stimulus package – included was 180 days to disclose what they know about aliens
 - Uri Geller, the famous Israeli psychic, told us that the New Age would be ushered in through a crucible of change during which the entire world would experience unprecedented conflict and disaster. An advanced alien he called “IS” (Intelligence in the Sky) from a planet called “Hoova”, informed him that they had experienced the same crucible of change themselves and that they had been watching the human struggle for centuries. They would not interfere until, in a single night, at the peak of the conflict, they would remove millions of humans who resist this initiation into a higher spiritual consciousness and “re-educate” them before returning them to Earth a few years later.
 - Bringers of the Dawn: Teachings from the Pleiadians by Barbara Marciniak – The people who leave the planet during the time of Earth changes do not fit in here any longer, and they are stopping the harmony of Earth. When the time comes that perhaps 20 million people leave the planet at one time there will be a tremendous shift in consciousness for those who are remaining.

Deception from the left

God’s Wrath on Unrighteousness

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are *without excuse*, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of

the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

²⁴Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

²⁸And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they* are whisperers, ³⁰backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³²who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

We have been in a civil war with the left for almost a year. The left, BLM and Antifa have been:

- Promoting riots and destruction
 - And the left pays to get the rioters out of jail (Harris is paying large amounts of money to put them back on the streets)
 - Funded and organized by the far left (Soros, Obama, Clintons, Gates)
- Promoting violence and lawlessness
 - Burning the cities (peaceful protests?)
 - Empty the prisons (because of covid? no)
 - Defunding the police (police driving past shootings as they are happening?)
 - Calling for the terrorizing and hurting/murdering the people you don't agree with
 - Destroying people's homes and businesses
- Promoting abortion
 - How else will they have enough fetal tissue for their mandatory vaccines?
- Reestablishing racism
 - We do NOT live in a racist society when we just tolerated 8 years of a horrifically bad black president
 - White privilege BS? I grew up in a trailer home - I don't think so!
- Destroying the nuclear family - no such thing as a mother, father and children - stated objective of BLM
- Promoting sexual deviance
 - Homosexuality / LGBTQ+
 - Transgender dysphoria
 - Legalized pedophilia
 - Child sex trafficking allowed to continue
- Destruction of absolute truths
 - Biology (boys are boys, girls are girls - there are only 2 and you don't get to choose!)
 - Past - Canceling culture so they can rewrite history as lies that promote their views
- Persecuting Christians and Republicans - anyone that disagrees with their insane views
 - Businesses intentionally targeted by LGBTQ+ because of their Christian beliefs
 - Forcing Christian organizations to go against their beliefs and pay for abortions and sex changes
- Anti-Israel / Anti-God
- Promoting a Marxist society - stated objective of BLM
 - IF Harris is allowed to take office, we will be at a one-world government within the year. Unfortunately, this is the more Biblically accurate scenario.
 - WEF - Great reset - You will have nothing and like it - and Harris is completely on board

- Pushing all children into liberal brainwashing education, no homeschooling option
- Promoting open borders
 - ILLEGAL immigrants taking our jobs and benefits
 - That's OK - soon their going to have to close the borders from people running away from this insanity. I am ashamed to say that I am part of this corrupt, Godless society.
- Using a virus as an excuse to force a vaccine that will have tracking information attached to it.
 - Using the masks as a way to condition the people to obey
 - You already can't buy or sell with a mark (mask) - we're a fraction of a step away from Revelation 13.

We have had it! Normal, rational, thinking people are done tolerating this insanity! Are ANY of the left held accountable for their actions? Why isn't Hilary in jail? or Obama? or Hunter? or Joe? Trump's biggest mistake was not holding them accountable. And now they want US to be accountable for a confirmed Antifa-lead breach?? They want to impeach Trump - who tweeted that the protesters should remain peaceful, even though they removed his Twitter account so no one could see it? We have had it! Trump won this election, by a LOT! There are a LOT more of us than them - and we have the guns (They'll be trying to decide which bathroom to use that day). The people will not tolerate horrific stated objectives of the Harris/Biden administration. War is already here, but a bloody war is around the corner.

The "Prison" Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon)

When Paul is arrested in Jerusalem in late A.D. 57, it plunges Paul into a legal morass that sees him held under protective custody in Caesarea for nearly two years, transported to Rome for his legal appeal, and two more years waiting in Rome for his court hearing. Altogether, Paul is sidelined for nearly five years, A.D. 58 – 62. It is important to understand that Paul is *not* a prisoner at this time: he is a Roman citizen, first arrested for inciting a riot, but quickly put under protective custody and sent to Rome for a legal appeal that *he initiates*. Indeed, we read in Acts 28: 30-31—“For two whole years Paul stayed there [in Rome] in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.”

While in Rome, A.D. 60 – 62, Paul writes three epistles (Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians) and a personal letter (to Philemon). Often mistakenly called Paul’s “Prison Epistles,” Paul’s epistles are enormously rich, and his personal letter to Philemon is a masterpiece of persuasion. We engage these works in this lesson.

Conspicuously absent from Paul’s writing is any mention of him complaining about anything.

- Instead, his focus is on the grace and goodness of God in spite of the unfair, life and death situation in which he finds himself.
- The question becomes one of how he was able to do this. Answer – because he had drunk deeply from the cup of God’s grace

Ephesians (Eph) – Our position in Christ and our practice on Earth

Ephesians Overview

EPHESIANS

	Introduction (1:1–2)	Our Position in Christ Section 1: What God has done for us (1) Emphasis: sovereignty Section 2: What Christ has done in us (2:1–10) Emphasis: grace Section 3: What Christ has done between us (2:11–3:21) Emphasis: reconciliation <i>CHAPTERS</i> 1–3	Our Practice on Earth Section 1: Our new unity (4:1–16) Section 2: Our new walk (4:17–6:9) Section 3: Our new strength (6:10–20) <i>CHAPTERS</i> 4–6	Conclusion (6:21–24)
Emphasis		Doctrinal: vertical relationship with God	Practical: horizontal relationship with others	
Core Phrase		“He chose us in Him.” (1:4)	“Walk in a manner worthy of the calling.” (4:1)	
Subjects		Declarations of heavenly truths (God’s accomplishments)	Exhortations for earthly living (Christians’ assignments)	
Prayers		Paul’s prayer for Ephesians (1:15–23)	Paul’s prayer for the whole church (3:14–21)	Christians’ prayers for one another (6:18–20)
Theme		The holy community God is creating and how it is to live out its calling		
Key Verses		1:9–10; 4:1–3		
Christ in Ephesians		Jesus is the source of spiritual blessing, the Cornerstone of the church, and the goal of spiritual maturity (1:3; 2:20; 4:11–16).		

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The book of Ephesians is a Prison Epistle (letter written while in prison). Paul wrote it about 60-62 A.D. The key personalities of Ephesians are the Apostle Paul and Tychicus. It was written to encourage believers to walk as fruitful followers of Christ and to serve in unity and love in the midst of persecution.

- In chapters 1-3, Paul begins with the joyful truth that every believer has been chosen by God before the foundation of the world, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will" (1:4-5). Paul then teaches about the unity of believers. These are the truths and blessings that all believers have in common. He wrote that all Christians are "adopted as sons through Jesus Christ" (1:5). All believers are, "redeemed through His blood"(1:7), and "sealed by the Holy Spirit" (1:13). Paul continues on to clear up one of the most misconceived and/or often ignored subjects even to this day, "Salvation by Grace". He wrote that salvation is by the "Grace" of God and that it is through "Faith", and that no one can contribute to salvation, in any way, even with good deeds: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast"(2:8-9).
- In chapters 4-5, Paul encourages the believer to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling". Every believer has a responsibility to live as servants of Jesus Christ. In these chapters, Paul teaches that it takes hard work to be in unity with others, and that we are to be "imitators of God" (5:1). He mentions imperative truths and advice for well-functioning families, including husbands and wives who upon the oath of marriage become as "one flesh" (5:31). Paul explains the concept of a biblical marriage. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church (body of believers) and the way that Jesus Christ loved the church is the way that the husband must love his treasured wife, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (5:25). Paul doesn't end there, he goes on to reinforce that husbands are to love their wives, "as their own bodies" and also to love their wives, "even as himself (vss 28;33).

When a husband learns to love his wife in this way, his wife usually has no issues fulfilling her role and even enjoys it, "the wife must see to it that she respects her husband" (vs 33).

- In chapter 6, Paul instructs believers how to prepare for spiritual battle by dressing in the "full armor of God" (6:11). Prayer is the key weapon of the Christian soldier. He emphasizes his principle with the repeated statement "stand firm".

Chapters 1-3 What God did for us

- God chose us
- Unity through Jesus
- Grace through faith

Chapters 4-6 Our response to what He's done

- Paul practically explains how our Christian lives can be lived as a result of what God did
- 4:1-16 How our lives can be lived in unity
- 4:17-5:18 How our lives can be lived in purity
- 5:19 - 6:9 How our Christian lives can be lived in harmony together with other people
- 6:10-24 How our Christian lives can be lived in victory specifically as it relates to spiritual attack

Ephesians Position & Practice

Ephesians 1-3	Ephesians 4-6
What God did for us	Our response to what He's done
Spiritual wealth	Spiritual Walk
Theology	Ethics
Position of believer	Practice of believer
Identity	Obligation
God sees us in Christ	World should see Christ in us
The privilege	The practice
Christian doctrine	Christian duty

Revelation	Responsibility
Christian blessings	Christian behavior
Our heritage in Christ	Our life in Christ
Work of Christ	Walk of the Christian
Christ's work in us	Christ's work through us
Heavenly standing	Earthly walk

Ephesus

The city of Ephesus was one of the most occultic and sexually immoral cities in that day, home to the Temple of Diana.

Grace and peace (Ep 1:1-2)

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- He greets them by saying to them “grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - Notice its grace and peace, not peace and grace.
 - Why? You can't know the peace of God unless you know the grace of God.
 - The peace of God is based on the grace of God.
 - We cannot have peace with God, or of God, absent God's grace.
 - "Grace is always first, peace always second. This is due to the fact that grace is the source of peace. Without grace there is, and can be, no peace, but when grace is ours, peace must of necessity follow."
- With grace in its proper place, a victorious Christian life leaves the realm of theory and enters the realm of reality.
 - With grace at home base, my obedience to God is now based on what I don't deserve, and not on what I do.
 - When I realize that my relationship with God is based on grace and not works, it will change my Christian life
- We do err greatly when we try to live our Christian lives under the banner of, “if I do ____, then God will do ____”
 - To have this mindset is to live my Christian life based on what my works deserve, and not on God's grace that's undeserved.
 - Conversely, a grace-based relationship with Christ doesn't depend upon what I do, or don't do. It's based on what He did do
- This makes willful disobedience against God, more difficult because I've been the undeserving recipient of grace
 - When I come to this realization in my Christian life, it will totally change my life by virtue of how it changes the way I live my life.
 - Now, instead of thinking that God's hammer is going to come down when I mess up, it's God's grace that comes down instead.
- Scriptural truth about grace
 - The common denominator with Paul, Peter and the many others with them is that they were recipients of His magnificent grace.
 - They did nothing on their end to be deemed worthy of it; they simply embraced God's grace, which in turn changed everything.
 - Here in lies the key to living a victorious Christian life. It's all of grace in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in my own strength.
 - Paul
 - 1Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.
 - Peter

- Matthew 26:69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said. 70 But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said. 71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.” 72 He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!” 73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.” 74 Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Spiritual Blessings (Ep 1:3-14)

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

¹¹In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹²in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

God Really Likes Me!

- “God Really Loves Me” is a firm grasp of the obvious
- When I come to the realization that God actually likes me – and isn’t mad at me – It can completely changes the relational dynamic.
 - If I truly believe that God is mad at me, I’ll keep my distance, lest I be on the receiving end of his wrath and anger.
 - If I know that God is not mad at me and that actually He really loves me, then I’ll want to draw close to Him instead.

Spiritual Blessings

The common denominator with these blessings is that they are all spiritual, not material, which is of much greater value

- Charles Spurgeon - “Our thanks are due to God for all temporal blessings; they are more than we deserve. But our thanks ought to go to God in thunders of hallelujahs for spiritual blessings. A new heart is better than a new coat. To feed on Christ is better than to have the best earthly food. To be an heir of God is better than being the heir of the greatest nobleman. To have God for our portion is blessed, infinitely more blessed than to own broad acres of land. God hath blessed us with spiritual blessings. These are the rarest, the richest, the most enduring of all blessings; they are priceless in value.”

3-6 Blessings that are ours from God the Father

7-12 Blessings that are ours from God the Son

13-14 Blessings that are ours from God the Holy Spirit

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For **he chose us** in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵**he predestined us** to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him **we have redemption** through his blood, the **forgiveness of sins**, in accordance with the **riches of God's grace** ⁸**that he lavished on us** with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹And **he made known to us the mystery of his will** according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

¹¹In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who **works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will**, ¹²in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, **you were marked in him with a seal**, the promised **Holy Spirit**, ¹⁴who is a deposit **guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

- Why does God choose us and bless us, with lavish extravagance and riches that are priceless in value?
 - Answer, the reason is He likes us, and it's according to His good pleasure, which is God's will for us.

Plan for the church

3-6 Past election

6-11 Present redemption

12-14 Future inheritance

Election / Predestination

Calvinism – You can't be saved unless God predestined you to be saved. You can not lose your salvation.

Armenianism – It's your free will that causes you to be saved, but you can lose your salvation.

Neither one is Scriptural

What Love is This: Calvinism's misrepresentation of God – Refutes Calvinism

- If God chooses us and predestines us, does that mean we don't choose Him?
 - "How can God choose us but still give us the free will to choose Him? It's as if, when a person decides to choose the Lord, he walks through a door over which is written the words, "Whosoever will, let him come" (Rev 22:17). Yet the moment he walks through the door, he looks back and sees the words, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16).
 - D. L. Moody - "I'm so glad God chose me before I was born, because I don't think He would have chosen me after I've lived!"
 - Ro 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Why Pray (Ep 1:15-23)

Thanksgiving and Prayer

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power

and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

It's as if Paul has turned a corner, going from talking to them about the Lord, to talking to the Lord about them.

- It's not so much that Paul prayed for them, it's more when and what and why Paul prayed for them.

15-16 When he heard of their faith in the Lord & their love for God's people, he never stopped thanking God for them

17 God would give them wisdom and revelation to know Him better

18-21 The eyes of their hearts would be enlightened to:

- The hope to which God called them
- The riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints
- His incomparably great power for us who believe
 - This power is the same might strength exerted to raise Christ from the dead and seat Him at His right hand in heaven far above all demonic powers
 - Specifically, rulers, authorities, powers, and dominions,
 - Every name that is invoked, not only in the present, but all eternity.

22-23 Paul ends by declaring that God placed all things under Christ's feet appointing Him the head over everything.

- Namely, as the head of the church, which is His body, and is His fullness
- In so doing, He then fills everything in every way

Why pray? Because of Who we pray to!

- Alexander the Great - "Compassionate Day"
 - While known for conquering the entire "known world," of his time, what's not so well known is that he was compassionate towards his people. As the story goes, he set aside one day a year and called it, "Compassionate Day," in which he would randomly select people across his kingdom and allow them to ask the king for a special request that he would grant – whatever it was! What's so interesting is that most people would only ask for such things as food, clothes, money for medicine and the like. That is until one particular year, when a peasant requested that he be given a large palace, with a large banquet hall so he could host large meals for all his friends. To the astonishment of all present that day, Alexander granted his request. When the king's men asked him why he would grant this man's extravagant request, Alexander the Great told them that all the people are asking for mundane things could ask just anyone to give them. They don't need a king to give them such things. Anyone with extra goods could do that. "But a king...for the first time, this man has made me feel like the king I am. For only a king could grant such a request!"
- We pray to the God of everything! When we do pray, do we ask for too little?
 - The scriptures are replete with promise after promise; God will give us anything we ask Him for if it's for our good and His will.
 - 1 John 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.
 - Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
 - James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
 - Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Why God allows adversity (Ep 2:10-13)

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. ¹¹Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)—¹²remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

This is one of those places in God's Word where we're told what God desires to do in our lives by allowing adversity. As such, what follows are two reasons as to why it is we can better understand the trials that God will allow us to go through:

He's in the process of creating a masterpiece (Verse 10)

- We are God's handiwork
 - Other translations render this as "workmanship", "masterpiece", or "poem"
 - In other words, we are God's work of art, which means that God is in the process of creating this "masterpiece" with our lives.
 - The problem is in order for God to do this in and with our lives, He has to first remove the separation and draw us closer to Him.
- Ro 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son,

He's bringing us closer to Him in order to complete it (Verses 11-13)

- In verses 11 and 12, Paul reminds them as Gentiles, they were, at that time, separated as foreigners and without hope.
 - Then in verse 13 he says now those who were once far away, have been brought near by Christ's blood.
 - Now that we are in Christ and near to Christ, the process has begun in which we are made to be like Christ.
- The chief purpose of difficult trials in our lives is that God is using them to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ
 - We become like and even behave like those people that we spend the most time with
 - We become more like Christ the more time we spend with Christ

Adversity draws us close to God so He can finish His masterpiece

- Through the process of adversity, God finishes the process of perfection that He started
 - Is 48:10 See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
 - It is the furnace of affliction that refines you, then God starts the decorating process
 - Once it's done, God puts his name on it
- When we become impatient with the process between "begun" and "complete," we do so to our own peril.
 - We fail to see the value of what God wants to create in and through His process of making us His masterpiece
 - And oh what a glorious and magnificent masterpiece we will be, so much so, that the Artist of artists will put His name on us!
- Ro 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
- Ph 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- Rev 2:17 To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.
- Rev 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

Have Thine Own Way Lord (hymn)

Jer 18:1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD : 2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." 3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. 4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

Jeremiah 18 sets the scene for this hymn written by Adelaide A. Pollard in 1902 after she was inspired by a simple prayer of an elderly woman at a prayer meeting: "It really doesn't matter what you do with us, Lord -- just have your way with our lives . . ."

"Have Thine Own Way, Lord" was composed during a time when Miss Pollard was trying to raise funds to make a trip to Africa. Her unsuccessful attempt to do this left her experiencing a "distress of soul." This crisis of the soul and the simple prayer of an elderly lady provided a setting for personal reflection on the will of God for her life. After the prayer meeting, she returned home and wrote the hymn as we sing it today.

Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Thou art the potter I am the clay
Mold me and make me after Thy will
While I am waiting yielded and still

Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Search me and try me Master today
Whiter than snow Lord wash me just now
As in Thy presence humbly I bow

Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Hold over my being absolute sway
Filled with Thy spirit till all can see
Christ only always living in me

Is There Anything Too Hard For The Lord? (Ep 2:14-18)

¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

- Jeremiah 32:27 - "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"
- Genesis 18:14a - Is anything too hard for the LORD?

- God brought unity between those at enmity – Jews and Gentiles
 - He united Jews & Gentiles together vis-à-vis a new identity in Christ, because of the finished work of Christ.
- Jews and Gentiles hated each other
 - The Jews saw the Gentiles as dogs and would thank God daily they weren't born a dog, a woman or a Gentile.
 - Jews believed that God had created the Gentiles as fuel for the fires of hell, to burn for all eternity.
 - A Jew who accidentally touched a Gentile, would immediately have to go through a ceremonial cleansing.
 - If a Jew were to ever marry a Gentile, the family would actually have a funeral service for them as if they no longer existed.
 - A Jew would never eat with a Gentile because doing so meant that they would form an intimate bond.
 - A Gentile could never go into the temple past the wall that had separated it from the outer courts.
 - Ironically Paul wrote this while under house arrest in Rome awaiting trial being falsely accused of taking a Gentile past that wall.
- If God can bring Jew and Gentile together, then God can do anything.
 - How did God do this? Answer; what united them was more powerful than what divided them.
 - Namely, the person of Jesus Christ, who not only brought unity from diversity, (university), but gave them a whole new identity
 - “it is not that Christ has brought one up to the level of the other, but that he has produced a greater: ‘as if one should melt down one statue of silver and another of lead, and the two together should come out gold.’ ”
 - Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 - Colossians 3:11 - Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.
 - Paul says He made the two groups one by destroying the wall of hostility and hatred that divided them.
 - Now, they are no longer identified as a Jew or Gentile, because they are reconciled with, and have access to, the same God.
 - They're now part of the same family, with the same heavenly Father and are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit.
- Is there anything that God cannot do?
 - Salvation
 - Hebrews 7:25 - Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them.
 - Healing
 - Matthew 9:27–30a - 27 When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” 28 And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” 29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” 30 And their eyes were opened...
 - Guidance
 - Proverbs 3:5–6 - 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.
 - Provision
 - Philippians 4:19 - And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.
 - Luke 1:37 - For with God nothing will be impossible.”
 - Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Surviving Life's Storms – Christ is our cornerstone (Ep 2:19-22)

Jesus Christ being the foundation upon which our Christian life is built by hearing and heeding the Word of God.

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

19-20 Paul begins where it must always begin and that's with the foundation being built upon the Lord.

21 Paul goes from the foundation being built upon the Lord, to the building up, as the temple in the Lord.

22 With the foundation built upon the Lord, and the building up in the Lord, we are indwelt by the Lord.

The cornerstone

- It's important to understand just how essential the cornerstone was in establishing the foundation of any structure that was built – It was so crucial it was positioned at the extreme corner in order to bind the other stones together for stability and dependability.
- One commentator defined and explained the significance of the cornerstone this way, ...[Cornerstone] literally means at the tip of the angle. It refers to the capstone or binding stone that holds the whole structure together ... often the royal name was inscribed on it. In the East it was considered to be even more important than the foundation."

With Christ as your cornerstone, you can now survive anything that comes against

- You can now survive anything, by virtue of the chief cornerstone upon which you are built.

Absent the chief cornerstone, which is Christ, it's just a matter of time before everything comes crashing down.

- It's not if, it's when, and while any structure may appear to be sound outwardly, what will determine its fate is what's inwardly.
- So too is this true with every single one of us outwardly, that is until the storms of life hit and reveal the foundation inwardly.

"Which of the two foundations have we built our Christian lives upon?"

- Sometimes it may actually take a storm to know which foundation we have. By that I mean it would behoove us to not wait until the storm hits to expose that our foundation was built upon shifting sand.

How do we build our lives upon the rock-solid foundation of Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone?

- By taking heed to, and being a doer of, God's Word
- James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.
- 1Pe 2:4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," 8 and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.
- Lk 6:46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

One of the best examples of surviving a perilous storm by taking heed to the Word of God is found in the book of Acts 27

- Acts 27:20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. 21 After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. 22 But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. 23 Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

When Life Gets Hard (Ep 3:1-15)

Paul had experienced unspeakable hardship and difficulty

If there was ever a man of God who knew a thing or two about a hard life, it was the Apostle Paul who suffered great hardship. For over 25-years, Paul had experienced unspeakable hardship and difficulty, which he lists in his second Corinthians epistle.

2Co 11:23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

It's important to understand as Paul writes this letter to the church in Ephesus he's under house arrest in Roman imprisonment. If this weren't bad enough, Paul could have easily avoided being in prison if he would have just compromised the Word of God.

How Paul was able to stand strong in the face of such unspeakable adversity in his life of hardship?

James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

What James is saying is that when life gets hard we can actually consider it pure joy because we know what God is doing in it. In other words, when I know what God is accomplishing in and through the hardships I go through, I can experience joy in it. This was how Paul got through all he went through.

What is God doing when life gets hard?

Ep 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. 8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold

wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. 13 I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. 14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

In this text, there are four things that we can know God is doing:

- God is ruining me for Him (Verse 1)
 - Paul doesn't say he's a prisoner of Rome, rather, he says that he is a prisoner of Christ for the Gentiles.
 - Paul knows God has allowed him to be imprisoned so as to accomplish His will.
 - Often times, God will ruin us for Him in order to do that which God could not otherwise do, had He not allowed the hardship.
- God is revealing something to me (Verses 2-6)
 - Here Paul says in his hardship, God revealed the mystery of how that through the gospel the Gentiles are joint heirs with Jews.
 - God uses hardship to get our attention so He can show us something. – That's what it takes in order for us to see that which I would not otherwise see were it not for the hardship
- God is showing me His grace and power (Verses 7-12)
 - This is a much-needed reminder of how hardship and difficulty in life is the only way to embrace God's grace and power.
 - It's when we realize it's all of grace, and not of myself, in my own strength, that the power of God is manifest in and through me.
- God is allowing it for others to benefit (Verses 13-15)
 - This is amongst the most important of truths when it comes to knowing what God is doing in and through the hardships of life.
 - Sometimes God will allow it so that we can comfort others with the comfort God gave us while we were in the difficult hardship

2Co 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

My Prayer Life (Ep 3:14-19)

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Paul's truly had an amazing prayer life – It's not just that Paul prayed, it's what Paul prayed, and perhaps even more importantly why it is that Paul was a man of prayer.

- When – Paul was imprisoned as he awaited trial being falsely accused
- How – Verse 14 – We're told how Paul prayed namely, that of his humbling himself and kneeling to pray
- What - He prayed:
 - 16 That they would receive from God's glorious riches
 - 16 That they would be strengthened with power through His Spirit in their inner being
 - 17 That Jesus Christ would be at home in their hearts through faith
 - 17 That they would be rooted and established in love
 - 18 That they might have power, together with all God's holy people
 - 18 That they would grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ

- 19 That they would know this love that surpasses knowledge
 - 19 That they would be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God
- Why
 - He prayed and received this himself
 - Paul loved them so much; he wanted them to experience what he had

All of these aforementioned blessings listed came vis-à-vis the prayer life of the Apostle Paul

- That also means that had Paul himself not asked for this in prayer, he would not have been the recipient of all of this.
- Every one of us should ask ourselves the question of what have we forfeited because we didn't pray.

God wants us to ask in prayer

- James 4:2b - You do not have because you do not ask God
- 1Jn 5:14T his is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.
- Romans 8:32 - He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
- James 1:17 - Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
- Mat 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!
- Luke 18:1 -- Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

The church needs to be a praying church

- E.M. Bounds, Possibilities of Prayer - "Defeat awaits a non-praying church. Success is sure to follow a church given to much prayer. The supernatural element in the church, without which it must fail, comes only through prayer".

Hymn – “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

- Written in 1820 by a man named Joseph Scriven.
- The numerous tragedies this man had experienced in his life inspired the writing of this hymn, which is all about our prayer life.

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry, Everything to God in prayer!
 Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry, Everything to God in prayer!
 Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
 We should never be discouraged—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share?
 Jesus knows our every weakness; Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care?
 Precious Savior, still our refuge—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!
 In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.
 Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised, Thou wilt all our burdens bear;
 May we ever, Lord, be bringing All to Thee in earnest prayer.
 Soon in glory bright, unclouded, There will be no need for prayer—
 Rapture, praise, and endless worship Will be our sweet portion there.

God is Able (Ep 3:20-21)

²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

- Paul is reminding the church that there is nothing that God is unable to do as he ends his prayer for them.
 - How – According to His power – How God is able is that He is all-powerful
 - Why – For His glory – He is able to because He works it out for our good and His glory in the end.
- Romans 8:32 - He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
 - This captures the very essence of this grand and glorious truth.
 - If God would give us His only begotten Son to die for us and deliver us, there's nothing that He won't do for us.
 - If it's good, it's God! If it brings glory to God, we can be assured without question that we will be on the receiving end from God.
- God is able to do immeasurably even, infinitely more, exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or imagine.
 - Charles Spurgeon - "He has constructed here in the Greek an expression which is altogether his own. No language was powerful enough for the apostle, I mean for the Holy Ghost speaking through the apostle, —for very often Paul has to coin words and phrases to shadow forth his meaning, and here is one, 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly,' so abundantly that it exceeds measure and description."
 - Adam Clarke - "Therefore he is able to do all things, and able to do superabundantly above the greatest abundance."
- Apply this to our own personal situation – "God is able to _____."
 - God is able to restore and heal my broken marriage.
 - God is able to provide financially
 - God is able to bring my luke 15
 - or daughter back
- Sometimes, God does it for us and even instead of us in the sense that the battle belongs to Him and not us.
 - One of the best examples of this is found in the book of 2 Chronicles where God does this for Israel.
 - At the time God does this, Jehoshaphat is the king of Judah, and is faced with an impossible situation and certain annihilation

2 Chronicles 20:5-17 - 5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, 6 and said, "O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that **none is able** to withstand you. 7 Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? 8 And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, 9 'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.' 10 And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy— 11 behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. 12 O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? **For we are powerless** against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." 13 Meanwhile all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. 14 And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: **Thus says the Lord to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.** 16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come

up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 **You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you.”**

Living a Real Christian Life (Ep 4:1)

Chapters 1-3 What God did for us

Chapters 4-6 Our response to what He’s done

- Paul practically explains how our Christian lives can be lived as a result of what God did
- 4:1-16 How our lives can be lived in unity
- 4:17-5:18 How our lives can be lived in purity
- 5:19 - 6:9 How our Christian lives can be lived in harmony together with other people
- 6:10-24 How our Christian lives can be lived in victory specifically as it relates to spiritual attack

What does it really mean to live a real Christian life in unity, purity, harmony and victory?

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

- The main reason that we as Christians live joyless and defeated lives – we are trying in our own strength to do that which only God can do in us, vis-à-vis that which He’s already done for us.
 - The problem is that we get it backwards – we live our lives trying to obey God in order to get him to love us, which never works.
 - This is a relationship based on works instead of grace, in the sense that I have to earn God’s love to be worthy of it.
 - I would suggest that the majority of Christians live their lives in this way, and I say that as one who still struggles with this today.
 - We need to fully understand all that God has first done for us – Then our response is to obey Him out of my love and worship for Him.
 - 1 John 4:19 - We love Him because He first loved us.
 - John 14:15 - "If you love me, you will obey what I command.”
 - Innate within every one of us is this propensity to live our lives like we have to instead of we want to
 - I’ll want to respond in this way, not to earn His love and blessing, rather, to express my praise and thanksgiving.
 - The result of this response is a life lived that’s proportionate to what God has done reflected in our daily life with Jesus Christ.

What does living a real Christian life really look like?

- Paul will answer this in the last three chapters of Ephesians dealing with our interpersonal relationships – Specifically as it relates to husbands, wives, parents, children, employees, employers and especially related to other Christians
- King David – If there were ever a man who obeyed God and lived a life of purity and victory in response to what God did, it would be David
 - David tasted from the cup of God’s grace and mercy, it changed his life, for the rest of his life.
 - So too is this true for us, once we realize just how much we’ve been on the receiving end of all God did for us, it will change us.
 - So much so, that our response will become one of wanting to live a life that is pleasing and acceptable in the sight of the Lord.

Psalms 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;

according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
 so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.
 5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
 6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
 9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.
 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.
 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.
 14 Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
 15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.
 16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
 18 In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem.
 19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you;
 then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Be Completely Humble (Ep 4:2-6)

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

What does humility look like in the life of a Christian, and especially in the life of a church?

- We can't "do" humble, we must "be" humble, as humility is who we are.
- We'll be humble proportionate to how much we realize God in his love has done for us.
 - When you realize how gentle, patient, longsuffering and loving God has been with you, you will respond in kind towards others.
- Be like Jesus
 - I'm never more like the Lord than when I am humble. Conversely, I'm never more like the Devil than when I'm proud, which is why humility is so attractive and pride so repulsive.
 - It's for this reason that scripture is replete with passage after passage contrasting pride with humility particularly in Proverbs
 - Proverbs 11:2 - 2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.
 - Proverbs 29:23 - 23 A man's pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor.

Characteristics of humility

4 characteristics of humility that will be evidenced in the life of a believer and as such in the church

Humble people are gentle

- 2a Be completely humble and gentle...
- What's interesting about what Paul says here is that when we are completely humble, the result will be that we'll also be gentle.
- Someone who's humble is gentle and someone who's proud will be harsh.

Humble people are patient

- 2b be patient...

- Humble people are patient and proud people are impatient.
- If you really think about it, being impatient with someone is like saying that you and your time are more important than they are.
- Romans 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you
- Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus
- C.S. Lewis defined humility this way, “True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.”

Humble people are loving

- 2c bearing with one another in love.
- Here Paul is talking about just one aspect of a multifaceted love, in that humble people will manifest their love by longsuffering.
- This echoes what the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth in that famous chapter known as the love chapter.
 - 1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Humble people are united

- 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
- Notice here where Paul says we’re to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
 - We don’t create unity in and of ourselves, the Holy Spirit does, and we are to keep unity.
 - Sadly, in our spiritual pride and arrogance thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought we do the exact opposite and divide.
- James 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. 4 You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”
- Charles Spurgeon - “We want unity in the truth of God through the Spirit of God. This let us seek after; let us live near to Christ, for this is the best way of promoting unity. Divisions in Churches never begin with those full of love to the Savior.”

We are one - unity in diversity

- In verses 4 through 6, Paul would say that there is one body and one Spirit.
 - This because we’re called to one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all over all through all and in all.
- What Paul is saying here is that in light of this there is unity in diversity
 - Unity in diversity which just so happens to be where we get “university.”

Why We Need Others (Ep 4:7-16)

We as Christians are all different parts of the same body of Christ.

- Just as with our bodies physically functioning in a healthy way, so too do we all play a part in the body of Christ being healthy.
- In other words, while we are all diverse in our function, we are all the same in our unity and importance as the body of Christ.

We all have a gift (Verses 7-10)

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

Paul begins by writing that each one of us has been given gifts, as Christ apportioned it, when He descended & ascended.

- This is a reference to the fulfillment of a prophecy found in Psalm 68 about how Jesus first descended into Hades
 - Ps 68:18 When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious—that you, O LORD God, might dwell there.
- It also fulfilled Mathew 16:4, where Jesus said the only sign for a wicked generation is that of Jonah 3-days in the belly of a fish.
 - Mt 16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.

We all are equipped (Verses 11-13)

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- After establishing that we're all given a gift, Paul lists some of those gifts, all of which are to equip God's people.
 - The purpose of the gifts is for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be both built up and grow up.
 - He gave the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and the pastors/teachers in order to attain both unity & wholeness
- One commentator delineated this:
 - The prophetic ministry is a guiding ministry and refers to those who speak the Word of the Lord in the Spirit.
 - The evangelistic ministry is a gathering ministry and refers to those who bring people to the kingdom.
 - The pastoral ministry is a guarding ministry and refers to those who protect the flock from the wolves who seek to destroy them.
 - The teaching ministry is a grounding ministry and refers to those who ground God's people in the truths of His Word.

We all are joined together (Verses 14-16)

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Paul describes what a healthy and whole body that's joined and held together will actually look like and even function like

- Specifically, that of no longer being immature, such that we are not back and forth when it comes to crafty and cunning people. Instead, we're speaking truth in love because of our maturity and unity; joined together, and built up, as each part does its work.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
- Sadly, many a Christian has resigned themselves to this notion that they're insignificant and unimportant within the body of Christ.
 - We do err greatly, when we mitigate the magnificence of those faithfully serving and ministering in obscurity and anonymity. Those unknown servants aren't perceived as having as much value in the body of Christ as those who are very well known.
 - The bottom line is, while some think more highly of themselves than they ought others think less of themselves than they ought. - I think the question we all need to ask ourselves is that of what is my part in the body of Christ, and what am I doing about it.

Change Your Mind – Change Your Life (Ep 4:17-24)

Here Paul is describing what our lives will be like and look like once God is allowed to change our hearts.

- We will no longer live our lives like we did before Christ, but instead live the new life in Christ, & because of Christ
- However, it all starts in the battleground of the mind, which is why Paul is emphasizing the need to change our way of thinking.

Why we're to change our thinking

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

- Paul describes those futile in thinking, darkened in understanding, separated in ignorance, and hardened in heart.
- The reason for this is having lost all sensitivity, becoming callous, giving themselves over to impurity.
 - As such, they have given themselves license to indulge in every kind of sensuality, impurity, and they also become full of greed.
- The reason why we need to change our minds is because of the propensity for our hearts to be hard and minds set.
 - Just as we develop a callous on our hands and lose the sensitivity because of it, so too does this happen in our heart and mind
- Knowing the “why” I need to change is the catalyst for motivating the “how” I can really change.
 - Not knowing the “why” is the reason nothing ever changes in our Christian lives - it starts with how we think.

How we're to change our thinking

- In verses 20-24 he goes from the “why” to the “how”
 - It's by our putting off the old self and putting on the new self in Christ.
 - It's interesting to note that we are being made new in the attitude of our minds when we do.
 - By way of a computer illustration, it's like downloading a new file to overwrite the old corrupted file on the hard drive of our mind.

20 You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. 21 Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Once we will change our minds, God, in turn, will then also change our hearts.

- God will never force His way, or His will, upon us, rather, the onus is on us to make the decision to choose Him.
- Both the changing and the transforming of my mind come by way of the renewing of my mind. With this renewing of my mind, comes a new way of thinking, which not only changes my mind, but it changes what I believe. Not only will this change what I believe, it will also change my behavior and my decisions based on what I believe to be true.
 - 2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
 - Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

We will become and behave as we think.

- Paul, in writing to the Philippians, lists those things that we're to think about for peace of mind and heart
 - Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.
 - Proverbs 23:7a - For as he thinks in his heart, so is he

Could the reason why nothing changes in your life be that you first need to change your mind?

What specific changes would you immediately and eventually see by changing, transforming, and renewing your mind? My prayer is that all of us, myself included, would take heed to this word in God's Word so as to experience a transformed life.

God Wants To Protect Me From Myself (Ep 4:25-32)

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and **speak truthfully** to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your **anger** do not sin": **Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry**, 27 and **do not give the devil a foothold**. 28 He who has been **stealing** must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

29 **Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths**, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all **bitterness, rage** and anger, **brawling** and **slander**, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

- This passage of scripture relates to how God desires to protect us from ourselves.
 - He loves us so much and doesn't want us to needlessly suffer the consequences of own decisions and actions

- When God commands us to not do something; He does so because it's for our own good in the end.
 - One noted that the "Ten Commandments" are really to be seen as the "Tender Commandments" from a loving heavenly Father. In other words whenever God says, "thou shalt not," it's always because He wants to protect us from that which would harm us.
- Sadly, in addition to being destructive to us and those around us, it more importantly grieves the Holy Spirit of God when we do.
 - I think about how grieved I am as an earthly father when my children are angry and fighting each other.
 - How much more God.
 - Another way to think of it would be that of how hurt we become when someone hurts one of our children. How much more God.
- Paul lists what we are not to do to protect us from ourselves:
 - In verse 26 he says, "Do not let the sun go down while you're still angry."
 - In verse 27 he says, "Do not give the devil a foothold."
 - In verse 29 he says, "Do not let unholy talk come from your mouth."
 - In verse 30 he says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God."
- All these are in the context of 8 sins in which we unnecessarily subject ourselves and bring on ourselves harm and danger. The common denominator in all of these is that we do them to our own peril.
 - 1 lying (verse 25) – Paul says that we are all members of one body when he says we are to put off all lying
 - If one of the parts of our bodies (hand) lies to the other (brain), it could be dangerous, even deadly
 - One commentator explained it, "A body can only function properly if it tells itself the truth. If your hand touches something hot but your hand tells your brain that the thing is cool, your hand will be severely burned. That's why telling the truth is so important, because we are members of one another."
 - 2 anger (verse 26)
 - Presupposes an unrighteous anger
 - Righteous anger – injustice towards someone else
 - The best example of righteous anger is when Jesus was angry with the moneychangers in the temple overthrowing the tables.
 - Unrighteous anger – injustice against me.
 - When we become angry with someone for what they did to us, we, as a result, will give the devil a foothold. It's for this reason scripture is replete with how much damage anger will cause when we do the devil's work for him in anger.
 - Unrighteous anger is the catalyst for the rest of the sins that Paul lists here,
 - When I become angry with someone for a perceived injustice against me, I then resort to stealing in order to get back at them. So too is this true with how I talk about them, I slander and curse them in rage and bitterness towards them, fighting with them.
 - 3 stealing (verse 28)
 - 4 cursing (verse 29)
 - 5 bitterness (verse 31)
 - 6 rage (verse 31)
 - 7 fighting (verse 31)
 - 8 slander (verse 31).
- When we know why this can be so destructive, it will motivate me with the how of the Holy Spirit to overcome them
 - Once I know the "why" I will now want to know "how" I can change so as to not suffer the consequences of it
 - Thankfully, Paul, by the Holy Spirit, gives us the answer as to the how
 - Ep 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
 - When we realize how much kindness, compassion, & forgiveness God has shown us, we in turn can show it to others

- This is what the Savior taught the disciples when they asked Him to teach them to pray, in what we call “The Lord’s Prayer.” Namely, “forgive us of our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” We forgive others because we’re forgiven.
- One commentator said it best this way, “Forgiveness is not a burden God places upon us, but rather a safeguard for our mental health and emotional stability. After teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus went on to underscore only one point: Forgiveness! ...Why? ...He was saying, “I want you to be free from the burden of holding a grudge.

The Source of Love (Ep 5:1-2)

1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- While the Apostle Paul continues his exhortation, he will sort of set the stage for what’s in the rest of the epistle.
 - The paramount importance of love – without which, God’s people will have no hope of living a godly life.
- Ep 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
 - Provides the “how” of the Spirit of God, in order to empower us to do the “what” of the Word of God.
 - It relates to how God enables us to forgive others, vis-à-vis the forgiveness that God has first given to us.
- Enter our text today, where Paul connects the dots between both forgiving one another and loving one another.
 - We are able to forgive each other because God forgave us
 - So too will we be able to love each other as God loves us.
 - The source of forgiveness and love for each other comes by way of God’s forgiveness and love for each of us
- “Follow God’s example,” or as the NKJV renders it “be imitators of God as dearly loved children.”
 - Children will naturally imitate their parents and so too will we supernaturally imitate our heavenly Father.
 - However, doing so presupposes that we will spend time with, and be close to God in order that we might end up imitating Him.
 - Acts 4:13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.
 - Charles Spurgeon - “What are we sent into the world for? Is it not that we may keep men in mind of God, whom they are most anxious to forget? If we are imitators of God, as dear children, they will be compelled to recollect that there is a God, for they will see his character reflected in ours. I have heard of an atheist who said he could get over every argument except the example of his godly mother: he could never answer that.”
- The litmus test is love – It’s the test by which we will be known as believers in and followers of Jesus Christ.
 - John 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
 - 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 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.
 - 1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.
- The more I’ve been forgiven of, the more I’ll then love.
 - The more I walk in love, the more I walk in obedience because of love, which results in being a good witness for Christ.
 - Forgiven of much → Loves much → obeying much

- John 14:23 - Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.
- Luke 7:36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.” 40 Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. 41 “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” 43 Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said. 44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, **her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.**” 48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” 49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” 50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Sexual Purity is Possible (Ep 5:3-4)

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

- In order to better understand what Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus, we need to know about the worship there
 - Temple of Diana
 - Ephesus was one of the most occultic and sexually immoral cities in that day
 - The Temple of Diana was a place where male and female prostitutes would provide their services under the banner of religion.
 - It was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, but it was like a magnet drawing the people to a cesspool of debauchery.
 - You can visit the site where this massive temple once stood in the ancient Ephesus. However, you should probably know that it’s now a swampland.
 - Specifically as it relates to living sexually pure lives in a sexually immoral culture, much like the church in Ephesus at that time.
- In this text, Paul exhorts us concerning the seriousness of sexual immorality as God’s people.
 - porneia – The word Paul uses for sexual immorality in the original Greek language of the New Testament
 - This is where we get our English word, “pornography,” which is a broad word that describes all matters of sexual sin.
 - In other words – any sexual intercourse outside of the marriage is sexual sin, which as a result makes a person sexually immoral.
 - Paul connects the dots of sexual immorality and impurity to obscenity, filthy talking and joking.
 - When sexual immorality takes up residence in one’s heart; it will be evidenced by what comes out of their mouth. I don’t think the importance of guarding one’s heart can be overstated, because what’s in our heart will come out of our mouths.
 - Proverbs 4:23–24 - 23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. 24 Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.
 - Luke 6:45 - A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

- How we are to live sexually pure lives as God's people, so there's no hint of this among us.
 - The answer is found in what Paul says at the end of verse 4 about thanksgiving coming out of our mouth.
 - When I am the recipient of God's forgiveness for my sins because of His love while I was yet a sinner, I will walk in obedience.
 - A life of purity comes vis-à-vis my response to all God has done for me, in the sense that I love Him because He first loved me.
 - Then, when I have this love for God, what comes as a result is that I will want to obey God, such that, it's a 'get to' not a 'got to'.
 - This is why the Apostle Paul listed in grand and glorious detail all God has done for us in the first three chapters of Ephesians.
- I am aware that there are those for whom this Christian experience seems not only unattainable but unsustainable. By that I mean there are those times that, as Christians, one can still fall prey to sexual temptation and in so doing, sin sexually. The truth of the matter is that, as Christians, it's not that we can ever, this side of heaven, be sinless. Rather, it's that we sin less.
 - 1 John 1:8–10 - 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
 - Psalm 119:11 - Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.
 - Romans 6:14 - For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.
 - This is one of the best and most freeing truths I've ever read concerning Romans 6:14, written by Roy Hession in "Forgotten Factors."

"If we are to experience sin not having dominion over us, we shall have to know truly what it is to be living under grace and not under law. ... If the dominion of sin over us is its power to condemn us, then the holy law of God only adds to that power. In that condition of despair we have little motivation but to commit further sin. ... To understand, then, the true nature of the dominion of sin and what are the devil's intentions in it is the first step into freedom. We are now ready to hear the message of grace. The grace of God is the love of God in action toward those who deserve nothing and can do nothing. ... Calvary shows us we are loved by God as we are, unconditionally without strings. There Jesus died not only for sin, but to sin. That is how Romans 6:10 puts it: "In that he died, he died unto sin once." What does that mean? It does not mean that He died to sin's solicitations (He was never alive to them); but that in paying our debt in His blood He died to sin's power to condemn Him any longer and therefore God raised Him from the dead. But if at that cross sin lost its power to condemn our Substitute, it has also lost its power to condemn all those whose Substitute He became. If each one of them now returns to the Cross in confession, they may all reckon on this fact, lose their burden of guilt, and step into freedom. ... If we take a long time to do that, we will be a long time under the dominion of sin. But the moment we humble ourselves and confess it all, we are forgiven, cleansed, set free from guilt and declared right with God ... The foundation of guilt on which Satan built his superstructure is removed by God Himself; the superstructure itself comes tumbling down and the one imprisoned within it is set free."

Doubting One's Salvation (Ep 5:5-7)

5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.

- This is a very important truth – and one for which there has been great misunderstanding – deception about salvation
 - Doubting and questioning their salvation
 - Doubting and questioning someone else's salvation
 - If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most important concerns for a Christian, this would be at the top of the list.

- How do you know whether or not one's saved? Paul tells us
 - If you're saved and you know it, then your life will surely show it.
 - This is, in effect, what Paul is saying in verses 5-7 – If you're not saved, you will also show it.
 - The lifestyle someone practices will determine whether or not an individual has experienced a true conversion
 - In verse 5, Paul says we can be sure of this, no fornicator, impure, greedy idolater will enter the kingdom of God.
 - In verse 6 he says don't let anyone deceive you with empty words because God's wrath is on those who practice disobedience.
 - Then, in verse 7 he says we are not, therefore, to be partners, or partakers, in practicing a lifestyle of willful disobedience.
 - Supporting scriptures
 - Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - 1 John 3:7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. 10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.
 - Matthew 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

How can you be sure your salvation

How is it that one can be sure of their own salvation, and as well, the salvation of someone they really care about.

1. I will have experienced a new birth

- In Matthew 7:15-23, the word "knew" in the original language of the Greek New Testament is Ginosko.
 - Ginosko is the same word that Mary used when the angel Gabriel told her she would conceive a son though a virgin
 - In Luke 1:34 Mary asks the Gabriel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man." It's a Hebrew idiom for sexual intercourse.
 - John 3:3 - Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

2. I will sin less though not sinless

- This is where "practice" comes into play, in the sense that I will no longer practice habitual and willful disobedience.
- When I'm born again, there's spiritual regeneration, such that I cannot rest in the habitual practice of such things.
- Conversely, those who aren't saved (but think they are) will practice such sin with no hesitation, conviction, remorse or repentance.

- 1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

3. I will bear good fruit in my life

- This is the litmus test when it comes to knowing whether or not someone is truly saved or not.
- It's for this reason that Jesus used the analogy in Matthew 7 about a good tree bearing good fruit and bad tree bearing bad fruit.
- Here's the bottom line, if I'm truly saved, there will be the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is evident on the tree of my Christian life.
- Galatians 5:22 But the **fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control**. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

From Darkness to Light (Ep 5:8-14)

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said:

"Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

- In this text, the Apostle Paul paints a stark contrast between once being darkness and now being light.
 - In so doing, he continues his exhortation to the Christians in Ephesus concerning their response to all that God has done for us.
- It's interesting to note that Paul doesn't say we were once *in* darkness and are now *in* light – rather, we *were* darkness but now *are* light.
 - While it is true that we walk in the light in the sense of reflecting light from the Lord, it's also true that we, as Christians, are light.
 - We are not only *in* the light of the Lord, we also *are* the light of the Lord.
- Living as children of light will be evidenced by the **fruit of the light; goodness, righteousness and truth**.
 - As such, our lives will be pleasing to the Lord
- 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.
 - We should really pay attention to this – that we're not to have anything to do with the darkness.
 - Not only are we to have nothing to do with darkness, but we need to reprove the fruitless deeds of darkness.
 - 12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14 for it is light that makes everything visible.
 - 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?
 - Please know this is God's way of protecting us from that, which could pose a harm or danger to us by yoking with unbelievers.
- 14 ... This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."
 - The sleeper is to wake up and rise from the dead so Christ will shine on them.
 - It seems that Paul is implying that, as Christian's, there's still this propensity for us to live as darkness instead of living as light.

- In other words, though we are now light, we're still prone to be partakers of and partners with those fruitless deeds of darkness.
- Actually, throughout the pages of scripture, God warns his people by way of forbidding his people to engage in such practices.
 - It reminds me of the saying that goes like this: "Sin is not bad because it's forbidden, rather, sin is forbidden because it's bad."
 - It's for this reason that Paul is emphasizing the good that comes from being light and having nothing to do with sinful darkness.
 - Paul, like the Savior Himself before him speaks to this important truth of being the light of the world in the darkness in the world.

3 truths about being light

1. Those in the light will be hated (John 3:16-21)

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

2. Those in the light will shine before others (Matthew 5:13-16)

Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. 14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

3. Those in the light will be ready for Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 5:4-8)

1 Thessalonians 5:4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

Being Wise in Evil Days (Ep 5:15-17)

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

- This addresses a very important issue related to us today – Why and how we're to live in a world that's seemingly waxing more and more evil with each passing day.
- The word "circumspectly" comes from two Latin words meaning look around or be aware of.
 - KJV Ep 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
 - More specifically, looking in a "circular" direction, so as to be aware of everything that's happening in all directions. This makes perfect sense – It's very practical if I want to walk and not get blindsided or fall
 - In other words, if I'm walking, looking only in front of me, or only at what's behind me, it's just a matter of time before I stumble.

- If we're to be wise in how we live, we must be circumspect with respect to the world around us, lest we fail and fall.
- Why are we to live in this manner?
 - 16 ... the days are evil.
 - Certainly this was true then, and it's even more so now.
 - It's important to understand that Paul is contrasting the one who lives wisely, as opposed to the one who lives very foolishly.
 - 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.
 - We would do well to pay particular attention to this – how to understand the Lord's will
 - What is the Lord's will? It's His will that we live and walk wisely in these evil days, lest we suffer needlessly in this evil world.
 - This speaks to a truth as it relates to God warning us because He loves us so much.
- How do we walk wisely? Redeeming the time
 - KJV Ep 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
 - Paul says first and foremost to redeem the time, while there's still time.
 - Redeemed is a very interesting word because it carries with it the idea of buying back that which is perceived as having value.
 - The question becomes what is so valuable that we're to redeem – our time and opportunity
 - The reason time is so valuable is that of the age-old principal of "supply and demand."
 - An increased demand will bring about a depletion of supply, which in turn propels an increase of value. As such, the reason time is so valuable is that the supply is disproportionate to the demand, in that we're just about out of time.
 - Jesus paints a picture contrasting the wise and foolish servant's attitudes about time
 - Matthew 24:45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' 49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. 51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - The wise servant redeems the time, whereas the foolish servant said to himself I have a long time. Because the foolish and wicked servant devalued time, he thinks to himself that he still has plenty of time.
 - The difference between these two servants is the wise one lived with urgency, whereas the foolish had no hurry and no worry. The reason the wise servant lived with urgency giving the servants their food at the proper time is that there wasn't much time.
- This is what Paul is saying in our text – be wise and make the most of every opportunity while there's time.
 - Here's the bottom line – like this wise servant, you should be wise proportionate to how you live with urgency redeeming the time.
 - It's when we circumspectly look at the world around me that we'll see just how evil the day is – and redeem the time as short as it is.
 - Proverbs 13:20 - Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.

Under The Influence (Ep 5:18-20)

18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- What Paul is not saying – a Christian should never drink wine

- What Paul is saying – a Christian should never get drunk on wine, because it leads to a wasted life of debauchery.
- Wasted on alcohol – I use the word wasted for a couple of reasons
 - The word ‘dissipation’ carries with it the idea of wasting away
 - Not only is a life wasted away by alcohol, but many lives are taken away by alcohol
 - National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) – Each year, nearly 9,967 people die on our roads due to drunk driving, which is equal to about 19 jumbo jets crashing each year.
- The emphasis is not so much on drinking wine, as much as it is on being filled with the Holy Spirit instead
 - Paul is contrasting constantly being filled with wine to constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit
 - In the original text, the grammatical sentence structure that Paul uses is that of “be constantly, being filled with the Holy Spirit.”
 - The point of the passage is be constantly under the influence of the Holy Spirit, not alcohol
 - Instead of ever being under the influence of alcohol, we should be under the influence of the Holy Spirit instead. Just as someone becomes a different person under the influence of alcohol in a bad way, so too is this true with the Holy Spirit in a good way
- Holy Spirit
 - Now this presupposes we’re filled with – and under the controlling influence of – the Holy Spirit
 - You must have been baptized with the Holy Spirit – To be baptized with the Holy Spirit is to have the Holy Spirit come upon (epi) you and fill you to overflowing, giving you power
 - There are three Greek pronouns describing the work of the Holy Spirit
 - Para – alongside as a helper
 - We get words like paramedic, paralegal, and parachute
 - John 14:16 - And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor (parakletos) to be with you forever
 - En – in or indwelling
 - The Holy Spirit indwells us when we give our lives to Christ.
 - John 14:17 - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.
 - Epi – upon
 - This is the baptism with the Holy Spirit Who comes upon us and fills us.
 - Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
 - An illustration of all 3
 - The pitcher of water is alongside, (para) the glass
 - The pitcher of water is being poured in, (en) the glass
 - The pitcher of water is being poured upon (epi) the glass to overflowing.
 - An example of this subsequent work is in Acts 8
 - Acts 8:14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.
- Evidence that a Christian is filled with – and under the controlling influence of – the Holy Spirit in their lives:
 - Those filled with the Spirit will speak with psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit.
 - Ep 5:19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,
 - They’ll always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Ep 5:20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Simply put, those filled with the Holy Spirit have a song in their heart, and an attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving to the Lord.

- If we have no joy in our Christian lives, maybe it's because we're not overflowing with the Holy Spirit.
 - Luke 11:9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

What Submitting Really Means (Ep 5:21-24)

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

- Many of the best ancient Greek manuscripts do not have the word “submit” in verse 22 concerning wives.
 - One commentator explained it best this way, “Ephesians 5:22 ...simply reads wives, to your own husbands. The topic is submission and Paul focused on a particularly important realm of submission—the Christian marriage, from the wife unto the husband. ...It is as if Paul said this: ‘I commanded you to submit to one another in a very general way. Now, if you do it in a general way, how much more so should wives do it to their own husbands in this special relationship of marriage.’”
- Submit – Literally means that of being under in rank
 - In the sense of the military having different ranks – generals, colonels, majors, captains, etc.
 - While someone may have a higher rank than another, it in no way means that they are superior to the one with the lower rank.
 - I like how Warren Wiersbe said it, “Anyone who has served in the armed forces knows that ‘rank’ has to do with order and authority, not with value or ability. ...Just as an army would be in confusion if there were no levels of authority, so society would be in chaos without submission.”
- It's with this understanding that our text concerning wives begins to make sense – It speaks to this authority structure
 - The ordained authority structure is:
 - Christ is the covering head of the husband
 - The husband is the covering head of the wife
 - Covering in the context of the awesome responsibility that comes packaged with being placed in the position of authority
- Problems – Misinterpretations
 - Many husbands have bought into a misinterpretation of this text under the banner of being the final authority
 - Many wives have bought into another misinterpretation of this text under the banner of, “I will only submit when I agree.”
 - Neither is correct because both think they are right and worse yet, they think they are the one to decide what the Lord wants.
- Never submit if it unbiblical, illegal, or immoral
 - This in no way means that the wife should ever submit to her husband if it's unbiblical or even illegal.
 - Nor should the husband ever force his wife to do anything that is unbiblical, illegal, or immoral, as he's under God's authority.
- If that's what unto the Lord does not mean then what does it mean?
 - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones answers that, this way, “It means: ‘Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands because it's a part of your duty to the Lord, because it's an expression of your submission to the Lord.’ Or, ‘Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands; do it in this way, do it as a part of your submission to the Lord.’ In other words, you're not doing it only for the husband, you're doing it primarily for the Lord Himself ... You're doing it for Christ's sake, you're doing it because you know that He exhorts you to do it, because it

is well-pleasing in His sight that you should be doing it. It's part of your Christian behavior; it's a part of your discipleship. ...There can be no more compelling motive for any action than this; and every Christian wife who is concerned above everything else to please the Lord Jesus Christ, will find no difficulty in this; indeed it will be her greatest delight to do what the Apostle tells us here."

- This misunderstanding one of the main reasons couples have conflict in their marriage
 - Specifically that of the husband abdicating his responsibility as the spiritual leader, and the wife trying to usurp his authority.
- This dynamic goes all the way back to the garden with Adam and Eve, when the curse of sin entered the world
 - Genesis 3:16 – To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."
 - At first read, you almost get the impression the woman's desire will be for her husband – but it's that she'll desire to rule her husband.
 - Perhaps better said, the curse causing the conflict in marriage will be centered on the husband's ruling authority over the wife. In other words the wife will desire to usurp the authority of the man just as Satan desired to usurp the authority of almighty God.
- Enter the Spirit filled life and the Spirit filled wife, who is then able to do that which she cannot otherwise do, which is to submit.
 - This is why Paul emphasizes the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the verses prior to this and even after
 - I suppose you could say that this is the "how" of the Holy Spirit that enables us to do the "what" of submitting to God's authority structure.
 - This truth could solve most marriage problems today
 - When God's ordained structure of authority is submitted to in a marriage, there is a harmony that ensues
 - Conversely, absent this submission, instead of harmony that ensues, the marriage will be riddled with both conflict and chaos.

Husbands Love Your Wives (Ep 5:25-33)

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

- This is the go-to passage in a wedding because of the emphasis on the husband.
 - 3 times Paul says to the husband that they are to love their wives and he explains both the "what" and "how"
 - When you fully understand the "what" of this kind of love, you're driven to the "how" because the "what" is impossible
 - Paul used the word 'Agape'
- Love – 4 different words for love in the original Greek language of the New Testament
 - Eros – We get our English word for erotic, which is a physical and even a sensual love
 - Storge – A love of natural affection that a parent will have for a child and a child will have for the parent
 - Philia – Greek word meaning brotherly love – It's the kind of love that we have for one another as a friend
 - Agape – Describes the unconditional love God has for us
- We would err greatly to assume agape love is out of reach for husbands under the banner of being God's love for us.

- We can actually have agape love for the world and the things of the world, which is the word that's used in John and 1st John.
 - 1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
 - John 3:18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
- If we're capable of love for the world and the darkness in the world, then we're capable of loving our wives in this way as well.
 - It's for this reason that, absent the Holy Spirit, a husband will have no hope of loving his wife in the way that Paul describes here.
 - This is why the context is of paramount importance – Paul couches this in terms of being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- The way a husband is to love his wife:
 - Love her as Christ loved the church and gave Himself
 - Love her as he loves his own body
 - Love her as much as he already loves himself
- A husband who loves his wife this way makes marriage problems go away.
 - When the husband loves his wife this way, the wife will, as God made her, submit to her husband's leadership, and respect him.
 - The wife won't respect him until he loves her
 - The husband who won't love her until she respects him is full of pride.
 - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - No husband is entitled to say that he is the head of the wife unless he loves his wife ... So the reign of the husband is to be a reign and a rule of love; it is a leadership of love.”
- Bottom line – If a husband will love his wife as Christ loves the church, and gives himself up for her as the spiritual leader, making her holy and pure by way of God's Word, and will love her the same way he loves, cares, and provides for the needs of his own body, making her the most important person in his life next to the Lord, and loves her and values her as much as he loves himself, then his wife will have absolutely no problem whatsoever submitting to him and being respectful toward him.
- I would submit we can either have a marriage that's hell on earth, or we can have a marriage that's heaven on earth.

Obey and Honor Your Father and Mother (Ep 6:1-3)

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

- Children in the church
 - The book of Ephesians is actually a letter, or epistle, that the Apostle Paul wrote under the Holy Spirit's inspiration – as such, it would have been sent to and read aloud in the church, in which the children were present during the reading of it.
 - There's a time when a family should worship together sitting under the teaching of God's Word.
 - While I realize this isn't age appropriate for the younger children, it's a disservice to our older children who aren't in the service.
 - This is one of the main reasons children will disenfranchise themselves from the church when they are older.
 - Sadly, the statistics bear this out – 59% of millennials who grew up in church have dropped out
 - What makes these statistics so disturbing is millennials are currently the largest living generation in the United States today.

- Please know that this isn't the only reason this generation is not in church, I believe it's also a prophetic sign of the last days.
 - 2 Timothy 3:1–4 - 1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—
- Lest we throw up our hands in despair and hopelessness, let me hasten to say that there is always hope and our text is proof.
- Paul by the Holy Spirit provides us with three very convincing reasons for children to obey their parents in the Lord
 - Because it's the right thing to do as unto the Lord.
 - In other words, to do what's right brings the blessing of God into the life of the child who obeys their parents for that reason.
 - The problem even for parents is that we tie the hands of God's blessing on our lives with the ropes of disobedience in our lives.
 - Things will go well for them in their lives.
 - Paul quotes the 5th commandment, which is the only of the Ten Commandments that has a promise
 - In scripture, the number 5 is the number of grace and grace changes everything.
 - Not only will the blessing and grace of God be on their lives, but they'll enjoy a long life as well.
 - An enjoyable and long life is a life that isn't cut short unnecessarily due to the child disobeying and dishonoring their parents.
 - This carries with it the idea of someone in battle disobeying orders meant to protect and direct only to have it cost him his life.
 - Proverbs 30:17 speaks to this untimely death in a very graphic way concerning disobedience, "The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it."
- This brings up questions as it relates to obedience to and honoring of the father and mother.
 - Are children to obey an abusive parent? Answer-NO!
 - It is never okay for a parent to abuse a child, and any parent who does will answer to God.
 - Also, a child should never obey a parent if doing so means they would be disobeying God, which is why Paul says, "in the Lord."
 - What is the difference between respecting your father and mother, and honoring your father and mother?
 - Respect is earned
 - Honor is given – they're authority is to be honored
 - This means we're to still show them honor in their position of authority, even though they haven't earned our respect as well.
 - One commentator explained it this way, "What it means to honor our father and mother may change as we grow into adulthood, but the principle always endures. The adult child does not owe the parent obedience, but they do owe the parent honor.
 - "Why" is children obeying their parents is so important?
 - Spiritual reason
 - Like Jesus, Who was one with the Father, so too are we spiritually connected to and reflective of our father and our mother. When disobey and dishonor our parents, we do so to our own peril because of our spiritual reflection and connection to them.
 - Physiological reason
 - There a physical, emotional, and physiological connection genetically to them. When we dishonor them, we dishonor ourselves, made in their image, and it takes its toll on us, and will negatively impact us.
- Luke 2:51–52 is a fascinating account of Jesus submitting to his parents, "Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

The Difficulty of Parenting (Ep 6:4)

4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

- It is utterly impossible to parenting our children in and of ourselves – by way of our own strength, skills and ability
 - Success in parenting comes because God extends both His grace and mercy to us. So much so that He has not paid us as our parenting failures deserved and instead has been faithful when we were faithless.
- Why Paul says that Fathers are not to exasperate their children and not mothers?
 - Because culturally the fathers are the authority, and naturally, the mother is more nurturing.
- Provoking
 - Most translations render it provoking, but it carries with it the idea of treating our children in such a way as to make them angry. I prefer the word exasperate because it means we have the propensity to irritate, frustrate, infuriate and as such embitter them.
 - Colossians 3:21 – Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.
 - We as parents can place unrealistic and impossible expectations on our children.
 - While the intentions of a parent may be good, the reality is that they are trying to relive their lives vicariously through the child. The problem with doing this is we set our children up for failure by virtue of how often times that's not the way God wired them.
 - One commentator explained it, "Wise is the father who understands that his children are not to be molded, but to be unfolded. In other words, you have the privilege, Dad, of observing your child carefully, seeing how God made him—and then unfolding what God has built into him from the moment of conception, all for His glory."
- Proverbs 22:6 – Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.
 - This Proverb has been the source of much debate and it's also been largely misunderstood.
 - 'the way he should go'
 - To train a child according to their particular bent, and they will continue in it when they're older.
 - This is why the Amplified Bible parenthetically renders Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go [and in keeping with his individual gift or bent], and when he is old he will not depart from it."
 - This does not mean we just let them do whatever their particular bent is, rather, we're to train them, according to the ways of the Lord.
 - Training
 - Translated 'chastening in corrective discipline'
 - Paul uses is the same word in Hebrews 12:5-11
 - In other words, we customize our training according to the child's bent, correcting and directing them in the ways of the Lord.
- Ep 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; *instead*, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.
 - 'instead' – not only provides the explanation, but with it, the application to our lives in our parenting
 - Instead of bringing them up in the training & instruction of the Lord, we pressure and push them to please us
 - Sadly, many a parent has been too harsh in demanding perfection from their children, which leaves them inadequate and bitter.
 - When this happens, it's only a matter of time before that child will see their acceptance, solely based upon their performance.
 - In other words, they won't feel loved for who they are, and instead, become discouraged because they are never good enough.
 - If this weren't bad enough, parents who push this way do so under the banner of challenging their children to be high achievers.
 - However, what they don't realize is that whether the child gives up or becomes successful, they can become bitter either way.

- We would do well to examine ourselves to see if we're a rancher who drives a herd, or shepherd who leads a flock.
 - If you're anything like me, you're probably experiencing a myriad of emotions about today's teaching – Everything from discouragement to hopelessness and everything in between, especially the emotion of guilt, which is the worst.
 - For some, the feeling of guilt set in because you think it's too late. You're children are older and you've made all the mistakes.
 - It's never too late for your children no matter their age. Never, ever give up on them, even if they are the quintessential prodigal who is as far away from you as they are from the Lord. The most powerful weapon we possess as a parent is prayer, and a wayward child is no match for that.
 - Let me encourage you to not only pray for your son or daughter, but also unconditionally love them as well.
 - By that I mean love them no matter what – that may be the very thing they have lacked growing up because of loving conditionally
 - One of the most encouraging verses that God has ministered to me in this regard is in Paul's epistle to the Romans chapter 2:4. Romans 2:4b ...the goodness of God leads you to repentance

Christians in the Workplace (Ep 6:5-9)

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. 9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

- Have to understand the context of what Paul writes prior in the letter – being filled with the Holy Spirit and the results of what our lives will be and look like as Christians in this world.
 - This is what a Spirit filled marriage, a Spirit filled family, and now a Spirit filled employee looks like.
- When the Apostle Paul wrote this letter there were over 6-million slaves in the Roman Empire.
 - Sadly, these slaves were seen as being less than human in many cases, which makes what Paul writes seem to be unrealistic.
 - It's for this reason that it's of paramount importance that we're filled with the Holy Spirit in order to be able to work as unto the Lord. Certainly, this was the only way for slaves to serve wholeheartedly in that day, and so too is this true more so for us in our day.
- If they were to serve in this way as slaves then, it should be much easier for us to do so in our day as an employee.
 - If you were to ask me what I thought was the best indicator of spiritual maturity in a Christian, it would be how hard they work.
 - They never see themselves as working for man; rather, they know they're working as unto the Lord.
 - We err greatly when we separate the sacred from the secular
 - Whatever your occupation is, you're serving the Lord in that environment whether you realize it or like it or not. This goes for employees as well as employers in the sense that your business and your job is your ministry that's unto the Lord.
- Characteristics of the Christian employees and employers
 - Paul isn't saying we need to be this way, rather that, if we're Spirit filled, this is how we will be
 - 4 Characteristics of what Spirit filled employee:
 - A Spirit filled employee will obey their employer
 - A Spirit filled employee will respect their employer
 - A Spirit filled employee will be sincere with their employer
 - A Spirit filled employee will work with their whole heart for their employer
 - 1 characteristic of the Spirit filled employer:
 - A Spirit filled employer will not threaten their employee

- Why Christians are to be like this
 - For the Christian employee
 - It's a good witness for the Lord when Christians are the hardest workers, especially when their employer is not watching.
 - When a Christian works wholeheartedly, not as unto men but so as to please the Lord, there is a reward from the Lord.
 - For the Christian employer
 - We all have the same Master
 - God makes no distinction between the employee and employer such that He shows no favoritism or partiality
 - While the employer may be in a position of authority over the employee, it doesn't make the employer better than the employee.
- Summary
 - The Christian employee should be the hardest and most reliable worker in the workplace, regardless of the environment.
 - So too should the Christian employer be the best employer in how they treat their employees, regardless of if they're Christians or not.
 - When a Christian employee or employer does so; they are more likely to win others in the workplace to Christ.
 - Conversely, when a Christian employee or employer does not act in this way, they can turn the workplace away from Christ.
- Sadly, many professing Christians have done more harm than good.
 - The professing Christian is often times the laziest, most unreliable, even the most dishonest one, on the job.
 - Proverbs 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy man to those who send him.
 - Proverbs 25:19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble Is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint.
- This can be common in the church today.
 - Hebrews 13:17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. 18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.
- Example
 - One of the best examples of serving faithfully and honorably regardless of the environment is Joseph as a slave in Egypt.
 - Joseph is a man that could have used every excuse in the book to complain about how he was treated, betrayed and enslaved.
 - Instead God enabled him and empowered him to prosper, so much so he was promoted to the most powerful position in Egypt.
- Charles Spurgeon - "Grace makes us the servants of God while still we are the servants of men: it enables us to do the business of heaven while we are attending to the business of earth: it sanctifies the common duties of life by showing us how to perform them in the light of heaven."

Satanic Attack (Ep 6:10-12)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- Satanic attack
 - Satan is very powerful, but he is NOT God's opposite
 - Satan is not omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all knowing) or omnipresent (all present)
 - One of his many successes is that he gets Christians to believe mistruths about him
 - We overemphasize how much power he has
 - We underestimate how powerful he is
 - Satan is very powerful, but he's not all-powerful
- Christian power
 - The fact of the matter is that the devil should be infinitely more afraid of us as Christians, than we should ever be afraid of him.
 - Yes, he can form weapons against us, but there is no way that any weapon he forges against us will ever prosper and prevail.
- 'Finally' – Seems to indicate that Paul is referencing everything written up to this point
- Then Paul tells us what to do, then why we're to do it and then perhaps more importantly how we are to do it.
 - What
 - Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power and stand against the devil's schemes
 - It's not by our own strength and power – It's by our strength in the Lord that we can experience the power of the Lord
 - Our strength in the Lord is displayed when there's a show of His power
 - A man with muscles has strength, but the display of that strength is when he uses them to show his power
 - Why
 - So we'll be able to stand against the schemes of the devil instead of falling prey to the devil
 - Because of who we wrestle with – Entities in the spiritual realm all of which are against us
 - The book of Acts tells us Ephesus was filled with demonic possession
 - Ephesus was known for the "Ephesian Book of Spells," and many had come out of a very demonic background
 - How
 - We're to do this is by putting on the full armor of God
 - You need to know who the enemy is and is not, lest we fight the wrong battle against the wrong enemy
- Paul delineates the entities that we wrestle with as being 4 different rankings and authorities within the spiritual realm
 - Rulers
 - Authorities
 - Powers of this dark world
 - Spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms.
- 'struggle' – better translated as 'wrestle'
 - Wrestling is a full contact and very intense and exhausting endeavor – an apt description
 - We do not wrestle with people as our enemies. Rather, these spiritual entities, through people, are our enemies
- 'schemes'
 - Some of your translations render it the "wiles" of the devil, which carries with it the idea of being very subtle under the radar.
 - The devil works through people behind the scenes and under the radar, so we don't even know that it's him
 - 2 Timothy 2:23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

- Matthew 16:23 (NKJV) — 23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”
- Bottom line - The devil influences people and circumstances to get us wrestling with flesh and blood, instead of him.
 - In order to be strong in the Lord and his mighty power, we must identify our enemy.
 - When we identify our enemy – in all of his subtle schemes behind the scenes – we will then be able to defeat our enemy as well.
 - This is the first step to standing, and not falling, when attacked by the enemy in the spiritual realm
 - The spiritual armor of God is the next step to defeating the enemy and walking in victory when (not if) we’re attacked spiritually

Recognizing and Resisting the Devil (Ep 6:13-14a)

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then,

- Jesus has already won the victory over Satan – Satan is already defeated
 - Jesus defeated Satan for us, and instead of us, when He was resurrected
 - All that we need to do is recognize the devil, and his strategies, in order that we can stand against him and resist him.
- First step to walking in victory – Recognizing that Satan masquerades as an angel of light and is so subtle we don’t know that it’s him.
- ‘To stand against the Devil’ carries with it the idea of not falling when we’re in the battlefield
 - The reason we’re able to stand – we’re not just conquerors because of Christ, we’re more than conquerors through Christ.
 - To be more than a conqueror means we, as Christians, can know we will stand victorious in battle even before the battle begins.
 - This is what the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome as it relates to both the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - Romans 8:34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
 - To stand against the devil as more than conquerors in Christ is to resist the Devil so we stand and he flees.
 - James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
 - Thankfully, the Savior Himself provides Himself as the perfect example of standing and resisting the Devil and having him flee. He did this in His humanity, not His divinity, so that we would have His example of how we too can stand and resist the Devil.
 - Actually, this is the very reason that the Devil seeks to deceive us so we’ll believe that we cannot stand and will once again fall.
- Satan uses an infrastructure of guilt and condemnation in our lives to cause us to fall instead of stand
 - 2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.
 - Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
 - Paul is saying the condemnation of my sins shall no longer be my master because I’m not under law, but under grace instead.
 - This is exactly what Satan doesn’t want me to know. He wants me to think that I’ll be controlled by sin and as such, fall into sin. Then, when I fall, Satan is right there to condemn us, so as to deceive us, into hiding our sin and keeping our distance from God.

- Roy Hession writes; “In that condition of despair we have little motivation but to commit further sin. Our spiritual situation is so dead and unsatisfying that we feel a further act of sin is not going to make things much worse – so why not? ... The most we can hope for in this situation is to try to hide some of the more shameful [sins]. But the longer we hide sin, the longer it goes on condemning us and we get more and more under its dominion. Is it not obvious from all this that the real purpose of Satan in provoking us to commit sin is not merely that we might do something unethical, but that when we have done it, he might have the opportunity to accuse us (he is called the accuser of the brethren in Revelation 12). And then in that condition we are rendered powerless... The Christian who has committed an impure act feels himself the next day an utter dog; he does not want to look God or his fellow-Christians in the eye; and as for undertaking some spiritual service – he would rather run away and hide. This is just the result the devil intended when he provoked that Christian to sin.”

Armor of God (Ep 6:10-18)

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, ¹⁵and with your **feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace**. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**. ¹⁸And **pray** in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

- Paul provides us with what I would argue is the best analogy concerning our spiritual warfare.
 - The armor that God has given to us in order to equip us and enable us to stand against the attacks of the devil.



- Problem – Verse 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
- Solution – Give before & after, surrounding the problem – Stand strong in the armor of God
 - 1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.
 - James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- Ep 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.
- It's important to understand that each aspect of the armor symbolically applies to every aspect of our Christian lives practically – The full armor of God covers every area very specifically, as it relates to the attacks from the enemy spiritually.

DESCRIPTION	APPLICATION
The belt of truth around your waist	Truth holds everything together
The breastplate of righteousness in place	Righteousness protects the heart
The sandals of the preparation of the gospel of peace	The Gospel provides a firm foundation and footing
The shield was held up above all as a protection	The shield is impenetrable and extinguishes flaming arrows
The helmet protected the head	The blessed hope of salvation protects the mind
The sword is the only offensive weapon	The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword

We are in a Satanic War

The moment that you got saved, you entered into a spiritual war against a demonic host – whose sole purpose every day is to destroy you and extinguish your effectiveness for Jesus Christ.

This is why Ep 6:10-20 carries the same war verbiage

- Be strong in the Lord (v10)
- Put on the Armor of the Lord (v11)
- Take your stand against the enemy (v12)
- Stand your ground (v13)
- Stand firm (v13)
- Put on the Belt of Truth (v14)
- Wear the Breastplate of Righteousness (v14)
- Get feet fitted with the Gospel of Peace (v15)
- Grab the Shield of Truth (v16)
- Put on the Helmet of Salvation (v17)
- Use the Sword of the Spirit (v17)
- Pray to the Commander (v18)
- Be alert (v18)
- Obey without fear (v19-20)

We war for Christ

- Ro 7:23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.
- 2Co 10:3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.
- 1Pe 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

We battle for Christ

- Jas 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

We struggle for Christ

- Ro 15:30 I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

- Ep 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
- Php 1:30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.
- He 12:4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

We fight for Christ

- 1Co 9:26 Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.
- 2Co 10: 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.
- 1Ti 1:18 Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well,
- 1Ti 6: 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
- 2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

We are soldiers for Christ

- 1Co 9:7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink the milk?
- Php 2:25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.
- 2Ti 2:3 Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
- 2Ti 2:4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.
- Phm 1:2 also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home:

We have weapons of Christ

- 2Co 6:7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;
- 2Co 10:4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

How do we win the war?

We must know and understand:

- Who the enemy is
- What your enemy is like
- The tactics of the enemy
- The destruction the enemy can cause
- The temptation of the enemy can provide
- The protection that God has given us from the enemy

Truths about the Armor of God

1. It's designed for war – Protection from Satan and demons
 - Context of Scripture
2. It's designed for victory
 - The need for victory
 - The solution for victory
3. It's designed to wear
 - It has to be put on by you – no one can do it for you
 - You have to understand what the symbolism means and apply it



- It protects from all angles
4. It is full body protection

Belt of Truth – Word of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaUfhfeGC-c>

¹⁴Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist

- Belt – *Cingulum militare* – Roman military equipment in the form of a belt with metal fittings
 - The belt was broad and composed of sturdy leather
 - From it hung an overlapping skirt of leather straps, almost like an apron, with decorative rivets
 - It was worn with the tunic at all times and it formed the central piece of the soldier's armor holding all the rest of the equipment securely in place
 - From the belt hung specialized hooks and holders on which the scabbard that contained the dagger ('pugio'), the quiver which held the lances and an apparatus on which to rest a large battle shield
 - Also on the belt were clips to hold the large breastplate in its proper place and even supplies of bread, oil and water
 - Slackened belt meant
 - Soldier is off-duty – time to relax
 - Pants coming down
 - Purpose
 - It holds all things together – It keeps everything from falling apart
 - It has to be put on by you – no one can do it for you
 - It provides serious support for low back – girding your loins
 - It indicates readiness for war
 - Has gromets to hang your victories
- Truth
 - *Alethea* – that which is objectively true in any matter pertaining to God, the duties of man, and moral and religious truths
 - The Bible (Word of God) is truth
 - Jn 17: 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.
 - Jesus is truth
 - Jn 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life.
 - The Holy Spirit is truth
 - Jn 15:26 "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.
 - Truth is of the utmost importance in the life of a Christian.
 - Without truth, the rest of the armor would be of no use to us
 - We are to actively lay hold of the truth and use it
 - Without an understanding of truth, we are left vulnerable to being "tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming." (Ep 4:14)
- Symbolism
 - The Bible is the linchpin of the armor – it is the central cohesive element that holds everything together
 - Every single piece of the armor depends on the belt of truth – the Word of God
 - Don't look like a fool with your pants on the ground
 - Absent the truth, everything falls apart – especially in spiritual warfare.
 - We're walking in the truth in the sense that we do not believe the lies from the father of lies
 - We need to read the truth every day to counteract the constant deception from the devil



- There is no day off
- When you go out the door every day, you need God's Word to support us so we can stand
- How do you know if the belt is not on?
 - The way you think and act in your life is set by some standard – and if that standard is not God's truth, you've already lost the battle
 - Critical spirit
 - Sarcastic attitude

Breastplate of Righteousness – Living a holy, righteous life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipdFhjhaZUY>

with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place,

- Breastplate – Comes from the Latin phrase '*Lorica segmentata*' meaning armor in pieces
 - Composed of 40 separate plates
 - Allowed the armor to be stored very compactly
 - 4 sections – 2 shoulder, front & back
 - Allowed the armor to be stored very compactly
 - Attached by brass hooks joined by leather laces
 - The broad iron or steel strips were fastened to internal leather straps and the metal strips were arranged horizontally on the body, overlapping downwards
 - Protects the vital organs – heart, lungs, liver
 - A hit in the vital organs was death
 - You could survive a hit to the arm
 - Protects from attacks from all directions
 - Front, back, above
 - Notoriously resilient to a majority of weapons – swords, missiles, spears, knives
 - Impenetrable to most direct hits and missile strikes
- Righteousness
 - Greek word *dikaiosynēs* means right living as defined by God
 - Integrity, virtue, purity of life, holy character
 - Satan is the father of unrighteousness
 - Ez 28:15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.
 - Hebrew word for wickedness is *evil* – means unrighteousness – All unrighteousness started from Satan – he's the unrighteousness one
 - God says that if you're going to counter the evil one's unrighteousness solicitations to do evil and to live an unholy life, you need the breastplate of righteousness
 - 2 options for righteousness
 - Positional/imputed righteousness – righteousness that is given to us through Christ when we are saved
 - Accounting term – His righteousness was credited to our account by His work on the cross
 - God takes all of our unrighteousness, our rottenness, our sins and places them on the cross with Christ. Then He takes all of Christ's righteousness and places it in our accounts.
 - 2Co 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



- This is a good thing to understand on the days that you fail to put on the breastplate of righteousness – there are times that we are going to blow it and sin. This understanding is really important for those days
- Salvation is based on the imputed righteousness of Christ
- This is a gift from God – we can't earn our way to heaven – This has nothing to do with our actions or inactions (aka, living a holy life)
- Practical righteousness
 - This involves an action on our part
 - Process of Christian maturity – the process of becoming more like Jesus
 - How much do you act like, look like, speak like and behave like Jesus
 - Jesus lived a holy life, therefore we are to live holy lives
 - Holy = purity
 - We don't become sinless, but we sin less
 - Ro 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.
 - instrument – Greek word *opla* – instrument of war, weapon
 - Our bodies are instruments of warfare of God by being committed to a holy life
 - If you are not an instrument of God, then you are an instrument for Satan
- To have in place / To put on
 - Greek word *enduo* – means that you are to sink into (immerse) yourself in the breastplate of righteousness
 - Make sure that there is not one area exposed to Satan to attack from
 - You alone have to make a personal commitment to living a holy life
- Symbolism
 - Means to be committed to living a holy life every day
 - To protect our vital organs – especially the heart – we must intentionally live holy, righteous lives
 - It does not give Satan an 'in' – an area of sin that he can use to condemn us
 - Every day you need to wake up and say 'God, use me as your weapon so I will not be a weapon of Satan'
 - The enemy will attack from every direction until he succeeds
 - He encourages us to do everything that is unrighteous
 - Weakness in the armor that cause failure
 - Sin
 - Acts of disobedience – crack in the armor
 - Wrong attitudes
 - Unconfessed / unrepented sins
 - While it's certainly true Christ's imputed righteousness protects our heart, there is an aspect of living a righteous life in Christ. Not self-righteousness, rather righteous and holy Christian living that comes with purity
 - Psalm 66:18 - If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

Shoes of Peace – We have peace with God

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV_DA_8ppTA

¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

- *Caligae* – Roman soldier's shoes
 - Latin for 'marching boots'
 - Heavily soled military boots worn by all ranks throughout the Roman Empire
 - Symbolic of the expansion of the Roman Empire
 - Design
 - Open design
 - To allow for the free flow of air and comfort of the feet – walked up to 25 miles/day
 - Specifically designed to reduce blisters
 - Woolen socks could be worn in colder climates, but not normally
 - Fitted with iron hobnails hammered into the sole – similar to today's cleat
 - Provided reinforcement and traction – strength and stability – keep you from stumbling
 - Could also be used as a weapon against a fallen enemy
 - Traction on hills and uneven terrain
- We have peace with God
 - God has forgiven you, you are His child
 - Keeps us from stumbling or backsliding when Satan attacks by reminding us of all the wrongs we have done
- Must be done every day by me – no one else can do it
 - Readiness that comes from putting these shoes on – must be done every day so we are ready
 - Greek for fitted – *Hupodeo* – to bind under one's self
 - Grammar – middle participle – which means do it on your own accord
- Shoes of the *gospel* of peace
 - Greek for gospel – *euangelion* – good news
 - We are no longer at war with God - We are God's children, He will go to war for us
 - All my sins are forgiven, forgotten, obliterated by God – I don't need to think about them again
- Peace – 2 interpretations
 - Peace that we proclaim through Christ – sharing the gospel, the good news of peace through Christ
 - Ro 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
 - Every day, we need to have our feet fitted with the good news of peace – we need to be out there every day sharing the gospel (evangelizing)
 - Great commission to share the gospel is an order from Jesus – not a suggestion just for those that have that gift – it is an order that we all have to obey
 - 95% of professing Christians never lead a single soul to Christ
 - It is the great commission, not the grand suggestion
 - Probably not the correct interpretation
 - The emphasis from the context of the passage is to stand, not go
 - Ep 6:11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your *stand* against the devil's schemes ... 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to *stand* your ground, and after you have done everything, to *stand*. 14 *Stand* firm then



- Peace that we have through Christ
 - We are born under the wrath of God
 - Jn 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.
 - Ro 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ... 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ... 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!
 - Saved from what? Before we were saved, we were under God's wrath
 - Eirene – Greek for peace
 - The exemption from the rage and havoc of war
 - Through the cross of Jesus, we are no longer at war with God, we are at peace
 - We are now God's children, He will take care of us
 - Not only are we not at war with God, He goes to war for me
 - A state of tranquility between individuals – security, harmony
 - I am forgiven of all my sins
 - My walk with Jesus Christ is secure for all of eternity
 - No matter how many times I mess up, my position is secure – positional truth
 - God uses me, in spite of me
- Forgive – Greek *aphiemi* – to send away, to disregard, to abandon, to give up, to leave behind, to let go, to no longer discuss
 - Forgiveness of sins does not mean ‘God, please don't send me to hell’ – that was secured the moment that you were saved
 - He *will* forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness – not maybe
 - 1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and *will forgive us our sins* and purify us from all unrighteousness.
 - 1Jn 2:12 I write to you, dear children, because your sins *have been forgiven* on account of his name.
- Forgiveness – good news that God will disregard and no longer discuss your sin
 - 1Jn 2:12 I write to you, dear children, because your sins *have been forgiven* on account of his name.
 - Mic 7:18 Who is a God like you, who *pardons sin and forgives the transgression* ... 19 You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.
 - Heb 8:12 For I will forgive their wickedness and *will remember their sins no more*."
 - Is 43:25 "I, even I, am he who *blots out* your transgressions, for my own sake, and *remembers your sins no more*.
 - Blot – Greek word machah – Utterly wipe out, to destroy, to eliminate, to become invisible, to disappear, to obliterate and exterminate
 - Php 3:13 ... But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,
 - Forget your past and move forward to Christ
 - Forget – Greek word epilanthanomai – Not just forget, but to give over to oblivion
- My walk with Jesus is safe and secure, even when I stumble
 - Positional truth – we are blameless through the work of Jesus on our behalf
 - Blameless – Greek amomos – No spots, no blemish, no flaw, no shame, no disgrace
 - Ep 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.
 - Ep 5:27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.
 - Col 1:22 But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

- Jude 1:24 To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy
- The great accuser – These are very common accusations from Satan
 - He reminds you of things that you did 10 years ago
 - What did you just do! God can't possibly love you now.
 - You are really an enemy of God – God hates you and has now turned His back on you
 - God's not going to protect you after what you did
 - Demoralization – I know that God loves me, but I'm a worthless idiot. I can't do anything right. I might as well just quit and go AWOL (absent without official leave). I have no right serving Christ.
 - Scripture says that God will never turn His back on you
 - Heb 13:5 God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"
 - Satan tries to make us a slave to our sins
 - He wants to make us feel horrible about something that Jesus has long since forgotten
 - Don't listen to the lies of the devil and keep fighting on the front lines of the war
 - Satan not only tries to get you to do the sin, but more importantly is when he attacks you for what you did
 - This is where the shoes of peace are so needed
- The Gospel provides us with that steady and ready footing to stand on when in the heat of the battle
 - Of this one commentator noted, "The military successes both of Alexander the Great and of Julius Caesar were due in large measure to their armies' being well shod and thus able to undertake long marches at incredible speed over rough terrain."

Shield of Faith – Belief in God and His promises to us

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nh6c8JfqUZc>

¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

- *Thureos*

- Derived from the word ‘*thura*’ which literally means ‘door’
 - Looked just like a large rectangular door – 2.5’ x 4’
- Provided full body protection for the soldier
 - Protects the whole body
 - Well suited to the tactical needs of the day – border defense, skirmishes, and aerial attacks
- Made of wood, covered in leather, and dipped in water
 - Had a central spine down the back and a metal strip boss
 - Carried using a central handgrip
 - Leather dipped in water made it flame-retardant for protection from flaming arrows



- Importance of Christians working together
 - When they all put their shields together, they were all completely invulnerable to the attacks of the enemy
 - The front lines held their shields together side by side
 - Those in the middle put their shields overhead
 - In this formation, they were practically invulnerable to arrows, rocks, and spears
 - This doesn't mean the shield was more important – rather it meant that taking up the shield formed an impenetrable protection
 - If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most successful strategies of the enemy, getting us all alone would be it.
 - It's for this reason that many a Christian has found themselves vulnerable to satanic attack, when they forsake the assembly.
- The shield was covered in leather and dipped in water to make it flame-retardant
 - The water is the Word of God
 - Keep the shield wet by continually staying in the Word of God
 - You have to not only quote God's Word, but obey it fully
 - You have to know the Scriptures to counteract each of the flaming arrows that are thrown at you
 - Ps 101:3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.
 - Mt 6:22: "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!
 - 1Co 6:18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not

your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

- Our shield must be dipped in the water of God's Word
 - Ep 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, **cleansing her by the washing with water through the word**
 - Ro 10:17 Consequently, **faith comes from hearing** the message, and the message is heard **through the word about Christ**.
- Flaming arrows
 - Doubt
 - Fear
 - Temptation
- Faith
 - Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (He 11:1)
 - Faith is the Greek word *pistis* – a conviction of the truth (i.e. God's truth)
 - A belief or conviction in God's truth – not your own truth
 - Faith – Trusting; Taking God at His word
 - Belief in God and His promises to us
 - Belief in God's Word – the Bible
 - Rev 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war.
 - This is God's fire insurance
 - Without the shield, the flaming arrows will turn us into crispy critters
 - The shield of faith won't stop the arrows from coming, but it will put every single one of them out.

The Christian soldier's shield is simply faith – a faith in God's trustworthy Word and in the One who is named Faithful and True, the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a faith firmly grounded on the Rock provides a sure defense against the fiery missiles of the evil one and his evil minions that are daily coming at us designed to hurt and harm the Christian.

Faith is an essential protection against these flaming arrows of temptation, or of doubt, or of fear, etc. Our unwavering belief in God's Word protects us from these harms. Where there is faith, there is nothing to fear.

And what is faith? Hebrews 11:1 "faith is being sure of what you hope for and certain of what you don't see." You're simply trusting God's Word no matter what things look like.

It is believing what God has said, for no other reason than He said it. It is taking God at His word. It is accepting His teaching, obeying His commands, heeding His warnings and laying hold of His promises. Where there is faith in God, defeat is unknown. Why? Because the Christian soldier who has it is never floored by anything. Faith in God and His Word makes us invincible.

- Paul says to, "take up" or "above all taking the shield of faith" to quench fiery darts.
 - Take - *dechomai*
 - Means to accept deliberately – to receive it steadily
 - It's in the Greek aorist imperative – implies an urgent command – do it now
 - The shield of faith must be 'taken up' to protect us from ALL the flaming arrows of Satan – makes us invincible
 - When in battle, the enemy would shoot fiery arrows above them, which is why they 'took up' their shields 'above all' of them.
 - You have to place your faith (Christian, individually) in the Word of God – In the midst of the temptation, in the midst of the flaming doubts, in the midst of the fiery fear – You place your faith in God's Word

- You have to be persistent and raise the shield of faith every time – over and over. And you can't slack off, because it only takes 1 flaming arrow to mess up your walk with Christ.

When Satan fires his flaming arrows, you need an invincible shield. So here's the good news – you not only get one this that isn't flammable, you get one that puts out fires every single time! And faith is that shield and God promises that shield for every single Christian. It can extinguish ALL the flaming arrows of the evil one. This is not a possibility – God says it is a certainty! And why is that shield so faithful? Why is that shield so strong? Because God is faithful and God is strong and when our faith is in Him and His word, He becomes our shield. And you can't lose because God never loses. So raise your shield of faith Christian. Put your faith in God. Reject all the insidious lies that burst into flames into your mind and trust in Christ. Trust Him wholly. Trust Him always. Trust him more and more. Go to Him today and enjoy his victory. And when the enemy comes, raise your shield and have a great day!

- Evil one
 - The Greek does not say 'extinguish all the flaming arrows of the devil', but rather evil one
 - Greek word *ponéros*
 - 2 Greek words for evil
 - *κακός* – Gives up when there is no apparent win
 - *ponéros* – Starts shooting when there is no apparent win
- How do you know if your shield is down?
 - Lot of sin in their lives
 - Attitude/behavior – When we complain and whine about our lot in life; a self-pitying attitude
 - Whining and complaining is distrusting God and His Word in action – the opposite of faith
 - When this is how you feel, you have to put the shield of faith up – it's the only thing that will help
 - You have to pay attention to your thought life, because there are a lot of arrows headed that way

Again and again, the Word of God shows us that the mark of a Christian – who has learned how to be a good, strong, mature Christian – is one that rejoices in everything and gives thanks in all things. This does not mean that God expects us to enjoy everything that happens in our lives. It doesn't mean that we should merely pretend to rejoice – there's nothing more ghastly than a fake, forced smile that people put on because they assumed that's what a Christian is supposed to do. No! Rather, the truth of the Scripture is it is genuinely possible to rejoice even in the midst of our tears, even the midst of our pain, if you just raise the shield of faith. Why? Because the shield of faith is trusting in God's Word – not just for spiritual warfare, but also about your life.

Helmet of Salvation – Hope in our eternal salvation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmbaLy0Ln0Q>

¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation

- Galea – helmet
 - Protects your head from injury
 - Has a band to protect the forehead
 - Has plates that extend down to protect the cheeks and neck
 - Has a visor to protect the face
 - Once the helmet was strapped into place, there was little exposed except the eyes, nose and mouth
 - Plumes for intimidation



- Some had plumes of horsehair to make the soldier look bigger to strike terror into the heart of their enemies
- Only put on during battle
 - The helmet was made of bronze and was equipped with pieces of armor that were specifically designed to protect the cheeks and jaws.
 - It was extremely heavy; therefore, the interior of the helmet was lined with sponge in order to soften its weight on the soldier's head.
 - This piece of armor was so strong, so massive, and so heavy that nothing could pierce it — not even a hammer or a battle-ax.
 - The helmets were hot and uncomfortable, and would only be put on if there was impending danger
 - The enemy would come at them with massive 3-4' long broadswords to take off their heads
 - The helmet deflects the crushing death blow to the head
- Very ornate and intricate
 - The Roman soldier's helmet was a fascinating and flamboyant piece of armor, very ornate and intricate.
 - Highly decorated with all kinds of engravings and etchings, the helmet looked more like a beautiful piece of artwork than a simple piece of metal formed to fit the head of a soldier.
 - It was not uncommon for a Roman helmet to be decorated with depictions of pastoral farm scenes, complete with all kinds of animals. Frequently the entire helmet was fashioned to look like an animal, such as an elephant or a horse. Some of the helmets had intricate engravings and etchings depicting fruit.
 - Furthermore, as if these fabulous engravings and etchings were not enough, a huge plume of brightly colored feathers or horse hair stood straight up from the top of the helmet. If the helmet was designed to be used in a public ceremony or parade, this brightly colored plume could be very long — long enough to hang all the way down the soldier's back!
 - Why would the Holy Spirit compare a piece of weaponry like this to salvation? Because your salvation is the most gorgeous, most intricate, most elaborate, most ornate gift God ever gave to you!



- Take - *dechomai*
 - Means to accept deliberately – to receive it steadily
 - It's in the Greek aorist imperative – implies an urgent command – do it now
- Helmet – *perkephalaia*
 - The word “helmet” in Greek is taken from the Greek word *perkephalaia*
 - *peri* means around or about
 - *kephale* is the word for the head
 - When you compound these two words into one, you discover that the word *perkephalaia* denotes a piece of armor that fits very tightly around the head.
 - When our minds are trained and taught to think correctly in terms of our salvation — that solid knowledge becomes a helmet in our lives! At that point, it doesn't matter how hard the devil tries to hack away at our spiritual foundation; we know beyond a shadow of doubt what Jesus' death and resurrection purchased for us. This knowledge has become a part of us, preventing the enemy from attacking our minds as he did in the past. That's how the full knowledge of our salvation puts a helmet on our heads!
- Salvation
 - We have salvation for all of eternity – we cannot lose our salvation
 - Jn 5:24 “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.
 - Jn 6:37 All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.
 - Jn 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

- 1Jn 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.
- The enemy tries to get you to doubt your salvation
 - If your salvation is not worn tightly around your mind like a helmet, the enemy will come to chop the multiple blessings of your salvation right out of your theology. He will try to hack away at your foundation, telling you that healing, deliverance, preservation, and soundness of mind were not really a part of Jesus' redemptive work on the Cross. By the time the enemy is finished with your mind, the only blessing he will leave you with is Heaven!
- Our intellectual comprehension of all that salvation encompasses must be ingrained in our minds. It includes:
 - healing
 - our deliverance from evil powers
 - God's desire to bless and prosper us
 - the benefits of our redemption in our everyday lives.
- Hope – There is hope in the salvation that we have
 - 1Th 5:6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the **hope of salvation as a helmet**.
 - Greek word for hope is *elpis* – joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation
 - Implies something future that you haven't received yet
 - Ro 8:24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?
 - Our hope is our inheritance that comes with our salvation
 - Ep 1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,
 - Not only is our salvation secure forever, but one day all this suffering is over
 - Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."
- Symbolism
 - The helmet is the Word of God
 - We have to think Biblically about everything, not worldly
 - God's Word renews your mind
 - We are to have the mind of Christ – a Christian mind, not a worldly mind
 - We are constantly bombarded by the evil ideals of this world – without the helmet of salvation, we will conform to those worldly ideals
 - Ro 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
 - How you think determines how you behave – Your head determines how you think
 - The enemy is constantly striking at your head – the process of temptation starts with the mind
 - Satan's battlefield is in the mind – that's where he strikes to lead you away from God's Word
 - How does the enemy get us to behave like him instead of like Jesus? He changes the way that you think, which then changes the way you behave.
 - Warren Wiersbe said it best in his book, "The Strategy of Satan." ...[Satan attacks] your mind [because it] is the part of the image of God where God communicates with you – and reveals His will to you. It is unfortunate that some Christians have minimized the significance of the mind, because the Bible emphasizes its importance. ...If Satan can get you to believe a lie, then he can begin to work in your life to lead you into sin. This is why he attacks the mind, and this is why we must protect our minds from the attacks of the wicked one. ...Your thinking affects your feeling and your willing, (Proverbs 23:7)."

- Paul says to put on the helmet and keep it on
 - We are always in the battle – there is always impending danger
 - The helmet of salvation – the knowledge of our eternal salvation – protects your mind from discouragement, doubt, despair and the desire to give up
 - Satan attacks right after you’ve done something sinful
 - You’re not a Christian
 - Look at you – why would God bothering saving you
 - When you doubt your salvation, you now have daily insecurity instead of eternal security
- Sign that their helmet is not on – not thinking with a Christian mind
 - Angry people that think that the world owes them something
 - Relative morality – Lack of moral absolute – they believe that what is right for them is what is right
 - Not judging any behavior as wrong
 - You are full of doubt and fear

Sword of the Spirit – Word of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFt8QYUD0Dw>

sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

- *Machaira* – Small dagger
 - Small dagger that Roman soldiers used for hand-to-hand combat in battle
 - 1½ - 2’ long
 - Made of iron
 - Double-edged so it could cut both ways
 - Light weight
 - ‘*machaira*’ literally means ‘a large knife used for cutting up flesh’
 - Precision instrument – used to cut up fish, etc
 - Soldiers were taught to stab and thrust instead of slash
 - Slashing frequently didn’t kill, but rather wounded because of their armor or human bone
 - A stab with this short sword almost always penetrated the body, hitting vital organs, killing their opponents
 - Light weight so it could be maneuvered quickly and with relative ease and allowed the soldier to carry a shield with the other hand
 - Had a big metal knob at the base of the hilt
 - Gave the soldier a better grip
 - Used to bash an enemy in the head or face with a back swing
 - Hung by the soldier’s side, attached via his belt
 - The belt (Word of God) holds everything together
 - Provided an offensive attack – all other pieces of the armor were defensive
 - Provides a way to stop the attack in the first place
 - If you had no other piece of armor, you still had a bit of hope
 - With only defensive armor, you would eventually be worn down and killed, but with the sword, you can make the enemy stop
 - *rhomphaia* – large broadsword used for slashing
 - Roman soldiers also carried a *rhomphaia* – large broadsword used for slashing
 - 6-8’ long Used to hack off limbs and heads of enemy soldiers
 - Because of its size and weight, it had to be used with 2 hands, which didn’t allow the soldier to hold his shield and left an opponent with a machaira with a distinct advantage
 - A machaira almost always beat a rhomphaia in battle



- Symbolism
 - The sword of the Spirit is the word of God
 - Provided an offensive attack – all other pieces have been defensive
 - It is used to take your enemy out
- The Bible is a spiritual book – the true Word of God
 - It's the perfect book for dealing with spiritual warfare
 - The Holy Spirit is the author of this Book
 - 2Pe 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
 - 2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
 - God's Word is a precision cutting instrument
 - Heb 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
 - It cuts exactly where it needs to in our lives to grow us in our spiritual walk
- God uses a sword to defeat His enemies
 - Is 27:1 In that day, the Lord will punish with his sword—his fierce, great and powerful sword
 - Am 9:4 Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them.
 - Rev 6:7 When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" 8 I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.
 - Rev 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. ... 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ... 15 Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.
- God has given us (His children) a sword to defeat our enemies
 - We have to know the Bible in order to have access to our sword
 - Take up - *dechomai*
 - Means to accept deliberately – to receive it steadily
 - It's in the Greek aorist imperative – implies an urgent command – do it now
 - You do not have access to the sword just by owning a Bible – you need to know the words in the Bible
 - Jn 14:26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.
- *rhēma*
 - sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God
 - word of God – Greek word used is *rhēma* – "any spoken word"
 - *rhēma* – A specific individual verse or passage from the Bible
 - *logos* – All of the written Word of God – The entirety of the Bible
 - When the Biblical authors wanted to refer to the whole Bible, they used the word *logos*
 - God didn't just give us 1 sword (the *logos*) – He gave us every word (*rhēma*) as a sword
 - God gave us a spiritual armory – swords by the tens of thousands
 - Every time you learn a new phrase in the Bible, you add a new sword to your arsenal
 - Every time you learn something new about a verse, you sharpen the blades on your sword
 - Every time you learn a new way to apply a verse, you become quicker and more deadly in using your sword
 - 2Ti 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.
 - These *rhēmas* give us specific, precision weapons (*machairas*) to take out the enemy, regardless of the angle that he attacks from
 - We don't throw the Bible at Satan, we throw specific verses from the Bible to defeat Satan

- If we keep throwing *rhēmas* at Satan, he will leave
- *rhēma* is the same word that Jesus used when He was tempted in the desert – he uses *rhēmas* to defeat Satan
 - Mt 4:1 4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.
 - 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”
 - 4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word (*rhēma*) that comes from the mouth of God.’”
 - 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” 7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”
 - 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”
 - 10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”
 - 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.
- How do we use *rhēmas* to defeat Satan? Take what the enemy throws at you and retranslate it
 - Finances getting to be in trouble – Satan tells you that God won’t take care of you
 - Ps 37:25 I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.
 - 2Co 9: 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
 - Ph 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.
 - You really blew it with sin – Satan tells you that you don’t deserve to be a Christian
 - Ro 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
 - 1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
 - Ps 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
 - Heb 8:12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”
 - You’re living a Christian life and are being persecuted
 - Heb 13:6 “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”
 - Ps 18:2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies.
 - Ps 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. 3 Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.
 - Ps 91:1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” 3 Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. 4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. 5 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.
 - 1Jn 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

The Power of Prayer (Ep 6:18-24) – The missing piece of armor

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFGiEpjs_gw

18 And **pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests**. With this in mind, be alert and **always** keep on **praying** for **all** the saints. 19 **Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel**, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. **Pray that I may declare it fearlessly**, as I should. 21 Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. 22 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. 23 Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

- Verse 18 – Pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and specific requests.
- Verse 18 – Pray for all the saints
- Verses 19-20 – Pray for Paul – that he be given a fearless boldness to preach the gospel
- Verses 21-23 – Paul ends the letter by saying Tychicus will give them the details concerning how he's doing to encourage them.
- Roman soldier communication
 - Roman officers would oversee the battle from an elevated position on a hillside
 - They would have a team of runners whose job it is to get information to the commanders in the battles
 - They would pass messages either verbally or written on a wax tablet
 - Short distances – Runners
 - Longer distances – Horseback
 - Even longer distances – Trumpets or fire signals or flags
 - Fire – They would light a series of bonfires on hilltops
 - Flags – “5 Flag Method”
 - Similar to Morris Code
 - 2 sets of 5 bright red rigid flags with letters that are raised or lowered on 12' poles
 - This is how they ensured victory in the battle
- Prayer is our communication with our Commander-In-Chief in the midst of the war
 - We need to be in constant contact with the One that has the vantage point and can see the big picture
 - This is how we will ensure victory in the battle
 - This is our spiritual walkie talkie to God in times of conflict

Prayer is a vital piece of warfare because the absence of it is a sure means of cutting yourself off from God and making yourself vulnerable in warfare. Prayerlessness produces a lack of spiritual perception and you cannot see what is coming ahead. No matter how complete your armor is, no matter how skilled you may be in the science of war, no matter how courageous you may be – you can be certain without prayer you will be defeated. Why? Because God alone can give the victory. When the Christian soldier goes forth armed for the conflict, if he looks to God by prayer he may be sure that he will triumph! Why wouldn't you access that!?

The fuel for the Christian life is prayer. Prayer is the energy that makes it possible for the Christian warrior to wear the armor of God and to wield that sword effectively. You cannot fight this battle in your own strength. No matter how talented you are, if you fight this spiritual battle in your own strength, you will be defeated.

FB Meyer – “With the perpetual use of the weapon called prayer, there is no enemy born of a hell that shall be able to withstand us.”

Christian – If you've got a bunch long standing problems, maybe it's time you start kneeling!

- Prayers and requests
 - Prayers – Greek word *proseuchomai* – Communication addressed to God
 - Requests – Greek word *deēsis* – Making a request of God
 - Both words emphasize who the communication is with
- Prayer
 - Repeated 5 times in 3 verses – Anytime something is repeated, we need to pay special attention
 - Prayer is the answer to how we put the armor on
 - Prayer is the answer to how we live victoriously
 - Prayer is the answer to our enduring and persevering through the trials in life, particularly when it comes to spiritual warfare
- Pray always
 - Repeated 4 times in verse 18 – Anytime something is repeated, we need to pay special attention
 - Why? Because the enemy is ALWAYS attacking us. Therefore, we ALWAYS need to be in connection with the Heavenly Commander for wisdom, direction and support
 - How often should we pray?
 - And pray in the Spirit on all occasions
 - Not speaking in tongues
 - 1 Corinthians 14:14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.
 - In the spirit means to “pray in concert with the Spirit, consistent with His will and nature”
 - To pray in the Spirit is to pray directed by the Spirit in the sense that the Holy Spirit impresses upon your heart to pray.
 - with all kinds of prayers and requests
 - Public and private
 - Oral and mental
 - Formal and informal
 - always keep on praying
 - Persevering prayer
 - Watchful prayer – To be alert
 - Greek word ἀγρυπνοῦντες Agrupneo – To be without sleep
 - Prayer is to be a way of life
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.
 - for all the saints
 -

Prayer is not to be our last resort - it should be our first resort. It is not a spare tire in the trunk that you use only case of emergencies. It's our daily lifeline – it's our air supply – it's our oxygen support from God in a spiritually deflated atmosphere. It's the spiritual air the we Christians are to breath every second of the day. And that's why there is no period in life that should be without prayer. Prayer to God is the all-pervasive strategy in which warfare is fought.

The book of Ephesians begins by lifting us up into the heavenlies – a position in Christ. But it ends here in chapter 6 by pulling us down to our knees – you need to pray. And you need to pray and have your eyes open because the enemy is after you. We need to realize that this holy war cannot be carried out in our unholy strength – only in the power of God's Spirit. Don't fall into that trap or you will be defeated.

Praying is simply showing our dependency upon God! We demonstrate to Him that we need His strength and we need His wisdom by praying at all times and in every way. A lack of prayer is showing your independence from God. It is basically saying to Him "God, I don't need your strength. I can do this on my own." And yet we wonder why we're getting chewed alive. We pray all the time because we're being attacked all the time and the battle never stops. No soldier can afford to close his eyes - that would be suicide.

- Who should we pray for?
 - Pray for yourself – because you're in a spiritual war
 - 18 All the saints – all Christians, fellow soldiers
 - We need every soldier fighting this war
 - Stop fighting amongst each other over minor issues – start praying for each other

When we intercede for our fellow soldiers of Christ – be it for healing, be it for wholeness, be it for their spiritual well-being – we get back to what the church is supposed to be. We were called to be a spiritual infirmary – a holy heavenly hospital that's working together. Why? Because it's not about us – it's about our injured soldiers working together – being healed, praying, and helping one another – getting all of us back on the battlefield so we can all fight again! That's what we're called to be. And no wonder the enemy does not want us to not just pray, but he definitely doesn't want you pray always and he doesn't want you to pray for all the saints. The devil wants our supply of soldiers to be completely depleted so that we will always be in a state that's defeated.

- 19 Pray for me [Paul] – Church leadership
 - Boldly and fearlessly share the gospel
 - We are to intercede and pray to spread the good news
- Paul's secret was his prayer life
 - How does someone persevere through very difficult circumstances?
 - If I was going through something similar to what they had experienced, and survived, even thrived in the midst of it, I would want to know what their secret was so I too could get through what I'm going through as they had done.
 - Paul does not pray to be released from Roman custody
 - He is chained to a Roman guard wearing his full armor,
 - Instead, he's encouraging them to pray, and keep on praying, and he's even asking them to pray that he is bold and fearless.
- The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray
 - They didn't ask how to preach or do miracles.
 - They saw the power Jesus had – the miracles Jesus performed – and they knew the source of it was prayer
 - They watched Jesus pray to the Father in every situation that was before Him
- Most Christians don't pray
 - One would think that knowing all of this about prayer, Christians would continually turn to prayer.
 - However, for many Christians, prayer has sadly become the last resort instead of a first response.
 - Satan knows that a prayerless Christian is a defeated Christian and a powerless Christian
 - It's for this reason that Paul says to pray in the Spirit because when we pray in the Spirit, we will receive the power of the Spirit.

A lack of prayer for the Christian is like fighting a one man battle - while that whole time, you've got all of heaven at your disposal!

What the church needs today is not more machinery, it's not new better organizations, it's not better novel methods. We need men whom the spirit of God can use - men who are mighty in prayer. Why? Because the Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men! He does not come on

machinery, but men! He does not anoint plans, but men of prayer! And that's why it's high time that we in the church learn what Paul was saying here – Satanic wars cannot be won on human energy, but they can be won in prayer. And that's why Satan trembles when he sees even the weakest saint upon his knees – because he's accessing the heavenly throne, God's power! And nobody can defeat God's power, not even Satan.

- Prayer is a 'get to', not a 'got to'
 - One of the main reasons we don't pray continually is because of how we see it.
 - We see prayer as a got to and not a get to, which to me explains why it is that Christians see prayer as a chore.
 - I think if we're honest with ourselves, we would all have to admit that prayer is hard in the natural, in that it's in the supernatural.
 - God doesn't demand I pray, rather, He will prompt me to pray.
 - He does this by bringing me to the end of myself and resources in the realm of the natural, so I turn to Him in the supernatural.
 - It's only when I realize that, for me, the situation is so impossible, that I'll go to the Lord as the One that can do the impossible.
 - When Jesus was asked about the impossibility of anyone being saved, his response in Matthew 19:26 was, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
 - When Mary questioned the angel of the Lord who told her that she would give birth as a virgin to the Savior of the world, he told her in Luke 1:37, "with God nothing will be impossible."
 - In Genesis 18, we're told that Sarah laughed after Abraham was told that she would give birth to a son at 90-years of age, well passed childbearing age. Then in Genesis 18:14 Abraham is asked the rhetorical question of, "Is anything too hard for the Lord."
 - It may very well be that God has allowed that impossible situation in your life for this reason.
 - He wants for you to see Him do that which He may not have otherwise done had the situation not been as impossible as it was.
 - By doing it in this way, our faith grows and goes off the charts because if God can do that then there's nothing too hard for Him.

Philippians Overview

PHILIPPIANS

	Joy in Living for Christ Even when we don't get what we want In spite of circumstances Even with conflicts <i>CHAPTER 1</i>	Joy in Serving Christ in Unity Starts with right attitude Maintained through right theology Encouraged by right models <i>CHAPTER 2</i>	Joy in Knowing Christ A warning A testimony A goal A command <i>CHAPTER 3</i>	Joy in Resting in Christ Unity Peace Final predictions <i>CHAPTER 4</i>
Christ	. . . my Life	. . . my Model	. . . my Goal	. . . my Contentment
Spirit	His provision (1:19)	His fellowship (2:1)	His worship (3:3)	His peace (4:7)
Positive Reaction	To difficulty: "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel." (1:12)	To others: "Do all things without grumbling or disputing." (2:14)	To the past: "Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize." (3:13-14)	To the "unchangeables": "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." (4:11)
Tone	Warm, encouraging, affirming			
Key Words	"Rejoice," "Christ," "Mind," "Act"			
Uniqueness	No major problem passages. "Joy" is found in each chapter. Not one quotation from the Old Testament. Christ mentioned over forty times. Most positive of all Paul's letters, yet written while he was chained to a Roman guard.			
Theme	By centering our lives around Christ, we can experience true joy.			
Key Verse	1:21			
Christ in Philippians	Jesus is the Son of God from heaven, who humbled Himself by becoming human, who suffered for us, and who was exalted to heaven (2:5-11).			

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The book of Philippians is a Prison Epistle (letter written while in prison). Paul wrote it about 62 A.D. as he anticipated his release from prison. The key personalities are the Apostle Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Euodia, and Syntyche. It was written to show his appreciation and love to the Philippians in a thank-you letter for their continued help and support, and also to encourage their growth.

- Chapter 1, Paul writes about his sufferings and that through his imprisonment the Kingdom was increased. "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel" (1:12). Christians are to surrender their lives in service to Christ Jesus. And what should Christians expect in this life for doing this? Suffering. Paul explains that there are two things granted by God for a believer. The first is to believe in Him and the other is to suffer, "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me" (1:29-30). Jesus said, "Count the cost"... (Luke 14:25-33).
- Chapter 2, Paul explains the benefits of believers in unity with the "mind of Christ". He teaches a theological lesson about the humanity of Jesus Christ as He laid down His glory and became a perfect human man in order to rescue and restore mankind back to a relationship with God.
- Chapter 3, Paul expounds on the joys of a Christian and encourages the church to press forward with the Gospel. He displays his testimony when he said, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ" (3:8).

- Chapter 4, Paul again mentions joy in Christ as he encourages believers to rejoice in the Lord. It is important for the believer to be well grounded in prayer and thanksgiving. To offer praise and to give God thanks for the many provisions they are blessed with, “my God shall supply all your needs” (4:19).

Philippi

Colossians (Col)

Colossians Overview

COLOSSIANS

	Christ Is Our Lord		... Our Life	... Our Love
	Lord of creation _____ Lord of the church _____ Lord of ministry _____	Lord of our walk _____ Lord of our salvation _____ Lord of our growth _____	Our mind _____ Our body _____ Our attitude _____ Our actions _____	Love for “outsiders” _____ Love for believers _____
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4
Subject	Instruction	Warnings	Exhortations	Reminders
Christ	His person and work		His peace and presence	
Emphasis	Doctrinal and corrective		Practical and reassuring	
Theme	Christ is our supreme Lord and sufficient Savior.			
Key Verses	2:9–10			
Christ in Colossians	Jesus is the supreme Lord of the church and the world, the all-sufficient Savior in whom the fullness of Deity dwells (1:13–20; 2:9).			

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The book of Colossians is a Prison Epistle (letter written while in prison). Paul wrote it circa 60-62 A.D. The key personalities include Paul, Timothy, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, and Epaphras. It was written to counter and respond to heretical teachings and encourage believers to serve with fervor and passion.

The basic problem was a Judaic-Gnostic heresy that sought to mix Greek philosophy with Christian theology. Gnostic philosophy taught that matter was evil. In order to avoid having their pure god create evil, they had created a system of lesser deities that overflowed from their god. These lesser gods were far enough removed from the pure god that they were able to create the universe (which was composed of evil matter).

They named this lesser deity the Jehovah God of the Hebrews.

- In chapters 1-2, Paul sends words of thanks to the faithful believers “who are at Colossi”. Paul did not establish the Colossian Church and had never visited there. He teaches one of the most powerful passages attributing the divinity of Jesus Christ who is God in flesh. It is apparent that false teachers were spreading heresy by rejecting the deity of Jesus

Christ, probably teaching that He was just a “unique man”. Paul warns not to allow anyone to lead them astray with Philosophy, trickery, or by traditions of men. Paul then assured the church that Jesus is God, “in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (2:9), and that He, “reconciled all things unto Himself” (1:20), and He did it by, “having nailed it to the cross” (2:14) referring to our sins. Because Jesus Christ is God,

He was able to pay the penalty of sin in order to rescue mankind.

- In chapters 3-4, Paul encourages the church to focus on God, and keep their eyes on the goal, “set your mind on the things above” (3:2). He teaches believers how to live at home, how to manage family matters, and how to get along with other believers in Christ. His approach is for believers to put aside the petty situations that become obstacles in our lives, ultimately slow us down, and prevent the spread of the Gospel. Paul then explains what it means to forgive, “just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you” (3:13). Paul declares, “Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts” (3:14-15)

Colossi

Philemon (Phm)

Philemon Overview

PHILEMON			
	Paul's Commendation		Paul's Promise
	On the basis of the slave's conversion (1:8-11) On the basis of the slave owner's friendship (1:12-17)		
	VERSES 4-7	VERSES 8-17	VERSES 18-21
Tone	Praise	Plea	Promise
Direction	Looking back	Looking within	Looking beyond
Central Statement	"I thank my God always." (1:4)	"I appeal to you." (1:10)	"I will repay it." (1:19)
Theme	Forgiving and accepting one another as brothers and sisters in Christ		
Key Verses	1:10-11, 15-18		
Christ in Philemon	Jesus is the Master, in whom believers are brothers and sisters in Christ (1:9, 15-16).		

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The book of Philemon is a Prison Epistle (letter written while in prison), which Paul wrote circa 61 A.D. The key personalities of Philemon are Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus. It was written to Philemon as a plea to request forgiveness for his runaway servant Onesimus, who was a new believer in Jesus Christ. The book of Philemon consists of only one chapter.

- In verses 1-7, Paul gives his greetings to Philemon and presents his appreciation and gratitude for Him as a brother and worker in Jesus Christ. Philemon was most likely a wealthy member of the church in Colosse. It seems Paul begins by softening up Philemon, as to prepare him initially, before mentioning Onesimus his runaway slave. Philemon was

apparently angry with his absent slave. “I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ’s sake” (vs. 6).

- Verses 8-25, consist of Paul’s appeal for Onesimus, “I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me” (vs. 10). Onesimus had run away and traveled to Rome where he met Paul. While there, Onesimus surrendered his life to Christ. Philemon, under Roman law, could execute his slave for fleeing however, Paul pleas with Philemon to accept his servant. Paul goes one-step further and asks Philemon not only to accept his slave, but also to accept him as a brother in Christ and to overlook his faults and errors. “For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (15-16). Onesimus would carry this letter back and give it to Philemon. Onesimus is later mentioned at the end of the book of Colossians as a faithful and beloved brother.

1 & 2 Timothy (1Ti, 2Ti)

1st Timothy Overview

FIRST TIMOTHY

Greeting (1:1-2)	Personal Encouragement and Exhortation <u>Timothy's task</u> <u>Paul's testimony</u> <u>Gospel's trustworthiness</u> <i>CHAPTER 1</i>	The Ministry Men and women (2) (Prayer and submission) Elders and deacons (3) (Qualifications for leadership) <i>CHAPTERS 2-3</i>	The Minister Seeing the importance of (4): <u>Faithful teaching</u> <u>Sound doctrine</u> Paying attention to (5): <u>Various age groups</u> <u>Widows</u> Developing a new perspective toward (6): <u>Masters and slaves</u> <u>Rich and poor</u> <i>CHAPTERS 4-6</i>	Conclusion (6:21)
	The work of ministry		The one who ministers	
	Be true!	Be wise!	Be strong and faithful!	
	Leadership of the church, the household of God			
Theme	Leadership of the church, the household of God			
Key Verses	3:14-15			
Christ in 1 Timothy	Jesus is the Mediator between God and people, the ransom for all, who came in the flesh and was taken up in glory (2:5-6; 3:16).			

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The book of 1st Timothy is a Pastoral Epistle (letter from Paul to a church leader). The author is Paul who wrote it approximately 62 A.D. The key personalities are the Apostle Paul and Timothy. It was written to give encouragement and leadership guidelines to a young pastor named Timothy at the church in Ephesus.

- Chapter 1 begins with a greeting to Timothy, then quickly turns to a warning against false teachings, and an emphasis on correct beliefs. Paul encourages him to “fight the good fight” (vs. 18).
- In chapters 2-4, Paul declares that God desires salvation for everyone, “Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2:4).

Paul then teaches that, “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (2:5). Next, Paul lays some important guidelines and principles for church leadership. He taught the controversial subject of women in the church and what the two offices of leadership in the church were to be, the Overseer and the Deacon. He even taught some of the practices that should be carried out in the church such as, “give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching” (4:13).

- Chapter 5-6, Paul gives guidelines for relationships within the church as he explains how to deal with discipline and care for widows. He gives advice of how to minister and lays more guidelines for the wealthy instructing them to be generous. “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy” (6:17).
"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1:17)

2nd Timothy Overview

SECOND TIMOTHY

	Guard the Treasure!	Suffer Hardship!	Continue!	Preach the Word!
	<u>Paul's greeting</u> <u>Timothy's life</u> <u>God's treasure</u> <u>Our responsibility</u>	<u>Passing on the truth</u> <u>Illustrations of the truth</u> (soldier, athlete, farmer, workman, vessel, servant) <u>Suffering for the truth</u>	<u>Last days</u> <u>Evil people</u> <u>Standing firm</u> <u>Biblical basis</u> <u>Spiritual examples</u>	<u>A solemn charge</u> <u>Reason for the charge</u> <u>Personal conclusion</u>
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4
Perspective	The past	The present	The future	
Tone	Gratitude	Compassion	Warning	Command
Theme	Paul's passing of the ministry torch to Timothy and encouraging him to stay faithful in the midst of hardship			
Key Verses	1:14	2:3	3:14	4:2
Christ in 2 Timothy	Jesus is the Judge of the living and the dead, who strengthens us in times of weakness and rescues us in times of danger (3:11; 4:1, 17).			

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The book of 2nd Timothy is a Pastoral Epistle (letter from Paul to a church leader). The author is the Apostle Paul who wrote it approximately 67 A.D. and is probably his last letter. After Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome in AD 61 or 62, and after his final missionary journey (probably into Spain), he was again imprisoned under Emperor Nero c. 66-67. The key personalities are Paul, Timothy, Luke, Mark, and many others.

Its purpose was to give direction to Timothy and urge him to visit one final time. From the somber nature of this letter, it is apparent that Paul knew that his work was done and that his life was nearly at an end (4:6-8).

- In chapters 1-2, Paul begins with thanksgivings and an announcement to remain faithful, strong, and to “Join with me in suffering for the Gospel” (1:8). In contrast to his first imprisonment (where he lived in a rented house), he now

languished in a cold dungeon (4:13) chained like a common criminal (1:16; 2:9). He also reiterates the important work of “entrusting the faithful men who will be able to teach others” (2:2). Paul’s desire was to equip the saints with the knowledge of how to teach others.

- In chapters 3-4, Paul tells Timothy to remain faithful and “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (4:2), because difficult times would be in the future. He challenges him to endure reminding him that endurance is one of the main quality essentials for a successful preacher of the Gospel. Men would become just as they were in the time of Moses. He writes that, “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (3:12).
 - At the end of chapter 4, Paul writes about personal concerns asking that some of his personal items be brought to him. It appears that his imprisonment was completely unexpected. Soon after this letter, probably the spring of 68 A.D., it is likely that Paul was beheaded as a Roman citizen.
- “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (4:7).

Who was Timothy

- From Lystra
- Family
 - Mother was a Jewish Christian
 - Father was a nonbelieving Greek pagan
 - Their son (Timothy) was a mamzer –
 - Dt 23:2 No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation.
- Timothy (2Ti 1:5; 2Ti:3 14-15)
 - Spoken well of
 - Mother Lois
 - Grandmother Eunice
 - He had sincere faith
 - Knew the Hebrew Scriptures from infancy

Timothy, My Dear Son

Paul meets Timothy at the beginning of his second missionary journey. On the first missionary journey (A.D. 46 – 48), Paul visits Lystra, a city in central Asia Minor. It seems he had little success there, as in Lystra “they stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead” (Acts 14: 19). On his return to Lystra in A.D. 50, however, Paul meets Timothy, a young man whose grandmother Lois and mother Eunice had become believers, apparently during Paul’s first visit to Lystra.

On the second missionary journey at the beginning of A.D. 50, Timothy joins up with Paul, and Timothy will travel with Paul for the next eighteen years, A.D. 50 – 68. During that time, Paul comes to view Timothy as a son, and it is Timothy to whom Paul will pass on his ministry upon Paul’s death in A.D. 68.

Both of these letters are intensely personal, and they give us great insight into the father/son relationship that develops between Paul and Timothy.

Themes

Warnings against false teachings

Titus (Tit)

Titus Overview

TITUS

Introduction (1:1–4)	Taking Charge		Giving Advice		Doing Right		Conclusion (3:12–15)
	Elders Rebellious people		Older men and women Young women and men Titus and all leaders Slaves and masters		What to do What not to do		
	CHAPTER 1		CHAPTER 2		CHAPTER 3		
People	Elders	Enemies	Specific groups		Christians in general		
Issue	Setting up the right leadership		Instruction for particular people		Attitude and conduct toward good and bad		
A Church	... in good order (1:5)		... with good doctrine (2:1)		... of good deeds (3:1)		
Theme	Titus's role in encouraging right living through sound doctrine						
Key Verses	1:5; 2:10; 3:8						
Christ in Titus	Jesus is our great God and Savior, who redeems and purifies His people (2:13–14).						

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The book of Titus is a Pastoral Epistle (letter from Paul to a church leader). The author is Paul who wrote it approximately 66 A.D. Key personalities include Paul and Titus. It was written to guide Titus, a Greek believer, in his leadership of the churches on the island of Crete, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you” (1:5). As was the case with the letter of 1st Timothy, Paul writes to encourage and guide young pastors in dealing with opposition from both false teachers and the sinful nature of men.

- In chapter 1, Paul gives qualifications about how to choose leaders in the church, “the overseer must be above reproach”. He also warned to be aware of the rebellious men and deceivers who “turn away from truth”, there were many to be aware of (vs. 10).
- In chapters 2-3, Paul teaches how believers may live healthy inside and outside of the church. He told them to live Godly lives and to be prepared for the coming Savior Jesus Christ. Paul describes how Jesus rescues us from sin in chapter 2 verses 11-13. When a person first places their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation they are saved from the penalty of sin, this is Justification, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men”. While the believer is worshiping and serving God on earth they are saved from the binding power of sin, this is Sanctification, “Instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age”. When a believer’s life comes to an end they go to be with Jesus Christ. Here they live with Him for eternity and are safe and protected from the presence of sin, this is Glorification, “Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus”.

General Epistles/Letters

The General Epistles are all those correspondences written by anyone other than Paul:

- Hebrews, once attributed to Paul, is now attributed to an anonymous author, someone in Paul’s inner circle;
- James is attributed to “James, the Lord’s brother” and the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Galatians 1: 19);
- 1 & 2 Peter are attributed to the Apostle Peter;
- 1,2,3 John are attributed to the Apostle John;
- Jude is attributed to Jude, another of the Lord’s brothers (Matthew 13: 55)

Hebrews (Heb)

Hebrews Overview

HEBREWS

Prologue (1:1–4)	Jesus Christ: Superior in His Person Superior to: Prophets Angels Moses The Sabbath Other priests <i>CHAPTERS</i> <i>1:1–4:13</i>	Jesus Christ: Superior as Our Priest Better than: Earthly priesthood Old covenant (Mosaic system) Animal sacrifices Daily offerings <i>CHAPTERS</i> <i>4:14–10:18</i>	Jesus Christ: Superior for Life Let us have: Faith to believe God Hope to endure trials Love to encourage others <i>CHAPTERS</i> <i>10:19–13:25</i>	Epilogue (13:20–25)
	Emphasis			
	Instruction			
Key Words	Exhortation			
Key Words	“Much better than” 1:4	“Better” 7:19		“Let us” 12:1
Warnings	2:1–4	3:7–4:13	5:11–6:20	10:19–39
Theme	12:25–29			
Key Verse	The absolute superiority of Jesus Christ			
Key Verse	4:14			
Christ in Hebrews	Jesus is the absolutely superior revelation of God and our eternal High Priest (1:1–14; 3:1).			

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The book of Hebrews is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). It was written mainly to the Hebrew believers. The author is anonymous, although either Paul or Barnabas was traditionally accepted as the author. It was written approximately 67 A.D. Its purpose was to present the Lord Jesus Christ as perfect and superior in comparison to anything Judaism and the old covenant had to offer. The author was writing to a group of Christians who were under intense persecution and some were contemplating a return to Judaism. He admonished them not to turn away from their only hope of salvation.

- In chapters 1-10:18, the author repeatedly demonstrates Jesus Christ as preeminent over the angels, “let all the angels of God worship Him” (1:6); over Moses, “He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses” (3:3); over the Old Testament priesthood, “being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek” (5:10). The writer explains that the New Covenant is greater than the Old Covenant because Jesus was the perfect, permanent sacrifice, rather than the Old Testament sacrifices. The author also presents the power and authority of the Word of God, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (4:12).
- In chapters 10:19-13, the writer explains that Faith is superior to the work of the Old Covenant. He writes, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (11:1). Chapter 11 is Faith’s Hall of Fame where all of the faithful individual’s from the Old Testament are highlighted in this chapter. Faith in Jesus Christ is our source of salvation because He is “the author and perfecter of faith” (12:2).

All are able to trust in Jesus Christ knowing that He is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (13:8).

Heb 13 is the call to action.

Why does holiness look like?

1. Love each other, esp those inside the church family
 - Church family is eternal, blood family may or may not be
 - Persist in love, even in bad times and persecution
2. Entertain strangers - ESV - practice hospitality
 - Greek word - love of a stranger
 - You show love & compassion for people you do not know
 - Hospitality is a major value in the Old Testament
 - Lack of hospitality - hallmark of unbelievers
 - Number 1 problem today - loneliness - reach out to them
3. Minister to prisoners
 - Prisoners are believers in jail for their faith - persecution
 - Matthew text - what you did for the least of my people
 - Not just sympathy, but empathy - enter into the suffering
 - Be in prayer for the persecuted church daily
 - Voice of the martyrs

This applies the doctrine that was taught in the 1st 12 chapters - Jesus is absolutely everything that you will need.

James Overview

JAMES

Faith	When stretched, it doesn't break.	When pressed, it doesn't fail.	When expressed, it doesn't explode.	When distressed, it doesn't panic.
Deeds	Authentic stability	Authentic love	Authentic control and humility	Authentic patience
	Greeting	Partiality and prejudice	The tongue	Money matters
	Trials	Indifference and mere intellectualism	The heart	Sickness
	Temptation	Obedience and action	The will	Carnality and correction
	Response to Scripture			
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTERS 3-4	CHAPTER 5
Background	The difficulties of life caused the scattered saints to drift spiritually, leading to all forms of problems—unbridled speech, wrong attitudes, doubt, strife, carnality, shallow faith.			
Characteristics	"The Proverbs of the New Testament," James contains many practical, straightforward exhortations. Emphasis is on importance of balancing right belief with right behavior. The book has many Old Testament word pictures and references.			
Theme	Real faith produces authentic deeds.			
Key Verse	2:17			
Christ in James	Jesus is the glorious Lord, who inspires true faith and authentic works (2:1, 14-26).			

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The book of James is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). James the half-brother of Jesus wrote it approximately 48-49 A.D. It was likely the first New Testament book (letter) to be written. The key personalities of this book are James and Persecuted Christians. James wrote this book to Jewish believers to encourage them to endure and live bold Christian lives. James is a book about practical Christian living that reflects a genuine faith that transforms lives. In many ways, it is similar to the OT book of Proverbs.

- In chapter 1, James teaches believers to test their faith and “prove yourselves doers of the word” (1:22). James encourages believers to put their faith into action, and to be servants of Jesus Christ.
- Chapters 2-3, James describes the relationship between faith and works. He teaches that a person of faith without works demonstrates useless faith. What good is a person’s faith if they don’t present it to the world? A believer’s good works are evidence of their faith in Jesus Christ. He also teaches that everyone is a sinner and that if one of the 10 Commandments are broken, than that person is guilty of breaking every one of them, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all” (2:10).
- In Chapters 4-5, James gives wise instruction to believers. He said, “Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you” (4:7). A faithful believer will desire to follow hard after God in service, obedience, and prayer. In the last chapter James stresses the weight and magnitude of prayer for every believer. He uses the word “Prayer” 7 times, signifying its importance. In the final verse of his book James expresses the magnitude of living faith in action saying:

“My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” (5:19-20).

Author and Date:

- James, was the oldest half-brother of Christ and brother of Jude.
 - He had first rejected Jesus as Messiah, but later believed.
- James wrote with the authority of one who had personally seen the resurrected Christ.
- He was recognized as an associate of the apostles, and who was a leader of the Jerusalem church.
- The epistle of James can be reliably dated A.D. 44-49 making it the earliest written book in the New Testament canon.

Historical and Theological Themes:

- The epistle of James's focuses on direct statements on wise and godly living for the Christian.
- He wrote with a passionate desire for the readers to be obedient to the Word of God and the emphasis on spiritual fruitfulness demonstrating true saving faith.

Outline:

Within the five chapters in James's epistle, he arranged it around a series of tests by which a person's faith may be measured.

Dead Faith (James 2:14-20)

James 2:14-20: Faith + Nothing = Nothing

A) Verse 14: Empty Confession

14. What use is it, my brethren, **if someone says** he has faith but he **has no** works? Can that **faith** save him?

A. James does not say that this person actually has faith, but that he claims to have it.

B. This describes someone who continually lacks any external evidence of the faith that he claims.

C. This is best understood in the broad sense, speaking of any degree of acceptance of the truths of the gospel.

Matthew 7:21 - Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but **he who does** the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. (The unfruitfulness of this sort of faith demonstrates its real character and the faith that says but **does not do** is really unbelief.)

B) Verses 15-17: Marked by False Compassion

15. If a brother or sister is without clothing and **in need** of daily food,

16. And one of you says to them, go in peace, be warmed and be filled, and yet you **do not give** them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

17. Even so, **faith**, if it has no works, is dead being by itself.

A. & B. James illustrates his point by comparing faith without works, to words of compassion without acts of compassion.

C. Just as professed compassion without action is phony, the kind of faith that is without works is a mere empty profession, not genuine saving faith.

Matthew 5:16 - Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see **your good works**, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (A godly life gives convincing testimony of the saving power of God. That brings Him glory).

C) Verse 18-20: **Shallow Conviction**

18. But **someone** may well say, you have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith, by my works.

19. You believe that God is one. You do well; the **demons also believe**, and shudder.

20. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that **faith without works is useless**?

A. James' main point is the same; the only possible evidence of true faith is works.

B. Even fallen angels affirm the oneness of God and tremble at its implications. They know the truth about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, but hate it and them.

C. James contrasts two kinds of faith; living faith that saves and dead faith that does not save.

Ephesians 2:8-10 - For by grace you have been saved through faith; and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Living Faith (James 2:21-26)

James 2:21-26: **Faith + Works = Genuine Saving Faith**

D) Verses 21-23: **Abraham Righteousness**

21. Was not Abraham our father **justified by works** when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

22. You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith **was perfected**.

23. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, and Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called the **friend of God**.

A. James quoted Genesis 15:6 which forcefully claims that God credited righteousness to Abraham solely on the basis of his faith.

B. This refers to bringing something to its end, or to its fullness.

C. Abraham is so called a friend because of his obedience.

E) Verse 25: **Rehab's Saving Faith**

25. In the same way, was not Rehab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

A. She demonstrated the reality of her saving faith when, at great personal risk she protected the messengers of God.

F) Verse 26: **The Human Body & Sole**

26. For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Conclusion:

James is asking the question, to all of us?

Do you choose to honor Jesus Christ whatever the cost?

Jesus said, pick-up your cross and follow me.

The Fruit / Proofs of Authentic / True Christianity

- Love for God
- Repentance from Sin
- Genuine Humility
- Devotion to God's Glory
- Continual Prayer
- Selfless Love
- Separation from the world
- Spiritual Growth
- Obedient Living
- Hunger for God's Word
- Transformation of Life

Genuine Saving Faith

God's Regeneration - is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5).

It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Living Word of God (John. 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation.

Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1st Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:12-17; 2nd Peter 1:4-11).

This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Co. 3:18).

Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:16-17; 2nd Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

Note: However, there is a time in every Christian's life that we are barren, this is due to disobedience and non-repentance.

1 & 2 Peter (1Pe, 2Pe)

1st Peter Overview

FIRST PETER

	Salutation (1:1-2)	Our Living Hope and Holy Life	Our Submission and God's Honor	Our Suffering and Christ's Suffering	Conclusion (5:12-14)
		"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:3) . . . for the hope we claim (1:3-12) . . . by our walk of holiness (1:13-25) . . . for our new identity in Christ (2:1-12)	"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake" (2:13) . . . to the government (2:13-17) . . . at work (2:18-20) . . . like Christ (2:21-25) . . . in the home (3:1-7)	"Since Christ has suffered" (4:1) Keep a good conscience (3:16) Share the sufferings and rejoice (4:13) Commit yourselves to God (4:19) Be humble (5:6) Cast your anxiety on God (5:7)	
		CHAPTERS 1:3-2:12	CHAPTERS 2:13-3:7	CHAPTERS 3:8-5:11	
Emphasis		Informing	Exhorting	Encouraging	
Grace		. . . to go on	. . . to live faithfully	. . . to stand firm	
Hope		A <i>living</i> hope through Christ's resurrection (1:3)	A <i>righteous</i> hope through personal submission (2:15)	A <i>trusting</i> hope through faith (4:19)	
Theme		Holy living in a hostile world; hope in the midst of suffering			
Key Verses		1:3-5, 13-16; 2:21; 4:12-13, 19; 5:10-11			
Christ in 1 Peter		Jesus is the living stone rejected by men, who has become the Cornerstone of the church and the Shepherd of our souls (2:4-10, 25).			

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The book of 1st Peter is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). It was written to all believers in general. The author is Peter who wrote it about 60 A.D. The key personalities are the Apostle Peter, Silas, and Mark. Its purpose was to encourage suffering Christians and to call them to personal holiness; Peter's central focus is persecution.

- Chapters 1-2, Peter addresses the issue that believers are to live a life of personal holiness as God's people, even during times of suffering and persecution. He teaches that all Christians are to expect suffering; it is normal and Scriptural for Christians to suffer persecution and even imprisonment and death. Peter explains that our salvation in Christ is secure and that He took our sin on the cross and, "for by His wounds you were healed" (2:24).
- In chapters 3-5, Peter explains that in living holy lives the believer is to, "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (3:15). A part of living a holy life is obeying the commands of Christ and Peter claimed that we are obligated to preach the "Hope that is in you". He expounds that believers should not be surprised when persecution comes upon them, "be on the alert" because Satan is continuously, "seeking whom he may devour" (5:8). In addition, if the believer does suffer persecution, they are to glorify God and entrust their souls to Him.

SECOND PETER

	Introduction (1:1-2)	Exhortation to Spiritual Maturity Answers question: How can I grow in grace and knowledge? (1:2-3)	Denunciation of False Teachers Answers question: What should I expect from so-called prophets?	Anticipation of Christ's Return Answers question: What sort of people ought we to be? (3:11)	Conclusion (3:17-18)
		CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	
Warning		Be pure! (1:4)	Be aware! (2:1-3)	Be diligent! (3:1-14)	
Reminder		1:12-13	2:21-22	3:1-2	
Promise		"You will never stumble." (1:10)	"The Lord knows how to rescue." (2:9)	"We are looking for new heavens and a new earth." (3:13)	
Perspective		Looking within	Looking back	Looking ahead	
Theme		Spiritual maturity as a remedy for false teaching and a right response in light of Christ's second coming			
Key Verses		3:17-18			
Christ in 2 Peter		Jesus is the Morning Star, who rescues the righteous from temptation and reserves the wicked for judgment (1:19; 2:9).			

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The book of 2nd Peter is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). It was written to all believers in general. The author is Peter who wrote it about 63-64 A.D. The key personalities are the Apostles Peter and Paul. Its purpose was to warn against the increasing number of false teachers attacking the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- In chapters 1-2, Peter gives guidance and reassurance to the growing church and claims that the Gospel they are preaching is of Jesus Christ. He claimed, "We were eye witnesses of His Majesty" (1:16), and that men who were, "Moved by the Holy Spirit" wrote all of the teachings of Scripture (1:21). The trouble they were dealing with was the beginning of what we now know as "Gnosticism" a philosophical principal that was hurting the churches. Peter went on to teach that in the end God would judge all of the false prophets.
- Chapter 3, Peter encourages believers with the coming Day of the Lord. The Earth will receive its punishment and the righteous will dwell in the "New Heavens and the New Earth". His final warning is critical which he claims, "Be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men" (3:17).
 "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (1:4).

1, 2, 3 John (1Jn, 2Jn, 3Jn)

John is writing to the church leaders as well as the Gnostics

Gnosticism

There was a LOT of false teaching in the churches
 John brings truth and clarity against the false teaching

Gnosis – Greek for knowledge

- You can gain salvation by knowledge
- Spiritual is good, physical is evil – Jesus couldn’t be God, because the physical is bad
 - God can’t be light and dark at the same time
 - Sin doesn’t exist – the body is a tent filled with spirit
- Takes all the focus off of God and puts it on us
- God’s 1st teaching – choose the Tree of Life, not the Tree of Knowledge (Choose Me, not the world)
 - 1Jn 2:15 Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God; 16 for all these worldly things, these evil desires—the craze for sex, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance—these are not from God. They are from this evil world itself.
- **Spirit/Matter.** Spirit is good; Matter is bad. Bodies are bad. Our souls are trapped in these material shells. We want to get rid of our bodies and get back to good spiritual realities. (Christianity doesn’t teach that matter is bad – God declared the Creation “very good.” The problem with the body *and* the soul is *sin*.)
- **Two gods.** There are two gods: the bad god, called the Demiurge, is the god of the Old Testament – he created everything, which is bad. The good god is the God of the New Testament – he is spirit and we want to get back to him.
- **Secret Knowledge.** Gnosticism gets its name from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means “knowledge.” All Gnostics taught that you needed to get some sort of secret knowledge to escape the bad body and get back to the good god. Salvation is essentially learning the secret handshake.
- **Jesus and the Gnosis.** Not all Gnostics claimed to be Christians, but some glommed on to Christianity because it seemed to offer a suitable vehicle for their secret knowledge philosophy. Jesus became the keeper of secret knowledge and you can get “saved” through him, though not in the orthodox sense of faith in his substitutionary atoning death for your sins. Rather, you get access through Jesus to the secret handshake that would open the door to the spiritual world.
- **Weird Ethics.** Because the Gnostics taught that the body was bad, they taught that it was good to punish the body by treating it poorly. Therefore, some Gnostics were very hard on the body, embracing a form of radical asceticism (intense fasting, absolute chastity even in marriage, etc.). Others pursued the opposite course and embraced a form of licentiousness – the body is bad so let’s punish it by doing all sorts of base things with it: drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, etc. Either course led in a direction contrary to orthodox Christian ethics.

FIRST JOHN

Prologue (1:1–4)	Walking with the God of Light		Responding to the God of Love			
	Living in the Light	Staying in the Light	Practicing the Righteousness and Love of God	Testing the Spirits	Loving Others as God Loved Us	Believing in Jesus
	CHAPTERS 1:5–2:11	CHAPTER 2:12–27	CHAPTERS 2:28–3:23	CHAPTERS 3:24–4:6	CHAPTER 4:7–21	CHAPTER 5
Fellowship with God Produces a . . .	Clean life	Discerning life	Loving life			Confident life
Emphasis	Light	Truth	Love			Knowledge
Means	Obedying	Perceiving	Sacrificing			Believing
Christ	Advocate (2:1)	Holy One (2:20)	Son of God (3:8)		Savior of the world (4:14)	
Purposes	That we may have fellowship and joy (1:3–4)	That we may not sin (2:1)	That we may not be deceived (2:26)		That we may know that we have eternal life (5:13)	
Theme	Living in fellowship with God, who is light and love					
Key Verses	1:5–7		4:10–16		5:11–13	
Christ in 1 John	Jesus is the Word of Life, who is God come in the flesh to bring eternal life to those who believe (1:1; 4:2; 5:20).					

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The book of 1st John is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). It is written by the Disciple/Apostle John around 85-95 A.D. probably from Ephesus. The key personalities are the Apostles Peter and Paul. Its purpose was to warn about the increasing threat of false teachings and to reassure Christians of their faith and love in Jesus Christ.

It was written to combat false teachings that had to do with the denial that Jesus had a genuine human body (1:1). This Gnostic view of matter as being evil led to two responses, asceticism or licentiousness. He very clearly writes to give the true tests of a true Christian. These tests also contradicted the Gnostic licentious approach to Christianity. He gives several means to measure the reality of one's conversion experience.

- Chapters 1-2, John reassures believers explaining, "God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1:5). He wrote that if sins were confessed He would cleanse them, because Jesus is the propitiation for "the whole world" (2:2). Because John was aware of the continuing attack of false teachings, he then urged believers not to love and follow after the world because it was not of the Father, and would ultimately pass away. Discernment is necessary to thwart the constant attacks of heresy.
- In chapters 3-4, He teaches about the love of God and that through His love He sent Jesus, "To destroy the works of the devil" (3:8). Therefore, believers should love each other not only with words but also, "in deed and truth" (3:18), as Jesus commanded.
- Chapter 5, John exhorts Christians to live by faith because through our faith in Christ we overcome the wickedness of the world. In addition, John writes one of the most powerful and assuring statements concerning the work of Jesus on the cross, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that

you have eternal life” (vs. 13). John wanted all believers to know 100%, that because of their faith and trust in Jesus Christ they would spend all of eternity with Him.

2nd John Overview

SECOND JOHN

	Introduction	Walk in Truth and Love!	Stand against Error!	Conclusion
	Greeting Affirmation Encouragement	The lady’s children The lady herself Love one another; walk in obedience	The circumstance (many deceivers) The warning (“Watch yourselves!”) The instruction (strong but necessary)	Personal Farewell
	VERSES 1–3	VERSES 4–6	VERSES 7–11	VERSES 12–13
Emphasis	Encouragement to love and affirm		Exhortation to be discerning	
Tone	Gracious	Concerned	Strong	Warm
Personal Touch	I love you (1:1)	“I ask you” (1:5)	I warn you (1:8)	“I hope to come to you” (1:12)
Theme	Loving others within the limits that truth allows			
Key Verses	1:5–6			
Christ in 2 John	Jesus, the Son of the Father, is the only way to the Father (1:3, 9).			

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The book of 2nd John is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). It is written by the Disciple/Apostle John around 85-95 A.D. Key personality is John. It was written to encourage all Christians not to lose focus of Jesus Christ and to warn against persistent heresy. His key purpose is that his children (the children of God) may abide in the truth and the truth may abide in them.

- In verses 1-3, John sends greetings to “the chosen lady” (vs. 1, 4, 5), who is most likely one of the churches in his region. John is the “elder” who probably was still in Ephesus when he wrote this letter.
- Verses 4-11, are the body of the letter. John supports the commandment to “love one another”. He cautions them to watch for the deceivers and the antichrists that are abundant and active in the world spreading false teachings. Key Thought: “Walk in the truth”. John is still dealing with “Gnosticism” which denied that Jesus had a real human body composed of matter, since they viewed matter as being innately evil.
- Those who do not follow the teachings of Jesus Christ are false teachers and stretch the truth into heretical doctrine. John was writing to protect his readers from the evil deception of those who refused to remain in the teaching of Christ, but were going beyond the truth of apostolic teaching (vs. 9). He makes it clear that these people are anti-Christ and do not know the Lord (vs. 7, 9). He also reminds his readers of their responsibility as Christians to love other Christians (vs. 5). Although, above all things he wants them to “walk in truth”. This truth is still consistent in our modern day. We must also “walk in truth” in this world of deception.

- Verses 12-13, John wraps up his letter with the intentions of making a visit and discussing many topics “face to face”(vs. 12). He sends greetings from “the children of your chosen sister” (vs.13), this is probably his church in Ephesus.

3rd John Overview

THIRD JOHN

	Encouragement of Gaius	Confrontation of Diotrephes	Affirmation of Demetrius	Conclusion
	<u>Sickly (?)</u> <u>Obedient</u> <u>Hospitable</u> <u>Loving</u> <u>Supportive</u>	<u>Proud</u> <u>Rigid and negative</u> <u>Accusing</u> “Church boss” <u>complex</u>	<u>Good testimony</u> <u>Community</u> <u>Scriptures</u> <u>John</u>	<u>Letter is abbreviated</u> <u>John hopes to visit</u> <u>Shalom!</u>
	VERSES 1–8	VERSES 9–11	VERSE 12	VERSES 13–14
Tone	Confirming	Denunciating	Endorsing	
Relationships	To the truth of God	With other Christians	In the world	
Emphasis	Keep it up!	Stop it!	Good for you!	
Paraphrase	I love you, and I pray for you (1:1–2)	I call attention to your deeds (1:10)	I hear good things about him (1:12)	
Theme	Holding to the truth with a loving attitude			
Key Verse	1:11			
Christ in 3 John	Jesus is the Name, for whose sake believers minister (1:7–8).			

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The book of 3rd John is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). It is written by the Disciple/Apostle John around 85-95 A.D. The key personalities in this book are the Apostle John, Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius. This book is the shortest book in the New Testament and was written to praise Gaius and Demetrius for their faithful service.

- In verses 1-12, John praises two teachers for “walking in truth”. He wrote that nothing gave him more joy than to see Christians walking in truth and acting faithfully, “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God” (vs. 11). Next, He criticized a false teacher named Diotrephes. John tells of a previous letter (that we do not have) that he sent to the church. However, Diotrephes rejected the letter out of pride and discouraged anyone from accepting or accommodating any of the brethren of the church.
- In verses 13-15, John brings to a close his letter with confident intentions of making a visit and discussing many topics “face to face” rather than by pen.

Credibility of the Bible

- More credible than any other book in all of history
- 1st hand eye witness of Christ’s ministry

- Truth
 - Absolute truth, not relative
 - Is 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
- 1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
 - Forgiveness of sins does not mean ‘God, please don’t send me to hell’ – that was secured the moment that you were saved
 - Forgive – Greek *aphiemi* – to send away, to disregard, to abandon, to give up, to leave behind, to let go, to no longer discuss
 - He **will** forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness – not maybe

1Jn (TLB) 1 Christ was alive when the world began, yet I myself have seen him with my own eyes and listened to him speak. I have touched him with my own hands. He is God’s message of life. 2 This one who is life from God has been shown to us, and we guarantee that we have seen him; I am speaking of Christ, who is eternal Life. He was with the Father and then was shown to us. 3 Again I say, we are telling you about what we ourselves have actually seen and heard, so that you may share the fellowship and the joys we have with the Father and with Jesus Christ his son. 4 And if you do as I say in this letter, then you, too, will be full of joy, and so will we.

God is Light

Light has no darkness – it gives no shadow
 Shadows in heaven? Probably not – no lack of light anywhere

God is light – walk in His light

1Jn1 5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 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.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Abide

1Jn 3:24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Abide – To remain in the same place for a period of time

- Stay focused on God’s Word. When we stumble, we get back up and keep going.
- Fellowship with Jesus and one another is the fullness of joy
- How do we abide in Christ? We follow his commandments

1Jn 2:3-8 TLB 3 And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By looking within ourselves: are we really trying to do what he wants us to?

4 Someone may say, “I am a Christian; I am on my way to heaven; I belong to Christ.” But if he doesn’t do what Christ tells him to, he is a liar. 5 But those who do what Christ tells them to will learn to love God more and

more. That is the way to know whether or not you are a Christian. 6 Anyone who says he is a Christian should live as Christ did.

7 Dear brothers, I am not writing out a new rule for you to obey, for it is an old one you have always had, right from the start. You have heard it all before. 8 Yet it is always new, and works for you just as it did for Christ; and as we obey this commandment, to love one another, the darkness in our lives disappears and the new light of life in Christ shines in.

God tests us in order to show us our own potential

- When we fail, He will stay with us and have us take it over and over until we pass

Stay focused on the things that are eternal – only people are eternal, no things are

- How do you focus?
 - 1Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
 - Abide in the Word of God and the lion will be powerless

1Jn 2: 15 Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God; 16 for all these worldly things, these evil desires—the craze for sex, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance—these are not from God. They are from this evil world itself. 17 And this world is fading away, and these evil, forbidden things will go with it, but whoever keeps doing the will of God will live forever.

- Immorality is rampant – it's all around us
 - Commercials, music, billboards – all distractions
 - If you are allowing the immorality, you are being devoured by the lion

God's love – God's encouragement

When you feel like God doesn't love you – we have been anointed

God lives in us

1Jn 3:16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

1Jn 2:20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. ... 24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life. 26 These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you.

27 But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.

Lead by example (2nd John)

- Walk in truth and in love – 2Jn 1:5-6
 - Love says that you correct deception and wrong doctrine
 - You need to love in the midst of disagreement – the world can't do that
- Deception – Things look and sound like they're from God, but it's been twisted
 - How do you know if it's from God – Scripture
 - Pattern of deceit – It is about us, not Jesus
 - Lot of deception in the church
 - Deceit will always be a counterfeit – an antichrist

- 2Jn 1:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.
- Jesus vs Satan – Satan models everything in the pattern of Jesus
 - Trinity
 - Prince of peace, prince of the world
 - Mark of God (Holy Spirit) – Mark of Satan (Mark of the beast)
- Church community
 - We need to recognize truth – if it isn't about Jesus, then it's not truth
 - Sheep vs goats/wolves
 - 3Jn 1:2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.
 - 3Jn 1:5 Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren [a]and for strangers, 6 who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, 7 because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles.
 - I received God's love, and so I pass it onto you
 - 3Jn 1:9 I have already written you once about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be in charge and recognized as first among you, does not acknowledge our authority. 10 So if I come, I will address what he's doing—spreading his malicious slander against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome our brothers, and he stands in the way of those who want to receive them and show them hospitality by throwing them out of the church!
 - Deception – they will not receive authority or correction

Jude (Jude)

Jude Overview

JUDE

	Greeting and Purpose	Exposure of False Teachers	Warnings and Commands to Christians	Benediction
	Mercy, peace, and love What to do: Contend for the faith! Why: Certain persons have secretly slipped in. <i>VERSES</i> 1–4	<u>Doom is certain</u> <u>Guilt is sure</u> <u>Spirituality is empty</u> <u>Lives are godless</u> <i>VERSES</i> 5–16	“Remember!” (1:17) “Keep yourselves!” (1:21) “Have mercy!” (1:22) “Save!” (1:23) <i>VERSES</i> 17–23	<u>Our ultimate hope</u> <u>Our infinite God</u> <i>VERSES</i> 24–25
Emphasis	Appealing	Revealing	Reminding	Praising
Tone	Personal concern	Bold exposure	Strong exhortation	Great hope
Directed to	Those “beloved in God the Father” (1:1)	Those who “indulged in gross immorality” (1:7)	“But you, beloved . . .” (1:17, 20)	“The only God” (1:25)
Theme	Exposing false teachers and standing firm in the faith			
Key Verses	1:3, 21–23			
Christ in Jude	Jesus is our only Master and Lord, who will judge the false prophets at His coming (1:4, 14–16).			

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The book of Jude is a General Epistle (Apostolic Letter). The author is Jude the brother of James, both of who are half-brothers of Jesus Christ. Jude wrote it circa 75 A.D. The purpose of this book is to address false teachings and to illustrate a contrast between the error of heresy and the truth of Jesus Christ. Jude consists of only one chapter.

- In verses 1- 16, Jude identifies himself and quickly delves into the dilemma of false teachings. “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed” (vs. 4), heresy was obviously seeping into the region, disturbing the churches, and deceiving believers. He begins by illustrating similarities between false teachers and condemned individuals from the Old Testament citing Cain, Balaam, and Korah.
- Verses 17-25, Jude urges Christians to “remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs. 17). He was referring to all of the apostles and disciples in the past, which had warned about false teachers and prophets that were coming to deceive. His advice is to focus on Jesus Christ and to watch out for each other so that no one is misled into error.

Those who place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ are secure in salvation, not by their own good deeds, because no one is good enough to do that, but believers are secure by the vicarious work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. It is only by, “Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” (vs. 24-25).

Revelation (Rev)

Book of Revelation:

- the last book in the Johannine canon

- the final book in the Christian canon of Scripture
- the concluding narrative in the story of redemption

No other book in the Bible seems so cryptic as Revelation

No other book so extravagant in its symbolism and wild visions

No other book so given to misreading and misinterpretation

Inclusion in the canon

- From the 2nd century through the 4th, debate raged as to its inclusion in the canon
- Accepted at the Council of Hippo in 393
- Affirmed at the Council of Carthage in 397

Christians rejected Revelation

- As far back as the 2nd century, Syrian Christians rejected Revelation as heretical
- In the 4th century Gregory of Nazianzus viewed it as difficult and dangerous
- Martin Luther held it in contempt as being “neither apostolic nor prophetic”;
- It is the only New Testament book for which John Calvin did not write a commentary
- In modern times Thomas Jefferson omitted Revelation from his *Jefferson Bible*, considering it “the ravings of a maniac”
- Friedrich Engels dismissed it as no more than “a political and anti-Roman” work
- George Bernard Shaw thought it “a peculiar record of the visions of a drug addict.”

Yet, Revelation has always been and still is wildly popular. Although written nearly 2,000 years ago, Revelation still grips our imagination with its drama, nightmare visions, exotic imagery, stunning colors, full-tilt sound, and over-the-top, blood-soaked violence. Yet, most who read Revelation come away baffled and bewildered, scratching their heads. What are we to make of this puzzling work?

REVELATION

	<i>"I am the Alpha . . ." (1:8)</i>	"The things which you have seen . . ." Personal and biographical <i>CHAPTER 1</i>	"The things which are . . ." Christ's letters to the seven churches <i>CHAPTERS 2-3</i>	"The things which will take place." (Revelation 1:19) Christ as Judge (chapters 4-5) The tribulation (chapters 6-18) The coming of Christ (chapter 19) The millennium (chapter 20) The eternal state (chapters 21-22) <i>CHAPTERS 4-22</i>	<i>" . . . and the Omega" (22:13)</i>
Scope		History: looking back		Prophecy: looking ahead	
Style		Dialogue		Observations and questions	
Scene		On earth		Shifts between earth and heaven	
Theme		Christ's future triumph over the forces of evil and His re-creation of the world for the redeemed			
Key Verses		1:7, 19; 22:12-13			
Christ in Revelation		Jesus is the coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who will return as Judge and King to usher in the kingdom of God on earth (19:11-20:6).			

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The literary genres of the book of Revelation are an Apocalypse, a Prophecy, and an Epistle (or Letter). The Disciple/Apostle John, who followed Jesus Christ and witnessed His crucifixion, authored it.

John wrote Revelation while a prisoner on the Island of Patmos, approximately 85-95 A.D. Its purpose is to give encouragement and hope for all Christians to continue watching for the return and triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ. It also is to warn of the Final Judgment that nonbelievers will endure on that Last Day.

John wrote that Revelation is special because, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near" (1:3).

- In chapters 1-3, John describes the details of the setting as he received this revelation (unveiling of truth). John was elderly and imprisoned on the Island of Patmos when he received an apocalyptic vision from an angel. With this vision he was instructed to write to seven churches about what he had seen. Revelation 1:19, describes a basic outline of the entire letter written by John, "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things" this is the pattern that is followed by John. He describes of the seven churches their qualities and/or their weaknesses and failings (such as Sardis and Laodicea).
- In chapters 4-20, John depicts what he sees in his vision about the Spiritual Realm. He describes Jesus Christ as the "Slain Lamb" who is the only one able to open the book with 7 seals. Aside from the 5th seal, each will bring a judgment upon the populace of the Earth. The 7th seal introduces 7 angels who each possess 7 trumpets, another series of daunting judgments. Incredibly, after the 6th trumpet in which 1/3 of the Earth's population is killed, John claims, "The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, DID NOT REPENT" (9:20).

After this, John receives visions of which include the antichrist and Satan who is aware of his looming end. Next, John describes 7 more angles that will each carry 7 bowls of plagues to be poured onto the Earth. Again, amazingly, while hail

is raining from heaven during the 7th plague, humankind does not repent but instead, “men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe” (16:21).

These fierce plagues demonstrate the wrath of God’s holy judgment upon the still wicked Earth.

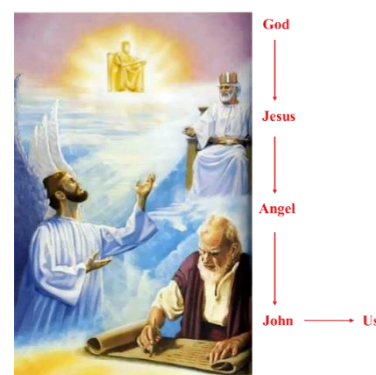
John describes the eternity of Hell, the final resting place of the unbelieving. In 19:20, the antichrist and the false prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire. One thousand years later after the millennium reign of Jesus Christ in 20:10, the devil is also cast into the Lake of Fire. We also see that the antichrist and the false prophet are still in torment, “day and night forever and ever” because John describes Hell as an eternal place of conscious torment.

- Finally, in chapters 21-22, John writes the last of the canon of Scripture. Here he describes the New Heaven and the New Earth. In it is the holy city of the New Jerusalem. There will no longer be any crying or tears, pain, mourning, or death because, “the first things have passed away” (21:1). Only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life can enter this place to live eternally with Jesus Christ who sits on His throne. “Come. “And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (22:17).

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” (22:12-13).

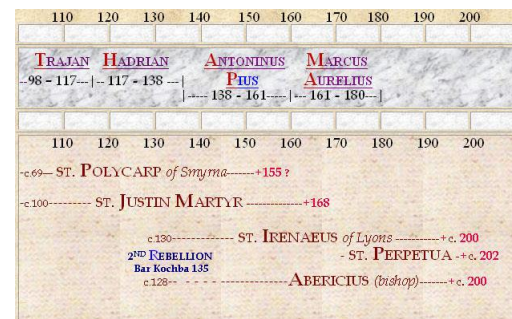
Author

- Rev 1:1 He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.**
- Irenaeus (church father) tells us that Justin Martyr heard from Polycarp that heard it himself from John that John wrote the Book of Revelation
 - Justin Martyr knew Polycarp
 - Polycarp was the Bishop of Smyrna (current day Izmir)
 - Polycarp was a student of John



Justin Martyr (c. A.D. 100-165) claims that “a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ” received the vision (Dialogue with Trypho, 81), and St. Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130 – 202) claims it occurred “almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign” (Against Heresies, 5, 30, 3).

- Tradition builds on these two witnesses and consensus forms that the Apostle John was the author of Revelation and that he wrote his book around A.D. 95, as the persecution under Domitian reached its apex.



Other voices disagree.

- Revelation nowhere claims that the Apostle John is its author; indeed, we read simply: “I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 1: 9).
 - Based solely on the text, the best we can do is identify the author as “John of Patmos,” a rather ambiguous figure who appears nowhere else in Scripture.
- Eusebius quotes Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria (c. 233-265)
 - Dionysius claims that “John of Patmos” could not be the Apostle John since John of Patmos mentions his own name in Revelation, but he never claims to be an apostle,
 - Dionysius notes that the rhetoric, language and style of Revelation differ markedly from John’s Gospel and the three epistles attributed to him (History, 7, 24.1 – 25.27).
- Many modern critics follow this line of thinking, arguing that the stylistic differences between the other writings attributed to John and Revelation are so radically different that the Apostle John and John of Patmos could not possibly be the same person.
 - The differences are undeniable, but few consider the possibility that the author deliberately employs such rhetorical and stylistic differences to address his apocalyptic content and audience.

- Paul does this frequently in his epistles: witness, for example, the dramatic rhetorical and stylistic variations between 1 & 2 Corinthians and Romans.

Date

The Book of Revelation was written sometime between A.D. 60 – 100, most likely during the persecution under Nero (A.D. 64 – 68) or the persecution under Domitian (A.D. 88 – 96)

- Written around 95-96 AD
 - Traditionally, the book of Revelation has been dated near the end of the first century, around A.D. 96.
 - Replacement theology claims that it was written around 70 AD because 90-95 AD does not fit with the narrative of replacement theology
- Clement of Alexandria

AD 90-96 (External Historians)

The evidence for this date is extremely strong.

External Evidence - The external evidence for the late dating of Revelation is of the highest quality. Upon the basis of external evidence, there is little contest between the earlier and later dates.

- Irenaeus
 - Irenaeus (A.D. 180), a student of Polycarp (who was a disciple of the apostle John), wrote that the apocalyptic vision “was seen not very long ago, almost in our own generation, at the close of the reign of Domitian” (Against Heresies 30).
 - The testimony of Irenaeus, not far removed from the apostolic age, is first rate. He places the book near the end of Domitian’s reign, and that ruler died in A.D. 96.
 - Irenaeus seems to be unaware of any other view for the date of the book of Revelation.
- Clement of Alexandria
 - Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 155-215) says that John returned from the isle of Patmos “after the tyrant was dead” (*Who Is the Rich Man?* 42)
 - Eusebius, known as the “Father of Church History” identifies the “tyrant” as Domitian (*Ecclesiastical History* III.23).
 - Even Moses Stuart, America’s most prominent preterist, admitted that the “tyrant here meant is probably Domitian.”
 - Within this narrative, Clement further speaks of John as an “old man.”
 - If Revelation was written prior to A.D. 70, it would scarcely seem appropriate to refer to John as an old man, since he would only have been in his early sixties at this time.
- Victorinus
 - Victorinus (late third century), author of the earliest commentary on the book of Revelation, wrote: When John said these things, he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the mines by Caesar Domitian. There he saw the Apocalypse; and when at length grown old, he thought that he should receive his release by suffering; but Domitian being killed, he was liberated (*Commentary on Revelation* 10:11).
- Jerome
 - Jerome (A.D. 340-420) said, In the fourteenth then after Nero, Domitian having raised up a second persecution, he [John] was banished to the island of Patmos, and wrote the Apocalypse (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 9).
- Eusebius
 - To all of this may be added the comment of Eusebius, who contends that the historical tradition of his time (A.D. 324) placed the writing of the Apocalypse at the close of Domitian’s reign (III.18).

- McClintock and Strong
 - McClintock and Strong, in contending for the later date, declare that “there is no mention in any writer of the first three centuries of any other time or place” (1969, 1064).

Internal Evidence - The contents of the book of Revelation also suggest a late date, as the following observations indicate.

- The spiritual conditions of the churches described in Revelation chapters two and three more readily harmonize with the late date.
 - The church in Ephesus, for instance, was not founded by Paul until the latter part of Claudius’s reign: and when he wrote to them from Rome, A.D. 61, instead of reproving them for any want of love, he commends their love and faith (Eph. 1:15) (Horne 1841, 382). Yet, when Revelation was written, in spite of the fact that the Ephesians had been patient (2:2), they had also left their first love (v. 4), and this would seem to require a greater length of time than seven or eight years, as suggested by the early date.
- Another internal evidence of a late date is that this book was penned while John was banished to Patmos (1:9). It is well known that Domitian had a fondness for this type of persecution. If, however, this persecution is dated in the time of Nero, how does one account for the fact that Peter and Paul are murdered, yet John is only exiled to an island? (*Eusebius* III.18; II.25).
- Then consider this fact. The church at Laodicea is represented as existing under conditions of great wealth. She was rich and had need of nothing (3:17). In A.D. 60, though, Laodicea had been almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake. Surely it would have required more than eight or nine years for that city to have risen again to the state of affluence described in Revelation.
- The doctrinal departures described in Revelation would appear to better fit the later dating.
 - For example, the Nicolaitans (2:6, 15) were a full-fledged sect at the time of John’s writing, whereas they had only been hinted at in general terms in 2 Peter and Jude, which were written possibly around A.D. 65-66.
- Persecution for professing the Christian faith is evidenced in those early letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor.
 - For instance, Antipas had been killed in Pergamum (2:13). It is generally agreed among scholars, however, that Nero’s persecution was mostly confined to Rome; further, it was not for religious reasons (Harrison 1964, 446).

AD 70 (Preterist view)

- Preterist - from a Latin word meaning “that which is past”
 - The notion that all end-time prophecies were fulfilled with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - Contend that the Apocalypse was penned around A.D. 68 or 69, and thus the thrust of the book is supposed to relate to the impending destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).
- A few prominent names have been associated with this position (e.g., Stuart, Schaff, Lightfoot, Foy E. Wallace Jr.), and for a brief time it was popular with certain scholars. James Orr has observed, however, that recent criticism has reverted to the traditional date of near A.D. 96 (1939, 2584).

In the absence of external evidence in support of an early date for Revelation, preterists generally rely on what they perceive as internal support for their view.

- Writing Style Differences
 - It is contended that the Gospel of John has a much smoother style of Greek than does the Apocalypse. Thus, the latter must have been written many years prior to the fourth Gospel—when the apostle was not so experienced in the literary employment of Greek.
 - In answer to this argument:

- R. H. Gundry: Archaeological discoveries and literary studies have recently demonstrated that along with Aramaic and Hebrew, Greek was commonly spoken among first century Palestinians. Thus John must have known and used Greek since his youth (1970, 365).
- B. B. Warfield contends that the Apocalypse betrays no lack of knowledge of, or command over, Greek syntax or vocabulary; the difference lies, rather, in the manner in which a language well in hand is used, in style, properly so called; and the solution of it must turn on psychological, not chronological, considerations (Schaff and Herzog 1891, 2036).
- R. H. Charles, author of the commentary on Revelation in the *International Critical Commentary* series, and perhaps the greatest expert on apocalyptic literature, regarded the so-called bad grammar as deliberate, for purposes of emphasis, and consistent with the citation of numerous Old Testament passages (Gundry, 365).
- It might be noted that in the 404 verses of Revelation, Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament gives over five hundred references and allusions to the Old Testament.
- Finally, as McClintock and Strong point out: It may be admitted that the Revelation has many surprising grammatical peculiarities. But much of this is accounted for by the fact that it was probably written down, as it was seen, "in the Spirit," while the ideas, in all their novelty and vastness, filled the apostle's mind, and rendered him less capable of attending to forms of speech. His Gospel and Epistles, on the other hand, were composed equally under divine influence, but an influence of a gentler, more ordinary kind, with much care, after long deliberation, after frequent recollection and recital of the facts, and deep pondering of the doctrinal truths which they involve (1064).
- No Mention of Jerusalem's Destruction
 - It is claimed that Revelation must have been penned before A.D. 70 since it has no allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem; rather, it is alleged, it represents both the city and the temple as still standing.
 - In response we note the following points.
 - If John wrote this work near A.D. 96, there would be little need to focus upon the destruction of Jerusalem since the lessons of that catastrophe would have been well learned in the preceding quarter of a century.
 - However, it must be noted that some scholars see a veiled reference to Jerusalem's destruction in 11:8, where "the great city," in which the Savior was crucified (Jerusalem), is called Sodom—not merely because of wickedness, but due to the fact that it was a destroyed city of evil (Zahn 1973, 306).
 - The contention that the literal city and temple were still standing, based upon chapter eleven, ignores the express symbolic nature of the narrative. Salmon says that it is:

difficult to understand how anyone could have imagined that the vision represents the temple as still standing. For the whole scene is laid in heaven, and the temple that is measured is the heavenly temple (11:19; 15:5). We have only to compare this vision with the parallel vision of a measuring-reed seen by Ezekiel (ch. 40), in which the prophet is commanded to measure—surely not the city which it is stated had been demolished fourteen years previously, but the city of the future seen by the prophet in vision (1904, 238).
- Nero Associated with 666
 - Some argue for an early date of the Apocalypse by asserting that the enigmatic 666 (13:18) is a reference to Nero.
 - This is possible only by pursuing the most irresponsible form of exegesis.
 - To come up with such an interpretation one must:
 - add the title "Caesar" to Nero's name;
 - compute the letter-number arrangement on the basis of Hebrew, whereas the book was written in Greek; and
 - alter the spelling of "Caesar" by dropping the yodh in the Hebrew.
 - All of this reveals a truly desperate attempt to find a reference to Nero in the text.
 - Leon Morris has pointed out that Irenaeus discussed a number of possibilities for deciphering the 666, but he did not even include Nero in his list, let alone regard this as a likely conjecture (1980, 38).

- Noted critic Theodor Zahn observed that Nero was not even suggested as a possibility until the year 1831 (447).

In view of the foregoing evidence, a very strong case can be made for dating Revelation at about A.D. 96. Accordingly, the theory of realized eschatology, which is grounded upon the necessity of the Apocalypse having been written prior to A.D. 70, is shown to be without the necessary foundation for its successful defense, to say nothing of the scores of other scriptural difficulties that plague it.

Outline

Part One: *What Was* (Revelation, Chapter 1)

- Prologue (1: 1-3)
 - The revelation of Jesus Christ . . . to John, “unveiling” what must soon take place.
 - Audience is the general reader
 - The “unveiling” is by Jesus Christ
- Introduction (1: 4-8)
 - The message is addressed specifically to “the seven churches in the province of Asia.”
- The Commission (1: 9-20)
 - John is on the island of Patmos “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”
 - “One like a Son of Man” speaks to him (parallel figure to Daniel 7: 13-14 and 10: 4-6)
 - The commission is: “Write, therefore, what you *have seen*, what *is now* and what *will take place later*” (Revelation 1:19)

Part Two: *What Is* (Revelation, Chapters 2 & 3)

- The seven letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor
 - Ephesus (2: 1-7)
 - Smyrna (2: 8-11)
 - Pergamum (2: 12-17)
 - Thyatira (2: 18-29)
 - Sardis (3: 1-6)
 - Philadelphia (3: 7-13)
 - Laodicea (3: 14-22)



Part Three: *What Will Be* (Revelation, Chapters 4-22)

- Prologue, “The Throne in Heaven” (4: 1-11)
- Opening the Scroll (5: 1-14)
 - **The Seven Seals**
 1. White Horse, enforced peace (6: 1-2)
 2. Red Horse, war (6: 3-4)
 3. Black Horse, famine (6: 5-6)
 4. Pale Horse, sword, famine, plague and wild beasts (6: 7-8)
 5. Souls of the Slain (6: 9-11)
 6. Earthquake (6: 12-17)
 - *Interlude* (7: 1-17)
 - 144,000 Sealed (7: 1-8)
 - Great multitude in white robes praising God (7: 9-17)
 - **The Seven Trumpets**
 1. Hail and fire, mixed with blood (8: 6-7)
 2. Huge mountain, all ablaze (8: 8-9)
 3. Blazing star (8: 10-11)
 4. Sun, moon and stars turned dark (8: 12-13)

- 5. Star, fallen the earth (9: 1-12)
- 6. Four angels, released (9: 13-21)
 - *Interlude* (10:1-11:14)
 - *Little scroll* (10: 1-11)
 - *Two witnesses* (11: 1-14)
- 7. Temple in heaven, opened (11: 15-19)
- **Flashback** (back story of *Revelation*) (12: 1-17)
 - Woman clothed with the sun (12: 1-6)
 - War in heaven (12: 7-17)
- Setting the Stage for Armageddon (13: 1-14: 20)
 - The Enemy (13: 1-18)
 - Satan's grotesque parody of the Trinity (13: 1-18)
 - Dragon (Satan/God the Father) (13: 1a)
 - Beast 1 (Antichrist/God the Son) (13: 1b-10)
 - Beast 2 (False Prophet/God the Holy Spirit) (13: 11-18)
 - The Heroes (14: 1-20)
 - The Lamb and the 144,000 (14: 1-5)
 - The Three Angels (14: 6-13)
 - The Son of Man (14: 14-20)
 - **The Seven Bowls** (15: 1-16: 21)
 - Prologue (15: 1-16: 1)
 - 1. Ugly and painful sores (16: 2)
 - 2. Blood, like that of a dead man (16: 3)
 - 3. Rivers and springs of water turned to blood (16: 4-7)
 - 4. Sun, scorching people with fire (16: 8-9)
 - 5. Satan's kingdom plunged into darkness (16: 10-11)
 - 6. Euphrates River dried up (16: 12-16)
 - 7. Massive earthquake—"It is done!" (16: 17-21)
 - *Profile: Rome, "The Whore of Babylon"* (17: 1-18: 24)
- All Creation Praises God (19: 1-10)
- Armageddon! (19: 11-21)
- The Aftermath (20: 1-22: 21)
 - The Millennial Kingdom (20: 1-10)
 - The Last Judgment (20: 11-15)
 - The New Jerusalem (21: 1-22: 21)

Historical and cultural context within the Roman Empire

Persecution of the Church under Nero

- Nero 64-68
 - Set fire to Rome and blamed the Christians
 - Plot to bring together all the many factions against a common enemy
 - Wanted to clear a large part of Rome so he could build a new palace complex
 - Peter and Paul executed
- Persecution was limited to Rome

Both Suetonius and Cassius Dio point to Nero as the arsonist, who wanted to clear a large part of Rome so he could build a palace complex. To deflect blame, Tacitus writes that Nero blamed the fire on Rome's Christians:

Therefore, to put an end to the rumor Nero created a diversion and subjected to the most extra-ordinary tortures those hated for their abominations by the common people called Christians. The originator of this name [was] Christ, who, during the reign of Tiberius had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate.

Repressed for the time being, the deadly superstition broke out again not only in Judea, the original source of the evil, but also in the city [Rome], where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and become popular. So an arrest was made of all who confessed; then on the basis of their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of arson as for hatred of the human race.

Political instability within the Roman Empire

- Nero committed suicide when he heard that the Roman Senate declared him a public enemy and announced their intention to have him executed
- Following Nero's death, civil war erupted and four emperors reigned in quick succession:
 - Galba (8 months)
 - Otho (2 months)
 - Vitellius (8 months)
 - Vespasian (10 years)
 - The first three emperors were dispatched through murder or suicide within 2 years.
 - 5 (and possibly 6) of its 7 emperors are dispatched by murder or suicide
- 50 years see 8 emperors – 7 of the 8 met violent deaths
 - Claudius
 - Nero
 - Galba
 - Otho
 - Vitellius
 - Vespasian
 - Titus
 - Domitian
- Affects the economics, stock market, morale

The great Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-73

- 63 – Emperor Caligula pronounced himself a God and ordered a statue of him be put in all the Temples
 - The Jews refused
- 66 – War between Jews and Rome starts in Galilee
 - Nero had General Vespasian take care of the revolt
- Those that survived escaped to Jerusalem where civil war broke out between the Jews
 - Fanatical Zealots and Sicarii against the more moderate Sadducees and Pharisees
 - By 68, the entire Jerusalem leadership and their followers were dead, having been killed by their fellow Jews, and the Zealots held the temple complex, using it as a staging area for their war against Rome
- In 69, after Nero's death and the Roman civil war that kills 3 emperors quickly, Vespasian goes to Rome as Emperor
- Vespasian leaves his son Titus to conclude the war in Jerusalem
 - 70 – Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed and 1.2 million Jews are killed
- 73 – Jewish revolt concludes at Masada

Catastrophic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79

- 79 – Vespasian dies and Titus becomes emperor
- Vesuvius erupts
 - Completely destroys Pompeii and kills everyone there
 - Blanketed a large part of the Roman Empire with volcanic ash – as far away as Constantinople
- While Titus is visiting Pompeii in 80, there is another great fire in Rome
 - In the wake of the fire, plague ravished Rome
 - Prompted widespread belief that the fire and plague — not to mention the eruption of Vesuvius — were punishments visited on Rome by the gods

Persecution of the Church under Domitian

- Titus dies in 81 and his brother Domitian becomes emperor
 - Titus was not liked by the Jews – Claim that Titus had sex with a whore on a Torah scroll inside the Temple while it burned, and that his death was caused by an insect flying up his nose and gnawing at his brain for seven years, growing to the size of a bird in the process
 - “I have made but one mistake”
 - Last words as Titus lay dying as recorded by Cassius Dio in his Roman History
 - Both Cassius Dio and Suetonius suggest that his mistake was allowing his brother Domitian to live, after having discovered that his brother was plotting against him.
 - In his Life of Apollonius of Tyana, Philostratus flatly accuses Domitian of murdering his brother by poisoning him with the flesh of a sea-hare, a culinary ingredient favored by Nero in dispatching his enemies (VI, 32)
- Domitian 81-96
 - Domitian believed the Roman Empire should be governed as a divine monarchy
 - Quickly dispensed with the republican form of government favored by his father and brother
 - Moved the center of government to the imperial court, rendering the Roman Senate impotent and expelling those senators whom he deemed troublesome
 - Proclaimed himself dominus et deus, (“Lord and God”)
 - Domitian tolerated foreign religions as long as they did not interfere with public order and could be assimilated into traditional Roman religion
 - Judaism and Christianity were not tolerated, as both rejected the Roman gods outright
 - Christianity proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth not only as divine, but as “King of kings” and “Lord of lords,” who would return to usher in a new kingdom, the Kingdom of God—a treasonous claim to Roman ears.
 - Roman senate passed *Damnatio memoriae* on Domitian
 - Latin phrase literally meaning "condemnation of memory," meaning that a person must not be remembered
 - Persecution was empire-wide
 - John exiled to the island of Patmos

The 2nd Jewish revolt (Bar-Kochba Revolt) of A.D. 132-136

Second Jewish Revolt, (AD 132–135), Jewish rebellion against Roman rule in **Judaea**. The revolt was preceded by years of clashes between Jews and Romans in the area. Finally, in AD 132, the misrule of Tinnius Rufus, the Roman governor of Judaea, combined with the emperor **Hadrian**’s intention to found a Roman colony on the site of **Jerusalem** and his restrictions on Jewish religious freedom and observances (which included a ban on the practice of male circumcision), roused the last remnants of the Jews to revolt.

A bitter struggle ensued. **Bar Kokhba** became the leader of this Second Jewish Revolt. Although at first successful, his forces proved no match against the methodical and ruthless tactics of the Roman general Julius Severus. The battle proved to be costly to both sides (although the Judeans suffered worse casualties with over 500,000 combatants killed, not counting many others). With the fall of Jerusalem and then Bethar (a fortress on the seacoast south of Caesarea where Bar Kokhba was slain), the rebellion was crushed in 135.

The Emperor Hadrian was so enraged by Jewish resistance that he re-named the province Syria Palaestina (after the two traditional enemies of the Jews, the Syrians and the Philistines) and banished all Jews from the region, building his city Aelia Capitolina on the ruins of Jerusalem. The Bar-Kochba Revolt was the last of the Jewish-Roman Wars and, afterwards, Rome held the region without further serious incident.

Genre of apocalyptic literature

To understand Revelation we must understand its historical and cultural context, for Revelation—like any other literary work—mirrors the time and place from which it emerged.

But we must understand, as well, that Revelation did not suddenly appear at the end of the 1st century A.D. in a literary vacuum; it is one of many works within the genre of apocalyptic literature, works that date all the way back to the 7th century B.C., such as portions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel and Zachariah; Scriptural works from the 3rd century B.C. through A.D. 70, such as Daniel, portions of 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Matthew 24 (the Olivet Discourse), 2 Peter and Jude. The apocalyptic genre also includes many extra-biblical texts, such as the Sibylline Oracles (books 3, 4 and 5); the Dead Sea “War Scroll”; 1, 2 and 4 Enoch; 4 Ezra; 2 Baruch; and the 2nd Century Apocalypse of Peter and The Shepherd of Hermes.

And, of course, we must also understand the structural and the stylistic devices our author uses to bring his apocalyptic vision to life, blazing with color, tone and texture.

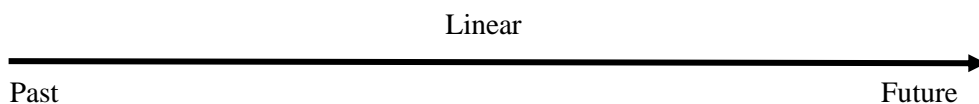
Finally, if we are to engage Revelation as educated readers of Scripture, we must also understand the message our author intends to convey. It is an urgent one. Revelation ends with Jesus’ assurance: “Yes, I am coming soon” and John’s response, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22: 20). And John expected to see it.

Revelation mirrors the time and culture from which it emerges, and it does not emerge in isolation as a unique work. It is one of many in a long line of apocalyptic visions that stretch back as far as the canonical books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel and Zechariah; the visions develop in Matthew 24 (and its parallels in Mark 13 and Luke 21), 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Jude; and they reach their climax in Revelation. Many non-canonical works reflect the genre, as well: the *Sibylline Oracles*, Books 4 & 5; *The Apocalypse of Peter* and *The Shepherd of Hermes*, just to name a few.

Characteristics of the Apocalyptic Genre:

- Contains dreams or visions
- Symbolic and mysterious revelation requiring interpretation of a heavenly being
- Concerned with the future and especially an eschatological judgement
- Marked distinction between the physical and spiritual worlds

Concept of Time



- Judaism
 - Beginning (Genesis 1: 1, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”)
 - Middle (the growth and development of Israel as a covenant community under God)
 - End (the advent of the Kingdom)
- Christianity – Inherits the linear view of time
 - Beginning (Genesis through Malachi)
 - Middle (Gospels and Epistles)
 - End (Revelation, the fullness of the Kingdom of God, ushered in by the return of Christ and the final judgment)
- A linear worldview creates an imperative to define meaning
- If history is linear in nature, it is moving toward a goal

- What is that goal?
 - And what is our role in it?
- The genre of apocalyptic literature offers a vision of that goal, an unfolding of God’s plan and the final steps toward history’s fulfillment

Prophecy shifts focus - apocalyptic refocusing

- The message the prophet speaks most often concerns events within his own historical time
- 200 BC – 200 AD – Prophecy begins to shift focus from:
 - Current events to future events
 - Current catastrophe to a coming Kingdom, one in which God will fulfill the linear course of history, ushering in the “Kingdom of God”
 - Largely as a result of the Babylonian captivity (586 – 539 B.C.)
 - The development of this apocalyptic refocusing spans roughly 200 B.C. - A.D. 200, with precursors as early as the 7th – 4th centuries B.C.
- As the apocalyptic genre develops, it moves from:
 - General to specific
 - From its own historical context to a time in the near future.
- We have concrete examples of this movement in the New Testament.
 - Jesus was, first and foremost, a radical prophet living on the bleeding edge of the apocalyptic vision. In the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:29-30) he speaks prophetically of events soon to come:

²⁹"Immediately after the distress of those days
 " 'the sun will be darkened,
 and the moon will not give its light;
 the stars will fall from the sky,
 and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

³⁰"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

- Of course, Jesus’ disciples want to know when all these things will happen. Answering, Jesus states flatly that *“this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”* (24:34-35)
- Stunned, his disciples ask for a specific time, but Jesus deflects the question, cautiously replying: *“Of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone”* (24:36)
- He does warn his disciples, however, to *“be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come”* (24:44)

Prophet	Context	
Major prophets		
Isaiah	Period:	740 – 686 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Assyria defeats Israel, 722 B.C.; Assyria attacks Jerusalem, 701 B.C.
Jeremiah	Period:	626 – 586 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Babylon attacks Jerusalem: 605, 597, 586-588 B.C.; Jerusalem falls, August 14, 586 B.C.
Ezekiel	Period:	592 – 572 B.C. (set in Babylon)

	Events:	Babylon subjects Judah and Jerusalem
Daniel	Period:	605 – 539 B.C. (set in Babylon) (Although written c. 165 B.C., the story is set during 605-539 B.C.)
	Events:	Daniel in the court of the king of Babylon during the Babylonian captivity.
Minor prophets		
Hosea	Period:	740 – 686 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Assyria defeats Israel, 722 B.C.; Assyria attacks Jerusalem, 701 B.C.
Joel	Period:	Not dated (9th century – post exilic)
	Events:	Not explicit
Amos	Period:	767-753 B.C. (set in Israel)
	Events:	Corrupt Israel, prior to its fall to Assyria in 722 B.C.
Obadiah	Period:	After 586 B.C. (Set in Judah)
	Events:	Edom collaborates with Babylon, 586 B.C.
Jonah	Period:	Before 793 B.C. (set in Assyria) Jonah is prophet in the generation <i>before</i> Jeroboam II, king of Israel, 793-752 B.C (2 Kings 14: 23-25)
	Events:	Prophecy against Nineveh, capital of Assyria; Nineveh repents and is spared.
Micah	Period:	739 - 686 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Corrupt Israel, prior to its fall to Assyria in 722 B.C.
Nahum	Period:	Before 612 B.C. (set in Israel)
	Events:	Prophecy against Nineveh, capital of Assyria; Nineveh falls to Babylon in 612 B.C.
Habakkuk	Period:	c. 626 – 586 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem
Zephaniah	Period:	640 – 609 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem
Haggai	Period:	520 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Post-exilic rebuilding of Jerusalem
Zechariah	Period:	520 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Post-exilic rebuilding of Jerusalem
Malachi	Period:	c. 430 B.C. (set in Judah)
	Events:	Prophecy against post-exilic Jerusalem

Old Testament

Joel 2:1-32 – The great and dreadful Day of the Lord
Ezekiel 40-48 – Ezekiel's Temple
Isaiah 24-27 – Little Apocalypse
Isaiah 56-66 – The God of a New City
Zechariah 9-14 – Promises of Glory through Tribulation
Daniel

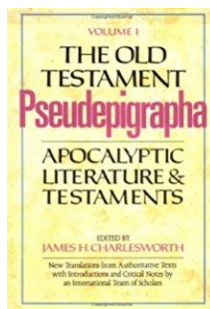
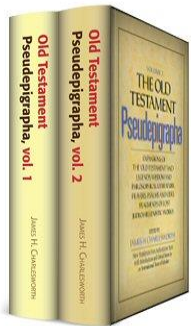
New Testament

Matthew 24 – Olivet Discourse
1&2 Thessalonians – What happens to Christians when they die?
2 Peter – The Day of the Lord will come like a thief
Jude
Revelation

Deuterocanonical books

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

- 1000 pages of text written about apocalyptic literature
- Dead Sea Scrolls
 - The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness
- Characteristics:
 - Jewish or Christian in origin
 - Often attributed to ideal figures from Israel's past
 - Claim to contain God's word or to be the word of God
 - Build upon ideas or narratives presented in the Hebrew Scriptures
 - Composed between 200 BC to 200 AD



Phase 1 (7th to 4th centuries B.C.)

Isaiah (Isaiah 24-27; 56-66) [Canonical]
Ezekiel (chapters 37-48) [Canonical]
Joel [Canonical]
Zechariah [Canonical]

Phase 2 (late 3rd century B.C. to A.D. 70)

1 Enoch (c. 200 B.C.)
Daniel (c. 165 B.C.) [Canonical]
Jubilees (c. 150-100 B.C.)
Sibylline Oracles, Book 3 (c. 150 B.C.)
Testament of the Twelve (c. 150-100 B.C.)
Psalms of Solomon (c. 48 B.C.)
Testament of Moses (c. A.D. 6-36)
1 & 2 Thessalonians (c. A.D. 50-52) [Canonical]
Matthew 24, and parallels in Mark and Luke (c. A.D. 65-75) [Canonical]
2 Peter (c. A.D. 68) [Canonical]
Jude (c. A.D. 65-80) [Canonical]
Martyrdom of Isaiah (1st century A.D.)
Dead Sea Scrolls (c. 100 B.C. – A.D. 70)
Apocalypse of Moses (c. A.D. 70)
Testament of Abraham (1st century A.D.)
2 Enoch (1st century A.D.)

Phase 3 (A.D. 70 – 2nd century A.D.)

Sibylline Oracles, Book 4 (c. 80 A.D.)
4 Ezra (c. A.D. 80-90)
2 Baruch (c. A.D. 90 – 110)
Apocalypse of Abraham (c. A.D. 70 – 100)
Revelation (c. A.D. 90 – 95) [Canonical]
3 Baruch (2nd century A.D.)
Sibylline Oracles, Book 5 (2nd century A.D.)
Apocalypse of Peter (2nd century A.D.)
The Shepherd of Hermes (2nd century A.D.)

Structural and stylistic devices

- In the book of Revelation John crafts an intricately structured, tightly woven apocalyptic vision, with:
 - the death throes of “*the old order of things*” (Revelation 21:4)
 - the triumphant return of Christ
 - the climactic battle between good and evil
 - the Last Judgment
 - the birth of “*a new heaven and new earth, where righteousness dwells*” (2Peter 3:13)

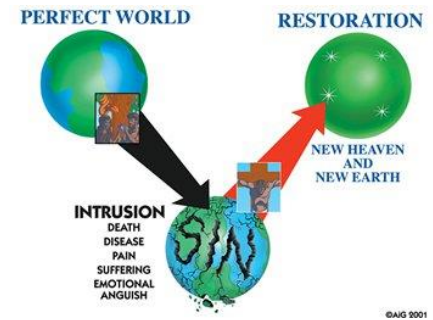
21 symbols used in the book of Revelation

- 1:12 7 Lampstands = 7 Churches
- 1:16 7 Stars = 7 Angels of the 7 churches

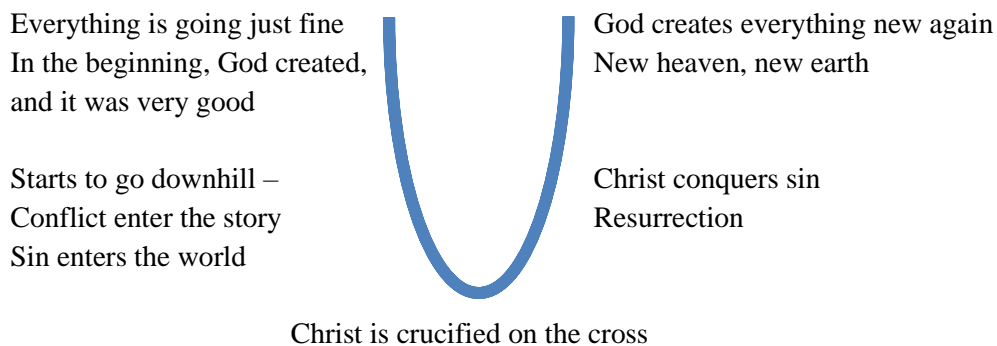
3. 1:16 Two-edged sword = Word of commendation & condemnation from Jesus to the 7 churches

God's redemptive story comes full circle

Genesis	Revelation
God lives with his people (Ge 1 / Rev 21)	
We start out where we belong – Garden of Eden (Ge 1 & 2)	We are brought back to where we belong – New Heaven and New Earth (Rev 21)
Sin enters the world and takes us to where we don't belong (3)	Christ brings us back to where we do belong (Gospels)
Satan kills man (3:1)	Satan punished (20:10)
Rebellion begins (3:6)	Rebellion ends (21:27)
Earth cursed (3:17)	Curse removed (22:3)
Tears shed (27:34)	Tear wiped away (21:4)
Paradise lost (3:22-24)	Paradise regained (22:2)
God lives with his people (Ge 1 / Rev 21)	



- U-Shape narrative
 - The entire Bible, viewed as a "divine comedy," is contained within a U-shaped story of this sort, one in which man, as explained, loses the tree and water of life at the beginning of Genesis and gets them back at the end of Revelation. (The Great Code, Northrop Frye)



- The Bible—in its final, finished form—is a unified literary work
 - The Bible—in its final, finished form, in the Christian canon—is a unified literary work
 - Linear narrative:
 - Genesis – Curtain goes up
 - Main character – God
 - Conflict – Sin
 - Theme – Redemption
 - Revelation – Curtain comes down
 - Written over 1500 years by many different authors, then goes through the hands of many different scribes, editors and redactors
 - We are going to look at the scriptures as a 2000 page novel with 66 chapters as opposed to an loose anthology of 66 books

Narrative framework of 3s and 7s

John builds his narrative on a framework of 3s and 7s – Prime numbers, complete and indivisible.

Part One: What Was (Rev 1)

1. Prologue (1:1-3) – The revelation of Jesus Christ . . . to John, “unveiling” what must soon take place
2. Introduction (1:4-8) – The message is addressed specifically to “the 7 churches in the province of Asia”
3. The Commission (1:9-20)

Part Two: What Is (Rev 2-3) - The seven letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor

1. Ephesus (2:1-7)
2. Smyrna (2:8-11)
3. Pergamum (2:12-17)
4. Thyatira (2:18-29)
5. Sardis (3:1-6)
6. Philadelphia (3:7-13)
7. Laodicea (3:14-22)

Part Three: What is to come (Rev 4-22)

1. 7 Seals (6-8:5)
2. 7 Trumpets (8:6-11)
 - Interlude
 1. The woman clothed with the sun (12:1-12:6)
 2. The war in Heaven (12:7-12:17)
 3. Preparing for Armageddon (13-14)
3. 7 Bowls (15-16)
 - Profile: Rome, the “whore of Babylon” (17-18)
1. All creation praises God (19:1-10)
2. Armageddon (19:11-21)
3. The aftermath (20-22)
 1. Millennial kingdom (20:1-20:10)
 2. Last judgement (20:11-20:15)
 3. New Jerusalem (21-22)

The message of Revelation

Its message, as our author intended it, for his audience. Like all prophecy, the Book of Revelation speaks first and foremost into its own historical context, through the conventions of its own literary genre.

Revelation’s context is the tumultuous time of the Roman Empire in the 2nd half of the 1st century, and Revelation is a masterpiece of the era’s apocalyptic genre.

For those living at the time, history seemed to be careening toward a cliff:

- Jewish prophet like Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel or Jesus witnessing the catastrophic events of their day
- Roman historian like Pliny the Younger witnessing the eruption of Vesuvius

It seemed clear that God—or the gods—was bringing history to a close through a series of great calamities. For Christians that meant the return of Christ and the advent of the Kingdom of Heaven, of God redeeming all creation. Indeed, Revelation ends with Jesus’ assurance: “Yes, I am coming soon” and John’s response, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22: 20). And John expected to see it.

When the 1st century passes into the 2nd, the 2nd into the 3rd and the 3rd into the 4th, the imminent advent of the Kingdom fades into the past. By the 4th century the apocalyptic genre seemed anachronistic, a remnant of less sophisticated times. In A.D. 313 Constantine signed the Edict of Milan, officially tolerating Christianity in the Roman Empire, and on February 27, 380 Theodosius I declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. In A.D. 325 the Council of Nicea ended the Arian controversy by declaring Christ consubstantial with God the Father, laying the groundwork for the doctrine of the Trinity. Nicea marked the first of seven Ecumenical Councils—A.D. 325 – 787—that sought to form a consensus that would unify Christendom throughout the Empire, and that consensus was achieved—to a

degree—by referring to the authority of inspired Scripture. These rough-and-tumble years saw the Church grow in wealth, power and influence; the Bishop of Rome supplant the Roman emperors; and Christian belief permeate the very fabric of society. By the 8th century the Church itself appears to have emerged as the Kingdom of God on earth.

4th Century AD

300 – 10% Christians

- 313 – Edict of Milan – Christianity tolerated
- 325 – Council of Nicaea – What do Christians believe (Nicene Creed)
- 383 – Emperor Theodosius I declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire
- 393 – New Testament Canon is defined at the Council of Hippo

400 – 90% Christian

Revelation = Apocalypse = Unveiling

ἀποκάλυψις [ah-po-kah'-lip-ses]

- Greek word *apokalupsis*
 - Literally means “unveiling, to take off the cover, to make naked”
 - Most translations render it “revelation”
 - Is 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.
- That is key to the genre.
 - A “revelation” is the “unveiling” of a subject previously hidden, things that could not be known apart from the “unveiling.”
 - Typically, such an unveiling reveals a vision of the “end times,” most often provided by a messenger or “angel” sent from God.
- The book of Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ
 - Revelation – not revelations
 - Revelation unveils Jesus’ relationship to the church, to judgement, and to the things to come in the future
- Daniel
 - Dan 12:9 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but **those who are wise will understand**.
 - Daniel did not understand – The truth will be unveiled at the time of the end
 - The wise – who are looking at the prophetic Word – it will be unveiled to them
 - They will be able to connect the dots – they will get it
 - If you look at prophecy literally, it all makes sense – everything that’s happening now
- We live in a generation in which Daniel’s and John’s visions make sense
 - Technology – Rev 13,
 - Dan 12:4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."
 - Rev 13:16 He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, 17 so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.
 - Wars and rumors of wars – Rev 6
 - Lk 21:10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

At the time of the end, the cover will come off, the truth will be revealed, and the wise will understand

Blessings promised in Revelation

- Rev 1 ³ Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.
- Rev 14 ¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ”
- Rev 16 ¹⁵ “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”
- Rev 19 ⁹ Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”
- Rev 20 ⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.
- Rev 22 ⁷ “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”
- Rev 22 ¹⁴ Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Revelation parallels Exodus

- Parallels between Exodus and RevelationZ

EXODUS	REVELATION
Israel enslaved	Israel afflicted
Israel oppressed and deceived by Pharaoh	Israel attacked and deceived by the Anti-Christ
Two representatives, Moses and Aaron	Two Witnesses, believed to be Moses & Elijah
Israel cries out to God, and He hears	Israel cries out to God, and He hears
Israel flees to the wilderness	Israel flees to Petra
Israel is delivered	Israel is saved
Plagues come down as God’s judgment	Wrath poured out as God’s judgment

REVELATION	SCRIPTURE	EVENT(S)	FEAST
What was (Past)	Rev 1	Jesus Christ	Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits
What is now (Present)	Rev 2 – 3	Church History (“Church” found 19 times)	Pentecost (Harvest)
What will take place later (Future)	Rev 4 – 5	The Rapture	Trumpets
	Rev 6 – 19	The Tribulation (Church not mentioned)	Day of Atonement
	Rev 20 – 22	The Millennium The New Heavens & Earth	Tabernacles

PLAGUE	EGYPT	TRIBULATION
#1 Water becomes blood	Exodus 7:19-21, Psalm 105:29	Revelation 8:8-9, 11:6, 16:3-7
#2 Frogs	Exodus 8:5-6, Psalm 105:30	Revelation 16:12-14 Though not an infestation of frogs, this is undoubtedly a plague like the frogs in Egypt.
#3 Lice	Exodus 8:16-17, Psalm 105:31	Revelation 11:3-6 Though lice are not mentioned specifically, they could be among the plagues brought by the two witnesses.

#4 Flies	Exodus 8:20-24	Revelation 11:3-6 As with the lice, flies are not specifically mentioned, but it's believed that they may be among the plagues as well.
#5 Food source (livestock) destroyed	Exodus 9:2-6	Revelation 8:9 Though not a direct correlation, there is a similarity in that the food source of God's enemies is destroyed.
#6 Boils	Exodus 9:8-10	Revelation 16:1-2
#7 Hail	Exodus 9:22-26, Psalm 105:32	Revelation 8:7, 16:21
#8 Locusts	Exodus 10:12-15, Psalm 105:34-35	Revelation 9:1-6
#9 Darkness	Exodus 10:21-23, Psalm 105:32	Revelation 8:12, 9:1-3, 16:10-11

<u>Exodus</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
Plague #1 – Water becomes blood	
<p>Ex 7:19 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.’ ” 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.</p>	<p>Rev 8:8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.</p> <p>Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.</p> <p>Rev 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”</p>
Plague #2 – Frogs	
<p>Ex 8:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.’ ” 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:30 Their land abounded with frogs, Even in the chambers of their kings.</p>	<p>Rev 16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.</p> <p>(Though not an infestation of frogs, this is undoubtedly a plague like the frogs in Egypt)</p>
Plague #3 – Lice	
<p>Ex 8:16 So the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.’ ” 17 And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.</p>	<p>Rev 11:3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no</p>

<p>Ps 105:31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, And lice in all their territory.</p>	<p>rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.</p> <p>(Though lice are not mentioned specifically, they could be among the plagues brought by the two witnesses.)</p>
<p align="center">Plague #4 – Flies</p>	
<p>Ex 8:20 And the Lord said to Moses, “Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 21 Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. 22 And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land. 23 I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.” ’ ” 24 And the Lord did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies.</p> <p>Ps 105:31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, And lice in all their territory.</p>	<p>Rev 11:3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.</p> <p>(As with the lice, flies are not specifically mentioned, but it’s believed that they may be among the plagues as well.)</p>
<p align="center">Plague #5 – Food source (livestock) destroyed</p>	
<p>Ex 9:2 For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them, 3 behold, the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe pestilence. 4 And the Lord will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel.” ’ ” 5 Then the Lord appointed a set time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.” 6 So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died.</p>	<p>Rev 8:9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.</p> <p>(Though not a direct correlation, there is a similarity in that the food source of God’s enemies is destroyed.)</p>
<p align="center">Plague #6 – Boils</p>	
<p>Ex 9:8 So the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” 10 Then</p>	<p>Rev 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.” 2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.</p>

<p>they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast.</p>	
<p align="center">Plague #7 – Hail</p>	
<p>Ex 9:22 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.” 23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.</p> <p>Ps 105:32 He gave them hail for rain, And flaming fire in their land.</p>	<p>Rev 8:7 The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.</p> <p>Rev 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.</p>
<p align="center">Plague #8 – Locusts</p>	
<p>Ex 10:12 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left.” 13 So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. 15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:34 He spoke, and locusts came, Young locusts without number, 35 And ate up all the vegetation in their land, And devoured the fruit of their ground.</p>	<p>Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.</p>
<p align="center">Plague #9 – Darkness</p>	

<p>Ex 10:21 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.</p> <p>Ps 105:28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His word.</p>	<p>Rev 8:12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.</p> <p>Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth.</p> <p>Rev 16:10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.</p>
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How do you understand Revelation?

- Use the plain meaning of terms where possible – The golden rule of interpretation
 - If the plain sense makes sense, look for no other sense, lest you end up with nonsense.
- Use the rest of the Bible – and Revelation itself – as context
- Look at the obvious
- Apply common sense

Why is the book of Revelation necessary?

- We learn that Christ really will come again
 - It pulls into focus an understanding of how Christ will fulfill the Old Testament prophecies that He did not fulfill in His 1st coming
 - Isaiah portrays 2 different pictures of the Messiah – Christ as the lamb (crucified) and Christ as the lion (conqueror) – how do they work together? Now we know – Jesus came the 1st time and was crucified and is coming back as the conqueror. Revelation helps us to connect the dots.
- Luke 4:16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

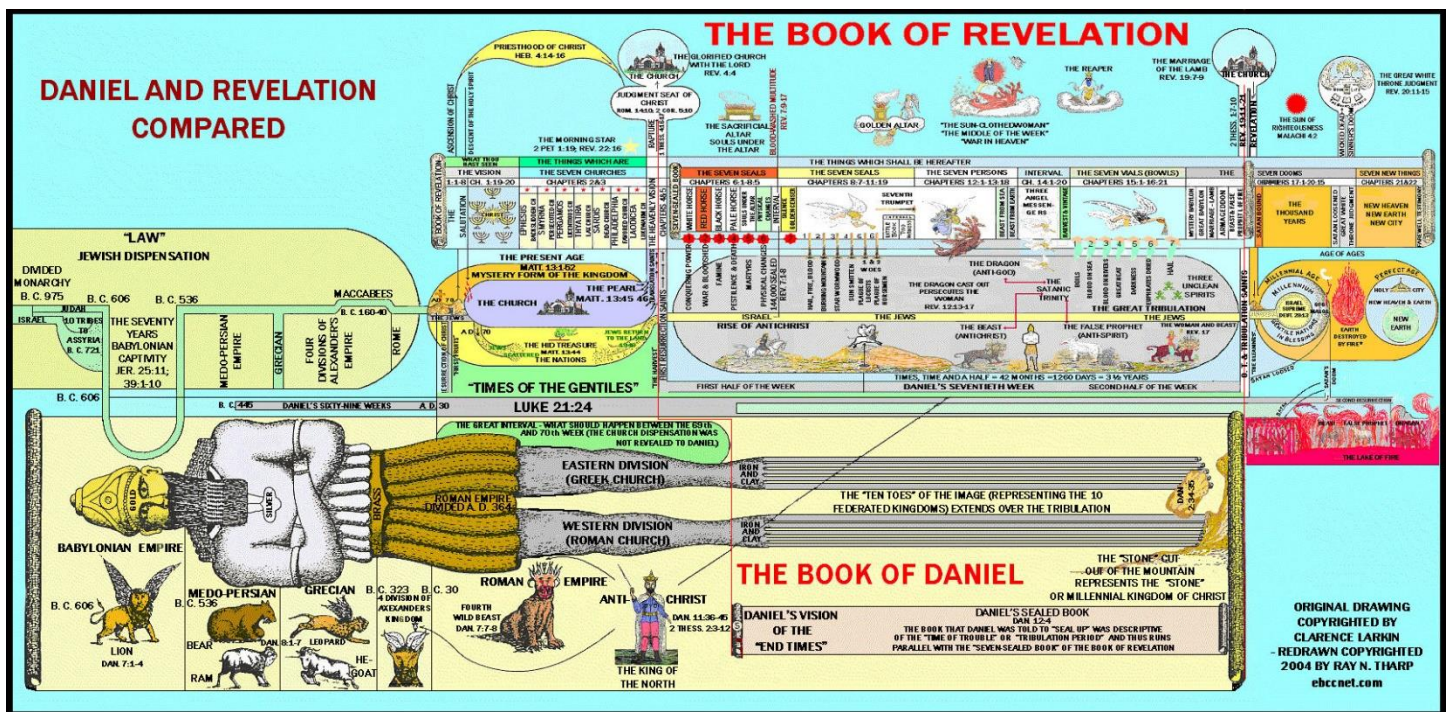
18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

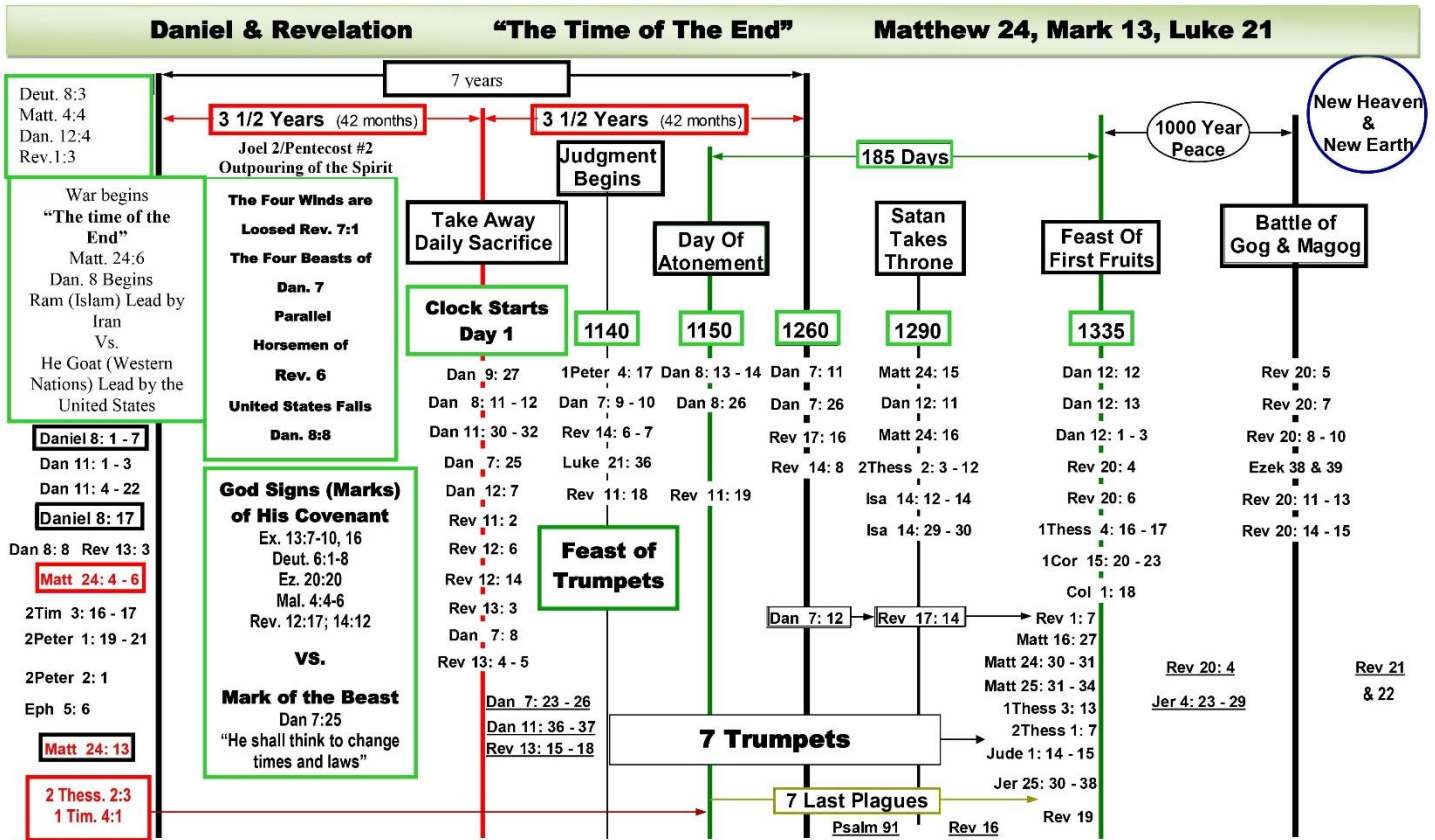
20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."
- Is 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives

and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

- Jesus stops reading part way through because He was there as the suffering servant, not yet as the conqueror.
- Revelation is necessary in the same way that Genesis is necessary
 - We need to know how it all began and we need to know how it will all end – or rather how it will continue into eternity
- It demonstrates the magnificence of Jesus like no other writing
 - Revelation – from beginning to end – is a call for holy living and full-on commitment to Christ
 - This book is all about Jesus

Daniel and Revelation





What Was – Introduction to Revelation (Revelation 1-2:7)

Revelation is the easiest book in the Bible to read and to teach—providing you have read all the books in the Bible that precede it! We noted at the very start of our study together that the Bible—in its final, finished form—is a unified literary work: the curtain rises in Genesis and it falls in Revelation. In between we have a linear narrative: God is the main character; sin is the conflict; redemption is the theme. Thus, reading Revelation is like reading the final chapter in a 2,000-page novel. How could one expect to understand the final chapter without having read the chapters that precede it? Obviously, one could not.

Just so in the book of Revelation. In Revelation ten great biblical themes merge, like ten great trunk lines coming together in Grand Central Station. Nearly all the extravagant imagery and events we witness in Revelation is introduced earlier in such books as Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Matthew, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and 2 Peter.

Introduction and Benediction

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. ³ Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.

Greeting the Seven Churches

⁴ John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Vision of the Son of Man

⁹ I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴ His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. ¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. ²⁰ The mystery of

the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

In this lesson we lay out a method for reading Revelation, and we get our foot in the door in Chapter 1.

When the risen and glorified Christ says to John, “Write down, therefore, what you have seen, and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards” (1:19), he lays out the basic 3-part structure of Revelation:

- 1) what *was* (past) (1) – Age of the Gentiles (Creation to the Cross)
- 2) what *is* (present) (2-3) – Church Age (Pentecost to Rapture)
- 3) what *will be* (future) (4-22) – Age to Come, Tribulation and Millennium (Future)

Part One: *What Was* (Revelation, Chapter 1)

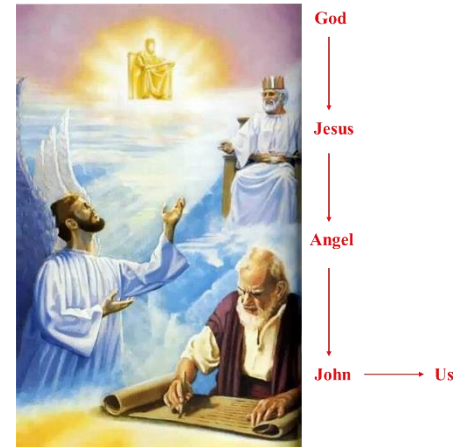
- Prologue (1: 1-3)
 - The revelation of Jesus Christ . . . to John, “unveiling” what must soon take place.
 - Audience is the general reader
 - The “unveiling” is by Jesus Christ
- Introduction (1: 4-8)
 - The message is addressed specifically to “the seven churches in the province of Asia.”
- The Commission (1: 9-20)
 - John is on the island of Patmos “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”
 - “One like a Son of Man” speaks to him (parallel figure to Daniel 7: 13-14 and 10: 4-6)
 - The commission is: “Write, therefore, what you *have seen*, what *is now* and what *will take place later*” (Revelation 1:19)
- Sets of 3
 - The Prologue consists of 3 verses
 - The 3-verse Prologue addresses John’s general audience, telling us that what we are about to read is a “revelation” (apokalepsis, “unveiling”) of events that “must soon take place,” an “unveiling” by Jesus Christ himself, as it was revealed to him by God.
 - The message involves 3 persons
 - Notice that the message is:
 - 1) from God
 - 2) through Christ
 - 3) to the reader
 - The benediction elicits a 3-part response
 - John concludes his 3-verse Prologue with a 3-part benediction: “Blessed is the one who
 - 1) reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who
 - 2) hear it and
 - 3) take it to heart,” noting that “the time is near”

Prologue (1:1-3)

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place.

- Purpose of the book

- *Rev 1:1 ... to show his servants what must soon take place*
 - Originated with God → who gave it to His Son (Jesus) for us (His servants) → so that we (His people) would be prepared for the events that would happen very soon.
- To give encouragement and hope for all Christians to continue watching for the return and triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ
- It also is to warn of the Final Judgment that nonbelievers will endure on that Last Day.
- John testifies to the supernatural origin of the book
 - *2 who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.*
- Revelation reveals the majestic and glorified person of Christ
 - The gospels revealed Jesus' purpose



- Revelation

- Greek word ἀποκάλυψις [apokalypsis, ah-po-kah'-lip-ses]
- Translated literally as “to make naked” or “to unveil”
 - Most translations render it “revelation”
 - A “revelation” is the “unveiling” of a subject previously unknown or hidden – things that could not be known apart from the “unveiling.”
 - The book of Revelation is not meant to be mysterious, cryptic, or confusing. It's meant to be a clear revealing of what must soon take place.

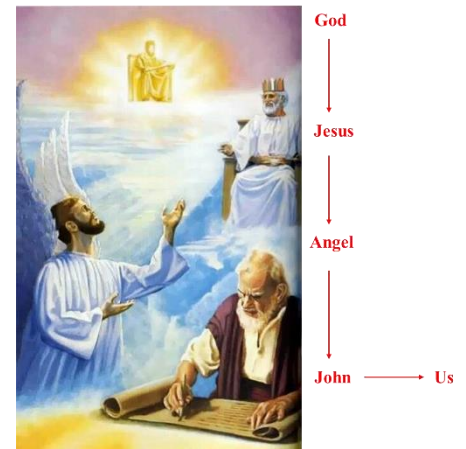
- Servant

- Greek word δούλος [doúlos]
 - Someone who is utterly, totally, completely, with every fiber of their being, devoted to another person
 - *doúlos* (a masculine noun of uncertain derivation) – Someone who belongs to another; a bond-slave, without any ownership rights of their own
 - A bond-slave became a slave of their own volition – it is by their own choice because of their love of their master
 - Doesn't carry the pejorative sense of a slave that we have in English
 - The servant often acted as an agent of his master – representing his authority and doing his will
- Title of honor
 - Ironically, *doúlos* ("bond-slave") is used with the highest dignity in the NT
 - Namely, of believers who willingly live under Christ's authority as His devoted followers.
 - Before God can set us apart, and send us out to further the Gospel, we must first, because of our love for Him, become a slave for life.
- Used 14 times in the book of Revelation

- Soon take place, shortly

- Greek word τάχει [tachei, ta'-khos] – literally means “must come to pass with rapidity”
 - Emphasis is on immediacy
- Same Greek word that we get the word ‘tachometer’ – an instrument used to determine the speed of an engine
- 1Th 5:3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.
 - Increase in frequency and intensity – especially at the end
- When it gets started, it will happen super fast
 - Like driving – when you are far away, the signs are distant. But as you get closer, the signs appear faster and faster and faster until you arrive
 - LA 500 miles, LA 300 m, LA 150 m, LA 50 m, LA 40 m, LA 30 m, LA 20 m, LA 15 m
LA 10 m, LA 8 m, LA 6 m, LA 5 m, LA 4 m, LA 3 m, LA 2 m, LA 1 m, LA ½ m, LA ¼ m

He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.



- Made it known
 - Greek word ἐσήμανεν [esēmanen] – literally means with ‘signs or symbols’
 - There will be many signs and symbols in Revelation. It conveys the teaching that there are signs that signify the return of Jesus.
 - Mt 24:3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"
 - Jesus then gave them many signs
 - We are told to watch for these signs
 - Mk 13:33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ... 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'
 - Lk 21:36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.
 - Mt 24:44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
 - Revelation was not given to us so it would be misunderstood
 - The idea that it is confusing is Satanic – Satan does not want you to know the end of the story
- Angel
 - Greek word ἀγγέλου [angelou, an'-gel-os]
 - Jesus conveyed the message to John through his “angel” – Literally means a “messenger”
 - We’ll actually see this angel face-to-face in Rev 10:9 and 22:1
- John
 - John was the last disciple of Jesus that remained alive. He was the only disciple that was not martyred for Jesus
 - John wrote Revelation while a prisoner on the Island of Patmos, approximately 85-95 A.D.
 - John was elderly and imprisoned on the Island of Patmos when he received an apocalyptic vision from an angel.
 - He received visions and had to write – based on his own knowledge-base and understanding – about things that were to happen thousands of years later.
 - John face martyrdom when he was boiled in a huge basin of boiling oil during a wave of persecution in Rome. However, he was miraculously delivered from death. John was then sentenced of the mines on the prison island of Patmos. He wrote his prophetic book of Revelation on Patmos. John was later freed and returned to serve as Bishop of Adicia in modern Turkey. He died as an old man – the only apostle to die peacefully.
 - John testifies to the supernatural origin of the book – He confirms that the author is Jesus

3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

- Prophecy
 - The “prophetic message” – Literally “words of the prophecy”
 - Like an epistle addressed to a group of people, is meant to be read aloud to the audience by a lector
 - So John says “Blessed is the one who reads aloud and blessed are those who listen” acknowledging the means by which the “revelation” will be delivered
- Blessings to those that read and believe
 - Means the “fullness of blessing”
 - This book opens and closes with a blessing to those that read, take to heart and keep the words written here
 - Also closes with a threat

- Rev 22:18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.
- The book of Revelation is the only book of the Bible that offers a blessing to those who read, hear & keep
 - This is the same word used by Matthew in the “beatitudes” of the “Sermon on the Mount” (Mat 5: 3-11)
 - There are 7 beatitudes (blessings) found throughout the book of Revelation
 1. *Rev 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.*
 2. *Rev 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."*
 3. *Rev 16:15 "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."*
 4. *Rev 19:9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'"*
 5. *Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*
 6. *Rev 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."*
 7. *Rev 22:14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."*
- **Take to heart**
 - Greek word τηροῦντες [tērountes]
 - Literally means “to guard as treasure and to watch over”, “heed,” “attend to,” or “keep”
 - It is important that those who read and listen also “to guard as treasure and to watch over”, “heed,” “attend to,” or “keep” what the prophecy says. Those who do will be “blessed”
- **Time is near**
 - Greek words γὰρ καὶρὸς ἐγγύς – Urgency
 - The prologue is framed with the sense of immediacy
 - Rev 1:1 The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants **what must soon take place**. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, **because the time is near**.

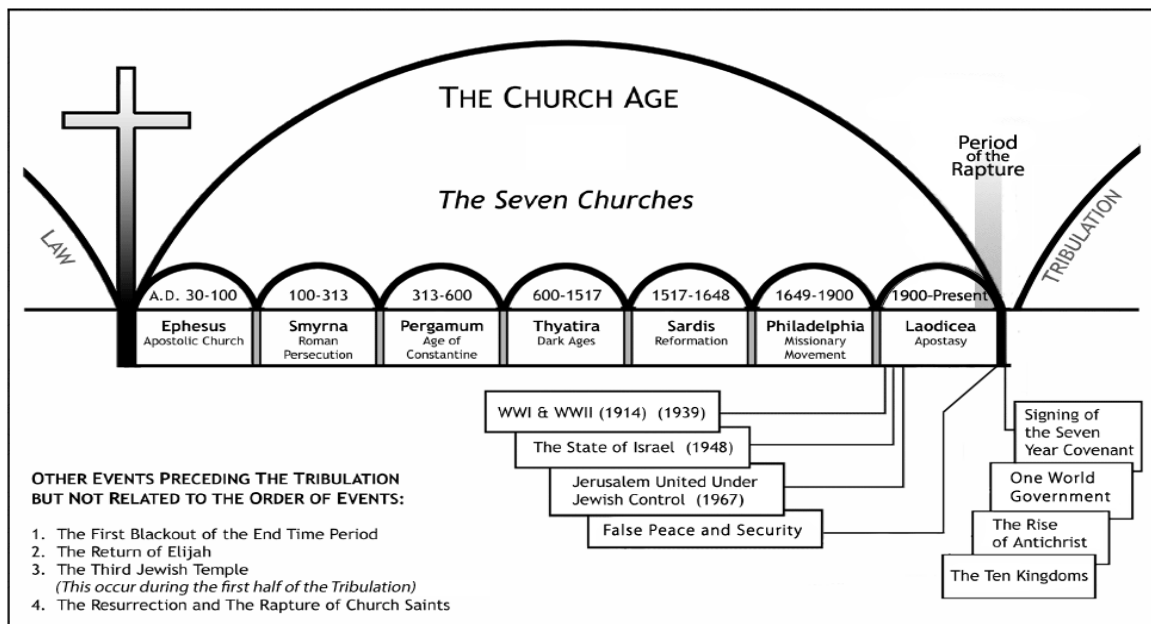
Introduction (1:4-8)

This is a general introduction to the 7 churches of Asia Minor, John's immediate audience to whom he is writing.

Greetings and doxology

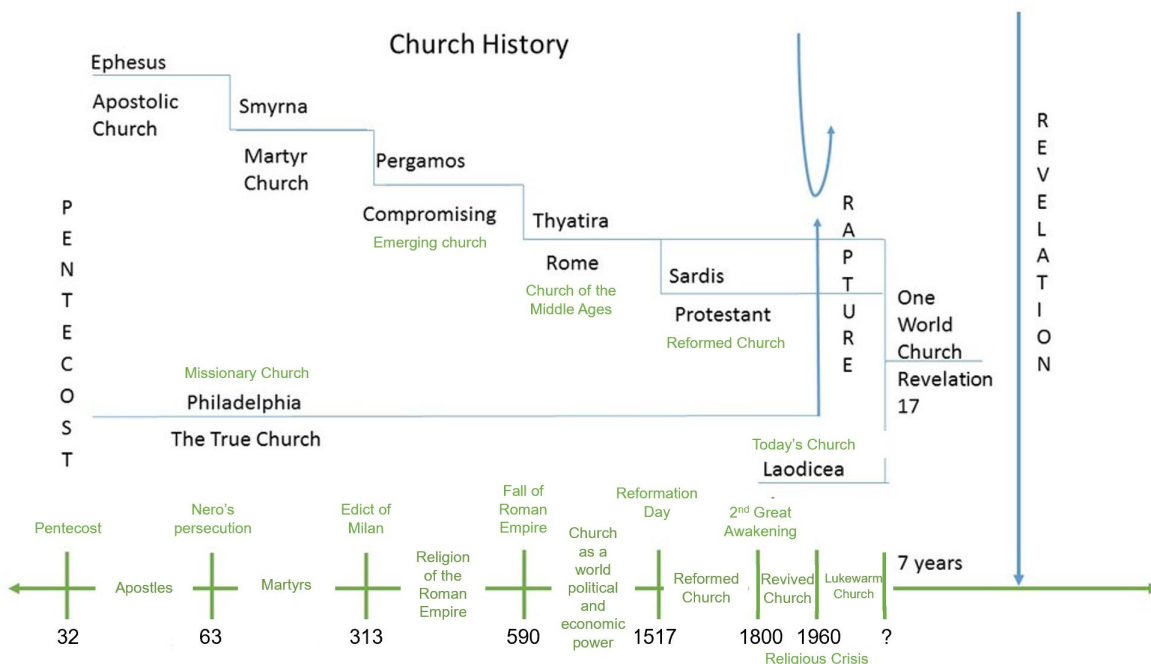
4 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

- These 7 churches were chosen because they represent the history of the church
 - The church of that day
 - The church as it went through different periods
 - The church as it was to come



by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

hosted on www.ltradio.org



Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

- “Grace to you and peace” from the trinity:

1. God the Father

1. who is
2. was
3. is to come

2. God the Holy Spirit (the “seven-fold spirit”)

- Is 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of **wisdom** and of **understanding**, the Spirit of **counsel** and of **might**, the Spirit of the **knowledge** and **fear of the Lord** and he will **delight** in the fear of the Lord.



- 7 = completion. In Revelation, there are:

7 Churches

7 Eyes

7000 Slain in the great earthquake

7 Spirits

7 Angels

7 Heads

7 Golden candlesticks

7 Seals

7 Crowns

7 Stars

7 Trumpets

7 Mountains

7 Lamps

7 Bowls

7 Kings

7 Horns

7 Thunders

- Zec 4:2 ...I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. 3 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left. ... 10 These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth.
- Rev 4:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.
- Rev 5:6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

3. God the Son (Jesus Christ) who himself is three things:

1. The faithful witness

- Witness - Greek word μάρτυς [*martys*]
 - We get the word martyr from this word
 - Now means one that has died for his faith
 - Original idea is one that has a faith so strong that he would be willing to die for it
 - While He was on the earth He was a witness of God.

2. The firstborn from the dead

- Firstborn is the Greek word πρωτότοκος [*prōtotokos*]
- *prōtotokos* – literally signifies priority – He is the 1st risen from the grave
- 1st person to be resurrected from the dead
- 1st in importance or prominence – He is to be the most important person in our lives

3. The ruler of the kings of the earth.

- Rev 19:16 ... On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

In the book of Revelation, it sometimes seems like the term "kings of the earth" is used to refer to the chosen ones, but in other verses it looks like they are the damned ones.

The chosen ones:

- Revelation 1:5 ... Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.
- Revelation 21:24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.
- Bonus: Psalm 89:27 Also I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth.

The damned ones

- Revelation 6:15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"
- Revelation 16:14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.
- Revelation 19:19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.
- Bonus: Isaiah 24:21 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings of the earth.

The Kings of the earth can be put into two groups.

- There are the Kings of the earth who worship the beast
- There are the Kings of the earth who follow Christ.

Revelation 13:8 NIV, it is written, "All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."

- It is clear from the above scripture that the ones who do not worship the beast are the followers of Christ and all the rest, are worshipers of the beast. They are referred to as "the inhabitants of the earth," and they along with the Kings of the earth, choose to worship the beast instead of worshipping Christ.
- What one must understand with reference to Rev 13:8, is that not all the Kings of the earth will worship the beast, but some will follow Christ. Read into the scripture for understanding. It explains it well,

All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all **whose names have not been written in the book of life** belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

Taking into account the above scripture, one can say that some Kings of the earth, along with some inhabitants of the earth will follow Christ. This is further reinforced in Revelation 21:22-27, when the Kings of the earth, who are followers of Christ, will bring their glory into the "New Jerusalem."

Revelation 21:22-27 "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Conclusion.

The Kings of the earth who are referenced in Revelation 21:24, are followers of Christ, this is why they are allowed to bring their "Glory" into the New Jerusalem. In short, their names have been written into the book of life which belongs to the lamb that was slain. All the other Kings of the earth do not have their name recorded in the lamb's book of life, because they are followers of the beast. These kings of the earth belong to the group called "inhabitants of the earth," as recorded in the above scriptures, and all inhabitants of the earth whose names are not written into the book of life, are considered shameful and deceitful, and are not allowed to enter the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:27 (NIV) "Nothing impure will enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written, in the Lambs book of life."

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

- To him who
 1. loves us
 2. has freed us from our sins by his blood
 3. has made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Fatherto him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.
- Jesus loved us enough to suffer and die for us – that through his blood, our sins have been washed away and we have been given eternal life with Him
- Believers will reign with Christ in the Kingdom age to come

7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

- Look, he is coming with the clouds and
 1. every eye will see him,
 2. even those who pierced him; and
 3. all peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.So shall it be! Amen”
- Reference back to the Old Testament
 - Daniel 7:13: I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!
 - Zec 12:10 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.
- Acts 1:6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."
 - Jesus does not say that he isn't going to restore Israel – He says that we are not to know the time – argument against replacement theology
 - 11...This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.
- “Pierced Him” refers to the crucifixion of Christ.
- Those who didn't believe in Christ will “mourn” with regret over their disbelief.
 - All will mourn because of what we did to Jesus
 - Why will they mourn?
- What an awesome sight it will be to see Jesus descending from the clouds!
 - Not the lowly servant, the humble shepherd, or the rejected prophet

- Now He is rightfully returning as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords – and the whole world will know it!
- Everyone will see it – you will not be able to miss it

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

- “I am the Alpha and the Omega” says the Lord God,
 1. who is,
 2. and who was,
 3. and who is to come,
 the Almighty."
- Alpha and the Omega
 - The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet – Signifies completion, as is the numbers 3
 - He was there at the beginning during creation and He will be there at the end at the Second Coming
 - He always was, always is, and always will be

Commission (1:9-20)

One like a Son of Man

9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

- John introduces himself as “your brother and companion in:
 - the *suffering*
 - and *kingdom*
 - and *patient endurance*
 that are ours in Jesus” (1:9a)
- He is on the island of Patmos “because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1:9b).
 - Patmos – similar to our modern-day Alcatraz
 - He was imprisoned for teaching and preaching the Word of God
 - Would we be willing to be imprisoned for Christ? Are we undercover Christians? Or faith servants?

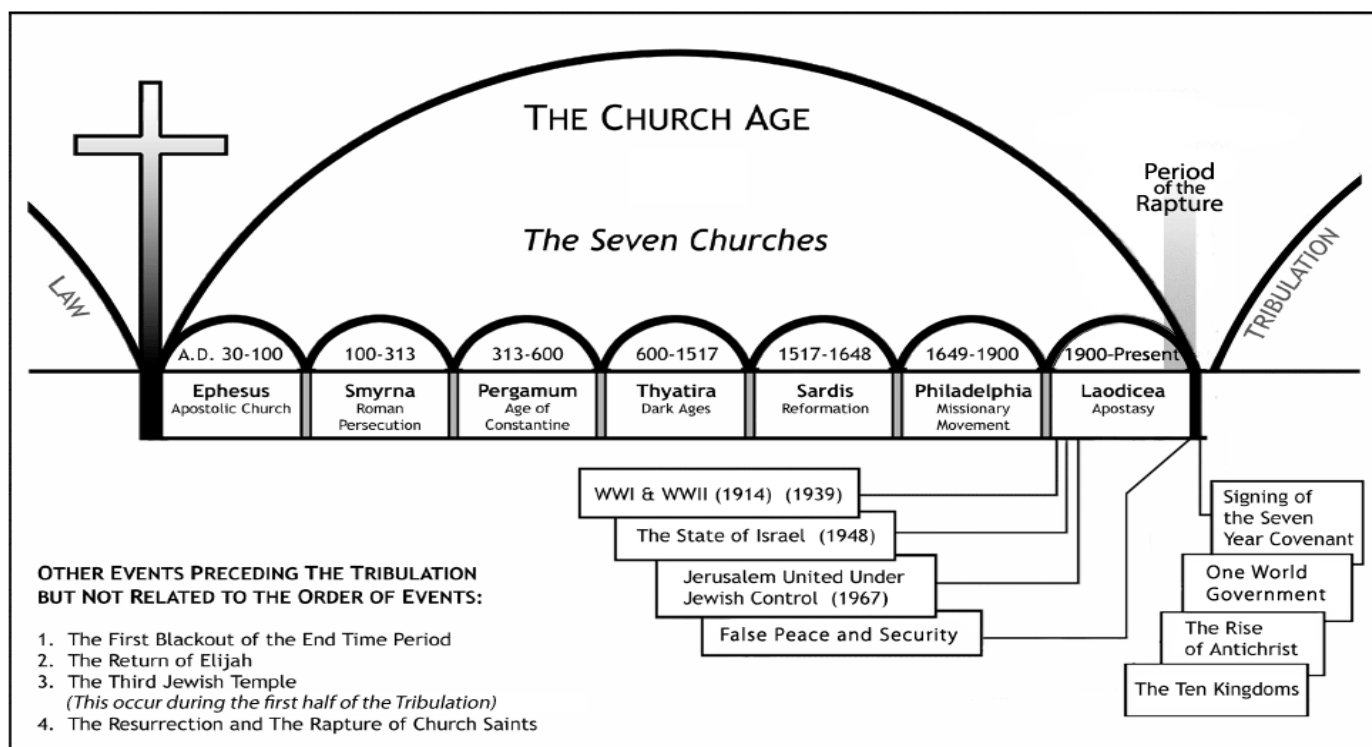
10 On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

- “On the Lord’s Day” – Sabbath
- John is deep in prayer, when suddenly he hears a voice behind him, startling him:
 - John was more than just tuned into the Holy Spirit. This was a special anointing – He was picked as the deliverer of a special message from the Almighty Lord Himself.
- loud voice like a trumpet
 - Rev 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."
 - 1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

- 1Co 15:51 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
- Rev 11:15 ESV Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever!'

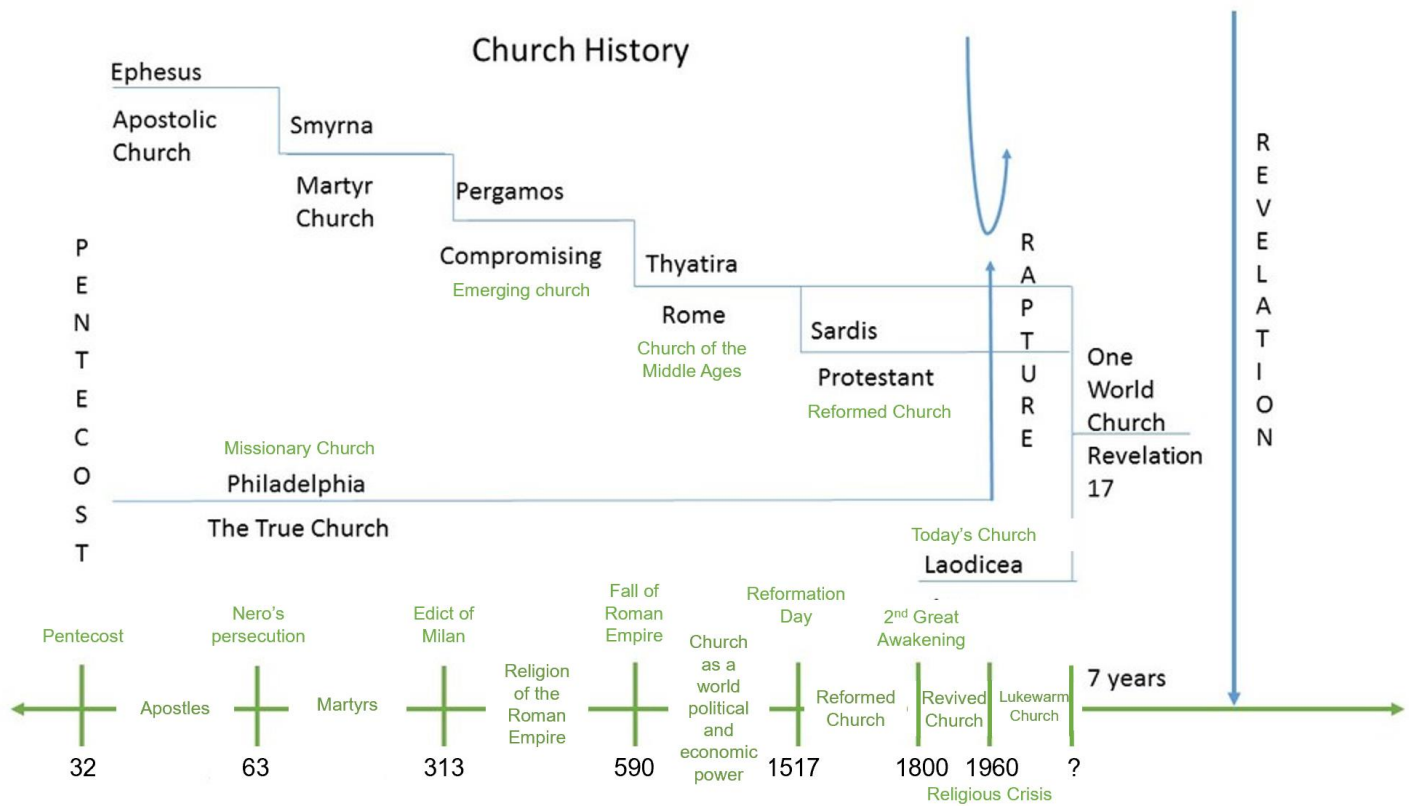
11 which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

- John is told to write down all that he sees and send it to the 7 churches
- 7 churches – those in the province of Asia:
 - There were a lot more than 7 churches. These 7 churches were chosen because they represent
 - The history of the church
 - The church of that day
 - The church as it went through different periods
 - The church as it was to come
 - The life of the believer



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	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
Ephesus (2:1–7)	Rejects sin and evil, stays fast in the Lord	No longer enthusiastic for Christ	Return to the works you once did	The tree of life
Smyrna (2:8–11)	Faithfully copes through trials	No criticism	Be faithful until death	The crown of life
Pergamos (2:12–17)	Is faithful	Allows immorality, false doctrines, and idolatry	Repent	Hidden manna, a stone with a new name
Thyatira (2:18–29)	Love, patience, faithful service	Allows cult activity, idolatry, and immorality	Judgment forth-coming, keep the faith	Rules over the nations, the morning star
Sardis (3:1–6)	Some have been faithful	The church is dead	Repent, empower, and strengthen what's left	The faithful will be honored and clothed in white
Philadelphia (3:7–13)	Is faithful, keeps the word of Christ, and honors Him	No criticism	Continue to be faithful	A place in the presence of God, a new name, and the New Jerusalem
Laodicea (3:14–22)	None, no praise at all	Apathy and indifference	Repent and be zealous	Share the throne of Christ




12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.



- As we have been working with sets of 3, now we move to sets of 7
 - Prefigured by the “seven-fold Spirit” of God in the introduction (1:4).
- John looks behind him to see “seven golden lampstands” (1:12)
 - 7 golden lampstands – 1 for each of the churches
 - Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.
 - The light of the world is Jesus
 - The purpose of the church is to be a light in this world of darkness
 - The teaching of the Word of Jesus is the source of light for the church to shine
 - How bright does your church shine?
- Jesus was standing among the *seven* lampstands
 - This is the only description of Jesus in the New Testament
 - A robe fit for a king – clear down to his feet – showing righteousness and honor
 - A golden brass plate or girdle across his chest – with the names of his people engraved, ready to fulfill his role as a redeemer
 - His hair as white as snow – pure and tried, as the Ancient of Days
 - His flaming, penetrating eyes that pierce even the hardest of hearts
 - His feet sturdy and strong
 - His voice commanding, full of knowledge and wisdom
 - “son of man”
 - Used generically for “human beings” in both Ezekiel and the Psalms
 - In Daniel and Revelation, it refers specifically to a unique figure who approaches the “Ancient of Days” (God the Father)
 - Given “dominion, splendor, and kingship,”
 - “all nations, peoples and tongues” will serve and worship him
 - In the synoptic gospels, Jesus uses the term “Son of Man” in reference to himself, alluding directly to the figure in Daniel’s vision
 - It is a self-referential term used by Jesus – no one else calls him “Son of Man,” only he does.
 - When John observes that the one to whom the voice belongs is someone “like a Son of Man,” he makes a direct allusion to “one like a son of man,” the figure in Daniel’s vision (Daniel 7:13), prompting the reader to draw a direct correspondence between the two, which John then makes explicit in the *seven-part* comparison
 - The figure is startlingly similar to the figure Daniel sees in Daniel 7:13-14 and who speaks to him in Daniel 10:4-6. Also similar to the figure that Ezekiel sees in Ezekiel 8:2
 - Eze 8:2 I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal.
 - Dan 10:4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, 5 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold

around his waist. 6 His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

- Rev 1:12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.
- Here is a point-by-point comparison of the figures, each consisting of *seven* elements:
 - These are the very same person
 - In Daniel, it is the pre-incarnate Christ who 'unveils' the future to Daniel and then has Daniel seal up the scroll 'until the time of the end' (Dan 12:4)
 - In Revelation, it is the risen and glorified Christ who unseal the scroll to reveal to John 'what must happen soon' (Rev 1:1)

Ezekiel 8:2	Daniel 10:4-6	Revelation 1:13-15
I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal	"a man dressed in linen" (5a)	"someone like a 'Son of Man' dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet" (13b)
	"with a belt of finest gold around his waist" (5b)	"with a golden sash around his chest" (13b)
	"his body was like chrysolite" (6a)	"his head and hair were white as wool, as white as snow" (14a)
	his face like lightning" (6a)	
	"his eyes like flaming torches" (6a)	his eyes were like blazing fire" (14b)
	"his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze" (6a)	"his feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace" (15a)
	"his voice like the sound of a multitude" (6b)	"his voice like the sound of rushing waters" (15b)
		

16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. ...

20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- 7 Stars = 7 angels
 - Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.
 - Angel literally means a “messenger”
 - Leadership of the 7 churches
 - Could refer to the pastors or the churches or the angels that are assigned to watch over each church
- Right hand – Hand of righteousness
- Double-edged sword
 - The Word of the Lord is a 2-edged sword – It can wound or heal
 - The Word of the Lord spoke the world into existence, and the Word of the Lord will defeat the antichrist and slay his armies
 - Format of the letters to the churches
 - Greeting
 - Words of commendation – what the church is doing right
 - Words of condemnation – what the church is doing wrong
 - Closes with an admonition
 - Jesus’ words themselves form the “sharp two-edged sword” in these letters



His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

- Reinforces the comparison (item 4 in Daniel 10:6a above).

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

- Another reference to Daniel
 - Daniel 10:7 I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. 8 So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. 9 Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

- Confirmation that the figure John sees is, indeed, the “Son of Man,” the risen and glorified Christ.
- When He descended into hell, he freed the slaves of Hades. Now He wants to set us free from death.

19 "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.

- Revelation 1:19, describes a basic outline of the entire letter written by John. When the risen and glorified Christ says to John, “Write down, therefore, what you have seen, and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards”, he lays out the basic 3-part structure of Revelation:
-

Rev 1	past tense	what you have seen	How John received his vision	Creation to the Cross
Rev 2-3	present tense	what is now	7 letters to the 7 churches Function as cover letters	Pentecost to Rapture Church age
Rev 4-22	future tense	what will take place later	What to expect	Age to Come

- We are currently living in the Church Age – Specifically the age of Laodicea (Chapter 3)
- Chapter 4 starts with the words “meta autos” which means “after these things”
 - **4 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”**
- It is important to understand the structure of the book

20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

- The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches
 - Pastors, messengers
- The seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches
 - Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea

What Is – The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)

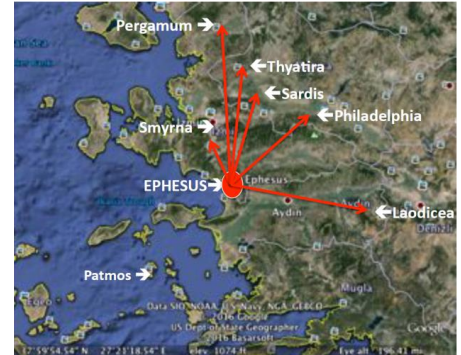
The risen and glorified Christ commands John to write a letter to each of seven churches in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea – all in modern-day Turkey.

If, as tradition holds, our Apostle John is the leader of the church at Ephesus and the author of Revelation, then all six of the other churches are within John's geographical sphere of influence, and the letters are to serve as "cover letters" for the vision that John will receive and that he will transmit in writing to the other churches.

These letters were the only direct communication from Jesus to the church

The churches in Asia Minor were the engine powering the early church

- Paul's three missionary journeys
- the church of Syrian Antioch (home church of Paul and Barnabas)
- the Council of Nicaea



Today, Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey)

- A constitutionally secular state
- Has a population of nearly 80 million people
 - 99.8% Muslim
 - 0.2% Christians and "others"
- There are only 11 diocesan priests in Turkey and 50 religious priests
- Each church was situated along a major highway in the Roman Empire. The distance from one church to the next closest church was anywhere from 20 – 50 miles away.
- 7 is the number of completion and fulfillment
 - These are all speaking to the complete church, not just the 7 congregations
 - Jesus (via John) addresses 7 churches in his letters:
 - Ephesus
 - Smyrna
 - Pergamum
 - Thyatira
 - Sardis
 - Philadelphia
 - Laodicea
 - Paul addresses 7 churches in his epistles:
 - Rome
 - Corinth
 - Galatia
 - Ephesus
 - Colosse
 - Philippi
 - Thessalonica
 - Jesus give 7 kingdom parables
 - The Sower (Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23)
 - The Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)
 - The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31, 32)
 - The Leaven (Matthew 13:33)
 - The Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)
 - The Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45, 46)
 - The Net (Matthew 13:47-50)

Part Two: What Is (Revelation, Chapters 2 & 3)

- The seven letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor
 1. Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7) - the church that had forsaken its first love (2:4).
 2. Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11) - the church that would suffer persecution (2:10).
 3. Pergamum (Revelation 2:12-17) - the church that needed to repent (2:16).
 4. Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29) - the church that had a false prophetess (2:20).
 5. Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6) - the church that had fallen asleep (3:2).
 6. Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13) - the church that had endured patiently (3:10).
 7. Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22) - the church with the lukewarm faith (3:16).

	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
Ephesus (2:1-7) Loveless, Preoccupied Church	Hard work & perseverance; Don't tolerate wickedness; Test false apostles; Patient endurance; Persevered - not grown weary	You have forsaken your first love; Focus is on correctness more than love	Remember; Repent and do the things you did at first	Right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God
Smyrna (2:8-11) Persecuted Church	Persecuted – Endured afflictions; Endured poverty; Endured slander; Faithfully coped through many trials	-- (none)	Remain faithful, even when facing prison, persecution or death	The crown of life – You will not be hurt at all by the second death
Pergamum (2:12-17) Compromising, Worldly, Political Church	Remain true to my name; Loyalty to Christ; Remained faithful - refused to deny Him	Sexual immorality; Follow false doctrines; Compromised; Tolerates cults, heresies, idolatry and immorality	Repent!	Hidden manna; White stone with a new name on it
Thyatira (2:18-29) Misguided; Wrong doctrine	Deeds, love, faith Patient endurance; Faithful service; Constant improvement	Tolerates cult activity, idolatry, and immorality; In darkness; Misguided	Judgement is coming – Repent! Hold fast until I come - keep the faith.	Authority to rule over the nations; gift of the morning star
Sardis (3:1-6) Spiritually Dead; Alive in appearance only	-- (none)	The church is dead; Church in appearance only; Incomplete deeds; Form without substance	Wake up! Repent! Empower and strengthen what little remains. Turn to Jesus again.	The faithful will be honored and clothed in white. Their names will never be blotted out from the Book of Life but will be acknowledged before God and the angels.
Philadelphia (3:7-13) Obedient; Spiritually alive	Though you have little strength, you have kept my word and have not denied my name; Obedient, powerful; Patiently endured persecution;	-- (none)	Continue to be faithful and I will keep you from the hour of trial	An eternal place in the presence of God; A new name; A place in the New Jerusalem

Laodicea (3:14-22) Materialistic; Complacent	-- (none)	Apathy and indifference; Lukewarm - Neither hot nor cold; Materialistic; Wealth over spirit; You rely on riches and don't realize your wretched condition	Turn from your indifference; Repent and be zealous	I invite those that overcome to sit with me on my throne - Share the throne of Christ
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Of the seven church cities:

- The two good ones, Philadelphia & Smyrna, now the modern-day Alasehir and Izmir in Turkey, continue to thrive
- The two bad ones, Sardis & Laodicea, are now desolate, uninhabited locations
- Ephesus the great political center
- Smyrna was the great commercial center
- Pergamos the great religious center

Greetings

- The greeting to all the churches references the attributes of the risen and glorified Christ from the commission (Rev 1:13-15)
 - “To the angel of the church in ...
 - ἀγγέλου [angelou, an'-gel-os]
 - Greek translation is “angel”
 - Literally means a “messenger”
 - “angels” – messengers sent by God to speak to or to interact with humanity
 - It's nice to think that God has assigned an “angel” to watch over each church
 - But more likely, the “angel” of the church in Ephesus is the leader of that Christian community, the one who reads the gospel, the messenger (pastor or priest)
- We should recognize the intimacy of this greeting. The risen and glorified Christ walks among us. He knows every detail of our lives, commending us for our successes and admonishing us for our faults. He holds us in the very palm of his hand as both our protector and our guide.

Commendation

- In most cases, the Lord starts with the good

Condemnation

- In most cases, the Lord tells them what they need to improve

Admonitions

- They all end with a call to pay attention and there will be a reward for your perseverance

Church History Through Time

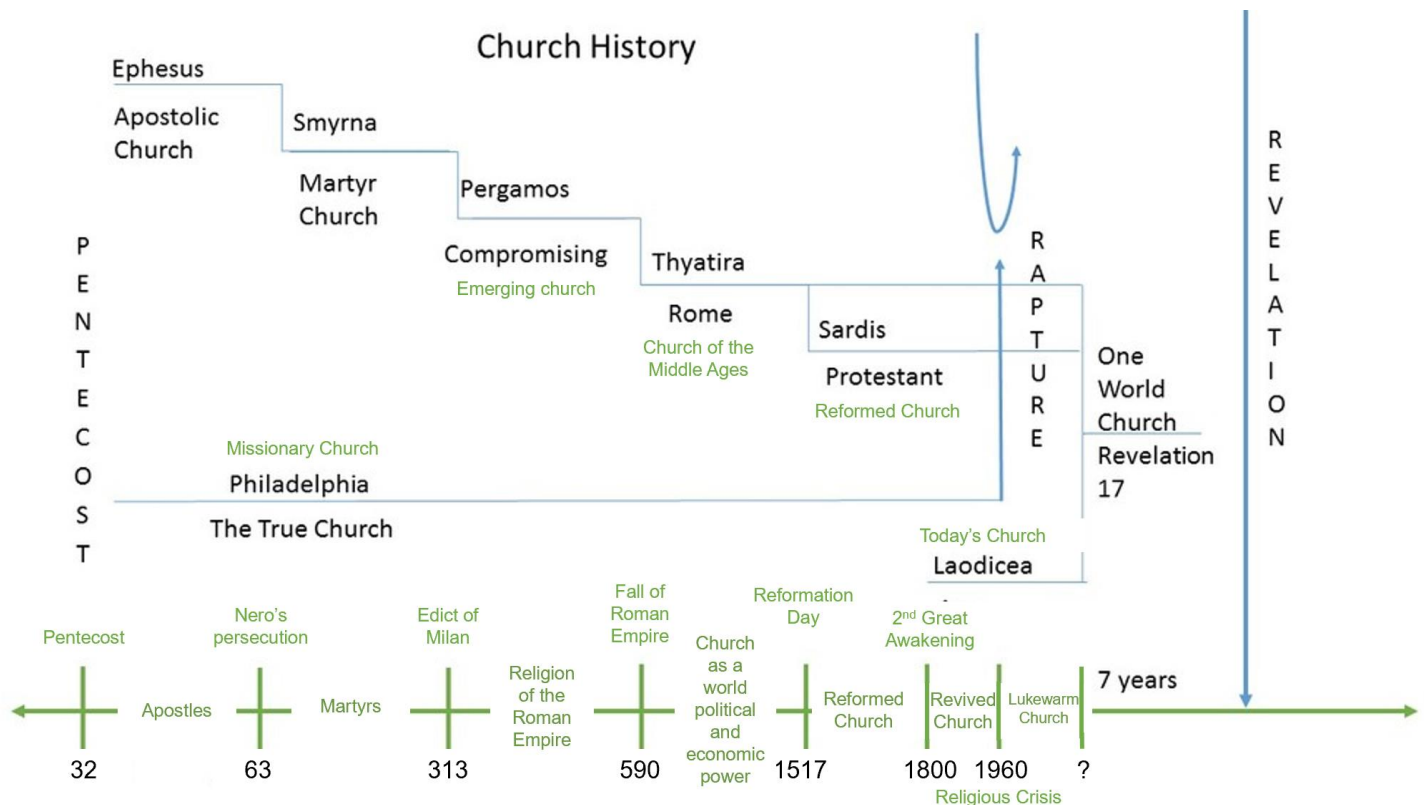
Each letter speaks to the current state of each church at the end of the 1st century.

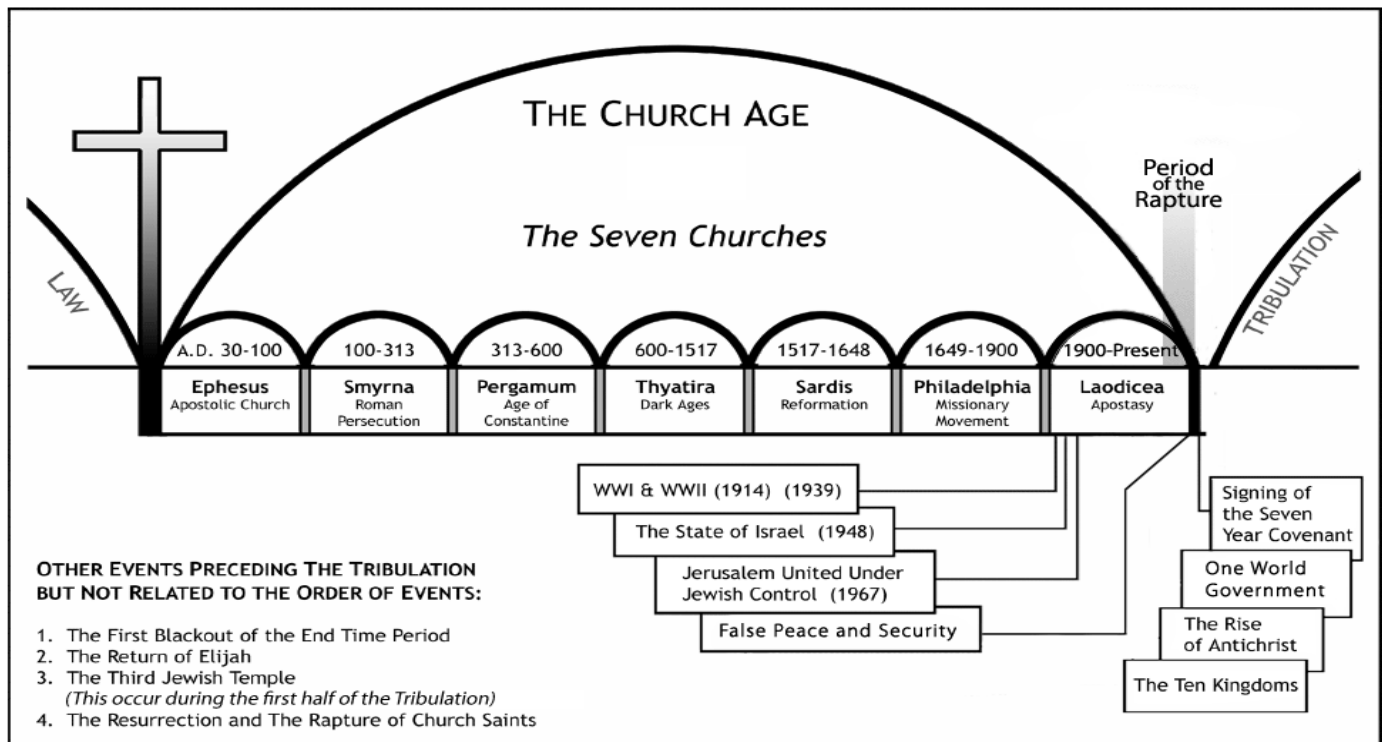
The sequence of the seven churches may also reflect the history of the church, from its apostolic beginnings until today:

- Ephesus—the apostolic church, Pentecost A.D. 32-63, the church at the time of the Apostles.
- Smyrna—the martyr church, A.D. 64-313, from Nero's persecution until the Edict of Milan.
- Pergamum—The emerging church, A.D. 313-590, the official religion of the Roman Empire.
- Thyatira—the church of the Middle Ages, A.D. 590-1517, the church as a world political and economic power.
- Sardis—the reformed church, A.D. 1517-1800, the church of the Reformation and counter-Reformation.
- Philadelphia—the revived church A.D. 1800-1960, the great age of the missionary church.
- Laodicea—today's church, 1960-present, the lukewarm, self-congratulatory church of a post-Christian era.

From a different perspective, we might well understand that all of **today's** parishes and Christian congregations can fit into one of the seven categories represented by the seven churches of Revelation

- Those whose faith and works are stellar
- Those many Christian communities in the Middle East who are martyr churches
- Those who have accommodated themselves to the dominant secular culture
- Those who are so tepid as to be irrelevant





by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

hosted on www.ltradio.org

Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser (1613-1658) predicted seven ages of the church

- The Bible refers to these Seven Ages as "The Fullness of the Gentiles" - it is one and the same. Running parallel with the Seven Ages (or the Fulness of the Gentiles) is a period referred to in Scripture as "The Times of the Gentiles"
- Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser was a holy priest of the seventeenth century, founder of an Institute for the formation of priests approved by Pope Innocent XI in 1680.
- The prophet Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser predicted seven ages of the church.
 - Real prophet –Holzhauser accurately predicted the execution of Charles I of England and the persecution of the Catholic Church in England for 120 years (Prohibition of Mass under penalty of death lasted from 1658 until 1778.).
- The fifth age began in 1517 with the Protestant Revolution.
 - This period of tribulation comes to it's five hundredth anniversary in the year 2017.
 - This fifth age would culminate in terrible persecution of the church.
 - After that he predicted an era of peace and consolation. Our Lady at Fatima also predicted a period of peace after the difficulties to come.

"During the fifth period, we saw only calamities and devastation; oppression of Catholics by tyrants and heretics; execution of Kings, and conspiracies to set up republics . . . Are we not to fear, during this period, that the Mohammedans will come again, working out their sinister schemes against the Latin Church? . . . During this period men will abuse the freedom of conscience conceded to them . . . there will be laxity in divine and human precepts. Discipline will suffer. The holy canons will be completely disregarded, and the clergy will not respect the laws of the Church. Everyone will be carried away and led to believe and to do what he fancies, according to the manner of the flesh . . . But, by the hand of God Almighty, there occurs so wondrous a change during the sixth period that no one can humanly visualize it.

The sixth period of the Church will begin with the powerful Monarch and the holy Pontiff . . . and it will last until the revelation of Antichrist. In this period, God will console His Holy Church for the affliction and great tribulation she has endured during the fifth period. All nations will become Catholic. Vocations will be abundant as never before, and all men will seek only the Kingdom of God and His justice. Men will live in peace, and this will be granted because people will make their peace with God. They will live under the protection of the Great Monarch and his successors.

All nations will come to worship God in the true Catholic and Roman faith. There will be many Saints and Doctors on earth. Peace will reign over the whole earth because God will bind Satan for a number of years until the days of the Son of Perdition. No one will be able to pervert the Word of God since, during the sixth period, there will be an Ecumenical Council which will be the greatest of all councils. By the grace of God, by the power of the Great Monarch, by the authority of the Holy Pontiff, and by the union of all the most devout princes, atheism and every heresy will be banished from the earth. *The Council will define the true sense of Holy Scripture, and this will be believed and accepted by everyone* (emphasis added).[35]

Matthew chapter 13 describes the Seven Church Ages

2000 years of Christian history is divided into 7 church ages according to Matthew Chapter 13

MATTHEW 13:1

The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

The sea shore is important in Scripture. It is the dividing line between land and sea.

The sea represents the unrighteous, restless multitudes of people who shift with the changing currents of fashion and doctrine. The sand on the sea shore was chipped or worn off rock at some stage by the forces of nature. Christ, the Word, is our Rock. Believers are born again of Him and remain part of His Word (Scripture).

I CORINTHIANS 10:4

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Thus the sand on the sea shore represents the righteous. The sea shore represents the limits of the sea. God will only allow the sea (the unrighteous) to go so far in their attempts to undermine and destroy the righteous (the sea shore sand). The righteous represent the limits that evil cannot go past.

JOB 26:10

He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.

This Earth has its limits. An Earth day is 24 hours. Light and darkness cut each other off so that each has a limited time. The land is cut off by the sea. Life is cut off by death. Ultimately light will replace darkness and the sea will disappear. Death, the sea and dark night are symbols of what goes wrong on Earth. These are essential for our growth. Hardship, grief, sin, error, deception, worldliness etc. are essential to test us, strengthen us, punish us and to give us an adversary to struggle against. Struggle is the law of growth. Defeat and difficulty are the hammer and anvil where character is hammered out and made strong. When we compromise with error we simply become wishy washy Tribulation fodder. Thus what is wrong is simply an instrument that is there for a while to mould us into what God wants from our lives; not what we want from our lives.

REVELATION 21:1

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was **no more sea**

REVELATION 21:25

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be **no night there**.

The time is coming when there will be no more sea and no more darkness.

Error and evil are temporary until they have served their purpose.

JOB 14:5

Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

No one can go beyond the limits that God has set for them. Fallen human nature needs to be cut off from its natural greed and selfishness. Each of us must learn to cope with the limits that God has set for us. These limits are essential for our survival. Each cell in our body is limited in terms of its size and function. Cancer is simply a cell that has rebelled against its limits, and it grows for the sake of growing. God uses evil and error to mould His church through seven different ages, but eventually evil will be done away with. Until then, the Church must contend with and oppose the error of its age.

JEREMIAH 5:22

Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have **placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree**, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

But equally, good sets a limit to evil. Evil will never eradicate truth. Believers can be dispersed but truth will spread due to their dispersion. Believers can even degenerate but new ones will rise up in other places. Salt limits the spread of decay. To save His children, God limits the spread and power of evil. Evil can only flow down the channels that God allows. So far, and no further. (The Mongol horde overran Russia and eastern Europe under their military genius and general Tsubodai. The Hungarian army was eliminated. Western Europe was at their mercy because the Pope was wasting his efforts on fighting the Holy Roman Emperor, who was German. Then Ogedai, the Mongol Khan who was son of Genghis Khan, after a brief reign of only 12 years died from excessive drinking. His son Guyuk then took the whole army back from Europe to Mongolia to claim the throne from Chagatai, his uncle and rival . Helpless Europe was saved by one man's death far away in Mongolia at this critical moment of time. Thus God pulls the strings so that His will triumphs)

ISAIAH 45:7

I form the light, and create darkness: **I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.**

AMOS 3:6

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? **shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?**

To create depth in a picture, an artist uses light colours for highlights and dark colours for shadows. Light and dark are totally under the control of the artist. Each light and dark colour can only occupy a certain specific portion of the picture.

To create depth of character in us God has to paint across our lives with light and dark events. So good and evil people are used by Him to mould us. Both types are totally under His control.

AMOS 3:7

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

The Bible is a Book of prophecy, giving us clues to future events.

REVELATION 13:1

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the **sea**, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

REVELATION 17:3

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

REVELATION 17:15

And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Chapter 13 starts with John standing on the sea shore. Why? Chapter 13 ends with the mark of the beast which is linked to a man and his number 666. The sand of the sea shores cannot be numbered. This implies that the righteous, represented by the sea sand, will not take on the mark of the beast as that mark sweeps through the people on this over-crowded planet like waves sweeping through the sea, which represents the unrighteous. There is more sea than land. There are more sinners than saints on earth.

REVELATION 13:16

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.
18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

MATTHEW 15:8

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain they do worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

This is the problem with people. They move away from Scripture and accept the plausible traditions and doctrines of man. Try finding the 25th December in the Bible. Matthew Chapter 2 Verse 11 says the wise men went into a house, not a stable.

MATTHEW 2:11

And when they were come into the **house**, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Joseph was not present. Jesus was not a baby in a manger, He was a young child in a house.

They gave gifts to Jesus, not to each other.

Our Christmas shopping spree of buying presents for friends and family has nothing to do with the Bible. December 25th is in the middle of winter. Shepherds could not be out with their flocks at night as they would freeze to death.

Only shepherds went to the stable, not the wise men. Rome could not try to tax people in the middle of winter and force Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem when snow makes the roads impassible. Christmas cards are equally unscriptural. Christmas is the gospel of greed and material gain as it is certainly not the Gospel of Matthew and Luke. Yet most people spend themselves poor, thinking that they must do this for religious reasons. Then January is a desolate month of recovery.

Our Christmas time is emotionally pleasant but very unscriptural. Where does the date come from? The pagan Roman emperor Aurelian, a brilliant cavalry general, united the Roman empire that had split into three sections. He completed the task in the year 274 AD and returned to Rome where he then declared the 25th December as the birthday of the sun god to celebrate the re-uniting of the empire. The Persian god Mithras also had his birthday on 25 December. So this date became widely accepted as a key festival (which basically meant it was honoured as a big booze up). This date became such a widely accepted pagan festival that Christians also joined in. To stop the flood of Christians who were enjoying the pagan festival, the Catholic church, around 350 AD, created an alternative festival by hijacking the same date as the birthday of the sun god and called it the birthday of the Son of God. And so Christianity merged into paganism and became churchianity. Over the centuries paganism died out in Europe and only the Catholic church version of 25 December remained, the so-called celebration of Christ's mass. We are more concerned with following some emotional tradition or some great man and belonging to and being popular with some special church group or organization rather than following Christ, the Word. Special events in the Catholic church are referred to as a mass. So they called Christ's so-called birthday celebration Christ's mass. This soon became known as Christmas. Then people realized it had nothing to do with Christ. So "Christ" was crossed out of Christmas and it became known as Xmas.

GENESIS 32:12

And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and **make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered** for multitude.

JEREMIAH 33:22

As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

HOSEA 1:10

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

So the sea shore represents the righteous which, like the sand of the sea, cannot be numbered and thus cannot take on the number or mark of the beast. Staying with Scripture is the only way to avoid taking on the mark of the beast.

MATTHEW 13:2

2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

Jesus was in a boat so He was above the sea (the restless masses) and not in the sea. Fishermen pull fish out of the sea which symbolizes being saved. The people stood on the shore and thus represented the righteous because they were listening to Jesus who is the Word. Listening to the Scripture is the key to being righteous.

MATTHEW 13:3

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the **fowls** came and devoured them up:

The first church age began with the preaching of the Word.

The seed is the Word of God. The fowls were the enemy that got rid of the Word. Replacing it with human tradition and philosophy.

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

This parable represents the first church age that was influenced by the apostles. They sowed the seed which represents preaching the Word. The sower (the preacher) was not criticised. It was the soil, the hearts of the listeners, who were criticized.

LUKE 8:11

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

The parable is lengthy which means that much Scripture was preached while the apostles influenced the age. The fowls got rid of the seed so they are the enemy. The sower is not criticized whether he sowed (i.e. preached) well or badly. The criticism is reserved for the soil which represents the hearts of the hearers. Don't complain that someone told you the truth in some inadequate way. How the seed was scattered is immaterial. The soil (the heart) where it falls is all that counts.

MATTHEW 13:10

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Scripture is written in a way that cannot be easily understood by the casual reader. Only when a person is born again of the Holy Spirit can his or her **inner eyes of insight** be opened so that they can link the Scriptures together to arrive at the truth.

God must also send a messenger at the end time to reveal the mystery of God.

REVELATION 10:7

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

This angel or messenger will also be a prophet. That makes him a human messenger, not a supernatural messenger like the angel Gabriel. So we also need an inspired prophet, like Paul, Peter and John were, to teach us the mystery of Who God is and what His salvation plan over 2000 years is, etc.

The first church age where Roman persecution of Christians was started by the emperor Nero who burned down most of Rome in 64 AD in order to rebuild it and then conveniently blamed and killed the Christians. Christians were forced to meet in secrecy, often in small groups. They looked to the apostles for leadership and the influence and writings of the apostles was pre-eminent until around the year 170 AD.

Their goal was not to build up big church organizations.

ACTS 8:4

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

The destruction of the Jewish Temple in AD 70 removed any obvious centre of Christian worship.

The meetings being held in private houses, or in any rooms that could be obtained, or in the open air, no special buildings were required. (*The Pilgrim Church by E H Broadbent page 3*)

But slowly the wisdom of man began to replace faith in the Bible.

Justin Martyr (100 – 165 AD) began to interpret certain aspects of Scripture in terms of Greek philosophy. He also drew a clear separation and distinction between the Son and then the Father who alone is the Creator and the only true God. He never referred to Christ as the “one true God”. Christ as the divine Logos (Word) is another God beside the Father, according to Justin Martyr, who says “by other I mean in number, not in will”. Thanks to the fame and influence of Justin Martyr, human opinion was beginning to replace the Scripture.

Then other men like Tertullian (160 – 220 AD) from Carthage in North Africa became famous and drew followers after themselves. The opinion of these so-called church fathers began to replace Scripture. People quoted clever men rather than just quoting what the apostles wrote in Scripture. Tertullian was the first writer to present the Trinity doctrine. When writing of Father, Son and Holy Spirit he said that “these three are one substance, not one person”. The word “Trinity” is unscriptural, but people no longer cared to stay with Scripture.

Clever men began to dominate the people. This is Nicolaitanism, the lifting up of holy men above the laity who are the ordinary people. As more believers joined in, **unscriptural rules were made in the interests of a more efficient organization**. Slowly the churches moved away from the Bible pattern of elders and accepted the leadership of a man. As each local church became controlled by one man instead of a group of elders, it was just a matter of time before a bishop came to mean a man who was in charge of a group of local churches. The Roman empire had political metropolitans who were in charge of certain regions. This office was copied by the churches and church metropolitans were promoted up to control a group of bishops in a region or province. These were lucrative positions and ambitious men competed shamelessly for these positions. In the interests of organizational efficiency there needed to be one person in charge. So as the church grew a cardinal had to be appointed to be in charge of a group of metropolitans. The final step was to appoint a pope to be in charge of the cardinals. A very efficient, though unscriptural, organization had been established which would spread around the world. Nicolaitanism (nico = conquer i.e. conquer the laity), the creation of an Aaronic priesthood between God and the laity (the ordinary people) was here to stay. From a human perspective this seemed a great way to serve God but unfortunately God hates this system.

REVELATION 2:6

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

Matthew 15:9

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

However good an idea seems to us humans, if it is unscriptural it simply takes us away from God.

MATTHEW 13:12

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Jesus never wanted Scripture to be interpreted in terms of clever Greek philosophy (human opinions) nor did He want us to use unscriptural words like “Trinity” to explain truth. So people read the Bible and then mess up their understanding by applying human intelligence and opinions which cannot interpret Scripture in terms of other Scriptures.

MATTHEW 13:14

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

MATTHEW 13:16

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

The apostles always stayed with the Scripture. Paul went to Athens to convert the Greeks, not to learn philosophy from them. The apostles never used the words Trinity, Christmas, easter eggs or easter bunnies, archbishop, cardinal, pope etc. They never applied the word “church” to a building.

MATTHEW 13 :17

For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Then Jesus gave the apostles the meaning of the parable as they understood truth. The concept of seven church ages was a hidden mystery that the Jews did not realize was part of God’s plan.

This explanation of Jesus implies that the early church understood the truth of Scripture, thanks to the influence of the apostles.

MATTHEW 13:18

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

The fowls are classified as the wicked one, the devil. He comes in many disguises with one aim in mind, to stop us believing the Bible. If you use unscriptural words to explain your beliefs, you are on the wrong track.

MATTHEW 13:20

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Shallow Christians want truth as long as it is only accompanied by benefits. Any difficulty and unpopularity or sacrifice is not acceptable. They only believe in the Gospel of gain and easy living. A prosperity doctrine.

MATTHEW 13:22

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

This is the Gospel of popularity and the Gospel of Greed. I will serve God with my friends and my family in my church. I will serve God while I pursue my ambitions and make money my way (Any dubious deals and selfishness are just called “that is business”).

MATTHEW 13:23

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Only one quarter of the seed fell on good ground. One group was good. Three groups were not good. One versus three. One God who is Jesus Christ versus the Trinity who is one God in three Persons.

The first church age ended around the year 170 AD as the influence of the apostles decreased and clever men with clever speculations took over the leadership of the churches. Each church had to have a bishop in charge of it. This system replaced the rulership of the local church by the local elders.

Now we come to the second parable.

The first parable was given and then explained at length. This indicates that the early church had a lot of truth.

The second parable is lengthy (showing that there was still a lot of people who, during their persecutions, wanted to believe the Bible as it was written) but no explanation was given. So understanding of the truth was diminishing.

Thus the traditions of man, based on unscriptural words and rituals and traditions were causing people to lose sight of basic Bible truths. Ignorance and misunderstanding formed a mist that stopped people from seeing the true Scripture. The forces of darkness began to slowly erode truth as human wisdom replaced faith in the written Word.

As the churches increased, their first zeal flagged and conformity to the world and its ways increased also. (*The Pilgrim Church by E H Broadbent page 11*)

Cyprian, born about 200 AD freely used the term “the Catholic church” and he saw no salvation outside it. This church excluded all who did not conform to it.

There was a growing distinction between laity and clergy. The clergy dominated then conquered the laity in a process called Nicolaitanism.

MATTHEW 13:24

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Truth and error would grow side by side. As Judas was one of the disciples, so preachers of error would be active in the congregations. Clever men with clever philosophies would blind many to the truth.

By the time of Origen (184 – 253) in Alexandria he took the concept of Trinity for granted and then blended Christianity with pagan philosophy.

Christianity (believing the Bible) and Churchianity were growing together. But people were losing sight of truth.

The second church age ended when Constantine killed his rivals and their followers in battles and became Roman emperor and claimed to be a Christian and stopped persecuting Christians in the year 312 AD. Starting with the emperor Nero in the year 64 AD, the Roman emperors unleashed at least ten savage persecutions against the Christians and killed about 3 million Christians in the process until Constantine stopped the slaughter.

Jesus gave no interpretation at the end of the second parable which implies that the church had drifted away from the Scripture and thus into darkness. Churchianity was replacing Christianity. Traditions replaced Scripture.

The Third parable.

MATTHEW 13:31

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Very little Scripture is written for this third parable. This means Bible truth is dying out.

The birds who were the enemies in the first parable are now in charge of the church. A big tree or structure has grown up which is a perversion. Mustard should be a small herb not a huge tree with unscriptural ranks like archbishop, cardinal, pope for the enemies of truth to lodge in. The early church consisted of small communities that usually met in houses, especially when they were persecuted and scattered as they often were. Slowly this changed into a big political and religious system under the control of totally unscriptural office bearers.

Constantine gave the Lateran palace to the bishop of Rome as well as enormous wealth from the Roman treasury. The bishop of Rome became Constantine's strong man in the West when Constantine shifted his capital to the East at Constantinople. Thus the bishop of Rome also gained political clout. Religion and politics have always been a dangerous combination that should be avoided.

It was now taken for granted that the church in each city was ruled by a bishop. The cities that were linked to the apostles were given greater prestige and their bishops became exalted. As they competed with each other for more power and prestige so the the bishops of Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria began to become even more influential. They were the main guys as they grabbed for power and prestige.

In 378 AD Theodosius became emperor and agreed to the persecution of pagans. Around 450 AD pope Leo had enlarged this to the persecution of Christians who disagreed with the Catholic church.

The third church age ended about the year 600 AD by which time the Roman bishop considered himself the universal bishop with power over all of Christianity.

The fourth parable

MATTHEW 13:33

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

This parable has very little Scripture to describe it. Only one verse. This represents the dark ages, when there was very little Scripture in the established churches, which lasted from about 600 to 1500 AD. The fourth church in Revelation chapter 3 is addressed as Thyatira which means a dominating woman. The Roman church had now secured complete domination over the people.

Soon after the year 620 AD, when the Muslims conquered Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria this left Rome as the only main western centre that was linked to an apostle. Lacking his former rivals, the bishop of Rome became ever more influential and powerful.

Persecutions increased as the Roman church tried to stamp out all opposition. By the time they finally stopped killing their opponents they had killed 68 million non Catholics. "Meal" makes bread which represents Scripture. A woman represents the church. Leaven must rot as it forms carbon dioxide which rises as a gas to puff up the dough. So a woman (the Catholic church) took meal (the Word) and broke it into three sections (the Trinity breaks up God into three Persons) until this rottenness had spread through all the Word. Thanks to the Trinity doctrine Christians no longer know the name of God (Jesus Christ) and thus get baptized in the titles Father, Son and Holy Spirit instead of in the Name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Error keeps spreading which causes people to understand less and less of truth.

MATTHEW 13:34

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: (Truth is hidden behind the symbols in Scripture).

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

MATTHEW 13:37

He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.(the great tribulation ends the last church age)

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;(doing things that they know are wrong)

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (The great Tribulation)

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

When the fourth parable is complete, Jesus begins to reveal what happened in the second church age as the Catholic church dragged Christianity off into error. Thus at the end of the fourth church age, at the end of the dark ages or middle ages, men like Huss and Wycliffe came on the scene with enough light to bring the Christians back to salvation and also to make the people aware that the Roman church was the ancient enemy of Truth.

The fifth parable

MATTHEW 13:44

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Only one verse describes this age. Thus there was not much truth that was restored. But Luther, that bravest of reformers, restored the truth about salvation as a personal experience with Christ. People could not break with most of the Catholic doctrines that were unscriptural, but they did find Christ as their personal Saviour. So it was a big step forward.

The man referred to in the parable is Christ. He , at Calvary, paid the price for the whole world. That is when He bought the world (the field). He sold out all of His Heavenly glory to become a suffering Servant and sold out any sense of dignity by suffering the most undignified of deaths. Thus He paid the price in full, giving up His Own Life. Then He hid the treasure which is salvation. Salvation cannot be bought. So people can read the Bible and miss the whole point that they need to be saved. A personal salvation experience with Christ is the hidden treasure that can be found in Scripture. It is free as it cannot be bought. But God so loved the world that He paid the price for the entire world (the field). Thus anyone can be saved.

The other aspect of the word “treasure” was the translation of the Bible into the common language of the people instead of being in Latin which suited the Roman Catholics. The King James Version of the Bible was printed about 1610 AD and is still regarded as the Jewel of the English language. So much so, that all the great Christian movements that were to follow started in English speaking countries.

[Around 1750 AD John Wesley preached holiness and outreach in England which laid the foundation for the missionary age that began just before 1800 AD.

Around 1906 the Pentecostal revival that began in America restored the baptism of the Holy Ghost to individual believers.

From 1947 to 1965, William Branham, also in America, revealed a deeper insight into Scripture that gave us a bigger picture that welded so-called conflicting Scriptures together. The real truth was restored for those individuals who could dare to think differently from their church leaders and their church traditions.]

But in the days of Luther’s great reformation, roughly from 1500 AD to about 1750 AD, there was a lack of Gospel outreach to the whole world. The reformers like Luther, Calvin, John Knox did an impressive work as regards evangelism in Europe.

But there were two major problems : what about the rest of the world? What about all the truth that they did not yet know?

Coming out of the Dark Ages the world needed the great truth of salvation as well as the great need of the Bible in their own languages. But people also needed holiness (which John Wesley would preach) and the Holy Ghost baptism (which the Pentecostals would restore). People also needed Truth so that they would not have to use unscriptural words like Trinity to describe God and then be fooled into thinking that “Father, Son and Holy Ghost” are names. We also need to know what original sin was and who the antichrist is. William Branham would guide us down that difficult path.

The reformers escaped from Rome and the authority of the Pope but their followers (like Jacob stealing his father in law’s idols), preferred to be dominated by human leaders and , as an example, the Anglicans accepted Henry VIII, who practiced adultery and murder, as Head of the church and Defender of the faith. They established their own priests with ceremonial robes in imitation of the Catholic priesthood. The reformers escaped (Sardis means escaped ones) from Rome but the Reformation was unfulfilled as their followers were not watchful to move on with God and simply re-established the Catholic idea of churches with a human head which, despite some differences, soon incorporated many ideas of the Roman Catholic church such as Trinity, baptism in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, a human leader (priest or pastor) who dominates the church with his power to welcome in or cast out any individual. Compliance and submission to church leaders became the biggest obstacle to accepting further truth as God revealed it.

The sixth parable

MATTHEW 13:45

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

A bit more truth is restored to the church as this parable contains two verses.

The field was bought in the last parable so it cannot be bought again. John Wesley opened the door to evangelism outside the church buildings and this eventually led to the great missionary age that began around 1800 AD.

In Revelation a pearl is a gate to the heavenly city.

REVELATION 21:21

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

REVELATION 3:8

I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

In the sixth church age of Philadelphia (brotherly love) the church has an open door set before it. A door is thus the symbol of missionary work. So Christ died at Calvary to purchase the right to the missionary age. He would raise up missionaries who would spread the gospel of salvation in the Name of Jesus Christ even though there was still much error in what the Christians believed.

The heroic age of the missionaries, despite incredible difficulties, cast a glow of light around the world. This was a golden age of brotherly love (Philadelphia) as salvation spread to other nations and John Wesley's emphasis on holiness upgraded human behaviour standards. So much so that Protestant England was spared the horrors of the French revolution which ripped apart Catholic France. No-one who wanted to live holy could use a guillotine to behead people, or watch this awful spectacle.

“and hast not denied my name.” Missionaries emphasize the Name of Jesus Christ. There is no other path to salvation. This emphasis also began to open a Door to a deeper insight into Scripture, the fact that Jesus is God and there is no Trinity. Deeper truths are difficult for people to accept when they are in the comfort zone of their established churches. But the Door to deeper revelation was opening and revealing that Jesus is the Lord God Almighty. Another deeper revelation was that denominational religion is the mark of the beast, following human pastors along their own paths which are a mixture of truth and error. They are unable to be corrected because they reject any opinion other than their own. A more difficult revelation to accept is that sex was the original sin. Satan has really blinded people to this truth. Muslim men live with the belief that 70 virgins await them in heaven. This inspires many of them to kill themselves and others in suicide attacks so that they can claim their reward in heaven. They forget one basic fact. The golden rule remains : thou shalt not kill.

The missionary age was remarkable but it lacked two things : the Holy Ghost baptism and the full Truth of Scripture that would come into view as the Door opened.

Notice how many Christians still say “ There is a mistake in the Bible” as they attempt to reconcile Scriptures that appear to contradict each other. There is no mistake in the King James Version Bible. It remains the Absolute. The mistake is always in our ignorance, our lack of the big picture. This would remain a problem until William Branham began to reveal his remarkable insights into Scripture. An eagle has a double eye. The outer perimeter keeps the big picture in focus. The inner portion of its eye can magnify a detail about 10 times which enables it to see things that other birds cannot.

The Lion age introduced the truth of the Bible with St Paul and the Apostles. The ox age saw millions of Christians die for their faith in the Dark Ages. The man age saw human intellect blessed with an ability to translate the Bible correctly into the King James Version. The last age, the eagle age, saw power from above come down on Pentecost in the form of the Holy Ghost baptism. But humans then split that movement up into pastor dominated Pentecostal denominations. Then a prophet, William Branham, restored the ancient Scriptural truths of the early church with his remarkable insights. But his followers would go down the same sad path of splitting the movement into pastor dominated versions of his quotes. Thus the last church age, the seventh parable, is ready to unfold. Outwardly it looks good and prosperous but actually the last church age is in bad shape.

MATTHEW 13:47

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

The sea is the restless multitude of people. The Gospel net goes out and collects all sorts of people. The word “net” also has the added meaning of internet, where people from all over the world can contact truth.

MATTHEW 13:48

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

Just like fishermen, some of the fish are good and some are not. Some people respond to the Truth and some do not. They think that they are rejecting truth but actually it is themselves that are being rejected by truth.

MATTHEW 13:49

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

The real struggle is in the Spirit where it is God versus Satan. The flesh is little more than a shadow of the real spiritual struggle. We think we serve God but angels play a key role in separating us from evil and keeping us on the right path. In this confusing and deceiving age, we need all the help that we can get.

MATTHEW 13:50

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Those who reject truth will end up in the great Tribulation which ends the seventh church age.

MATTHEW 13:51

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

In the seventh age, thanks to the revelations unfolded by William Branham, the understanding of Scripture returns so that the last church age can have the same basic beliefs as the first church age.

MATTHEW 13:52

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

The last age must understand all the **new developments** like the Jews going back to Israel as well as the Elijah who will restore us back to the early church of the first age so that we can serve God in the same ways and with the same understanding that they did in **days of old**.

MATTHEW 13:53

53 ¶ And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

The seventh church age will end when Jesus returns to take His Bride, the true church, and then departs with her to Heaven for the wedding feast.

The rest go into the Tribulation. Please do not be amongst this group even though they are by far in the majority. But they will not go far.

Has the Church gone through Seven Church Ages?

The Christian church has always been trapped between the two most important events in human history (His story) which are the First Coming of Jesus to die for our sins, and the Second Coming of Jesus to catch up His Bride church from off the earth and take her to Heaven for the wedding supper of the Lamb. The Second Coming is often called the Rapture.

The roughly 2 000 years in between these two great events has been devoted to the history of the church.

The church can be compared to a seed that has to be buried in the ground. The seed dies and rots and then, miraculously in a way that Science cannot duplicate, leaves come shooting up from the ground before the tassels form which produces pollen that blows over the field. Then a husk forms to protect the seed that is developing in it. As the seed develops the whole plant begins to dry up. Then finally seeds appear which are identical to the original seed that was planted. Then comes the harvest where the seeds are pulled off the plant. Then the farm beasts like oxen and cows eat up the dried up plants that never went in the harvest.

During 2 000 years, the church went through four basic stages as seven different church ages faced different conditions for the Christians to fight against. But there was one constant opposition throughout all seven church ages, and that was the Roman Catholic church.

Stage 1.

This was the original seed that God established.

Church Age 1. The apostles established the truth between AD 33 and about AD 100 when the last apostle, John, died. By that time the New Testament was written and became the basis of the early church.

Church Age 2. Shortly before the year AD 200 the churches, in their attempts to combat error, became careless. Error is like the weeds of the field -- it will always be present. With good intentions, they established a man to be the head of each church. This looked efficient but it just introduced another error which was the human leadership of the church. To keep all these church leaders in line, each city elected a bishop to be in charge of all the churches in a city. When this bishop was a godly man like Irenaeus, then this did not seem to be a bad idea. But not many men were of his calibre. The human leaders, or bishops, began to bind their churches to their own opinions. God used a series of vicious persecutions by the Roman Empire to scatter the Christians and thus minimize the damage caused by human leaders.

Stage 2.

This led to the burial of the original seed truths of the New Testament under the dirt of the Dark Ages.

Church Age 3. Politics entered the church with Constantine as the Roman emperor in 312 AD. He used the Council of Nicea in AD 325 to dictate official church doctrine and establish a centralized church organization in Rome to make the bishop of Rome a strong yes-man of his in the western Roman empire, while he went east to Constantinople. Loaded with Constantine's money, the bishop of Rome could buy his way to power over other churches by giving other churches money when they needed it.

Paganism entered the church. Around AD 400 the bishop of Rome assumed the title of Pope which made him the boss bishop of all the local bishops that he could get under his authority. By 382 AD the bishop of Rome, Damasus, was called Pontiff (the high priest of the Babylonian mysteries) by the Roman emperor Theodosius. Truth became buried under layers of pagan tradition (think about the date 25 December which was the sun god's birthday, and the decorated pagan tree of Jeremiah Chapter 10 that became the church's Christmas tree) and church people degenerated into superstition. Making the sign of the cross, and praying to Mary and the dead saints for help.

Church Age 4. By the year AD 606, the Pope or bishop of Rome declared himself to be the Universal Bishop. He now claimed to be the Big Boss Bishop with authority over all the bishops in the world.

Tens of millions of dissenters were killed by the Roman Catholic church, which did its best to keep people away from the Bible. Europe became spiritually cold, dark, and dirty. The corruption and evil in the Roman church were sickening. These Dark Ages were the dirt that the original seed of the apostolic truth was buried in, out of sight. But the blood of tens of millions of martyrs would nourish that rotten soil.

Stage 3.

God begins to restore Life back into the church.

Church Age 5. Just after 1500 new leaves began to shoot up out of the blood-drenched soil as the Reformers, led by the brave Martin Luther in Germany, began to restore the truth of salvation by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus. Knox, Calvin, Zwingli, Melancthon, and other reformers sprouted up like green leaves, before the Protestant movement later stalled in a multitude of different denominational camps that gave their devotion to their human leaders. Human leadership again crept in, devoted to competitive Christianity. "My church is better than yours". Denominations built protective doctrinal walls around themselves.

Church Age 6. Around 1750 John Wesley in England started a movement based on holiness and outreach to the sinners who were outside the church. This laid the foundation for the great missionary age led by William Carey as the first missionary to India in 1793. His example inspired tens of thousands to enter the mission fields as they scattered the Life-giving pollen of salvation and holiness around the world. This golden century of outreach enabled Christians to develop a vision that extended beyond their denominational barriers. The mission fields were tough and harsh and dangerous. But God raised up a fantastic spiritual army of tough and determined people whose memories still live on as inspiring legends today. These missionaries were simply incredible. Satan got badly whipped in that century of selfless devotion and sacrifice. But a wounded Devil is dangerous. He licked his wounds and prepared for the last round of his titanic battle against God for the control of the minds of men and women.

Stage 4.

The Bride must be fully restored to the Spirit and Truth of the apostolic fathers of the New Testament. This has to happen in a gifted but dark age.

Church Age 7. Starting in 1906 in Los Angeles, the Pentecostal movement restored the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the supernatural gifts. It started as a free movement, but by 1917 Pentecost denominated and the fires died down. In the late 1940s, William Branham and Oral Roberts gave Pentecost a welcome boost, and the revival fires lit up again. But this age, thanks to an explosion of scientific knowledge and technology, became incredibly wealthy. Sadly, the spiritual renewal was ruined by wealth and carnal materialism. The prosperity doctrine unleashed human greed, which is a commodity that is never nice, nor does it ever achieve anything worthwhile.

In this modern nervous age that loves luxury, but is plagued with instability, uncertainty, nervous tension, stress, violence, and barbarity, the people are so self-obsessed and self-seeking that they cannot hear the Voice of Jesus as He calls to them from *outside* their church door. This is the ultimate tragedy of the age. The leaders of the church have effectively removed Christ from the people in the church. This is just what the scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of the Jews, achieved when Jesus first came to earth.

So the Bride individuals who seek Truth have to be restored back to the same New Testament beliefs of the apostles. They have to find Truth *outside* their churches where they fellowship. Like the missionaries, they are going to have to be brave and determined if they want to achieve this. But some will, in fear and trembling, search out their own salvation from the oncoming storms of judgement that will sweep the world in the Great Tribulation.

Just before that happens, the Bride that is exactly restored to the first church so that the first seed and the last seed look identical will be pulled off the dried-up church plant in the latter rain harvest, as God takes her up to the Heavenly feast of the Lamb. The rest of the world will go to the Beast. The Bride will eat, the rest will be eaten or destroyed by the ferocious antichrist Pope and his demon-controlled hordes.

Chapter 1 in the Book of Revelation is a brief introduction to the seven church ages.

Matthew Chapter 13 records seven parables of the kingdom. These parables relate to the seven church ages.

MARK 4:11 And he said unto them (His disciples), **Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God:** but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

:12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Jesus gave the apostles an insight into the mystery of the unfolding history of the church. The Jews would be rejected from God's plan when they crucified their Messiah. God would then turn to the Gentiles. This was a mystery that the Jews did not understand.

But then the truth that the apostles used to establish the early church would be lost as human leadership and human traditions took over the Gentile church. Then finally, at the end, in the seventh church age, the mystery of the history of the church ages would be made known. This would enable the end-time believers (the children) to be restored back to the understanding that the apostles (the fathers) once had.

REVELATION 10: 7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel the **mystery of God** should be **finished** as He has declared unto His servants the prophets.

ROMANS 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be **ignorant of this mystery**, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

But the church as a whole would reject the idea of returning to the beliefs of the apostles. Jesus, the Word, would be locked out of the church in the last church age. Then God would catch up the true church to Heaven and turn His attention to the Jews.

ROMANS 16:25 Now to him that is of **power to stablish you according to my gospel**, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was **kept secret** since the world began,

Paul established the mystery of the Gospel. The basis of Christianity was laid down by Paul. We have to return to his beliefs.

EPHESIANS 2:6 And hath **raised us up together**, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

:7 That **in the ages to come** he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

There are ages to come says, Paul. He was aware of the seven church ages. But each age had to fit into a certain pattern.

I PETER 2:5 Ye also, as **lively stones**, are built up a spiritual house, **an holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Each Christian is a living stone in God's great spiritual Temple that spans 2 000 years. Each Christian is part of the priesthood. The fivefold ministry is not an Aaronic priesthood that stands between a man and God. All believers are part of the priesthood. Thus all believers are equal. No human is elevated above the rest.

GALATIANS 1:8 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.

:9 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.

"Again". Why does Paul say this twice?

Those Christians in the first church age had to listen to him as he wrote down half of the Books in the New Testament. No apostle, not even Paul himself, can change what is written. The Bible is supreme. Man can only preach what is in the Bible.

II THESSALONIANS 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, **except there come a falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Then the truth would be lost and buried in the Dark Ages and only in the last church age would Christians be restored back to Paul's teachings.

So the second time he is warning us in this last age. We had better believe what Paul said or else we will be accursed. If we disagree with Paul then we are in big trouble. The great Tribulation is moving in like a tsunami and our only way of escape is by getting back to what Paul taught. William Branham also has to line up with Paul's teachings.

I CORINTHIANS 3:9 For we are labourers **together** with God: ye are God's husbandry, **ye are God's building**.

:10 According to the grace of God which is **given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation**, and another buildeth thereon. But **let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon**.

:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Each Christian is a living stone in God's great temple that will be built over 2 000 years. But whatever you build for God, make sure you are building on the foundation that Paul built.

We build "together" with Paul. Do not think up your own bright ideas. Just get back to what Paul said.

ROMANS 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Paul's Gospel was the foundation for the church ages which were to follow. This was a great mystery that was hidden from the Jews. Then the church also lost this knowledge as they followed human leaders. So the doctrine of the church ages became lost to the Gentiles until it was finally restored back in the last or seventh church age.

EPHESIANS 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

God has allowed the history of His church to unfold in a way that humans find mysterious. God's will is very different from our will.

EPHESIANS 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

"Other ages".

The Jews had also gone through seven church ages, starting with Abraham who "left his first love" when he claimed that Sarah was only his sister and not his wife. Then he produced Ishmael with the Egyptian Hagar. From her came the Muslims and today's Middle East crisis.

Finally John the Baptist came in the last or seventh age of the Jews to introduce Jesus Who died *outside* the camp of Jewish establishment-religion as their rejected King. The Jewish religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, blinded the people to their Messiah.

But throughout Jewish history the idea of a Gentile church stretching over 2 000 years was a complete mystery to them.

EPHESIANS 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

COLOSSIANS 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

The Godhead is a major mystery.

I TIMOTHY 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,

Somehow Jesus is both Man and God. This is not easy to understand. The church would lose sight of Jesus being Almighty God.

Irony -- The Jews could not believe that Almighty God could be a Man, Jesus. The church today cannot believe that the Man Jesus can be Almighty God. They only see Him as the Son of God.

But natural light is also a mystery. It behaves like a particle that can only move in one direction (like a bullet) but also behaves like a wave that can move in all directions at once (like dropping a stone into a pool of water and watching the ripples move outwards in all directions). Not easy to understand, but it happens anyway.

II THESSALONIANS 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

"Let" means prevent. Religious deception started in the church right at the beginning. This deception is so subtle that it would fool the vast majority of churchgoers. Very few will properly expose church error. God combats this evil until He leaves the earth at the end of the seventh church age. Then humanity is in deep trouble. The Devil will go unchecked on his final rampage into the Tribulation.

EPHESIANS 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

God wants to gather the last age and the first age into the same set of beliefs.

GALATIANS 1:11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

:12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

No man can add anything to the Bible. No man can change the Bible. The Book of Revelation lays out the whole history of the Gospel through the different conditions of each age. Satan kept throwing up different problems, and God somehow got His believers to overcome in the face of very different tactics and circumstances that confronted them at different times.

I PETER 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at **the revelation of Jesus Christ**;

I PETER 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, **pass the time of your sojourning here in fear**:

If we grasp the revelation of Jesus Christ we will realize the great danger of being fooled in our day, and our total dependence on God's grace will make us fear Him. We will not seek for our own selfish greed and lust.

The revelation of Jesus Christ puts the emphasis on Jesus. Not on some great man.

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

The Chapter starts with a focus on Jesus. If we do not have a revelation of Who He is, then we will take our eyes off Him and start focusing on some man.

'Things will shortly come to pass' -- which will later be known as the history of the church. Different challenges unexpectedly confront Christians. Stay with the Bible, not with your own ideas as you confront the enemy. Your own ideas on how to combat error will merely be another error of human opinion that enters the church.

A day with God is as a thousand years. So 2000 years of church history is just today and tomorrow as far as God is concerned. So, very shortly, in fact, the day after tomorrow, Jesus says to John that He will come.

REVELATION 1:2 Who bare record of **the word of God**, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Stay with the Bible as it is the Word of God. The testimony of Jesus means that you do things His way, not your own way. His way is always written in the Bible.

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

We read the Bible, not some man's opinion. You are only blessed when you hear someone read what is written in the Bible, but you must stay with what is written.

"Readeth" means to read with understanding.

If you do not understand what is read then it is meaningless and is not a blessing to you.

Keep God's Word. Do not change it to suit yourself. Truth does not always suit our human convenience and comfort. Nor will truth fit in with our human opinions.

"He that readeth". Only one man, the seventh angel, will be able to read the mysteries of Scripture with insight and understanding. We, in turn, must listen to his voice in order to understand the Scripture.

REVELATION 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

This Book of Revelation is mainly addressed to the seventh church age. The first church age had the truth from the apostles. Their test was to believe the New Testament and be ready to die for what they believed. In 64 AD the Roman emperor Nero launched the first vicious persecution against Christians. Three million Christians were killed by Roman emperors in the first 250 years of the history of the church. They faced death as their major enemy.

Then the truth got lost, and during the church ages, people basically had no clue what the symbols in the Book of Revelation meant. In the last age, the symbols would be revealed again. Thus John is effectively writing to the Christians of the last church age. Only they could actually understand him.

God's grace is critical. Only He can help Christians. We need inner peace from God in our hostile and deceiving surroundings. The battle is His. We must learn to submit to His will.

Seven represents completion. Seven days complete a week. Seven dominant colours in a rainbow. Seven dominant notes in music "Doh, ray, me, fah, soh, lah, tee". Seven churches are all that God needs to convey the complete plan of church history.

He chooses Asia. This begins and ends with an A. The first and the last letter are the same. The last church age must be the same as the first church age. Asia is Gentile territory. This is a hint that the future church (at the time of writing the book of Revelation) will be mainly Gentiles.

"Which is" (our present tense seventh church age), "*which was*" (past tense. The first church age was past tense to every other age. Every church age only served God in so far as they were restored back to the first church age), "*which is to come*" (the future. Jesus "is to come" when the last age Christians are fully restored back to the first age Christians. This is the only group that has a great future, free from the Tribulation).

The seven spirits. God gives different attributes of His Spirit to each age to combat the challenges of that age. So each age seems different to the others because different attributes of God are manifest in each age. Our seventh age wallows in wealth, but the spread of wrong doctrine is so subtle that we need a good understanding of the Bible to withstand error. In the Dark Ages of the fourth age they had little truth, partly because Bibles were banned, but needed huge courage to be burnt at the stake and not deny the bit of truth that they had. So God manifested His Holy Spirit in seven different ways to sustain each age through its different problems.

For instance, a woman can be the wife of a man, the daughter of her mother, the mother of her daughter, a friend of her neighbours, a colleague at her work, a helper at a charity, and a rescuer of animals in distress. She behaves in completely different ways, depending on who she is with. But she is still one woman with seven different ways of manifesting the spirit that is within her. "My husband tells me what to do", says the wife but, "I tell my daughter what to do". Nevertheless it is the same woman.

REVELATION 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

There is only one faithful witness that can be trusted in the changing circumstances of church history and that is Jesus, the Word.

He is the first one to be resurrected in a new immortal body. The last church age ends with the resurrection of the dead. So the Bible gives us all the clues that we need to be ready for the resurrection.

The prince takes over from the king. Jesus is the prince of all the kings on earth. When He returns, He will take over from every king as they fade off the scene and He sets up His kingdom on earth.

Jesus loves us and is struggling to get us to believe the truth so that He can save us from the Tribulation.

There is only one way to get saved from hell. Confess our sins and have them washed clean in the Blood of Jesus. That saves us from *hell*. That was a crucial doctrine running through the church ages.

But the last church has a further problem because it ends in the Great Tribulation and we need to be saved from that fate also, even though we are already saved from hell. That is what the restoration to the first church is all about. Only their beliefs will save us from the Tribulation.

REVELATION 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

We will rule with Christ in the millennium as kings on earth. Every member of the Bride is also part of the priesthood. There is no Aaronic priesthood of a fivefold ministry that is elevated up between God and man. As kings and priests, we have no humans above us. Thus the church has to be run as a brotherhood that is based on equality. Not an elevated priest or pastor, with the people being in submission to him.

Every saved Christian is a priest. No priest is above another priest. The only person who is above a priest is the High Priest, Jesus.

Priests and pastors love the praise of people and a position of pre-eminence. They love the power that they have over people. It feeds their ego and self-importance. But glory and dominion over people only belong to Jesus. Praising man is the first step down the wrong path. Relying on a man establishes us in the wrong path.

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

His Coming will be **with** clouds, plural. Clouds of glory will be seen with His physical body. He will not **come as a cloud**.

When every eye sees Him, that is His third Coming when He returns for Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation. All the sleeping virgins have been killed in the Tribulation. The 144 000 have also been killed. Only the beast and those who served him, by killing off those who refused to submit to the beast, are left. That is why everyone is wailing. They then know they will have to answer for their crimes and murders.

“Even so”. That is the way it has to be. The Scriptural Bride will escape the tribulation. The rest of the saved Christians will be slaughtered in the Tribulation.

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

He went up with a cloud. He did not go as a cloud.

:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**

He will come with a cloud. He will not come as a cloud.

The supernatural cloud of 1963 was not the coming of the Lord.

The cloud never came down. It stayed at an incredible height of about 27 miles but was only visible for 27 minutes after sunset. Besides, there were two clouds.



The above photograph was taken from Winslow in Arizona.

REVELATION 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

He stresses the first and the last two times. Why? He wants the last church age to end up believing exactly what the first church age believed. The seed that is planted in the beginning is identical to the seed that is harvested in the end. So Jesus warns us -- If we are not exactly like the early church, we will not be in the harvest when He pulls His Bride off the earth.

“**which is**”. Present tense. “**Which was**”. Past tense. Another warning -- In our present age we must go back to what the church was in the first age. When we are identical to them, only then will He be able to fulfill His plan which means that He “**is to come**” to take His Bride Home to Heaven. This is future tense. So the restored Bride has a great future.

But look at the succession of Popes.

REVELATION 17: 8 when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

A Pope was ruling. He is not when he dies. Yet is when they elect a new Pope. The succession of Popes is the longest line of rulers in the western world. But notice. “was” is past tense. “is not” is present tense. “yet is” is present tense. So the succession of Popes is described by words in the present tense and the past tense. That tells us that there is no future tense. In other words, there is no future for the Roman Catholic church. The home of the Popes, the Vatican city, which is mystery Babylon, is to be destroyed by a nuclear bomb.

REVELATION 18:9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall **see the smoke of her burning,**

: 10 **Standing afar off** for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Why do they lament from *far away*? Why not get in and put the fire out? It is a nuclear inferno that cannot be put out because of all the deadly radiation will kill nearby people. No one wants to get close to a nuclear bomb explosion.

REVELATION 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, **the Almighty.**

“the Almighty”. Jesus is Almighty God. No one can be compared to Him. Never try to elevate a man to be equal with God. If you believe something like that, it just shows that you have absolutely no idea Who God is. God is like the sun. Man is like a star. The brightest star cannot shine when the sun comes into view.

REVELATION 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Consider the human lust for church leadership. "Call me pastor. I am above you and you must be submissive to me." - - Look what John says, “I am your brother”. This great apostle does not try to intimidate us with his rank and title. He was one of the select twelve. He can claim that rank of apostle. But he does not. People who stress their leadership titles have caused so much damage to the church over the ages. Human leadership of the church has been a major disaster. So this great apostle sets the example, “I am your brother”. You are equal to me. There is no Aaronic priesthood with ministries above the people. Elevating a man is nicolaitanism. That is a bad space to be in.

“companion in tribulation”. The church has so many tribulations to endure. Tens of millions of martyrs will pay the price for their faith. Christianity is not for sissies. John does not offer you a bed of roses. He offers you tribulation. Just ask the thousands of missionaries who struggled and died on the mission fields. Not the TV evangelists and megachurch pastors in their luxury homes. They are missing something.

If you have an easy and prosperous Christian life, be careful. Maybe you are no threat to the Devil and that is why he leaves you in peace.

Patmos was an island prison for the scum of the Roman empire. John was unjustly banished to Patmos first by Nero, that worst of Roman emperors who ruled from AD 54 to 68. Nero died in AD 68 and all political prisoners were released on the death of the emperor who had imprisoned them. Then Domitian who ruled from 81 to 96 as emperor banished John again to Patmos during his reign of terror. John was finally released when Domitian died. Historians claim that John went to Ephesus, the nearest city to Patmos, and made the final compiling of the New Testament books as he was the only apostle left, and thus the last man who could get that depth of guidance from God. John knew God when God was on earth in the form of a Man, called Jesus.

John was imprisoned because of his stand for the Bible.

This will be our final test too. Can you stand for the Bible when all around you are standing on quotes of some man?

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

The Lord's day is the Tribulation time, not a day of the week.

ISAIAH 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a **destruction** from the Almighty.

:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, **cruel** both with **wrath** and **fierce anger**, to lay the land **desolate**; and he shall **destroy** the sinners thereof out of it.

AMOS 5:20 Shall not the day of the LORD be **darkness**, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

JEREMIAH 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of **vengeance**, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall **devour**, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath **a sacrifice in the north country** by the river Euphrates.

The Russian hordes. Russia is north of Israel. The king of the north, the Great Bear, will finally be destroyed in the Tribulation.

REVELATION 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in **Asia**; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

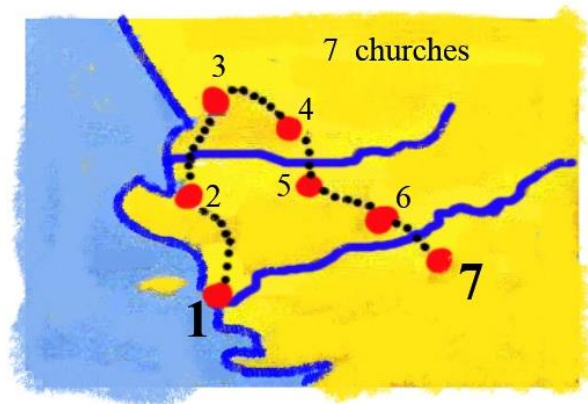
Jesus emphasizes the first and last again. The last age must be restored to the first age.

Even the word "ASIA" is significant. The last letter is "A" which is the same as the first letter "A".

The seven red dots indicate the seven churches in Asia. Rome is marked with a green dot.



These seven cities lay on a postal road. God describes their characteristics and thereby sends a message, not just down this postal road to describe the condition of these seven churches but also down the "postal road of time" or the "pipeline of time", as He describes the events that will unfold during the future church ages. The Devil is defeated by time as he cannot see the future. God prophesies about the future to show His control over time. Prophecy is what makes the Bible unique. This is the stamp of God.



The postal road from Ephesus (1) to Laodicea (7) is shown on the above map as well as the two rivers that are in that area.

Now comes some real power. God made the characteristics of each city to match the characteristics of a future church age. And those future church ages would unfold in the same order as what the cities were on the postal road. This indicates the incredible control of human events that God has.

A pattern begins to unfold.

The road moves up away from Ephesus until it gets to the political capital Pergamos (3) then it does a drastic turn. This is the third church age where the emperor Constantine forced politics and paganism into the Roman Catholic church. With all the money and the magnificent Lateran palace that Constantine gave to the bishop of Rome, the Roman bishop became the powerful head of a centralized church, which was the only Roman organization that survived the breakup of the Roman empire, which had been caused by the barbarian invasions. Then followed the famine, plague, chaos, and the religious murder of the Dark Ages. The Popes also encouraged the murderous crusades into Palestine to kill the Muslims. There were flickering lights of revival like the Albigenses in southern France, the Waldenses in the Alps, and Jan Hus of Bohemia that the Roman Catholic church suppressed and opposed. Then the church began to return back to the same level as Ephesus with the Reformation of Martin Luther (5) and the missionary age of John Wesley (6) and the Pentecostal revival of the Holy Spirit that started the Laodicean church age in 1906 at Los Angeles (7).

Finally, the church needed a revival of Scriptural Truth. A prophet Elijah was needed to restore us back to the teachings of the apostolic fathers where it had all begun.

But the church tradition of having a one-man human head as pastor sidelined the movement. Then followed an obsession for these elevated pastors to be the interpreters of quotes that placed future events into the past. The great Cloud of 1963 became the Coming of the Lord and the descent of the mighty Angel of Revelation 10. Brother Branham's **image** in the eyes of "Message believers" changed from being a prophet who was the "voice of the seventh angel". He became regarded as infallible, and his quotes, which are uplifted to Deity as the "Voice of God", can replace Scripture where necessary. He became more than a man, as they claimed that he was the appearing of "*The Son of Man*". The enforced "worship" of an **image** of the prophet Daniel began in the first Gentile kingdom of Babylon. Subtle infusions of the Babylonian mysteries into revealed Bible truths have reduced Message believers to this same delusion that their prophet is the Absolute, with his quotes standing **in the place of** the Word of God, in the last Gentile age of Laodicea. (Vicarius Filii Dei means "In place of the Son of God". This is 666, the number of the mark of the beast. These Message believers are in a dangerous territory).

No one can replace Jesus or stand in His place.

So there is a final mystery to the seven church ages.

The need for individuals to come out of the Message groups that have built up unscriptural interpretations from selected quotes.

The need for a group of elders to replace a dominating pastor as the ones who feed the local flock.

No Scripture says that the tithes belong to the pastor.

No Scripture says that we have to meet in "church" buildings or tabernacles.

Early believers met in houses. So this is a safe example to be restored back to.

ROMANS 16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

:5 Likewise greet the church that is **in their house**.

I CORINTHIANS 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their **house**.

ACTS 8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every **house**, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

COLOSSIANS 4:15 Salute the brethren which are **in Laodicea**, and Nymphas, and **the church which is in his house**.

The last move is just for **individuals** who can escape from the church of Laodicea (7) back to Ephesus (1) so that we can be fully restored to the first church, free from the errors that are caused by splicing selected quotes together. Free from the domination of one-man human leadership.

REVELATION 3:14 And unto the angel of the **church of the Laodiceans** write

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

Jesus stands outside the door of all the Laodicean churches. He mentions no exceptions. This includes Message churches, in all their varieties. He appeals only to individuals.

We can have only one goal today: somehow we have to get back to Ephesus where the church ages started. We must only do and believe what is written in the New Testament.

Even the names of the cities can be given meanings that tell the same unfolding story of events.

“unto Ephesus (relaxed, aimed at), and unto Smyrna (bitterness, death), and unto Pergamos (thoroughly married), and unto Thyatira (dominating woman), and unto Sardis (escaped ones), and unto Philadelphia (brotherly love), and unto Laodicea (peoples’ rights)”.

The first church age, thanks to Paul and the apostles, had the truth but after the apostles died, believers became **relaxed**. They **aimed at** being Scriptural but became less vigilant and more careless about the odd unscriptural human ideas that kept creeping in. As this human leadership established control over the church, God raised up persecution which scattered them into small groups to minimize human domination of the church. Three million Christians died in the Roman empire from these fierce and bitter persecutions. **Bitterness and death** were the Christians’ companions as the Roman Empire tried to stamp them out. The Roman emperor Constantine stopped the killing at the cost of forcing the church to **marry thoroughly** into his brand of political control. He also forced the church to **get thoroughly married** into pagan traditions so that pagans would feel at home in the church. Like claiming that 25 December, the birthday of the sun god, was also the birthday of Jesus. Then the Roman empire disintegrated under the barbarian invasions, and the Roman Pope rose to power as the barbarians depended on him to anoint their kings, which saved these kings from assassination. A man could only be a legitimate king if he was anointed or crowned by the Pope. So the barbarian kings defended the Roman Catholic church which consequently rose to power and ended up dominating Europe. A woman symbolizes a church. The true church is called the Bride of Christ.

Thus the Catholic church was the **dominating woman** of the Dark Ages.

Then came the Reformation as Martin Luther in Germany led the escaped ones who rejected the clutches of Catholicism, and joined the Protestant movement. Then John Wesley started an outreach movement to save those who were outside the church. This led to the great missionary age where the **brotherly love** of the missionaries for their pagan brethren took them overseas to labour and die in their great efforts to save the heathen.

Then came our nervous and uncertain modern age with its two awful world wars, amazing technological advancements, incredible production of goods and wealth, and free-thinking in the universities that “proved” evolution and the Big Bang which destroyed faith in the Bible. Taking their eyes off God, people became obsessed with their own rights and their entitlement to live in sin as they pursue their greed and selfishness. **People’s rights** made people demand the right to choose their own lifestyle and their own beliefs by being able to join whichever church they want to attend out of the more than 45000 different varieties or types of churches or denominations now available. Christians insist on their own right to elevate, uplift, and follow the pastor of their own choice. Their own right to interpret a man’s quotes and call this their Absolute. Thus very few will actually seek to be restored to the original teachings of the apostles as written in the New Testament. Sadly, a gifted but dark age, blinded by wealth and human brilliance, locks the Word of God Who is their true Head outside their church door. Inside the church is another head, the pastor. But inside is darkness because the Light stands outside.

JOHN 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil.

On such a world the great Tribulation will burst like a horrific tsunami and earthquake.

REVELATION 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

REVELATION 1:20and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

We are never where God wants us to be. We are never looking in the direction where God wants us to look. To see the Voice that spoke, John had to turn around. Turn around and go the other way is symbolic of repentance. The key to spiritual success is endless repentance. *We have far more error than what we realize.* But then our age is blind, and we do not know that. We think we are bright.

ISAIAH 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Whenever God reveals something from the Bible then it will be different to what we thought. So we must be endlessly repentant of our own way of thinking, because our thinking just cannot reach the level of God's thinking.

LUKE 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, **We are unprofitable servants:** we have done that which was our duty to do.

An unprofitable business makes more losses than gains. Since the Bible says we are all unprofitable servants it means that however hard we try, we do more wrong than what we do right. We have many wrong beliefs that we have picked up from books, priests, pastors, other people, as well as our own so-called bright revelations. So thinking that we are very clever, we are actually an endless loss to God. Only His grace can sustain us, not our works or our bright ideas.

REVELATION 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

The seven candlesticks represent the seven church ages. Only one Person is visible. Jesus. No man is seen with Him. No man can in any way compare with Him. John did not see Paul, nor William Branham. We Christians must learn to elevate Jesus way above any other person. Jesus is in the midst of His people during these seven ages. Whatever Christians have to go through, Jesus is there to help them endure their trials. Jesus is the only Person Who is present in all seven ages. Each man, however spiritual, could only be present for a portion of one church age. Thus no human can compare with Jesus.

REVELATION 1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

The white woollen wig of a judge. Grey speaks of age, but white speaks of wisdom. We are not to judge one other, only Jesus has the wisdom to do this.

JOHN 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

Jesus will judge us as a Man, not as God. As a fellow Man, He understands us.

JOHN 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word** that I have spoken, the same **shall judge** him in the last day.

We will be judged by what is written in the Bible.

His eyes glow with fire. His judgements will be hard. His eyes look right through people to discern their thoughts and motives. If we do not stay strictly with Scripture we will be in deep trouble.

Only one sentence will pass the Judgement seat: "It is written...".

If it is not written in the Bible, leave it alone.

REVELATION 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

Feet like brass.

DEUTERONOMY 28:15 But it shall come to pass, **if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD** thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these **curses** shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

:23 And **thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass**, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.

Brass is hard and is a symbol of judgement. He Himself suffered frightful agonies of death to establish the truth. The fiery trials of His faith were as if He had walked through the fires of hell on our behalf as He suffered for our sins and carried our sins through hellfire to dump them on the Devil. Yet His voice is life-giving like the soothing sound of waters to those who believe His Word. But His voice sounds like the oncoming storms of judgement to those who do not believe.

REVELATION 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

EPHESIANS 6:17 ...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

The Word of God is the sword wherewith we fight, not against people in the flesh to kill them physically, but rather to kill the ideas that Satan has put into their minds. It is a war of words, truth versus error.

A two-edged sword that cuts out our own sin even as it cuts out the sin of others. The truth blends the cutting edge of the Old Testament with the cutting edge of the New Testament. Both Testaments have to merge together if we are to claim that we have the truth.

His face is like the sun, dazzling in its brightness. Jesus is the Word of God and we cannot argue with Him. His brightness, His wisdom, His example just so far outshines any human efforts. Our man-made lights only illuminate a small area. The sun lightens up the whole world as the world spins on its axis. And sunlight is free. The King James Version Bible is free from copyright, except possibly in the United Kingdom. Anyone else can copy it. This makes sense as nobody can copyright God's Word. The other Bible versions are copyrighted as they are man's opinions. So God's Word freely illuminates everyone, just like the sun. Man's bright lights are like his bright religious ideas -- they are just limited puddles of light that last until the globe goes out.

The King James Bible is the River of Life. Do not misinterpret a puddle of quotes and call that Truth.

REVELATION 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

In the presence of Jesus, the great prophet John became as nothing. If we truly come into the presence of Jesus then we will just die to ourselves and our own opinions. His right hand symbolizes power.

MATTHEW 26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man **sitting on the right hand of power**, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

The power of God becomes more and more effective as we succeed more and more in dying to ourselves. We are so obsessed with our own ideas and traditions that our efforts to serve God are unprofitable to Him. If we die to ourselves, then God can use us to achieve His will, because we cannot comprehend God's will in our own wisdom. To serve God, He has to be able to push us in directions that we do not want to go in. That is why we fail when we choose the church that we do like. That is our will, not His will.

"I am the first and the last" -- Once again this emphasis. The first church age had the truth. The truth then got lost. Only in the last church age will the Bride be restored back to the first church age's teachings. We must have no bright ideas of our own. We must not rely on a plausible interpretation of quotes that produce ideas that the first church never believed. We must not follow some man. All we can do, if we are to please God, is to follow the teachings and example of the New Testament, and make sure that we add no "clever" trimmings to what they believed. We think we are bright. We think that our interpretations of quotes are clever. But we fool ourselves. Our wisdom is like a flickering candle. You cannot compare a candle with the sun. Only Jesus is bright like the sun. Only the Bible should be our illumination.

REVELATION 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Again Jesus stresses that He is alive in His last church age, and refers back to His death and then His resurrection which launched the first church age. Thus He wants the last church to be like the first church because the truth established in the

first church age will never change, as it will be forevermore the way Paul and the apostles preached it in the power of the resurrection. We have to get back to their example and teachings. Our modern interpretations, if they were not preached by the first church, are simply wrong.

Jesus went down to the regions of the lost and defeated the Devil, stripping him of his authority over death and hell. Since then no Christian can die unless Jesus grants permission. Christians do not have to fear death, as it only happens if God permits it, and then that death is in the will of God.

The third and fourth church ages would see the Christian church plunge into the abyss of religious deception, pagan traditions, and political involvement which are guaranteed to produce spiritual death. But Jesus has the keys of death and hell, so when all seemed lost in the Dark Ages, He would unlock the doors of human knowledge that would lead to the Renaissance of learning, the skill of printing, and then the courage of the Reformation to return to Biblical salvation by grace through faith that finally ended the Dark Ages. Justification by faith launched the fifth church age. This was the first step towards restoring the church back to the New Testament model of the apostles. The strength of Christianity lies in the extent that it has returned towards the first church.

REVELATION 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things **which shall be hereafter**;

John must write down what he saw in these visions which describe “the things that are”, the present state of the seven churches and the amazing way in which the characteristics of these seven churches will reveal the history of the seven church ages “**which shall be hereafter**”, as the 2 000 years of church history unfolds. Already he could see the way in which the first church age was being described by the characteristics of the Ephesian church. He could see how human leadership was infiltrating the early church, and leading the people away from the doctrines of the apostles.

III JOHN 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who **loveth to have the preeminence** among them, receiveth us not.

:10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, **prating against us** (the apostles) with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

This early church leader, behaving just like a modern-day pastor, dominated the church, rejected the Scriptures that were written by the apostles, and threw people out of the church when they disagreed with him. John was giving us an insight into the way that human leadership would govern the church. It was not a pretty picture.

Yet John knew that the first church had the truth, for those who wanted to follow truth.

John introduces himself as an elder. Elders, plural, not a dominating pastor are to run the church. John did not refer to his rank as an apostle. He tries to stress the equality of brotherhood. Not the Nicolaitanism of elevating a human leader above the congregation just because he calls himself a pastor. The word “pastor” only appears once in the New Testament and is condemned six times in the Old Testament.

III JOHN 1:1 The **elder** unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that **my children** walk in truth.

“My children”. Those who followed the teachings of the apostles, as only the New Testament writers had the authority to write down the Word of God.

John made the final selection of Books which would make up the New Testament. After the deaths of all the other apostles and New Testament writers, John was the last apostle left on earth, a towering spiritual figure who could move with amazing authority between our physical dimensions of space and time and the much higher but hidden dimensions of the spiritual realms of Heaven. He alone was close enough to Jesus, having been trained by Jesus, to have sufficient inspiration to make these critical choices. He was gifted with a unique discernment to choose the right eight authors of the New Testament. Since that time, no one else can add anything to the Bible.

Our souls depend on his choice of new Testament Books. But John chose well.

MICAH 5:5 And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, **then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.**

The evil and bloodthirsty kingdom of Assyria symbolizes the Devil. Once the church accepted human leadership it was just a matter of time before the wrong men rose to power in the church and good men became corrupted by the love of

power and wealth. Satan would rise high in the church world with its exorbitant wealth and palatial buildings. In AD 312 emperor Constantine gave the beautiful Lateran palace on the Caelian hill to the Roman bishop which still remains the official residence of the Pope. Then in the 1500s, the Vatican was established in Rome with its vast and beautiful buildings. The Roman Catholic church thus set the pace with its palaces for its top leaders. Protestants would not be slow to follow this example of luxurious buildings for their human leaders. But Satan would soon trample around inside those same buildings and make himself at home. Satan loves fancy buildings.

But God would raise up eight principal men to stand for truth. These were the eight men who wrote the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the Gospels. Luke wrote the Book of Acts. Paul wrote from Romans to Hebrews. James, Peter, Jude. And then that same John wrote his last three Books, as well as the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Then God organized for seven angels to come down at different times in history, during the seven church ages, to guide the thinking of seven men so that each one could act as a guide or messenger to his church age. Paul was helped to write his New Testament books. The other six would each be helped by the specific angel for his age, knowingly or unknowingly, as they worked hard to steer the church back towards the beliefs of the New Testament. An angel is a messenger from heaven. Because these men were under this angelic help and guidance, God referred to these men as messengers from God and thus also called them angels, because they brought the message of the will of God for their church age to the people.

So there would be an ongoing battle between human leadership in the church that loved being important and created its own beliefs and traditions, and the true believers who died to themselves, never wanting to be anything in this world, and were content to simply follow the truth as laid down by the apostles.

REVELATION 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches:** and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

The first human messenger to the first age was Paul, and he was received as an angel by the people, despite having some physical infirmity. Maybe his eyes were damaged by looking at the Holy Spirit that shone as a dazzling Light on his way to Damascus.

GALATIANS 4:13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; **but received me as an angel** of God, even as Christ Jesus.

God also called each great man of each age, an angel. A messenger. A star. A burning light with the truth for that day. Then the seven candlesticks represent the seven church ages, with each candlestick representing a church age. Let us follow the church history by using the seven-branched candlestick of the Jews:

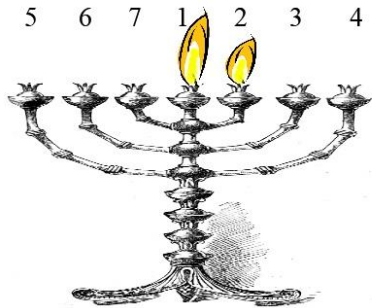


On the Day of Pentecost tongues of supernatural Fire lit the first church age.

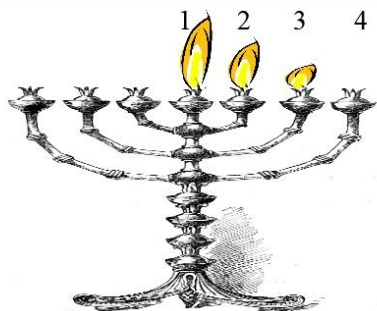
This was God's best church, as described in the Book of Acts. This was the only guaranteed church.

God started His church the way He wanted it.
Now He wants it the way that He started it.

Then the standards declined as human leadership took over in the second church age. The original spiritual light of the Gospel dimmed as human opinions and traditions entered the church.



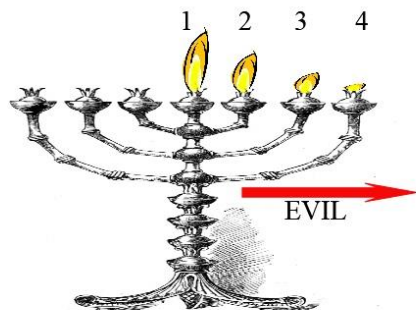
Then Roman emperor Constantine introduced politics and pagan ideas into the church. So the light dimmed further in the third church age. A centralized organization under the Pope developed.



Then brutal politics with mass murder sustained the church in the fourth church age as the Roman Catholic church clawed its way to power over Europe that had disintegrated during the barbarian invasions.

Hardly any truth remained as the Bible was banned.

The evil in the church was the fact that they had moved far away from the New Testament beliefs of the first church age.



But then God began a restoration back to the New Testament.

JOEL 2:25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

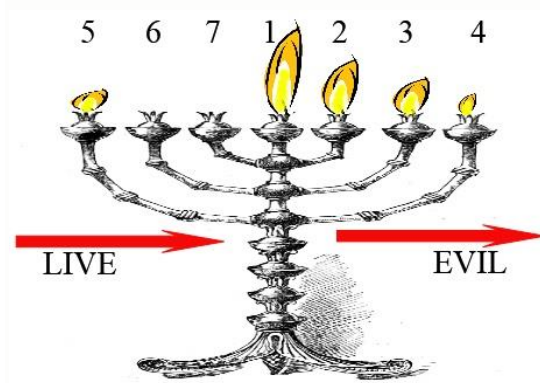
There will be three church ages of restoration to restore what the enemy had chewed away.

Ezekiel said the same thing.

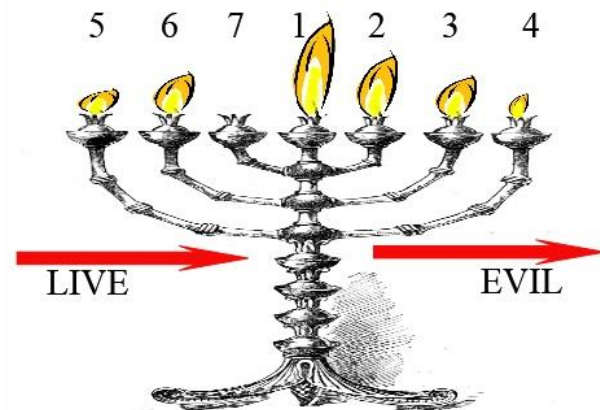
Water symbolizes God's Word for its life-giving qualities.

Each stage of the Reformation brought back deeper truth.

Luther restored salvation by faith in church age 5.



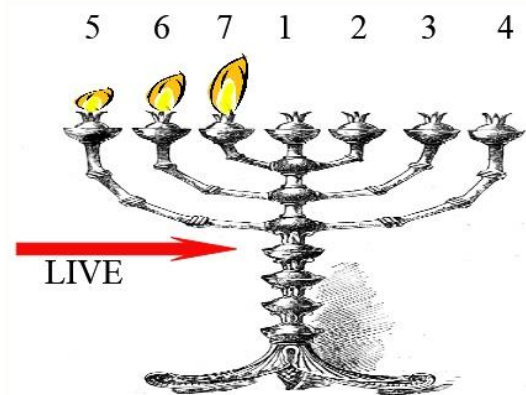
Wesley restored holiness and outreach in church age 6.



“LIVE” is the opposite to “EVIL”. Spell EVIL from right to left and you get LIVE.

The secret behind the word “live” is the desire to get right back to the original faith of the apostles.

Pentecost restored the gifts of the Spirit in church age 7.



But that was not enough. Jesus said we need Spirit and Truth.

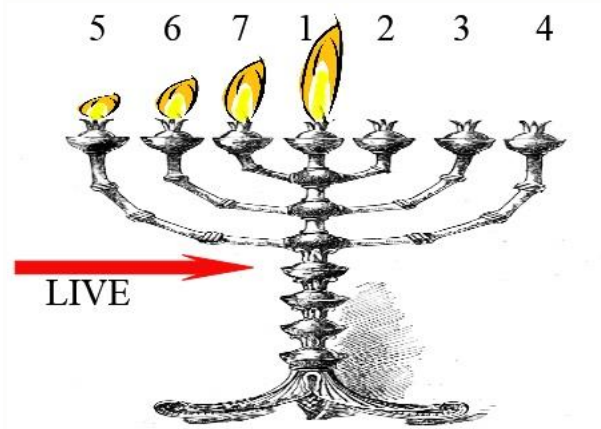
JOHN 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Then in the seventh church age we also need to be restored back to the original Bible beliefs of the New Testament church. The seventh age must merge back into the first church age.

Thus there were two phases to the seventh church age.

Pentecostal power and the revelation of the Bible mysteries.

The seed that is harvested always looks identical to the seed that was planted.



These doctrines will run deep as they are traced through many Scriptures.

EZEKIEL 47: 3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; **the waters were to the ankles.**

:4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; **the waters were to the knees.** Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; **the waters were to the loins.**

:5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, **waters to swim in**, a river that could not be passed over.

At each stage of restoration, there was an increasing depth of Bible revelation that unfolded. The last stage was a very deep insight into the Bible. 1. Justification. 2. Sanctification 3. Holy Ghost baptism 4. Restoration of truth.

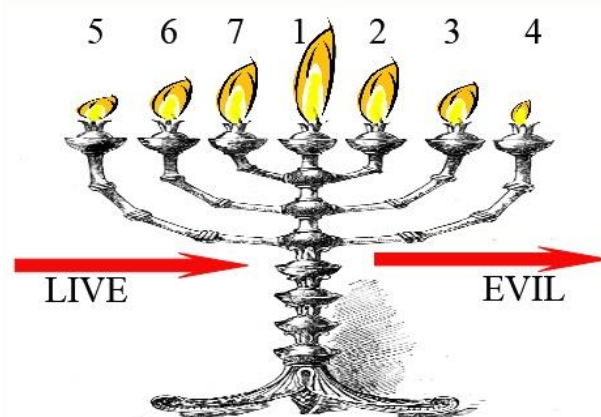
Ezekiel also saw a valley of dry bones.

It would take four steps to make them **live**. Sinews. Flesh. Skin. Breath

EZEKIEL 37: 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, **can these bones live?**

6: And I will lay **sinews** upon you, and will bring up **flesh** upon you, and cover you with **skin**, and put **breath** in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Only then will the restoration of God's Word be complete.



Thus the seven-branched candlestick, with its central candlestick being the first church age, tells us the history of how the church was ignited by the Holy Spirit and then fell away from the truth and then God started a Reformation under Luther that will ultimately restore the Bride back to that full New Testament truth.

Ephesus (2:1-7) – The Loveless (Preoccupied) Church

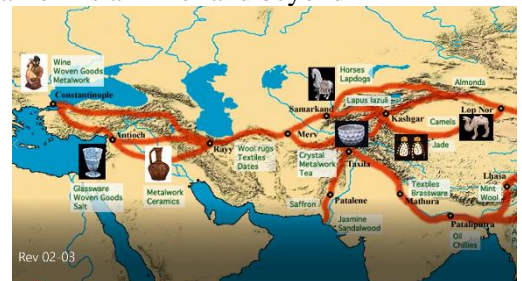
The Loveless Church

2 “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ²“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. ⁴ Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

- Name Ephesus means: maiden of choice; darling; desirable
 - Meaning provided by "Hitchcock’s New and Complete Analysis of the Holy Bible” (published late 1800s)
- History
 - Founded in 1400 BC
 - Attic-Ionian colonists from Athens settled there around 1000 B.C.
 - 1 of 12 cities in the Ionian League
 - Lydians – The Lydians captured the city in the middle of the 6th century BC
 - Persians – 541 BC – Fell to the Persians
 - Macedonians – 334 BC – Fell to the Macedonians under Alexander the Great
 - Eventually became the Roman capital of the Province of Asia and home to the Roman governor
- Geography
 - Called the ‘Queen of Asia’ – an extremely wealthy and beautiful city
 - Located near the mouth of the Cayster River (now Lower Meander River) on the Aegean Sea
 - A natural deep-water port
 - Provided a major harbor and caravan gateway for trade to all of Asia Minor and beyond
 - One of the major roads ran through Ephesus
 - It was the main line of communication between Rome and its Eastern Provinces
 - Today, Ephesus has the appearance of an inland city because of the natural changes in the coastline
- Roman rule
 - Ephesus was the 2nd largest city in the Roman Empire
 - Population of around 250,000
 - Only Rome surpassed its size and grandeur
 - 1 of only 3 cities in the Empire with street lighting at night
 - Rome and Syrian Antioch were the other ones



- Pagan Religions

- Temple of Diana (Artemis)

- Roman goddess of nature and fertility, identified with the Greek goddess Artemis
 - Around 550 B.C. the Temple of Artemis (or Diana) was completed in Ephesus.
 - Around 550 B.C. the Temple of Artemis (or Diana) was completed in Ephesus.
 - The temple was 4 times larger than the Parthenon at Athens
 - It stood on a platform 425' by 225'
 - The building itself was 340' by 165'
 - 120 ionic columns, each 60' high



- One of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world

- Antipater of Sidon compiled the Seven Wonders. Here is what he had to say of the Temple of Artemis:

“I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus by Alpheus, and the hanging gardens, and the colossus of the sun, and the labor of the great pyramids, and the vast tomb of Mausolus, but when I saw the house of Artemis [in Ephesus] that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliance, and I said, ‘Lo, apart from Olympus, the sun never looked on anything so grand.’”



- The rise and fall of the Temple of Diana

- 550 BC – The Temple of Artemis was completed
 - 313 AD – Edict of Milan – Christianity was tolerated in the Roman Empire
 - 380 AD – Theodosius I made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire
 - 401 AD – The Temple of Artemis was destroyed in by a mob led by St. John Chrysostom, who was then Bishop of Ephesus

- Church at Ephesus

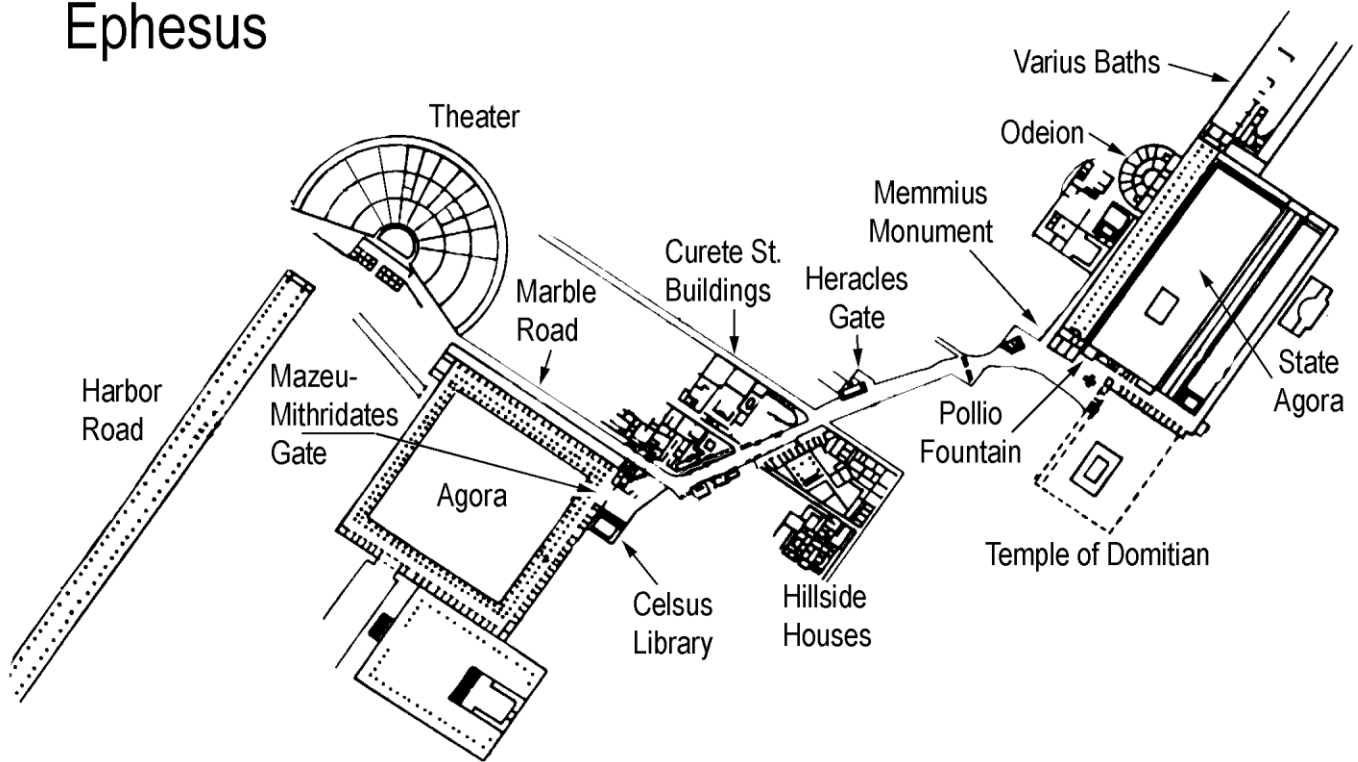
- Founded by Paul

- Decline of Ephesus:

- Destruction of the Temple of Artemis
 - Deep water port was silted in by the Cayster River
 - 614 AD Catastrophic earthquake

Ephesus – Ephesus was fabulous in every way!

Central Ephesus



- Ephesus
 - In the New Testament, Ephesus was the largest city of its day
 - Known for its great theater that held 25,000 people and its statue-line marble roads
 - The entire city was made of marble
 - The Cardo “Main Street” in Ephesus
 - Magnificent public buildings
 - Lush private residences
 - High-end shops
 - Fountain of Memnius on the Cardo
 - The Heracles Gate
 - Narrowed the access to the street, preventing the passage of vehicles thus making Curetes Street a pedestrian area.
 - Odeion
 - This building has the shape of a small theatre with the stage building, seating places and the orchestra.
 - It had double function in use.
 - Bouleuterion for the meetings of Boule (Senate)
 - A concert hall for the performances
 - The library of Celsus (131 AD)
 - Built by Gaius Julius Aquila
 - 1 of the 3 great libraries of the ancient world, along with Alexandria, Egypt and Pergamum
 - Housed 12,000 scrolls
 - Fountain of Trajan
 - Constructed for the honor of Emperor Trajan



- Theater of Ephesus seated 25,000 people
 - Indicated a population of 250,000
- Emphasis was the center for the study of arts and magic
 - Renowned over the world for talismans, incantations, charms, spell books, etc



Greeting

	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
Ephesus (2:1-7) Lost your first love	Hard work & perseverance; Don't tolerate wickedness; Test false apostles; Patient endurance; Persevered - not grown weary	You have forsaken your first love; Focus is on correctness more than love	Remember; Repent and do the things you did at first	Right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God

1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands:

- If our Apostle John is the leader of the church in Ephesus, then the 1st letter in Revelation is addressed to him!
- **Rev 1 ¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man ... ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars**
 - Jesus is the one who:
 - Holds the 7 stars [angels] in his right hand
 - the 7 leaders of the 7 churches
 - Walks among the 7 lamp stands [churches]
 - the 7 churches themselves
- We should recognize the intimacy of this greeting:
 - The risen and glorified Christ walks among us
 - He knows every detail of our lives, commending us for our successes and admonishing us for our faults
 - He holds us in the very palm of his hand as both our protector and our guide



Commendation ☺

2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

- “Your”
 - Jesus addresses not only the “angel” of the church at Ephesus, but the entire community
- The Christian community at Ephesus not only has copious works to show for their faith, but they also labor hard and they don't give up.
 - Jesus said: “If you love me, you will keep my commands” (John 14:15)
 - Emphatically, “we are saved by grace through faith,” but a genuine saving faith will *always* manifest itself in a life of active love, a life of good works
 - As James said: “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works” (3:14); such a faith is shallow at best, self-delusion at worst

- “Wicked” refers to false the teachers that John so opposes in his three letters
 - Men such as Diotrophese (3John1:9)
 - There were many people traveling about in John’s day claiming to be Apostles, but they were phonies, charlatans, and religious opportunists. At Ephesus they were exposed for what they are!
 - Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:1-25)
- The Lord again emphasizes how hardworking and steadfast the Christians at Ephesus are, and he commends it.
- 7 Points of commendation
 - I know your deeds (works)
 - I know your hard work (labor)
 - I know your perseverance (patience)
 - I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men (stand against evil)
 - I know your that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false
 - I know you have persevered and have endured hardships for my name (long-suffering)
 - I know you have not grown weary (endurance)

Condemnation ☹️

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. 6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

- Although the Christians at Ephesus have worked hard, suffered and persevered, they have lost the fervor of their initial faith, the inner fire they first had when they fell in love with Christ.
- “left”, not “lost”
 - Notice it says ‘left’, not ‘lost’
 - God is saying: Remember when we first met? How much you loved me and longed to be with me? Now I hardly ever hear from you except when you're in trouble. I so long to be the first in your life again! I will never leave you nor forsake you. Please come back to me! I miss our long talks in intimate fellowship! I want to bless you. I want the best for you. You're the apple of my eye. If you do not seek me, if you do not ask me for guidance, how can I work through you?
- “repent”
 - Greek word is μετανόησον [metanoēson]
 - literally “to turn around” 180 degrees
 - to get back to where you were at the start
- Remove your lampstand means remove your church!
 - The churches in Asia Minor were the engine powering the early church
 - Paul’s three missionary journeys
 - The church of Syrian Antioch (home church of Paul and Barnabas)
 - the Council of Nicaea
 - Today, Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey)
 - A constitutionally secular state
 - Has a population of nearly 80 million people
 - 99.8% Muslim
 - 0.2% Christians and “others”
 - There are only 11 diocesan priests in Turkey and 50 religious priests
 - It appears that their lampstand has been removed

Teaching of Nicolaitans

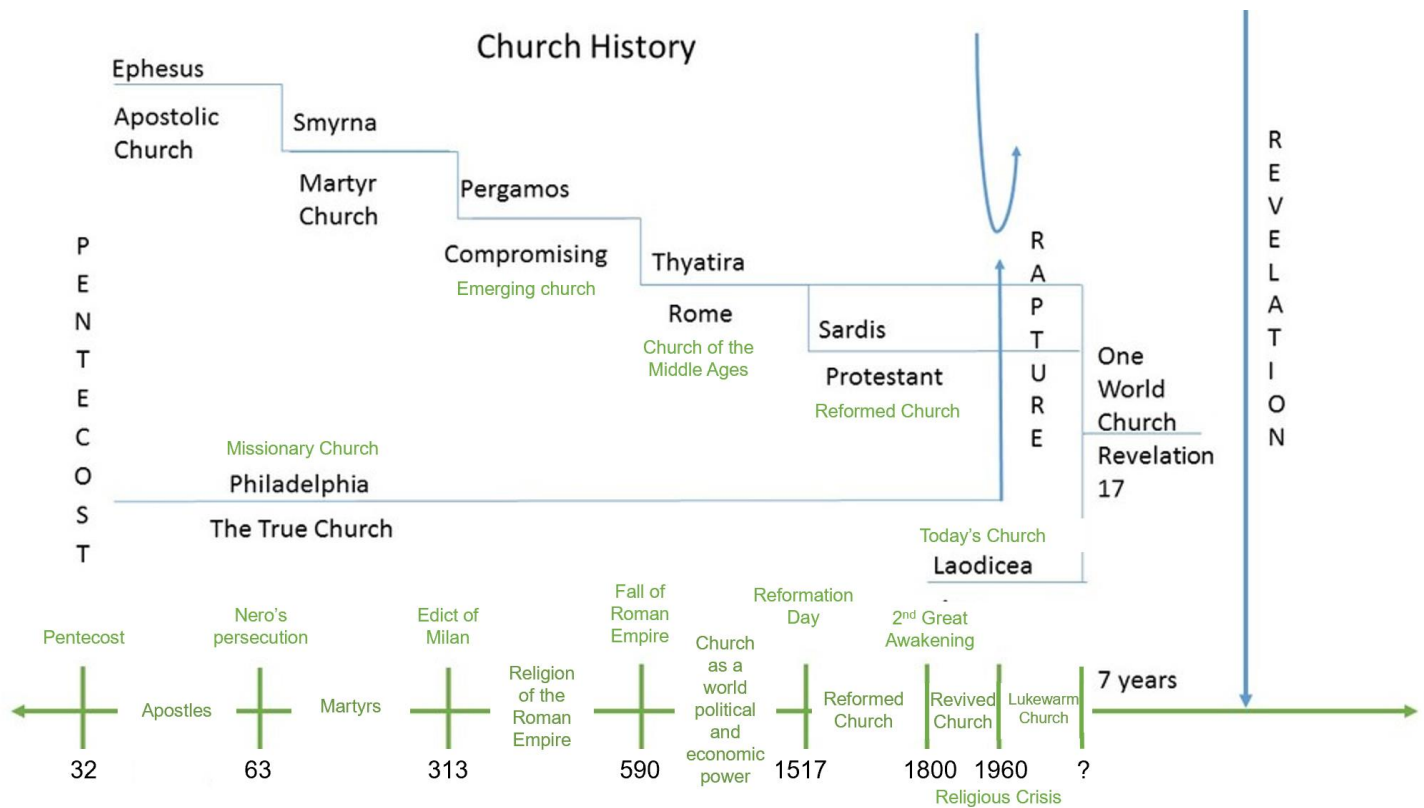
- Note that it was the ‘deeds’ of the Nicolaitans, not the Nicolaitans themselves
- “Nicolaitans” are possibly followers of Nicholas
 - It’s not absolutely certain who he was or what he taught
 - Thought to be a Gnostic sect, founded by Nicholas of Antioch
 - Known for their unbridled and excessive lusts
- **Deeds of the Nicolaitans**
 - ‘Nicholaus’ or ‘nikos’ – Priest or priesthood
 - ‘Laos’ – laody, the common people
 - Literally means ‘to conquer the people’
 - It is the **establishing of a spiritual hierarchy, where a man comes between you and God** (Catholics)
- The church at Pergamum is also infested with “Nicolaitans”
 - **Rev 2 ¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**
- Whatever the teaching was, it falls into the same category as that of the “deceivers” and “antichrists” that John abhors in 2 John 7-8
 - **2Jn 1 ⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁸ Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward.**

Admonition (Call to Action)

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

- Then He promises that if they do they will be rewarded with fruit from the “*tree of life that is in the garden of God*” (2:7)
 - We saw this tree in Genesis 2:19 and 3:22
 - We will see it again in Revelation 22:2

Church History (33-170)



The Church Ages - Ephesus, The First Age, 33 AD-170 AD

The early church was born supernaturally, with no man elevated between the believers in the upper room and God. The Holy Spirit came down directly into each of the individuals and filled the whole house as tongues of supernatural fire appeared on their heads. Thus the New Testament church was born in a house.

ACTS 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the **house** where they were sitting.

:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.



The seven branched candlestick represented the seven church ages that would occupy 2 000 years of human history. The first church age of Ephesus was launched on the day of Pentecost when God ignited the **central** candlestick. This first

church was the church at its best. This is the only guaranteed example of what a true church should look like, and the beliefs of the New Testament should be **central** to all our Christian thinking. Anything different to the New Testament beliefs means that we are deviating either to the left or to the right. Deviation is not a good space to be in. The first four letters of **deviation** are also the first four letters found in the word **devil**. Satan is the author of any movement away from the written Word.

Let us follow the example of that superb child king Josiah.

II CHRONICLES 34:1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.

:2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, **and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.**

What God did to the first church on the day of Pentecost, He also did when He anointed Solomon's temple in the same way with a supernatural fire that consumed the sacrifices.

II CHRONICLES 7: 1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, **the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.**

:2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house.

But the Jews had an Aaronic priesthood of elevated human leaders above the congregation. The people could only worship God by having the priesthood between them and God. As time went on this elevated priesthood that stood between the people and God failed miserably. Anything that depends on humans will fail. God finally tore up the Temple veil during the crucifixion signifying the end of the Temple worship and its failed priesthood in AD 33. But those self-centred priests desperately continued to cling to their tithes and their power over the people, which was their only interest in life. They continued to dominate the Jews, successfully fooling them as they carried on with a form of godliness that no longer had any reality, until God destroyed the Temple in AD 70, together with the self-seeking priests who had maintained their empty farce of uninspired religious leadership down the wrong path when God had turned a corner.

The New Testament church was to be different.

There must be no human leaders between the people and God.

God then **ordained all Christian believers to be priests** as they carried the Gospel to a sinful world, spread out in space in all directions, but looking back in time to its apostolic founders. As sinners repented, so they also joined the priesthood. Thus no Christian was ever standing between God and another Christian. "See how these Christians love one another" was the typical pagan comment. A Christian can stand between God and the unsaved, pointing them to their Saviour. But when the sinners have repented, they are equal to other Christians as members of the royal priesthood.

I PETER 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.

Brotherhood is based on equality. We can all learn from each other. No one is better than another.

I PETER 2:17 Honour **all men. Love the brotherhood.**

I PETER 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. **Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility:** for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

We submit to each other by acknowledging the Scripture that anyone refers to. We do not try to prove that we are right, we simply establish that we are Scriptural. If you have a better gift or ability than others, God gave that to you. So it does not make you better than them. You are just better off because of what God has given you. Whatever gift God has given you, He expects you to use it by serving others, and not dominating others. Equally, when anyone else points out a Scripture that is different to what we do or believe, we immediately submit to the Scripture, irrespective of who pointed it out.

Two vines were growing in the Christian church right from the beginning.

One vine was the Christians who felt that they had to develop their own relationship with Jesus and believe the Bible and not have their thoughts controlled by what other people say. This freedom to worship God according to what was written in the Bible and according to the conscience of the individual was a flame that could not be organized. It flared up in different places, and if it died down somewhere it would flare up somewhere else. Often, like the 7 000 who secretly worshiped God in the days of Elijah, it was hidden from public view. Endless persecutions forced Christians to keep a discreetly low profile. But whatever the circumstances, there were always people that God raised up who desired to obey

only what was written in Scripture. These were usually an unnoticed, humble group who desired in quietness to serve God and do good works as they took the Sermon on the Mount to be their rule for living.

No authority of any man, however eminent, was allowed to set aside the authority of Scripture.

This vine continues to this day. They may fellowship in a church, but they do not "belong" to that church as they belong to Jesus and seek only to obey His Bible, even though this may make them unpopular and unwanted. They need the freedom to think for themselves, and be convinced that an idea is Scriptural. Then they believe the idea because the Bible says so, not because some man says so. They feel very uncomfortable having a man stand between them and God, especially since all men have their flaws. No bride wants some man standing between her and her husband. No bride wants to be in submission to what any man says, but rather to what her husband says. In the same way God's bride are subject to the Lord Jesus Christ.

ROMANS 3:12 They are **all** gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; **there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

JEREMIAH 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; **Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.**

When Christians trust their leaders, they take their eyes off God. Then we think we serve God, but we are actually cursed. The great curse of the last church age, our present age, is when we end up in the great Tribulation. Then we will realize that we are truly cursed.

Then another false vine started which would become the dominant church. The leaders of this humanly organized church fed their interpretations of the Bible and their clever human opinions to the people. This false vine consists of people who want to look up to some holy man, and have him tell them what to believe. Satan would endlessly try to use leaders to dominate people, and tell them to believe something that deviated from the New Testament. Their security lay in belonging to the church, rather than in belonging to Christ. Today there are more than 45 000 different church organizations or denominations, all claiming to be right, but all described as blind. The Roman Catholic church is easily recognized as the oldest and biggest of these centralized organizations. It boasts the longest line of absolute rulers in the world. The people have to submit to their infallible human leader, now called the Pope, even if he disagrees with what previous Popes said.

Both vines were impressive in terms of the practical acts of charity that Christians performed. This charity was a potent weapon in making Christianity successful. They cared for orphans, widows, and the poor and needy. Their social actions were seen in times of calamity like famine, earthquake, plagues, and war. They were generous in giving their money, goods, or time.

Once the apostles had established the early church, and the New Testament was written, the apostles left the scene. They had tried to establish churches that were ruled by groups of elders that held to what the apostles had said, and written in the New Testament. All saved Christians were priests, and in this equality of brotherhood there was no elevated Aaronic priesthood of special men. Like John the Baptist, the preachers pointed the people to Christ and the written Word, not to themselves.

JOHN 1:35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;
:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!
:37 And the **two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus**

If a great man of God speaks, you have not heard him speak just because you listened to his words. You have only heard him speak when you follow Jesus through the pages of the written Bible.

But where there is light, there are also shadows. The Devil has endlessly labored to elevate a human priesthood of the five-fold ministries between the people and God. According to Satan, there must be someone between you and the Word. These ministries, once they succeeded to become accepted as the head of each church, gradually led the people away from what was written in the Scripture. When the Christians stopped being Scripturally vigilant, and relaxed their guard, the weeds of human opinion and human domination were sown amongst the seeds of God's Word. It is much easier to agree with a dominating personality who is the church leader, rather than trying to oppose him. When you agree with him, he makes you feel very popular. When you disagree with him, he makes you feel very unwanted. So he rules us by emotions and our longing to belong to a church, not by Scripture.

Pagan religions usually had a professional priesthood.

Alexander the Great, by his amazing achievements, was readily worshiped as god in the east, and won a reluctant godhood from the West. The east, where Cain went, worshiped their rulers as gods. This was not a habit in the west. Alexander was the first western man to go east from Greece and get accepted in Egypt as the "son of god". Their god was Amun Ra, because of his incredible military successes. He conquered Persia, went to Afghanistan, and by his sheer brutality and mass extermination of men, women, and children, plus his genius in marrying the daughter of a powerful Afghan warlord, he became the only man to ever conquer and pacify Afghanistan. He then proclaimed himself as "god", even to his western followers. Though western Greeks were forced to worship him, he never returned to the west. Within four years of declaring his godhood, he was dead in mysterious circumstances in Babylon. Jesus, who was both God and the Son of God, only had a ministry of three and a half years. So Alexander's claim to be god, because he was the most famous of western conquerors and wanted the people back in Greece to worship him as god, limited him to less than four years of life. You cannot be greater than Jesus Christ. No man should ever be compared to Jesus, as it will cost that man his life. God wants no human competition. We humans are simply too insignificant to compete in that League.

Four of Alexander's generals took over his mantle, but could not conquer the west, although they also claimed their godhood as Alexander's successors. This idea of a deified king in the west tended to fade after the four generals died, except for the city of Pergamos. When Cyrus conquered Babylon the pagan priesthood of Babylon had fled to Pergamos under their high priest or Pontiff whose name was Attalus. After Alexander's death, his general Lysimachus ruled Pergamos, and claimed to be a god like Alexander. The kingdom of Pergamos flourished. When Lysimachus was killed, the Babylonian high priest of Pergamos became the king, and also claimed to be god, like Lysimachus did, and the Attalid line of deified kings was established. These human god-kings only had local acceptance.

Unlike Alexander they performed no great exploits to attract wide spread attention. The Greeks were brilliant and eloquent in defense of error, with their cunning philosophy and clever interpretations. Their clever thinking polished up and spread the mysteries of Babylon, and then these mysteries and their idea that their human leader was god, were handed over to Rome in 133 BC when the last god-king of Pergamos, Attalus III, died. The Babylonian mysteries had great status among the pagans, but were rather unnoticed in Rome because no high priest or Pontiff ever won any fame. Then Julius Caesar borrowed heavily to bribe his way into being elected high priest or Pontiff of the Babylonian mysteries in 63 BC in Rome. The impressive robes of the Pontiff, and the elaborate Babylonian ceremonies, gave the high priesthood great status amongst the heathen. Under the fame of Julius Caesar, that most famous of the Roman rulers, the eastern Babylonian mysteries gained prominence and authority. The city of Pergamos deified Caesar in 29 BC, shortly after his death. Julius Caesar thus became the first man in Rome to be worshiped as god. His initials, J C, are the same as those for Jesus Christ. Caesar adopted his sister's grandson Augustus to succeed him. The emperor Augustus was worshipped as god in Pergamos while he was still alive. The cult of emperor worship, since he was the Pontiff of the Babylonian mysteries, swept through the empire as a means of uniting all the different nations. By 400 AD, the bishop of Rome had taken over this title of Pontiff, which made the Pope the high priest of the Babylonian mysteries. The mysteries of Babylon thus officially entered the Roman Catholic church, to turn her into Mystery Babylon. The Roman Catholic church now had a professional priesthood that was elevated above the congregation, just like the pagans.

Satan inspired the Roman Catholic church to ordain priests above the people, thus taking the Roman Catholic church back to the Old Testament Aaronic priesthood. They then **modified** the system to have bishops above the priests.

The structure of the Roman Catholic church generally followed the Roman Empire imperial practice, with one bishop ruling each city and its surrounding territory. The bishop of the provincial capital, the metropolitan, enjoyed certain rights over other bishops in the province. Metropolitans became archbishops who ruled the bishops of a province. Around 700 AD Cardinals appeared in the hierarchy above the archbishops.

Thus was built up an elaborate church hierarchy based on the dictatorship of the Pope who had supreme power over the centralized organization. The growth of this colossal organization did not have a pre-planned blueprint, but proceeded in unexpected bursts as the church reacted to unforeseen events, and the papacy fell alternately into highly capable hands, who pushed for domination over all Christians, and very incapable hands who often hindered or reversed this progress.

This centralized church organization of the Roman Catholics, that had such impressive abilities to survive the chaos of the disintegrating Roman empire, was imitated amongst the non-Catholic churches with an elevated five fold ministry to stand between the Christians and God. *Efficiency* required one man to be the head of this five fold ministry, and so "pastor", only mentioned once in the New Testament, was sufficiently vague as a ministry to slip through unchallenged as head of each church. Then bishops rose above pastors in the cities. Then archbishops and patriarchs later appeared as

these religious organizations grew. Instead of the church being run as a democracy of elders, it submitted to centralized one-man authority. Freedom in the Spirit gave way to rigidity.

God chose the Jews to be separate from other nations so that they would be uncorrupted by heathen influences. The Jews were called to be the people of the Book. No other ancient religion was strictly bound to one Holy Book. Those Christians who stayed strictly with the New Testament, and developed no church hierarchy, were usually unnoticed. The growing ranks of organized religion took the lime light and the attention of historians.

For certain Gentiles, the main attraction of the Jewish faith was their belief in monotheism, one God. For other Gentiles the main attraction of the pagan beliefs was their various trinities. So issues surrounding the nature of the Godhead would rip the churches apart, as it still does today.

The Jews were not chosen because they had any merit. This choice was the will of God. And we humans do not have the brain power to understand God's will. The mistake of the early church was to not remain submissive to the will of God. They could not trust themselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit. They wanted a human leader to tell them what to do.

The true vine regarded the revealed will of God as a matter that required the most intense seriousness. The Bible became their spiritual compass, which guided them in the direction that they should go. The course of history would be shaped by the Bible's divine doctrines, and the cunning and ruthless attempts of the Devil to oppose the spread of the written Word in the turbulent centuries that lay ahead.

The early church was a close-knit body that practiced property-sharing, and distributed money in accordance with individual needs. Clothes were often worn until threadbare. Extra clothes that were owned by people were dished out to those in need. Goods were shared. Their lives were frugal. Christ had not only broken down the barriers between sinful man and God, but also the barriers between one man and another.

Christians had to face adversity and persecution. But oppression only strengthened their faith. Persecution scattered them, and extended the boundaries of the church. An initial flood of missionary activity characterized early Christianity, as it was a faith that men and women were willing to die for.

Early Christianity was not for sissies. No one would dare join them unless called by God. Their standards were too high. Their challenges were too great.

ACTS 5:13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

These were not comfortable churches where people were complacently self-satisfied.

The expansion of Christianity seemed to be an extraordinary chain of improbabilities and strange co-incidences that were far removed from human expectations. God was working out His own will, which did not depend on any human organization. Forgiveness of sin by repentance, and public association with a Saviour through water baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, attracted people who in difficult and dangerous times were tired of living, and scared of dying. The ideal of a sinless life and high moral standards enabled them to live by their consciences in their pursuit of God. This gave them inner peace.

Baptism was a public act that separated Christians from the world.

ACTS 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and **to all that are afar off**, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Peter had the only key that could loose us from our sins so that we can enter Heaven. That key was the doctrine of repentance. Repent to get rid of sin, and then get baptized in water so that you know the human Name of God. The Jehovah of the Old Testament, with His numerous other Names that indicated His various spiritual attributes, had now become a Man, and we only needed to know Him by His human Name, Jesus Christ.

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

Peter loosed us from our sins by opening a door to Heaven for the Bride, that we can only go through if we repent and get baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ. In the process he locked the door to Heaven that John the Baptist had opened with his baptism of repentance. John baptized before he knew the Name of the Saviour.

Baptism was symbolic of death, burial, and resurrection. This had not yet happened to Jesus while John was alive.

ROMANS 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
:4 Therefore **we are buried with him by baptism into death**: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
:5 For if **we have been planted together in the likeness of his death**, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Thus Peter turned the key, and closed off or bound John's baptism that no longer worked, as it had been a temporary measure.

It was crucial to understand this point when the first church age doctrines were being established by Paul, who was the most effective apostle towards the Gentiles.

So Paul, as the messenger towards the foundation Ephesian church age, confirmed what Peter had done, by also binding John's baptism and loosing Peter's baptism.

ACTS 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to **Ephesus**: and finding certain disciples,
2: He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.
:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.
:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
:5 When they heard this, they **were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**.

These disciples in Ephesus had been baptized by John's baptism. Paul basically said to them, "If you have not been baptized like Peter baptized 'in the Name of Jesus Christ', then your baptism is not valid, and you must get re-baptized properly". This is part of the doctrine of the apostles that we must be restored back to.

COLOSSIANS 3:17 And **whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Baptism is a **deed** of submerging someone under the water, and the **words** of Peter are spoken over the person who is being baptized. So it is essential to baptize in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

But, since repentance and baptism in the Name of Jesus is the key that opens the door to Heaven for the Bride, it is going to be attacked by the Devil. Churches would emerge that do not preach about a heartfelt repentance of sin that leads to a born again experience, where Jesus is accepted as a personal Saviour Who turns the individual away from sin, and then controls the person's life. Then the human Name of God, Jesus Christ, would be attacked by reducing Jesus to being only the Son of God. Thus the Name of Jesus Christ would be removed from the water baptism. Soon three titles would replace the Name of Jesus in baptism.

MATTHEW 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me** in heaven and in earth. Jesus is **Almighty God**

MATTHEW 28:19 Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the **name** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

:20 **Teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Jesus has all power. Twice He says that we have to be taught. So there is a deep mystery here.

Baptize in the **Name** (singular) of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

If God is three Persons, then the Name of the Father is Jehovah. The Name of the Son is Jesus. The Holy Spirit has no Name in Scripture. Thus we have only two Names for three People. This is not a good fit. To make it worse, Jesus said we must have only **one Name** for all three Persons. This is not possible.

"Trinity", "three-in-one", "of the same essence", and "of the same substance" are statements we find in **Greek philosophy**, not in the Bible.

So Peter realized that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through **philosophy** and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after **Christ**.

:9 **For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily**.

The Father was the Spirit of God that dwelt **above** the Jews. This Spirit dwelt bodily in Christ, making Him Emmanuel, which is God **with** us. This physical Man was the Son of God. The Spirit in Him was the Father.

MATTHEW 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God **with** us.

God was **above** the Jews as the **Father**. Then He was **with** the Jews as the **Son**, to pay the price for sin by dying. Then only could the **Holy Ghost**, that left His Body in death, return into us as repentant sinners and thereby dwell **in** us.

JOHN 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth **with** you, and **shall be in you**.

The Christians made the fatal mistake of saying that Peter in Acts 2: 38 contradicted Jesus in Matthew 28: 19, and therefore they stayed with what Jesus said. But Jesus said they must have **one** Name in the baptism, not three titles. So the Christians lost the Name of God, because there is no one Name for the three People who comprise their Trinity Godhead. They also reject as a mistake the Heavenly key of repentance and baptism in Jesus Christ's Name that Peter used to open the Door for the first church age Christians. Trying to correct the apostles is a bad situation to be in. We need to be restored back to them.

After all, the Father and the Holy Spirit never died for us. They were never buried -- How do you bury a Spirit?-- and thus never rose from the dead. So baptism has no reference to them as it refers to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

The fulness of God's Spirit was in Christ and left Him when He died. It was the corpse or body of Jesus that had died which was buried. Jesus is the human Name of God. He died like us, as a Man.

ROMANS 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

The first Christians were mainly Jews, and thus Christians were classified as Jews at first. In AD 50 Roman emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, and the Christians were expelled with them. This opened the way for an alternative Christian concept of Roman Catholicism to rise up free from any opposition or correction. When the expelled Christians were allowed to return when Claudius died in 54 AD, there were two branches of Christianity. One followed the apostolic teachings of Paul, while the other modified the Gospel to become Roman Catholicism. It was this branch that became pre-eminent in Rome.

ACTS 18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that **Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome**;) and came unto them.

The emperor Nero began a murderous persecution of Christians between the great fire of Rome in 64 AD and his death in 68 AD. Most of the original apostles were either dead, or had moved beyond the borders of the Roman empire by the time Nero died. During the Neronian nightmare of persecution, in 66 AD Nero ordered the general Vespasian to conquer Jerusalem, where James the apostle had been killed many years before. The Christians in Jerusalem fled. According to early Christian historians, some went to the nearby town of Pella. The final destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 removed the main Christian church that could be seen as more important than the church in Rome. Thus it became easier for men to rise up and lead the churches into error by slowly moving away from what was written in the Bible.

Persecution united the early Christians. They worshipped in secret for fear of arrest. Publicity was dangerous. The earliest churches were simply private homes that were gradually modified inside if the congregation grew big enough. Only after 312 AD did churches become public buildings that were easy to recognize. This was when the emperor Constantine stopped persecuting the Christians.

CHURCH AGE BOOK EPHESIAN CHURCH AGE

All you have to do is recall this last move of God in the Spirit..... They **worshipped in homes** or old store buildings. They had reality. But it wasn't too long a time until they began to get enough money to build fine new churches. They organized a movement and ran it by man.

A Christian movement happily started in private homes. "Church" buildings were never a requirement in New Testament days. Organizing people in a church building leads to one-man human leadership and man-made rules and beliefs. The Devil has always used this very successful tactic, especially in our modern age. He brings in slow gradual changes that are unnoticed by those who are not very alert.

To establish the Ephesian church, which not only represented the first church age, but was also the foundation of all the future church ages, Paul called the elders of Ephesus to the city of Miletus. Miletus was the first city in that region to be laid out on a blueprint with streets in a grid that cross at right angles to each other, like a modern city. So this was the best place for Paul to lay out his blueprint for running the church in the Ephesian age, and all the church ages to follow.

ACTS 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the **elders** of the church.

ACTS 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers**, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Human leadership would be creeping in with men saying, "Follow me" -- One man, as the head of the church, not a group of elders.

From Strong's Concordance :

"overseer" in the Greek is episkopos which also means 'bishop'.

So the elders are the bishops or overseers of the church.

From Strong's Concordance :

"presbuterion" is the presbytery or the body of elders.

So presbyter, overseer, and bishop are simply alternative words for an elder.

PHILIPPIANS 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the **bishops** and deacons:

There were many bishops in the city of Philippi. These men were the elders or overseers of the church there.

Peter confirmed that a group of elders should feed the flock. Peter calls himself an elder, rather than an apostle. He did not stress a superior rank or ministry. He focused on the equality of the leadership, not on the elevation of one man above the others, which is what the Roman Catholic church would do by putting a priest as head of the church, and then a bishop as head of the priests. This is nicolaitanism -- the elevation of a holy man above the people.

I PETER 5:1 **The elders which are among you** I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

:2 **Feed the flock of God** which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; **not for filthy lucre**, but of a ready mind;

Peter does not say that the tithes belong to the pastor.

Look at the ministries that Paul said should run the church.

I CORINTHIANS 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, **first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Only three ministries are mentioned. The apostles established the truth, and are the most important ministry. Before they died, their teachings were written as the New Testament. By reading the New Testament, we are actually consulting the apostles.

God speaks directly to a prophet, but the prophet comes second because if he speaks on doctrine, the prophet can only bring us back to what the apostles wrote in the Bible. He has to agree with Scripture.

Teachers come third. The teacher gets the revelation or picture from the prophet, and then has to prove this revelation from the Bible, which the apostles wrote. Neither the prophet, nor the teacher, can disagree with what the apostles wrote.

Note: Paul does not even mention pastors here.

ACTS 15:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

This method should always have been continued. We still have what the apostles wrote down in the New Testament. So if today the elders of a local church consult the New Testament that the apostles wrote, then they are still consulting the apostles.

Nowhere in the New Testament was a pastor ever called the head of the church.

The word pastor is only mentioned once in the New Testament as part of the five ministries. Thus there is no Scriptural authority for a pastor to dominate a church. A pastor is simply part of a *team* of different types of preachers, that are part of the group of elders who oversee the church.

I TIMOTHY 5:17 Let the **elders** that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, **especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.**

Thus not all elders are preachers. But all elders are equal to each other. Peter, an apostle, called himself an elder when speaking to the elders. An elder, who is not part of the five fold ministry, can still offer wise advice to the congregation.

I TIMOTHY 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Here it seems that exhortation can be separated from doctrine, and thus may, for example, be just a word of encouragement or advice. Any elder can do this, even if he is not a preacher.

After the apostles died, God wanted groups of elders to oversee each local church and keep each church faithful to the doctrines of the apostles. But slowly the word “bishop” began to be mentioned more and more as the head of the church.

Historians say that within two generations after the apostles died, **in a manner that is shrouded in secrecy, the bishop somehow emerged as the head of the church.** All pagan temples had one man, a priest, as the head of the congregation. Christians slowly began to follow this pagan example. Antioch was a city whose church history was held in high regard. Ignatius of Antioch, who died sometime before 117 AD, claimed to be bishop of Antioch, and stated that the local bishop of a city was God’s representative on earth and said, “We ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself”.

A bishop being the head of the church in a city was a new idea that captured the imagination of the Christians. This was the way that the majority would go. This was an unscriptural elevation of a man to be the head of the church. Making a man the head of the church was unscriptural, and then comparing him to God was completely wrong. Christians, thinking that this was the best way to combat error, were promoting nicolaitanism which is the elevation of a holy man above the church. Bishops were now classified as above the presbyters or elders. An Aaronic priesthood was beginning to form that stood between the congregation and God. The church was too relaxed to take this error seriously and stamp it out. Christians became careless about keeping the details of their faith strictly in line with what the apostles taught. This stress on human leadership entered slowly, but surely. After a while, having forgotten what the apostles had said, (or being too relaxed to research the truth from Scripture) the churches submitted to having a man as head of the church. Just like it is today.

Choosing a bishop could be difficult at times for a local church. Fabian of Rome was elected because a dove landed on his head. The church assumed this was the choice of the Holy Spirit.

But by the time the first church age ended around 170 AD it was common to have a bishop as head of the church in a city. Presbyters were then regarded as an inferior rank to the bishop. Elders were losing importance. Rank and titles were taking over the leadership of the church.

The church began to see itself as a world wide organization like the Roman empire was.

The church allowed its environment to determine its line of growth. It became a practical organization for social duties. An organization obeying human rules, not a collection of individuals who loved Jesus, with no bond of union beyond certain practices like baptism, communion and foot washing, and their beliefs in the written Word.

Romans were skilled administrators, and all organization tended to this highly efficient and effective system.

The church became more and more Roman in its practical organizational methods like feeding the poor.

Different areas in different cultures had to be kept the same. So officials were needed to travel between groups to maintain common policy.

By 170 AD every community was ruled by officials who had certain ranks, at whose head was a bishop, and the bishop represented the community. All the communities were part of the same universal or Catholic church (so-called by Ignatius who was the first to use this word “Catholic”). Councils of bishops were called up and determined and expressed the common views of a number of communities. Slowly the edicts of these councils began to deviate from Scripture.

The bishops were the ruling heads of the different parts, so that the different places would have the same beliefs. The bishops soon became directors of the church as a party struggling against the state.

The officials who maintained communication between the churches became important as the guardians of unity, first in the universal church, and then as heads of their local churches.

They also learned something about that organisation by which Rome ruled the world, and they appreciated the fact that the Church could fulfil its destiny and rule the Roman Empire only by strict organisation and rigid discipline. Without the hand of a vigorous organiser there was extreme danger that "heresy" would triumph.

This was the downfall of human wisdom. Trying to combat heresy or doctrinal error, which would always be around like weeds in a garden, the church introduced a major error -- nicolaitanism or human leadership by a man.

With this process established, and good Christians thinking that a bishop must be in charge of the church, this unscriptural form of church organization set the stage for further doctrinal errors to take over the church. The original light of the apostles was getting dimmer.

Who does the Bible say is the Head of the church?

EPHESIANS 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

: 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as **Christ is the head of the church**: and he is the saviour of the body.

: 24 Therefore **as the church is subject unto Christ**, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

SEVEN CHURCH AGES BOOK CHAPTER 5 PERGAMOS AGE DOCTRINE OF NICOLAITANES

You will recall that I brought out in the Ephesian Age that the word, Nicolaitane, comes from two Greek words: Nikao which means to conquer, and Lao which means the laity.

Nicolaitane means, "to conquer the laity".

Now why is this such a terrible thing? It is terrible because God has never placed His church in the hands of an elected leadership which moves with political mindedness. He has placed His church in the care of God-ordained, Spirit-filled, **Word-living men who lead the people through feeding them the Word.**

He has **not separated the people** into classes so that the masses are **led by a holy priesthood.**

It is true that the leadership must be holy, but then so must be the whole congregation.

Further, there is *no place in the Word where priests or ministers or such mediate between God and the people*, nor is there a place where they are separated in their worship of the Lord. God wants all to love and serve Him together.

Nicolaitanism destroys those precepts and instead **separates the ministers from the people and makes the leaders overlords instead of servants.**

Now this doctrine actually started as a deed in the first age. It appears that the problem lay in two words: 'elders' (presbyters) and 'overseers' (bishops). **Though Scripture shows that there are several elders in each church**, some began (Ignatius among them) to teach that the idea of a bishop was one of preeminence or authority and control over the elders.

Now the truth of the matter is the word 'elder' signifies who the person is, while the word 'bishop' signifies the office of the same man. **The elder is the man. Bishop is the office of the man.** 'Elder' always has and always will refer simply to a man's chronological age in the Lord. He is an elder, not because he is elected or ordained, etc., but because he IS OLDER. He is more seasoned, trained, not a novice, reliable because of experience and long standing proof of his Christian experience.

.... But no, the bishops did not stick to the epistles of Paul, but rather they went to Paul's account of the time he called the elders from Ephesus to Miletus in Acts 20. In verse 17 the record states, "elders" were called and then in verse 28 they are called overseers (bishops). And these bishops, (no doubt political minded and anxious for power) insisted that **Paul had given the meaning that 'overseers' were more than the local elder with official capacity only in his own church.**

To them a bishop was now one with extended authority over many local leaders. Such a concept was neither Scriptural nor historical, yet even a man of the stature of Polycarp leaned toward such organization.

... In organizing they separate themselves from the Word of God, and bring themselves into spiritual adultery.

PERGAMEAN.CHURCH.AGE - CHURCH.AGE.BOOK CPT.5

That is what has happened in every age since. God delivers the people. They come out by the blood, sanctified by the Word, walk through the waters of baptism and get filled with the Spirit; **but after awhile the first love cools off and someone gets the idea that they ought to organize in order to preserve themselves and make a name for themselves, and they organize themselves right back in the second generation and sometimes even before then.** They no longer have the Spirit of God, just a form of worship. They are dead. **They have hybridized themselves with creed and form and there is no life in them.**

REVELATION 2: 1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Paul is most important as the angel or messenger to the Ephesian church age. But before we get too impressed with this great star, Jesus reminds us that there are six other stars, and all seven of these great men only have their great power and influence because they are held in His right hand of power.

MATTHEW 26: 64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting **on the right hand of power**, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

However great a messenger to a church age is, and they were all very great men, in comparison to Jesus they are just a star in His hand. Thus He is so much greater than any or all of them. The brightest stars fade when the sun rises. The brightest star or messenger fades in the light of the Word of God, which alone is the truth, as Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, arises in the hearts of His people.

MALACHI 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Thus all the messengers can do is point people to the written Word of God, in the same way that John the Baptist pointed two of his disciples towards Jesus.

JOHN 1: 35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;
:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!
:37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and **they followed Jesus.**

The only exception was the first messenger Paul, as he had the great responsibility of writing the Word of God. And no one must dare to disagree with Paul.

GALATIANS 1:8 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.**

: 9 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.

:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for **if I yet pleased men**, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Paul would never try to please some human leader. It was the Scripture that he wrote or nothing.

Jesus alone is seen walking amongst the candlesticks. No other human being.

Each messenger influences his age. Jesus is there throughout all seven ages. So each messenger or star was to point people to Jesus, because Jesus alone could sustain the Christians throughout each church age.

A messenger is a sign post pointing to the destination. The destination is Jesus, Who is the written Word.

Your personal experience with Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, and the extent to which you believe and follow the written Bible, determines your spiritual future. It does not depend upon the church you belong to.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12 ... work out **your own salvation** with fear and trembling.

There is no *group* salvation of a church. Salvation is a *personal* issue between you and God. This verse does not speak of people being complacently happy in a church.

ROMANS 14:12 So then every one of us shall **give account of himself** to God.

Your church may help you or hinder you but it cannot save you. You alone answer to God for your own lifestyle and beliefs. He in turn judges you by His Word, not by some man's quotes.

JOHN 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**

Hard work was a feature of the early church.

ACTS 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto **Berea**: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

They checked everything they heard against the written Word. No error would sneak past this quality of believer. They trusted no man and checked what was said against the Scriptures.

REVELATION 2:2 I know thy works, and thy **labour**, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

The church started well. They climbed in with enthusiasm, not counting the cost. They were not scared of hard work and hard circumstances. They labored to spread the Gospel, and were patient when persecution and misfortune undermined their efforts. Thrown to the lions to die a brutal death, they stunned the pagans by their singing of praises to God as they awaited their fate, though their songs were sometimes cut short by their involuntary screams of agony which testified to their humanity. They were ordinary human beings who had found a cause that was worth painfully dying for. The pagans

realized that their attachment to their false gods was extremely shallow in comparison. These brave martyrs thus turned many pagans to Christ.

The word *labour* creates a picture of weariness through oppression. They labored hard to stop the teachings of the apostles from being corrupted. The Bible was their Absolute. But all around them were people obsessed with their own clever opinions that deviated from the written Word. It was a case of choosing to believe the quotes and statements of some uplifted leader, or choosing to just simply stay with the written Word of God.

At first the Christians were very strict. They would only believe what the apostles said. These words formed the New Testament. When the apostles died, the early Christians would only believe what was written in the New Testament. If any leader said anything different to the New Testament, they would simply call him a liar.

Persecution scattered them, but wherever they ended up, they taught what the apostles had written, and so the Word of God spread, and people developed an intense relationship with Jesus which made Him the Head of the church. Early preachers had to be careful. If you said what the apostles said you were well regarded. If you said anything different, you were a liar. There was nothing in between.

For the early Christians Jesus was their main love, and His Word was their Absolute. As a Bride they were in complete submission to their Husband. No one else could tell them what to do. They had a great reverence for every word that was written in the Bible. For the Bible was Jesus, in Word form.

EPHESIANS 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

:32 This is a great mystery: **but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and **the wife see that she reverence her husband.**

The early church had no desire to follow men. Once you fall in love with Jesus, any other man has little influence on your beliefs. Only the Bible verses stick in your brain.

REVELATION 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast **laboured**, and hast not fainted.

In the previous verse they had labored hard to keep the apostolic beliefs of the New Testament. Now they also had to labour hard to keep the Name of Jesus. The Jews of the Old Testament could not believe that Almighty God could become a Man. Thus the Jews could not believe that Almighty God had come down to live inside a Man, and become manifest in the Man Jesus. Then the reverse problem occurred. After the apostles died, within one or two generations, the Gentile Christians were struggling to believe that the Man Jesus could be Almighty God. It was easier for the human mind to see Him as the Son of God. Slowly the idea was gaining ground that, if Jesus was the Son of God, then there had to be another Person in Heaven, who was God the Father. At first this concept was very fuzzy, but it opened the door to human speculations about the nature of God. Slowly these Christians moved away from what was actually written in the Bible. They began to use arguments from Greek philosophy, and introduced the word "triad" which the Greek philosopher Plato had invented. This would slowly evolve into the Word "Trinity". Unscriptural words were slowly creeping in, which would result in a "Godhead of three Persons" (an unscriptural statement) that could no longer be described by the Name of Jesus.

There were now two vines in the church -- the true vine that held onto the Name of Jesus and only believed the Bible, and the false vine.

CHURCH AGES BOOK THE EPHESIAN CHURCH AGE

"... And for **My Name's sake** has labored". These believers **weren't laboring for Paul**, or for an organization. They weren't committed to programs and institutions whereby they built up holdings of value. They worked for the Lord. They were His servants, **not pawns of organization.**

No representative of an organization can give an honest personal opinion. They can only say what the organization permits them to say, or expects them to say.

Then a false vine was developing that was happy to accept ideas from outside the Bible, and was keen to develop a multi-Person Godhead that was not described by the Name of Jesus.

The war was on. The two seeds had been planted.

REVELATION 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Somewhere down the line the true vine grew careless. They were too relaxed. Vigilance was undermined by success. Things would go well for a while. Persecutions would ease off. And slowly there developed an attitude that there was no need to be strictly Scriptural. Their intense love of the Bible began to slack off. A bit of compromise began to creep in. The pressure to conform to the manners and beliefs of the surrounding society would grow intense. Their first strong love for the Bible was fading. They no longer demanded that a doctrine had to be written in the Bible.

One important idea that was starting to take over was the *efficiency* of having one man as a church leader, who tells us what to believe, as that makes our lives so much easier. We no longer have to think for ourselves.

It is so much easier to follow a human leader than to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

But the tiny seeds of error that were planted in the first church age would grow up until they became a universal world-wide form of unscriptural "churchianity" (called denominationalism), that would swamp the truth, until in the end hardly anyone would believe that the Bible is infallible. As happened with Eve in Eden, even if one Scripture is not believed, that is sufficient to ruin the church. Try finding a Christian today who believes that every word of the Bible is true. You will have to look hard.

Science claims that the **Theory Of Evolution (TOE)** is true, so millions of Christians regard the first Chapters of Genesis as a fable.

Remember the Gentile image in Nebuchadnezzar's image? The Rock smashed into the feet of the image and broke the TOEs of the image. Try finding a Christian who adds no human opinion to the Bible. They are very scarce. Science claims the theory (or guess) of the Big Bang is true, so we do not need God to create us. The scientific world is desperately trying, although unsuccessfully, to combine the theories of the four forces of nature into a **Theory Of Everything** that they call a TOE. (So it will also be smashed by the coming Rock, which is the Coming of the Lord Jesus.) Thus scientists claim we do not really need God, nor must we take the Bible too seriously. Countless millions fall for this idea. Church preachers endlessly proclaim that various verses in the King James Bible are wrongly translated from the originals. To modern Christians the Bible has become the "opinions" of the Bible writers. Christians are convinced that the Bible is full of contradictions. The seed of doubt sown in the first church age is now reaping a deadly harvest.

PROVERBS 30:5 Every word of God is pure:

MATTHEW 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God

II TIMOTHY 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Every Word needs to be believed and obeyed. God gives us no permission to pick and choose the Scriptures we like. If there is any Bible verse that disagrees with your beliefs, then your beliefs are wrong.

REVELATION 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Many in the early church were responding to peer pressure from important people, to conform to human leaders in their cities and towns. Because the people were listening to human leaders instead of the teachings of the apostles, God removed virtually all the apostles, except for John, by the year 70 AD and thus the trend to follow human leaders increased. If we want error, God will give us error. The Jews had also wanted a human leader, a king, and God gave them king Saul, who did them a lot of harm because a king was not God's perfect will for the Jews.

REVELATION 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

"Rome" can also be pronounced "Roam", which means to **wander** about. When the Jews believed that they could not conquer the promised land, God made them **wander** in the wilderness for 40 years.

NUMBERS 14:33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness.

Christians ignore and drift around the difficult Bible verses, wandering around spiritually as they do not know the deeper meanings of so many Scriptures. They tend to regard these Scriptures as mistakes, or else as being unimportant. That is the easy way out, so we do not have to seek for a deeper meaning.

- Why did Jesus twice write with His finger in the dust when challenged about a woman taken in adultery? Most Christians do not know enough to answer this question, and many similar questions. They were questioning Him on the Law and He used this technique to give them an in depth lesson on both the Godhead as well as law and grace.

- Why does Luke have a different bloodline of ancestors for Jesus between David and Joseph, compared to Matthew? One is the line of Joseph. The other is the line of Mary. Why was it necessary to have two lines?
- Why do only those two Gospels trace the ancestry of Jesus?
- Why does Luke have thirteen generations more than Matthew does between David and Joseph?
- Six of the seven churches in Revelation have the proper names of their cities. But the third church has a Greek ending, Pergamos, instead of its proper name Pergamum. Why? This question was first asked in 1850. Do you still know as little about the Bible as what they did then? Scientific knowledge has rocketed up in the last 40 years. Bible knowledge crawls along like a tortoise. Christians today only know as much about the Bible as what they knew 40 years ago. Something is wrong.
- Matthew and Mark only mention one angel at the tomb of Jesus. Why? Luke and John mentioned that there were two. What are the four Gospels trying to tell us here?
- When Mary came to the tomb, John mentions that Jesus told her not to touch him.

JOHN 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not

Yet Matthew says that the women were allowed to hold Jesus by the feet.

MATTHEW 28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

:9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

The Bible is full of such mysteries which most Christians cannot answer. Skeptics use these verses to claim that the Bible is full of contradictions. Thus skeptics win the argument against these Christians. Why cannot so many Christians, including 'Message believers', answer these questions? The simple answer is that they have been kept in the dark by their church leaders, who do not know the answers either.

So right at the beginning, church leaders took over, and guided the church down a path that would obscure the truth until it was forgotten.

Nicolaitanism comes from “nikao” which means “to conquer”, and “laos” which means “the laity”, in other words the congregation. The conquering of the laity was most effective in Rome. The Roman Catholic church would grow to be the world’s largest denomination, dominated by a Pope, who rules the church as a supreme dictator. Today, the Pope is the only dictator in Western Europe. But Rome is in Italy. Take the word ITALY and rearrange the letters -- You get LAITY. So conquering the laity was at its most effective in Rome, to produce the Roman Catholic church.

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

You can see a picture immediately when you look at it. At one glance. But you cannot hear a lesson immediately, as speech requires time before the words are all said. So the Spirit puts the emphasis on the ear, so that we can hear the *unfolding* of what God wants to tell us about each church age. 80% of our contact with the visible world comes from our eyes, but only 15% comes from our ears. So God gives the Devil the advantage of using our eyes. Satan fools us with the lust of the eyes, the glamour and glitter of the world, and its big and impressive looking churches and luxury lifestyle. The lure of wealth that makes us greedy for gain.

God moves in a humble way by asking us to hear what is written in the Bible. Then we have to wait *patiently* until God decides to reveal the mysteries of His Word. Truth takes time. Plants grow at their own pace. Fruit has to ripen slowly.

Today Message preachers try to rush future events into the past. But events will unfold in their proper time. All we can do is try hard not to be fooled by this reckless preaching. Running ahead of God's timing is a waste of time.

God speaks to all the **churches**, plural. Each age should be the same as the first church age, as God has no other blueprint. Each age will be judged in terms of its deviation from the first age. Our church age, Laodicea, is the critical age. God expects us to be fully restored back to the first church age, and to be just like them. Then our church age is going to be viciously cut off by the great Tribulation. Those who are not identical in belief to the New Testament church, are going to learn the harshest of lessons. The holocaust of the Jews during the second World War, when 6 million were killed by the brutal Nazis, was a preview of the Tribulation, as was the vicious destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 when just over a million Jews were killed.

But to the individuals who will combat the growing trend of denominationalism, with its rejection of Bible truth in order to elevate a human leader as head of the church, the future rewards in Paradise far outweigh the rejection and unpleasantness that they encountered on earth. Jesus Christ is the Tree of Life. He alone gives eternal Life. He is the Bible

in Human form. So if you want to stay with the Bible on earth, you can only do that if the Spirit of Christ is in you. Then your portion of the Holy Spirit will take you into paradise, as you will be part of the great Holy Spirit, part of Jesus. If you stood for Him on earth, you will stand with Him in Heaven. There can be no better destination.

But each age has to overcome the error of the age.

The fault with the first age is they began to believe that they did not have to stay strictly with the Bible. They began to think that obedience to the will and opinions of human leaders, who claimed to be serving God, was how God wanted to be served. The idea of loyalty to a church and safety in church membership and church attendance was born. None of these things seem bad in themselves, but what they were doing was taking peoples' eyes off the Bible so that Christians no longer quoted Scripture when they defended their church leadership. "The pastor is the head of the church", "The tithes belong to the pastor", and "Your pastor will see you through" are all unscriptural statements that we still have with us today. So an unscriptural organization was starting to form which would take people further from the Bible. At first it seemed harmless. So these ideas slipped into the church, under the radar. People were too relaxed to check that the word "pastor" only appeared once in the New Testament, and thus had no Scriptural authority to be the head of the church.

The beliefs that the apostles had died for, were no longer being taken that seriously.

The apostles said Jesus was the Head of the church and that the church should be run by a group of elders. The spiritual watchmen were no longer at their posts to check that these new ideas were not written in the Bible. Vigilance slackened, and people focused on enjoying themselves and prospering in the material world, just like they did at Belshazzar's feast when they thought they were secure. It was much easier for the church to have one man as a human leader, who could tell them what to believe.

Paul had been stamping on this human love of human leadership right at the beginning. It is a weakness that is built into our human genes.

The group of believers, or church, that met in the house of Chloe complained to Paul about the competitive Christianity of other believers who called themselves Paul's church, Apollos' church, Cephas' church -- as if the church belonged to some man and thus gained pre-eminence if the head man was more important than other head men. Today we still have Luther's church, Wesley's church, William Branham's church, the Message church. Tom's church. Dick's church and Harry's church. Churches are named after their pastor's name. This sad error has survived 2 000 years. It sure is a tough virus, and is very infectious. Hanging onto human leadership at all costs is the downfall of the church.

I CORINTHIANS 1:11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

:12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

:13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul was horrified that someone could be baptized in his name. Today this has actually materialized as some people get baptized in the name of William Branham, or Lord Branham Christ. So the errors of the first church age began with one-man human leadership of the local church, and that error has never been effectively stamped out.

There is great danger of over-emphasising one aspect (one man promoted up to efficiently lead the church), and omitting others entirely (what the Bible says about a group of elders running the church).

Over-emphasizing a big church building where a large congregation meets to be guided by one man. It is efficient, but then traps the whole group in error. But we omit that the early churches met in *houses*, where no one man could thus dominate a big group, because each house could not contain a very big group. There they could read and discuss the Bible, and live Scriptural lives, free from the domination of an ambitious leader.

So true believers in the first church age had to combat that error of elevated human leadership, which God hates. Today we also have to combat that error, just like they had to. But our problem is more tricky. We not only have to oppose the errors of the first church age, which like snakes could slither in under a small gap in the Scripture that was no longer obeyed, but we have to also combat the errors from six other church ages where bigger gaps of unobeyed Bible verses allowed bigger snakes to slither in.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**

If you are comfortable and complacent in your church, you are missing something. Beware.

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

:35 For **as a snare shall it come on all** them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

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

A snare is a hidden trap. If God does not reveal the errors to us that blind us from seeing the truth of the Bible, then we are in serious trouble.

By listening to human opinion the church proved unfaithful to its trust, and ceased to adhere to the principles with which it started. We make the same mistake today. The city of Ephesus faded away as a port when the silt from the river that flowed into the harbor filled up the harbor, and the sea shore moved away from the city. So, gradually, human leadership and ideas filled up the minds of the people in the early church as they drifted away from the written Bible. The main error of the first age was that a presbyter was called a priest, and he was established as the head of a local church. Then this system was compounded by a bishop being established as the head of the local churches in each city and its surrounding areas.

Thus the stage was set for the next errors that entered during the second church age.

Some people hold the view that the most important cause of the decline of the Roman Empire came during the reign of a basically good Emperor: Marcus Aurelius. Except for his mad compulsion to persecute Christians. It was the Antonine Plague, one of the most devastating plagues in history, that swept through the Empire between 165 AD - 180 AD. This plague came when Rome was at war, so the army was gathered together. It swept through their ranks, removing their numerical superiority. It also created a population problem. Less people in the Empire meant less people to produce food, which led to a decrease in urbanization (because cities need large agricultural production to survive) and less population growth overall. In short: Rome no longer had enough manpower to garrison all of its Empire at the same time.

This laid the seeds for the later collapse of the western Roman Empire when there was neither the money nor the manpower to defend their borders.

Thus in the midst of this great plague we can probably draw a line around 170 AD to indicate where the first church age ended and the second church age started.

Life was tough. This was the consequence of the church moving away from the example of the apostolic church of the New Testament.

Smyrna (2:8-11) – The Persecuted Church

The Persecuted Church

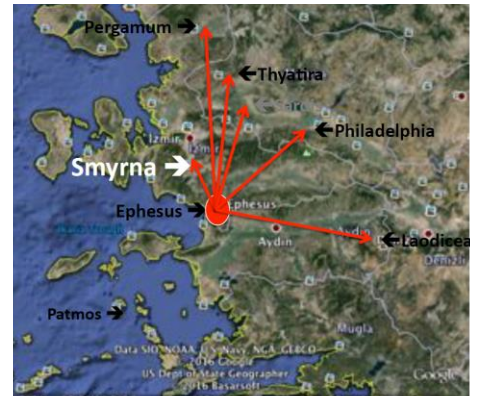
⁸“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: ⁹“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’

- The name Smyrna means “myrrh”
 - The name Smyrna – comes from the Greek word Smurna – from the Hebrew root that is translated myrrh
 - Myrrh is closely associated with death in the Bible
- History
 - Began as an Aeolian (Greek) settlement in the 11th century B.C.
 - Smyrna was inhabited by the Asiatic Lelegez until about 3000 BC
 - According to Herodotus, the area then fell into the hands of the Ionians from Colophon
 - Began Smyrna’s most glorious phase in history
 - During this period, the poet Homer was born, lived, and died in Smyrna
 - Born sometime between the 12th and 8th centuries BC
 - Smyrna was captured and destroyed by the Lydians in the 7th century BC (Alexander the Great’s conquests)
 - 3 centuries of greatness ended with the attacks of the Lydians
 - In the 4th century, on order from Alexander the Great, the “New City” developed
 - Smyrna was built into a strong, well planned city – the most beautiful in Ionia
 - It became known as the flower of Ionia
 - It prospered into one of the greatest cities of that time
 - Smyrna came under the control of the Romans in 27 BC
 - In New Testament times, Smyrna vied with Ephesus & Pergamum for the title of “First City of Asia”
 - Paralleled Ephesus in wealth, beauty & commerce – It was a truly beautiful & influential city
 - It became known as the most beautiful city in the world over the years
 - Although a free city, it gave full allegiance to the Roman Empire
 - Famous for its superb school of medicine
 - Ancient Smyrna was known for its many temples and splendid buildings
 - Center of pagan worship
 - Temples of Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Asclepius, Cybele, Poseidon and Demeter
 - Smyrna was demolished by several earthquakes and rebuilt, but never attained its former glory

- Smyrna is today's Izmir
 - 3rd largest city in modern-day Turkey
 - 3.3 million people
 - Exports tobacco, grapes, figs, cotton, olives, and olive oil
- Geography
 - 35 miles north of Ephesus
 - Smyrna has an excellent harbor
- Smyrna = myrrh = death
 - The name Smyrna – comes from the Greek word Smurna – from the Hebrew root that is translated myrrh
 - Myrrh is a bitter gum and costly perfume which exudes from a certain tree or shrub in Arabia and Ethiopia or is obtained by incisions made in the bark
- Uses of myrrh
 - It was an ingredient in perfume
 - Ps 45 ⁸ All Your garments *are scented* with myrrh and aloes *and* cassia, Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.
 - It was prominent in song of Solomon
 - SS 1 ¹³ A bundle of myrrh *is* my beloved to me, That lies all night between my breasts.
 - SS 4 ⁶ Until the day breaks And the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh And to the hill of frankincense.
 - SS 5 ⁵ I arose to open for my beloved, And my hands dripped *with* myrrh, My fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the lock.
 - It was an ingredient in holy anointing oil for priests
 - Ex 30 ²² Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²³ “Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred *shekels* of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling cane, ²⁴ five hundred *shekels* of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. ²⁵ And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.
 - Used in the purification of women
 - Esther 2 ¹² Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.
 - It was a gift of the Maji at Christ's birth
 - Mt 2 ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
 - Gold = royalty
 - Frankincense = deity and priesthood
 - Myrrh = suffering and death
 - At the 2nd coming, gold & frankincense are offered, but no myrrh, since his death is now behind Him
 - Is 60 “Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side. ⁵ Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. ⁶ The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; *They shall bring gold and incense,* And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.



- It was offered to Christ at the cross
 - Mk 15 ²² And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. ²³ Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it. ²⁴ And when they crucified Him,
- It was used in embalming
 - Jn 19 ³⁸ After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹ And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. .
- Note the death theme through this letter
 - Myrrh yields fragrance by being crushed
 - The church of Smyrna went through tremendous suffering and persecution from the Roman government – It was estimated that 6 million Christians were martyred during this period of time. They were crucified by the hundreds as the Roman emperors at various periods sought to stamp out Christianity.
 - Fed to the lions
 - Stretched on the racks
 - Polycarp (A.D. 69–155) – The pastor/bishop of the church at Smyrna
 - He was the last man personally discipled by John
 - As a young man living in the city, Polycarp may have heard Revelation read from the actual manuscript in John’s handwriting, delivered fresh from Patmos.
 - Martyrdom of Polycarp
 - The church historian Eusebius recounts the martyrdom of Polycarp
 - Polycarp martyred in Smyrna in A.D. 155 – at 86 years old – amidst one of the numerous waves of persecution
 - Polycarp was ordered to burn incense at the altar of Caesar.
 - The Proconsul said *“Take the oath and I will let you go. Revile Christ!”*
 - To which Polycarp is said to have replied *“For 86 years I have been his servant, and he has never reviled me; how can I revile my king and my savior? How can I deny him who has been faithful to me these 6 and 80 years”*
 - He asked consequently he was sentenced to burn at the stake
 - When the fire failed to come near him, however, a frustrated guard pierced his shoulder with his sword – Inadvertently drawing blood which put out the flame.
 - At times, the only substance powerful enough to extinguish the fire of persecution was the blood of the saints
- Pagan Religions
 - Pagan temples of Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Asclepius, Cybele, Poseidon, Demeter and Emperor Tiberius
 - The Temple of Athena dated back to the 7th century – it was one of the most important buildings of that period
- The church at Smyrna
 - Founded during the first century A.D., but we don’t know by whom – probably one of the believers from Ephesus.
 - To this church that was going to experience much tremendous suffering and persecution, the message of Jesus is one of a different nature – It is a message of comfort, a message of hope...



- Excavations of “New Smyrna” in Izmir began in 2002
 - They are sponsored by the Izmir Archaeology Museum and the Metropolitan Municipality of Izmir
- A vast network of vaulted Roman arches created a multi-level “shopping mall,” both below and above ground.
 - The arch network also reduced the impact of frequent earthquakes.



Greeting

	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
Smyrna (2:8-11) Persecuted, suffering	Persecuted – Endured afflictions; Endured poverty; Endured slander; Faithfully coped through many trials	-- (none)	Remain faithful, even when facing prison, persecution or death	The crown of life – You will not be hurt at all by the second death

*8 "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:
These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and
came to life again.*

- Ephesus – “These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands”
 - Rev 1 ¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man ... ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars
- Smyrna – “These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again”
 - Rev 1 ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ *I am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.
- In both instances the greeting recalls attributes of Christ that were mentioned previously in the prologue of chapter 1



Commendation ☺

9 I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

- I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich!*
 - This period for the church in Smyrna was a time of oppression, affliction and distress.
 - I know your works – nothing is hidden from me
 - I know your poverty and how you were persecuted through confiscation
 - I know your persecution by these ‘religious men’ that claim to be Jews but were not
 - In the midst of much affliction it is easy to think that God has forgotten all about you – but I know, I have been there, done that, says Jesus.
- you will suffer persecution for ten days*
 - Persecution
 - Diseases brought back from the Parthian wars devastated much of Rome.
 - Inundation from the Tiber put much of the grain storehouses under water
 - Famine and pestilence followed.
 - The Christians were a convenient scapegoat, and Christianity became a crime.
 - In the years 100 through 313, there were 10 Roman emperors who correspond to the 10 days spoken of here
 - They launched such massive attacks against the believers that between 5 and 7 million Christians would be killed during their rule

- 10 rulers total over 250 years
- In Foxe's Book of Martyrs, it said 5 million believers died for Christ during this period

1. Nero (54–68) – Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified upside down
2. Domitian (95–96) – John was exiled
3. Trajan (104–117) – Ignatius was burned at the stake
4. Marcus Aurelius (161–180) – Polycarp was martyred
5. Septimus Severus (200–211) – Killed Irenaeus
6. Maximinus (235–237) – Killed Ursula and Hippolytus
7. Decius (249–251)
8. Valerian (257–260)
9. Aurelian (270–275)
10. Diocletian (303–313) – He was the worst of all!

- Smyrna was a wealthy, influential city in John's day, but the church felt the brunt of persecution
 - Arrest, punishment, confiscation of property and the poverty that followed
 - Yet, the Lord reminds them, they are spiritually rich, even as they suffer persecution
- Judaism as an ancient indigenous religion, and it was protected under Roman law
 - The Roman Empire recognized Judaism as an ancient indigenous religion, and it was protected under Roman law
 - But when tensions between Judaism and Christianity worsened, Christians lost their protection as a minor sect under the umbrella of Judaism.
 - Apparently, the large Jewish population in Smyrna actively persecuted the church, as well.
- Both the civil authorities and the Jews persecuted the church in Smyrna
 - Ultimately, it was Satan working behind the scenes
 - Some people will be imprisoned and their faith will be tested severely for "ten days"
 - Ten is a number signifying a transient period, not finality, not "to death."
 - Translated as "persecution" or "ordeal"
 - Means "tribulation," "affliction," or "anguish"
- The Lord encourages those in Smyrna to remain faithful, even if it means unto death, for "the crown of life" awaits them

Condemnation ☹️

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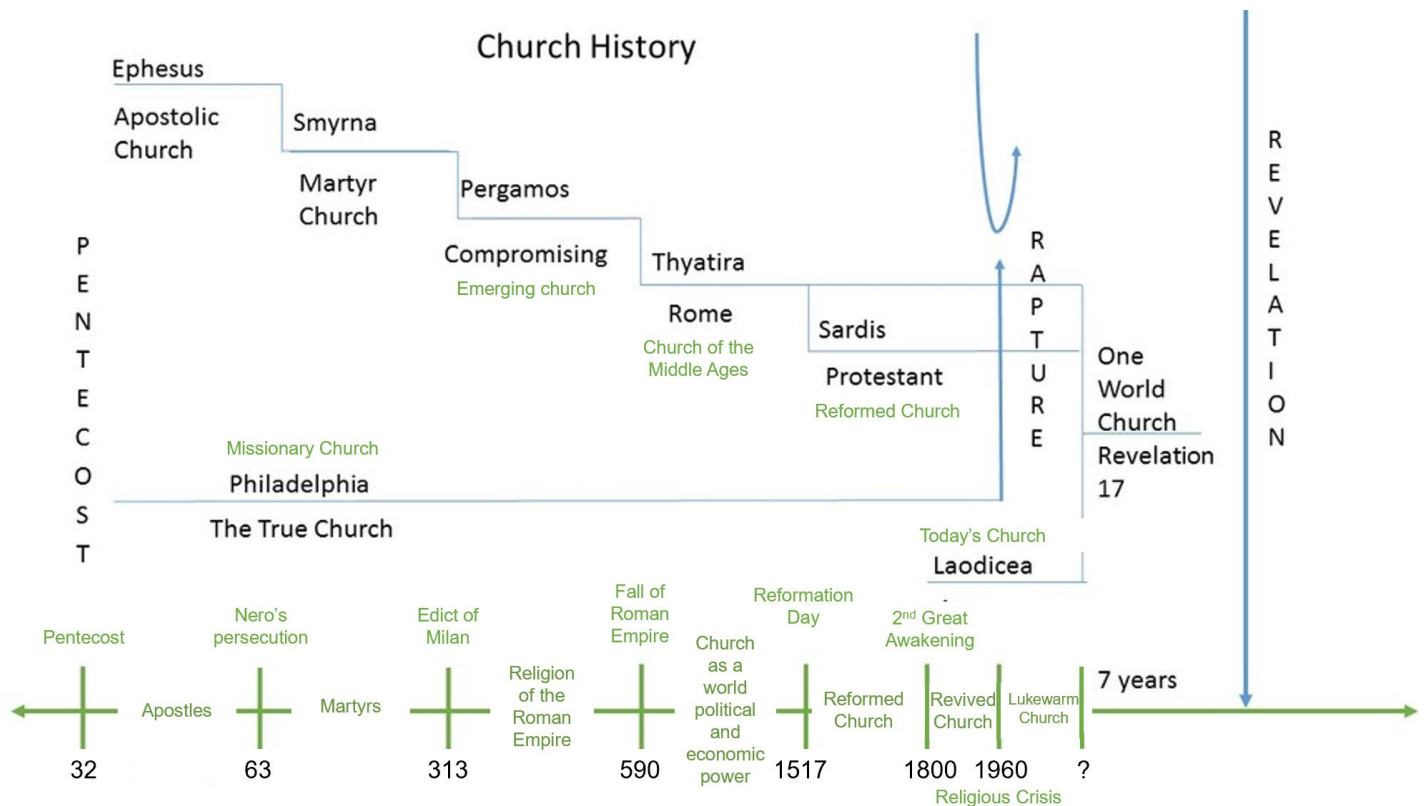
- Notice, there are no words of condemnation for the church at Smyrna, perhaps because the Lord saw Smyrna as a martyr church, one that was shedding its blood for him.
 - "witness" – One whose death for Christ spoke boldly and with ultimate conviction
 - "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church,"
 - Written by the 2nd-century church father Tertullian
 - Implies that martyrdom is the strongest witness one can make to lead others to Christ
- In Revelation 6:9 we will meet an army of such martyrs beneath God's altar in heaven, *"those who had been slaughtered because of the witness they bore to the word of God."*

Admonition (Call to Action)

11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

- As in his letter to the church in Ephesus, Jesus encourages those in Smyrna to pay attention to what he has said, and provides an assurance for those who persevere to the end
 - “he who overcomes” or “victors” means one who “overcomes” or “prevails”
- *He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.*
 - What is the “second death”? Hell – the “lake of fire”
 - It is called the “second” one because it follows physical death.
 - Where those who are separated from God by their sin will dwell for eternity
 - This judgment was recorded in Scripture as a warning to unbelievers to seek the salvation that Jesus Christ provides.
 - The coming judgment should also challenge believers to share their faith. There is a vast difference between the final destination of those who know Christ and those who do not.
 - *Rev 20¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*
 - At the end of time, even death and the grave (Hades) will be thrown into the lake of fire.
 - In addition, every person not included in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire.
 - This condition will be final; the destination is permanent.
 - *Rev 21⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”*
 - Great White Throne judgment – At the end of the millennium, the unbeliever will be resurrected to stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne judgment
 - There, his failure to believe on the Lord and his refusal to accept God's payment for his sin will condemn him to outer darkness
 - *Mt 25²⁹ ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*
 - It is a “death” in that it is a separation from God, the Giver of life.
 - But for those who (like the church at Smyrna) stay true, the 2nd death will have no effect
 - For those who overcome the threat and acts of violence from Satan, they will never be hurt by the 2nd death
 - Death is conquered for these overcomers
 - *Rev 2¹¹ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’*
 - Jesus promises that believers will not experience the lake of fire. The second death is exclusively for those who have rejected Christ. It is not a place that believers in Christ should fear.
 - “overcomers” – *1Jn 5⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*
 - Revelation 20:6 speaks of the second death in relation to a future period called the Millennium
 - *Rev 20⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*
 - This verse notes three important facts.
 - First, those who die for their faith in Jesus during the Tribulation will later be resurrected to enter the Millennium and live with Him.
 - Second, these martyrs will escape the lake of fire or second death.
 - Third, they will reign with Christ.

Church History (170-312)



The Church Ages - Smyrna, The Second Age, 170 AD-312 AD

Smyrna comes from the word myrrh, which means bitterness and death.

This was a very uncertain and unstable age with many assassinations, as about 80 men declared themselves to be Roman emperor in some part of the empire or in Rome during this interval of 142 years. In the 23 years from 247 – 270 AD thirty men proclaimed themselves as emperor. In the year 238 AD seven self-proclaimed emperors were killed. This totally unstable situation regarding the succession of emperors paralysed the Roman Empire's defence system, which also undermined the economy. The costly civil wars as ambitious men fought to kill the existing emperors and replace them, drained soldiers away from the frontiers leaving them open to invasion by ferocious German barbarians, and the increasingly powerful Persians.

The Roman empire had a leadership crisis which reflected the growing leadership crisis of the church. Each of the early churches that were established by the apostles had to be run by a group of elders, according to the permanent pattern and principles of the New Testament that needed no modifications or additions to meet the changing circumstances of the ages. The Scriptures were for their unchanging guidance, as Jesus made Himself the **centre** of each church. That is why Jesus is seen in the **midst** of the candlesticks. The Christians of this age were scattered much by persecution, civil war, and barbarian and Persian invasions. It was the gathering of the people around the Scriptures as their centre that preserved the genuine believers. Death was a constant companion. This scattering of the persecuted Christians minimised the damaging effects to the true believers caused by the imposing of human leadership over the church.

MATTHEW 18:20 For where **two or three** are gathered together in my name, there am **I in the midst** of them.

Small scattered groups did not need a religious organisation to bind them to some man.

But church organisation was quickly growing as they developed a succession of man-made bishops to rule the church in each city. This "official" church was also becoming bitter towards those who wanted to be Scriptural. A succession of bishops seemed to be the right answer as it gave some stability and order in an age that was extremely unstable. This age is rather obscure, as a thick darkness still envelops much of its history. The fifty years between the years 235 – 284 are particularly poorly illuminated. Fifty years of convulsions caused by civil war and 20 years of invasion by Germanic barbarians (around 245 – 265 AD) made this a time of chaos. Also, the Persian leader Shapur, who was the most

dangerous enemy Rome had except for Hannibal, also launched three major campaigns between 242 - 260 AD against Rome. In between the campaigns, he organised annual raids into the Roman provinces.

To combat these uncertain and changing circumstances in these dangerous and hostile times, the churches made a huge mistake by establishing "apostolic succession" in certain select cities in a frantic attempt to defend truth and provide stable leadership. They said that only those churches who were "started" by an apostle could claim to have the truth. This was the lie that was developing and taking over the churches.

249 -260 AD was a particularly vicious eleven-year persecution of Christians amid pestilence and the loss of value of their money as inflation became rampant. Increasingly the Christians got blamed for all these catastrophes, and the empire tried to eliminate them. By 266 AD the Roman empire had split into three sections due to civil wars. At the cost of tremendous resources, and the cost of much human happiness, the emperor Aurelian with great military skill and cruelty, especially towards Christians, reunited the empire in 274 AD before falling to an assassin's knife in 275 AD. This was an age of drama and violence.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons from about 178 AD to when he died just after 200 AD, (many dates are a little vague in this age) was the greatest Bible teacher of the age. He became bishop two years before the semi-mad, depraved, and evil Commodus became emperor from 180 -192 AD. Cruelty, vanity, power mania, and fear formed the toxic character of this emperor. The lazy, pleasure-seeking Commodus promoted a man Cleander to run his government, and historians say that it was the most corrupt Roman government of all time. Such was the leadership chaos at the time that Irenaeus became bishop of Lyons. He was the brightest Scriptural light of his day, but he lived in a time of weird political leadership. Marcus Aurelius, the father of Commodus, was rated as a brilliant Emperor, but he launched excessively cruel persecutions against the Christians. He had them viciously tortured before killing them. This sadistic streak in a man who was a great philosopher was really puzzling. Marcus Aurelius had the bishop of Lyons killed in 177 AD during a cruel persecution. This was the bishop that Irenaeus replaced as bishop of Lyons.

So everyone was desperate for some stable form of church leadership, which would help them endure the shambolic political leadership with its uncertainty and violence. In those troubled times, because the Roman emperor Commodus was so corrupt, and his father Marcus Aurelius had been so murderously cruel towards the Christians, Irenaeus leaned towards making the bishop of Rome, a far more reasonable man than either of those emperors, an example of a defender of truth. But he only mentioned Rome, no other city. Thus it sounded like he said that the Roman bishop is **the** religious authority. Thus, sadly, the messenger to this second age deviated from Scripture on the issue of recognising the authority of the Roman bishops who "descended" from the Apostle Peter. Remember that this was a very confused and heavily persecuted age as the churches drifted towards human leadership, by claiming that the various bishops who succeeded each other in certain cities where the apostles had established the churches, were the only people who were guaranteed to have the truth.

Ironically, Irenaeus had the most truth for his age, yet he was bishop of the city of Lyons which had no apostolic founder. The folly of this approach was that Martin of Tours, Columba of the island of Iona, Luther of Wittenburg, Wesley of England, and William Branham from Jeffersonville in America would all rise up to restore truth from cities that never saw an apostle, and had no continuous link of bishops over the ages. Irenaeus was human and messed up badly on this point. Never trust a clever human opinion. Stay with what is written in the Bible.

This apostolic succession seemed a great idea at the time as Rome, Antioch, the rebuilt Jerusalem, and Alexandria gained pre-eminence amongst the Christians. The churches in smaller cities could learn from them. One of these important churches could act as a counterweight to another important church. These few important churches could thus keep each other in check. But the Muslim Arabs wrecked that plan when they swept out of the Arabian deserts in 634 AD and conquered Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria by 641 AD. Those churches were then lost prominence for the Christian cause, and Rome gained even more prestige as the only western church that was started by an apostle. Greece had churches that were started by apostles, but Greece was part of the eastern empire. This is a classic illustration of why we must never depart from Scripture. We cannot predict the future, so the plans that sincere men made to deal with the hectic problems of their age merely ended up eventually boosting the wrong church and making it even more powerful. So much for truth was being entrusted to the "succession of bishops". This whole concept was very short-sighted and very unscriptural.

Irenaeus wrote, "That tradition derived from the apostles of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known church founded and organised at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the

faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the **successions of the bishops**. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its **preeminent authority**".

Irenaeus said that Peter founded the church in Rome. This is completely wrong. Peter never was in Rome.

He then stated that the succession of the Roman bishops was true to the apostolic faith and should be held in preeminent authority. But Rome was the church that Scripture would classify as the mother harlot.

This also indicates how the rumours of Peter being in Rome had been repeated so often that everyone now believed them. So much for human opinions and advice. Even the best leaders get things wrong. So do not rely on your pastor and his opinions, but rather rely on what is written in Scripture.

Irenaeus maintained that the bishops in different cities are known as far back as the Apostles and that those bishops provided the only safe guide to the interpretation of Scripture. His writings, with those of Clement and Ignatius, are regarded as among the earliest attempts to develop **the doctrine of the primacy of the Roman church**. This doctrine which made the Roman bishop the boss of all the other bishops was soon to be a disaster.

Irenaeus mentioned the Roman church as an example of the unbroken chain of authority. This doctrine meant that certain cities would always be more important than others. This is the key to Nicolaitanism, having a more important bishop elevated above a less important bishop.

With the lists of bishops to which Irenaeus referred, the doctrine of the apostolic succession was firmly established in the Church at this time. This succession was important to establish a chain of custody for what they thought was the truth. Irenaeus felt it important, however, also to speak of a succession of elders (presbyters). But this last suggestion was not taken as seriously as his comments about the chain of bishops.

The Carthage bishop Cyprian, a very influential church writer who died in 258 AD, wrote in favour of increasing the authority of the bishops over the church. He said,

"No one can have God for his Father if he does not have the church for his mother".

The church could only be your mother if you obeyed the bishop of the church.

Irenaeus also claimed that the Nicolaitanes were the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven deacons first ordained by the apostles. He said that they lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. On this point, he completely missed the mark. Christians are easily fooled by plausible rumours.

The succession of bishops, as elevated leaders above the congregation, was the Nicolaitans. Thus the church in the second church age was deviating away from the apostolic pattern of the New Testament. The original light of the apostles was dimming.

The second candlestick had been lit. The light of this age was becoming different to the first age and dimmer.

Savage persecution by Roman emperors saw the church, most surprisingly, grow more rapidly than what the outside forces of the Roman empire were able to destroy it. The persecutors and witnesses of the Christian sufferings often became converts which swelled the Christian ranks. About ten brutal and murderous persecutions by the Roman emperors, starting with Nero in 64 AD, finally ended in 312 AD. About three million Christians had been killed. Many of these cruel Roman emperors ruled during the second church age. By 312 AD Satan had learned a harsh lesson: no brutal earthly power could crush Christianity by attacking the church from without.

The Roman empire had been gradually drawn into an attack on the churches which grew in intensity until the Empire's whole power and resources were put forth to crush and destroy the churches, who now desperately needed help and safety. The Roman church had the resources to help many of the persecuted, and these Christians naturally looked up to the Roman church as being a caring mother church.

REVELATION 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

This was an age in which it was easy to die. Fifty years of civil war. Twenty years of invasions and border wars against the German barbarians and Persian armies. Many vicious persecutions by the Roman emperors.

Smyrna comes from the word myrrh -- a bitter oil from a tree resin that was used to embalm the dead.

So Jesus comforts the many who will be killed in this age by starting with His death and then pointing to His resurrection where He showed Himself alive again. Death must not scare the Christian because death opens the door to Heaven and eternal life for the believer who has repented. Jesus is first and last which means that when the persecutions hit, Jesus is the first to enter the killing fields and strengthen the Christians for their ordeal, and then He is the last to leave. That way there is no Christian who has to die alone. Jesus' secret Presence is *always* with us.

He is the first and the last. He wants the last Christians to be like the first Christians because He never changes.

HEBREWS 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

But this second age was not to be the last age of the Christians because they were moving away from the New Testament church.

REVELATION 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

These Christians were poor in this world's goods, but they were rich in faith because they stood for God's Word even if they had to die for it. In this life, they suffered for a while, but in the next life, they have treasures beyond counting for all eternity. Thus they had no regrets for their temporary losses on earth as their rewards in Heaven are so fantastic. Just like a woman who struggles to give birth, but somehow the memory of her pain and suffering fades as she holds that precious little bundle in her arms.

These Christians were very sensible. If they had built up treasure on earth, the greedy Roman emperors would have robbed them of it, and they would have nothing anyway. So they ignored earthly success and stood for Scripture. The treasures of their faith were thus far beyond the grasping hands of the emperors. When they were killed, they simply went to join their treasures that were eternally safe in Heaven. This age knew how to think. They had few goods, but an abundance of insight into what really matters.

They were poor, but God never criticised them. There is an important lesson in that. In contrast, the last age, Laodicea, is rich, but God never compliments them. So what are we doing wrong at the end time?

A synagogue is an assembly or gathering. Satan assembles people when the assembly is done in an unscriptural manner.

ISAIAH 54:15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me:

So the Devil first focused on setting up an unscriptural church system.

The original twelve apostles who had the truth were Jewish. Claiming to be a Jew meant that these people claimed that they had the original truth. But the Bible says that they were liars. Tell a lie, and stick to it for long enough, and eventually, people will believe you. So the Roman Catholic church was going to rise up to power on the basis of lies.

The first church age ended when the Christians accepted the lie of Nicolaitanism, the elevation of a holy man above the congregation, who imposed human leadership and opinions on the church. This lie claimed that each church had to have a priest or presbyter in charge of the church, and then each city had to have a bishop in charge of all the priests. Thus even Irenaeus, the great saint of that age, was fooled into becoming the bishop of the city of Lyons around 178 AD. No such office as **the** bishop of a city was ever held by a man in the New Testament. But that tradition had been started by Ignatius who called himself bishop of Antioch, soon after the apostle John died around 100 AD.

Error was springing up all over, and Christians decided to combat these errors with another even bigger error called "apostolic succession". The Orthodox faith was claimed to be held by a bishop of a city who could trace a succession of bishops back in time that linked them back to an original apostle who had started the church in that city. This man-made system seemed clever but was seriously flawed. Many cities like Lyons and Tours in France would make a strong stand for truth, despite never being visited by an apostle. Rome was where the apostle Paul stayed for a while, yet it would later become the mother harlot. Some cities, like Ephesus, were by 170 AD already disappearing off the map because the great harbour had silted up.

This doctrine of apostolic succession gave the cities of Rome (where Paul had ended up), Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria (who claimed that Mark had gone there) great pre-eminence over other churches in smaller cities because these cities were big and wealthy. This prestige that elevated one bishop above another bishop was unscriptural. The fallacy here was that the future emperor Constantine would build the city of Constantinople. The bishop of Constantinople would have just as much prestige as Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria because it was the capital of Eastern Roman Empire, which was wealthier than western Rome, as well as having the backing of the emperor who lived there.

Yet no apostle had visited Constantinople as it was only built around 330 AD. Worse still, when the Arabs burst out of the Arabian deserts around 634 AD, after the death of Muhammad, they rapidly conquered Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. Those important churches disappeared as the Muslims took over. Then only Rome and Constantinople were left. So now everyone in the west had to look to Rome as it was the only church that could claim apostolic succession. In those chaotic times, the true churches would appear and disappear and then reappear elsewhere as the Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of individuals. But for the false vine, Rome was the great survivor. The Roman Catholic church was the only Roman institution that survived the breakup of the Roman empire. Apostolic succession gave Rome great credibility in the eyes of the world. The Roman bishop, who around 400 AD became the Pope, began to enforce his domination over other bishops. By 606 AD he would declare himself Universal Bishop because he was the only man in the West who could claim an unbroken succession of previous bishops in Rome, who linked him back to an apostle who was in Rome. Thus the doctrine of apostolic succession, started in the second church age as a clever idea to protect truth against the many doctrinal errors that sprung up, had now bred out a monster church organisation called the mother harlot by Scripture. So much for clever human thinking. We must learn to just stay with Scripture. When we cook up bright ideas to help God, we are no better than Abraham was when he produced Ishmael. From him came the Muslim Arabs, and some of today's endlessly violent Muslim extremists. Error will always be around. Today there are approximately more than 45 000 different kinds of denominational and non-denominational church systems that flash their various lights onto the stage. The net effect of all these flashing lights is simply to blind us with their glare. So we are in a Dark Age, because of too many conflicting lights and opinions, while we think we are enlightened. The only way to establish truth is from the King James Bible. The chances of your church being right is one chance in 45 000. It is safer to believe that all our churches are blind, as that is what the Bible says about the last church age Laodicea.

REVELATION 3:14 And unto the angel of the **church of the Laodiceans** write;

:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, **and blind**, and naked:

The claim of the Roman bishop, that he had authority over other bishops, developed slowly. This was the spirit of Rome, the urge to domineer and crush dissidents until they became submissive to her iron rule.

Clement (91 – 100 AD) wrote to the Corinthians in the name of the Roman church with no hint of papal authority over them.

Bishop of Rome Anicetus (154 -168 AD) was unsuccessful in persuading Polycarp to change the date of the Easter from 14 Nisan, the day of the full moon.

Bishop of Rome Victor I (190 – 202 AD) threatened to excommunicate the eastern churches for not changing the date of Easter from 14 Nisan. The Roman church was calling the Jews “Christ killers”, and refused to have Easter on the Jewish date of 14 Nisan. They wanted to enforce this on other churches too. (Even today we hardly ever have Easter on the day of the full moon). But then Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons rebuked Victor for trying to dictate to other churches.

Roman bishop Stephen I (253 – 257 AD) tried to intervene in a North African dispute over baptism, but Bishop Cyprian of Carthage told him to stay out as each bishop was supreme in his own diocese.

So in this second church age, the Roman bishop established his credentials by claiming apostolic succession from Paul and Peter. By the time the second church age had started, virtually everyone believed the lie that Peter had been killed in Rome. Even Irenaeus recognised the Roman bishop as an authority for holding the truth, which was a bad mistake.

So in the second church age, the Roman bishop was struggling to impose his authority over other bishops.

But soon after 400 AD, the barbarian Vandals overran Carthage in North Africa, and in 476 AD the last western Roman emperor was deposed by the barbarians. In the chaos and uncertainty that followed, Christians were happy to look up to the Roman bishop for leadership and financial support. At that time they would accept anyone's human and material leadership. The church as a whole had lost confidence in the New Testament teachings. Small, scattered groups of Christians gathered around the Scriptures, but the majority went for the large visible church organisation that was increasingly centralised around the control of the bishop of Rome.

Another dramatic lie was surfacing which would give the Roman bishop great power over the barbarian tribes who had destroyed the empire.

Roman bishop Calixtus I (218 – 223 AD) was the first to claim that Peter was the “Rock” of the church and that this applied also to the Roman bishop. Tertullian, a famous Christian writer and bishop of Carthage, then called Calixtus a usurper.

But as the chaos, murderous violence, and financial uncertainty of the second church age grew worse, so more and more churches and bishops were helped by the resources of the Roman church, and were then obliged to look up to the Roman bishop as their leader.

Thus the Roman church developed what was going to be one of their most spectacularly successful lies -- "Peter had the keys to open Heaven's door, and he had passed on this authority to the bishops of Rome, who now have control over those who will and who will not get into Heaven." This gave the Roman bishop huge clout.

The Roman church had gradually built up this clever idea that enhanced their fame, especially among the pagans.

Petr was the Egyptian word for a priest or "interpreter" of the mysteries of the gods.

Petr Roma was the sacred book used to celebrate and interpret the Eleusinian mysteries of the ancient

Greeks, which were highly regarded by many pagans. Eleusis was a city close to Athens. So the Roman Catholic church began to develop the rumour that Peter was the first bishop of Rome.

This was based on a magnificent fluke that "Peter of Rome" sounds very much like "Petr Roma". So the pagans could easily be persuaded that Peter was the great interpreter of their hidden mysteries.

Peter himself is last mentioned in Chapter 12 of the Book of Acts. After that, he fades from our view and there is no definite history of him other than his two letters that were written from Babylon, as he was the apostle to the Jews.

Mystery Babylon was not a reference to pagan Rome.

The scarlet woman, who was mystery Babylon, was the Roman Catholic church that first had to rise to sufficient power so that her bishop could dominate the Christians of the city of Rome. This would only happen around the year 250 AD. Then to become Mystery Babylon she had to begin to accept the mysteries of Babylon as her official belief, which started at the Nicaean Council in 325 AD. Then followed a century of uniting Christian words with pagan beliefs, like the birthday of the sun god on 25 December becoming the birthday of the Son of God, Jesus. The eggs and rabbits of the Spring fertility celebrations of the goddess Ishtar became Easter eggs and Easter bunnies. This marriage of faith and paganism resulted in Pope Leo I, around 450 AD, claiming the title of Pontiff -- the high priest of the Babylonian mysteries.

Then to qualify as the woman who rode on the beast and had authority over the beast, the Pope had to gain political control over the city of Rome which could only happen after the western Roman emperor was deposed in 476 AD. Only then could it be justified in saying that Rome was Mystery Babylon.

We know that Jesus prophesied that Peter would be killed. Legend claims that this was probably by crucifixion. Some claim that he asked to be crucified upside down, but historians don't seem to be able to prove this. Unfortunately, concerning Peter's later life, facts are about zero, and legends are abundant. Historian John Julius Norwich in his book *'The Popes, a history'* says on page 4 "All that can be said for sure is that by the middle of the second century (around 150 AD) -- which could well be during the lifetime of the grandchildren of people who had actually known them - it was generally accepted that Peter and Paul had both been martyred in Rome".

There are no historical facts to support this statement that Peter was killed in Rome. It was simply an untruth that became believed because people endlessly repeated the idea. Even today, Christians endlessly repeat that the wise men went into the stable. The Bible says in Matthew they went into a house. But because everyone keeps repeating that they were in the stable, that untruth has now become accepted as the factual truth. All propagandists know that if you repeat a lie often enough, it will finally be accepted as the truth.

MATTHEW 2:11 And when they (the wise men) were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother,

So why this obsession to insist that Peter was in Rome? It does not really fit the facts.

Paul greets at least 28 people in the last chapter of his letter to the Romans. Yet there is no mention of Peter. Thus Peter obviously was not there, much less being in charge as a bishop. There is no Scripture that says Peter was a bishop.

MATTHEW 8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

Peter was married. The Popes are not allowed to be married. So claiming Peter as the first Pope is wrong.

Enemies of Rome were executed and their bodies were thrown into the fast flowing river Tiber. The chances of any “criminal” apostle, especially an unsophisticated fisherman from a remote province called Palestine, getting a proper burial were highly unlikely. Since Peter never was in Rome, he obviously never died in Rome.

Thus trying to make Peter the first Pope in Rome does not fit the facts.

But there was a special mystique to Rome as events conspired to make her a natural leader in times of trouble and persecution. This second church age would see the Roman emperors launch ferocious persecutions against the Christians. The Roman church had the resources to help others, and she seized the opportunity to make her mark.

After he had approved the final choice of Books for the New Testament the Apostle John died around 100 AD, and various city churches began to compete for leadership of the Christians churches. Local churches were supposed to be run by groups of elders, who kept them true to the New Testament pattern of the Apostles.

A treatise known as the *Shepherd of Hermas*, written in Rome shortly after the year 100 AD, always speaks of ‘the rulers of the church’ or ‘the elders of the church’.

In terms of historical facts, though slightly fuzzy, the first bishop of Rome appears to be Anicetus from about 155 – 166 AD. But Rome had many different church groups, and it was only around the year 250 AD before any real claims could be made for one man to be regarded as the supreme bishop of Rome.

By AD 70 most of the apostles had been killed or had moved beyond the borders of the Roman empire, and Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Roman army who killed over a million Jews. There was then no obvious centre for Christianity. But ambitious church leaders were also slowly growing in power.

The Roman church, owing to its prestige as the church of the capital of the Roman empire, found that it naturally had a pre-eminence amongst the churches.

After 180 AD, insecurity and anxiety were more acute and desperate than ever before. The Roman government relied on ruling by autocratic force. Increasingly formidable German tribes forced Rome into expensive wars on the river Danube frontier, which produced a grimmer age of intensified and forcibly collected taxation that kept increasing. Rome’s eastern enemy Parthia had been replaced by the far more dangerous Persians. Pestilence and 50 years of civil war added their stress. Barbarian German invasions intensified around 240 – 260 AD. Currency collapse and price inflation followed. Christians were blamed for all these calamities, so they were punished and killed in many persecutions. The empire then briefly split into three portions thanks to civil war. Aurelian, a brilliant cavalry commander, became emperor and reunited the empire. To celebrate, he named 25 December as the birthday of his sun god in 274 AD. Sun god worship helped to produce a revival of official paganism. Diocletian became emperor in 284 AD. He built palaces of unprecedented splendour and expense, expanded the civil service, and doubled the size of the army. All this required a crushing toll in taxes. Diocletian established a totalitarian state with complete political, social, and cultural control over the people. To all this, he decided to add religious control by exterminating all Christians and uniting the people around the pagan gods. Around 303 AD he launched the cruellest of all persecutions, as well as an empire-wide program to destroy every Bible. After two years, in 305 AD, he abdicated, but the vicious persecutions continued for a further eight confused years until 312 AD.

During this violent age the Roman church was very generous in helping those churches that were ravaged by the barbarians, the civil wars, or the horrific persecutions. These circumstances encouraged many churches to look up to the Roman church as their sponsor, and thus leader. If anyone gives us money when we are in need, then it is very easy to accept that person as our boss, and we are more inclined to obey that person without arguing.

Greek philosophers explored the “mysteries” that lay behind the outward forms of the pagan religions. Christians began to use Greek philosophy to blend pagan ideas into Christian doctrine. The church, in its attempts to combat this error, introduced a system of human leadership that affected the church negatively, even more than the errors that they were trying to combat. Nicolaitanism was the system of elevating a holy man above the congregation, which soon began to seriously modify the character of the churches. Priests were put in charge of each church, and then bishops were put in charge of the priests. By 170 AD, when the first church age ended, a church hierarchy was established with a bishop in charge of the churches of each city and its surrounding areas. Then came the idea that truth was only really held by a succession of bishops in a city where the church was started by an apostle.

By 250 AD the resources of the church of Rome had grown very big. They supported 1 500 widows and needy people, which was good. They supported the bishop who was the head of the church, 46 presbyters, 7 deacons, 7 subdeacons, 42 acolytes, 52 exorcists, readers and doorkeepers. An unscriptural organisation was starting to grow apace.

Emperor Decius, who had a short reign full of disasters, in 250 AD launched a savage persecution against Christians. Many refugee bishops from various cities fled to Rome, where they could hide in the vast city and be supported by the Roman church. The Roman church granted much charity to believers and non-believers who were in need. This greatly strengthened the reputation of the Roman church.

260 AD saw emperor Gallienus make an edict of toleration towards Christians. Money and land started being bequeathed to the Roman church in people's wills. The wealth of the church kept growing. Thus they were able to help more churches in the Empire, and these churches looked up to Rome as a leader, especially in these times of trouble, persecution, and financial shortage.

Meanwhile the Roman church was seeking for some justification for the natural pre-eminence that its status and circumstances were granting it. A possible Scripture was at hand if they could just fool people into thinking that Peter had been in Rome.

MATTHEW 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That **thou art Peter**, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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

Rome was a pagan city. Peter having the keys to Heaven opened the door to immense possibilities amongst the pagans. They would happily serve Peter if he would open the Door to Heaven for them.

With the error of apostolic succession being established by great men like Irenaeus, the bishop of Rome could then claim to be the successor of Peter, and have the authority to use his keys. No other apostle had the keys to Heaven. The Roman bishop, as Peter's successor would be the top bishop. Salvation would then depend on the Roman bishop, who could open the door to Heaven, not on Jesus. It would be a brilliant fraud.

Petr Roma (which sounds just like "Peter of Rome") **was the sacred book used to celebrate the Eleusinian mysteries**, associated with Artemis - who is called the goddess Diana. These were the ancient rites of Greece from about 700 BC, that later went to Rome. These mysteries were widespread amongst the pagans, and if they believed that Peter was in Rome, they would accept him as the **interpreter** (or Petr) of the pagan mysteries that opens the door to Heaven.

In addition, the words of Jesus made Peter the man who opens the door to Heaven for the Christians too.

So if Peter could be hijacked by the Roman church, it would give them have a superlative asset. The **interpreter** (notice the word 'peter' hidden in the word 'interpreter') of pagan Greek mysteries in Rome was also the man who has the keys to the Christian Heaven.

Greek philosophy was brilliant. So once the Greek philosophers had polished up a pagan mystery, it was far more captivating and convincing. Now the Romans had all these Greek mysteries to interpret to the pagans. And Peter, the only man in all history who had the keys to Heaven, was the great interpreter.

In addition, Jupiter was the chief Roman god. And his name was pronounced Ju-peter. Peter again.

So the propaganda machine swung into action. Peter was dead and could not refute their arguments. After Acts Chapter 12 Peter had faded from view. The next generation was fuzzy on the facts of his life. The grandchildren knew even less of the facts of his life, and as persecution made churches look to Rome for help, those Christians who needed Rome's help would not oppose the claims of Rome that Peter had died in Rome. Around the year 250 AD, the Roman Catholic church was dominant enough to claim their leader as bishop of the city. Once their man was the bishop in charge of the Rome, then Peter's position was backdated to be the first bishop of Rome. Before AD 70, while Peter was still alive, there was no single bishop in charge of a city. A bishop or overseer was simply an elder. Every church had a number of elders - also called bishops. In the city of Philippi:

PHILIPPIANS 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at **Philippi**, with the **bishops** and deacons:

Once people believed that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, a hierarchy of bishops was invented to link Peter to the existing bishop of Rome. This was apostolic succession. There are different ancient lists of Roman bishops that disagree with each other, so the succession of bishops gets off to a bit of a fuzzy start.

But as time went on, this chain of bishops that started with Peter developed into the spectacularly successful doctrine of 'apostolic succession'. The existing bishop of Rome then claimed that Peter's authority to open Heaven's door was passed on to Peter's successors, who were the bishops of Rome.

This idea immediately gave the bishop of Rome incredible pre-eminence. He was the only man on earth who could open Heaven's door to you. But he would not do that unless you were in submission to his beliefs. But worse still, if he did not like you or your beliefs, he would close the door on you and then you could not enter Heaven. How was this possible? The bishop of Rome claimed to be Peter's representative on earth, and thus Peter only opened the door to Heaven for those who the Roman bishop approved of.

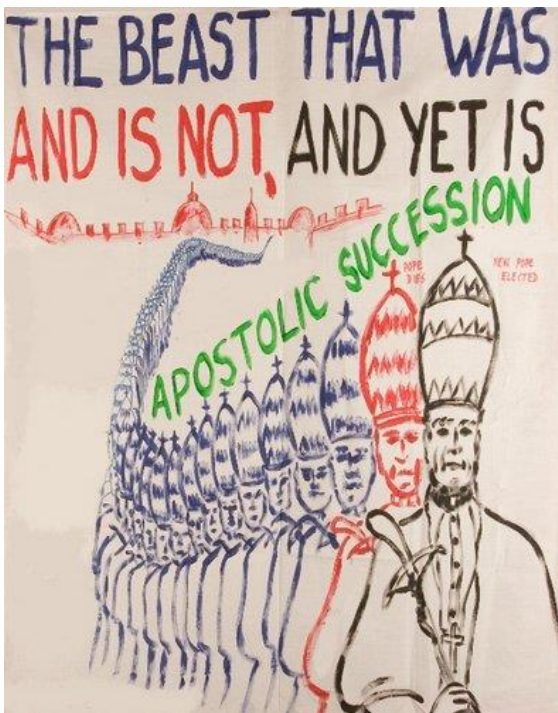
The Roman bishop now had incredible authority. Your final eternal fate was in his hands. This was a scary thought.

After 400 AD when the bishop of Rome had got powerful enough to call himself Pope, then the title of Pope was backdated, and Peter was called the first Pope.

Thus the Popes are now the longest line of dictatorial rulers on planet earth.

REVELATION 17: 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that **was, and is not, and yet is.**

The Pope is the figurehead of this big powerful Roman Catholic political-religious system or beast. At any time in history a Pope **was** ruling the church, then he dies, **and is not, and yet is** because a new Pope is elected to take his place. So the succession of Popes continues. The whole basis of their power is the claim that they are Peter's earthly representative with his keys which gives them power to open or close Heaven's door.



The blue figures represent the Popes from the past when each one **was** Pope. The red figure represents the Pope who **is not** as he has just died. The black figure in front represents the Pope who **yet is** because he has just been elected. The succession of Popes looks just like the *Trail of the Serpent* which is awaiting its head, the final superman antichrist Pope of the great Tribulation. Maybe he will call himself Pope Peter II.

Notice the departure from Scripture. Jesus is the Door to Heaven, but Peter has the keys and decides whether to open the door or not. And Peter will only do what the Pope tells him to do.

So Jesus is no longer the Saviour. Peter holds your fate in his hands as door keeper. Actually, the Pope holds your fate because he tells Peter what to do. Satan had pulled off a masterpiece by effectively removing Jesus as the Saviour.

So what did Jesus mean when He gave Peter the keys to bind and loose in Heaven?

ACTS 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and **to all that are afar off**, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Repentance opens the door to Heaven. Then we get baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ to become a member of His Bride because a bride takes on the name of her husband.

Peter then locked the door of John's baptism because that no longer applied.

But, since repentance and baptism in the Name of Jesus is the key that opens the door to Heaven for the Bride, it is going to be attacked by the Devil. Churches would emerge that do not preach about a heartfelt repentance of sin that leads to a born again experience where Jesus is accepted as a personal Saviour Who turns the individual away from sin, and then controls the person's life. Repentance is the key that opens Heaven's door.

But there are a Bride and a sleeping virgin, both of whom are saved.

But only the Bride is ready for the second Coming of the Lord, because only the Bride takes on the Name of Jesus Christ in baptism. Mr Jesus Christ will only go home with Mrs Jesus Christ. Mr Jesus Christ will not go home with Mrs Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So Satan would attack the human Name of God, which is Jesus Christ. Satan set out to reduce Jesus to only be the Son of God. Thus the Name of Jesus Christ would be removed from the water baptism, and be replaced with three titles.

An ultimate irony is that the Roman Catholic church claimed Peter as their first infallible Pope, yet they refuse to follow his baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ.

They claimed to tell us the truth, but they lied. Truth only comes by quoting Scripture, not modifying the Bible verses.

JOHN 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**

REVELATION 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

This church age, in God's big picture, had a mission to accomplish. They had to keep believing in Jesus no matter what cruelties were imposed on them. They were not on earth to enjoy a prosperous life. Their enjoyment would come in the next life. They had to prove to Satan that death, destruction, and suffering could not destroy Christian faith. Satan went berserk with a murderous intensity to eliminate them. Wave after wave of persecution and distress swept over them, but as each wave subsided the true believers were still standing on the real Rock, which is the personal revelation of who Jesus is to the individual. Jesus living in a Christian heart that is centred on the Word of God will take that person through any outside attack. As each wave of terror subsided, Satan saw to his horror that the remnant that was still standing was actually stronger than when the attack started. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church that kept sprouting up.

These Christians understood that Death was simply the open door to a much better life in Heaven. They went to their fate with incredible courage and faith, based on their love of Jesus and His Word.

The ten-day tribulation was the final devastating ten-year persecution launched by Diocletian from 303 – 312 AD. A day can represent a year in Scripture.

GENESIS 29:27 Fulfil her **week**, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet **seven other years.**

A week is seven days which represented seven years of service.

Jacob had served seven years and gained the older sister. Now he had to serve seven more years for the younger sister.

What did this represent?

In the Old Testament God guided the Jews through seven ages, starting with Abraham who left his first love when he handed his wife Sarah over to another man to marry her. The second age was when Joseph was afflicted of his brothers

and sold as a slave and sentenced falsely to years in prison. Everything went against him as he stood up to the tests and tribulations that life threw at him.

Then Moses had to combat the love of money as the religious leader Aaron built a golden calf (sound familiar?). Then he had to fight the doctrine of Balaam who corrupted the Jews by using Moabite women (symbolising churches) that were similar to, but not the same as Jewish women. Balaam was told what to do by a politician, the king Balak. Constantine, a politician who became emperor, corrupted the church at the Nicaean council in 325 AD, and made them intermarry with politics and paganism. Pergamos means thoroughly married.

Then Elijah came in the dark ages of Israel, who had sunk low when the evil king Ahab ruled and was dominated by his even more evil wife, the painted face Jezebel (symbolic of the dominating Catholic church in the Dark Ages). Thyatira means a dominating woman.

Ezra restored the treasure to the rebuilt temple. Symbolic of Martin Luther who restored salvation, our real treasure, by faith in Jesus Christ to God's Temple, His church. Thus the Protestants escaped from the grip of the Roman Catholic church. Sardis means the escaped ones.

Nehemiah rebuilt the city walls which made the city of Jerusalem strong. The strength of Christianity is holiness, and outreach based on brotherly love (Philadelphia). John Wesley in England led this movement that laid the foundation for the great missionary age.

Then John the Baptist came in the seventh Jewish age, and introduced the Messiah who was to marry the Jews. But they rejected Him and killed Him. The Jews were the older sister (a woman symbolising a church) that God had worked for in the Old Testament. Now He had to start all over again as He worked for His Gentile bride, the younger sister or church. God would finally guide the Gentile church through seven church ages until He could restore them back to the original New Testament doctrines.

REVELATION 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Every age is told to hear what the Word says. Don't change Scripture to suit your present circumstances, because you then create even bigger errors. Just stay with Scripture, despite any circumstances that you find yourself in. The worst that can happen is that we die. But this second church age is all about death, and the fact that it is part of God's plan. Jesus has the keys of death and hell. No Christian can die unless Jesus gives permission. When Jesus does give permission, then our deaths are in His will, and thus they are the best thing that can happen because His will must always over ride our selfish little wills.

The second death in the lake of fire is too awful to contemplate. I would rather die now and be in Heaven later, than live now and be in the lake of fire later. Compared to the future lake of fire, the second death, we have a much easier option when required to die for Jesus in this life. If you die to yourself and are born again, then when you die physically you can call that your second death. Thus you can't go into the lake of fire as that would be your second second-death which is unscriptural.

We all have to die twice.

So if we are born once, we die twice. Physically (our first death) and in the lake of fire (our second death).

If we are born, and then die to self (first death) so that we can be born again, then when we die physically, that is our second death.

This second church age emphasised the second death.

Those who had died to themselves (first death) and were born again then faced their second (physical) death bravely as they knew it could not hurt them. Their second death merely opened the door to Heaven for them. Thus they would also never face the lake of fire which is the second death for the unbelievers.

This second church age was one of suffering and death. There was no chance of a complacent, comfortable lifestyle. To be a Christian was hard. Personal ambitions were all too often shattered in the convulsions and hardships of the age. But please notice something very important. Jesus does not criticize this age in any way.

Those Christians were just like us, fallible human beings. They also made mistakes. But they got something right that was essential. *They died to their self-will.* Self-will centres on material success and comfort. These Christians focused on

suffering for Jesus, even if His will demanded their deaths. They did what He wanted them to do, not what they wanted to do.

Millions died for Him, and He never even mentioned any mistakes they made. Putting God's will first is the key ingredient to impressing God.

Who cares what happens to my life, as long as I can faithfully submit to His will. That is the secret of Christianity.

Satan had failed to destroy the church by an outward show of force.

He had learned a hard lesson, and in the next age decided to change his tactics to the infiltration of the church with a counterfeit gospel.

Pergamum (2:12-17) – The Compromising (Worldly, Political) Church

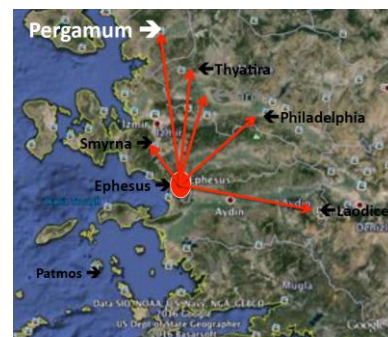
The Compromising Church

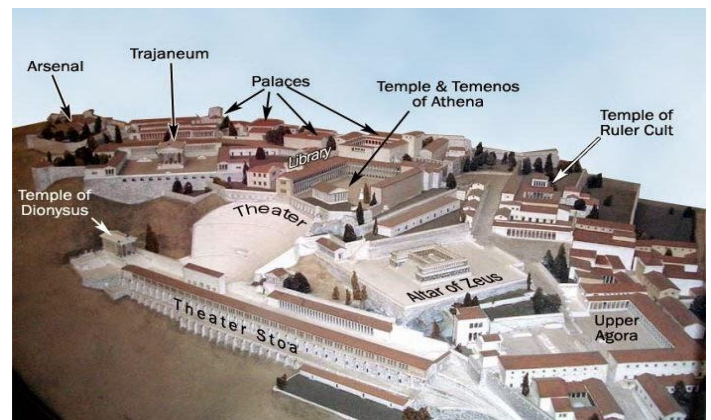
¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: ¹³ “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. ¹⁶ Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

¹⁷ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.” ’

- The name Pergamum means "married"
 - From the Greek word pergamos, which is a combination of two Greek words: pergos and gamos. These words combine to mean either "citadel" or "united by marriage."
 - Pergamos is the feminine form
 - Pergamum is the neuter form
 - Both forms are used
- History
 - There are evidences that it was occupied during the stone (8700-2000 BC) and bronze (3000-1200 BC) ages.
 - But prior to Alexander the Great, Pergamos was little more than a castle on top of a Hill
 - Founded in the 399 BC
 - It was the capital of the Kingdom of Pergamum during the Hellenistic period (323 BC – 30 BC)
 - Became the capital city of the Roman province of Asia for a while
 - Gave the traveler the impression of a royal city, the home of authority
 - Center of learning, medicine and religious books
 - Boasted 1 of the 3 great libraries of the ancient world, along with Alexandria, Egypt and Ephesus
 - The library rivaled the Alexandrian library and drew many princes, priests and scholars
 - Known more than the others for its architectural beauty, especially the marble carvings
 - Pergamum was home to 200,000 people
 - The present city of Bergamo has a population of only 20,000
- Geography
 - Located 16-18 miles inland from the Aegean Sea on a promontory on the north side of the Caicus River
 - 60-80 miles north of Smyrna





- Pergamum boasted two theaters. This one is the steepest theater in the Greco-Roman world.
- Asklepion – Healing center
 - Sits at the foot of Pergamum's Acropolis
 - An acropolis is a settlement, especially a citadel, built upon an area of elevated ground—frequently a hill with precipitous sides, chosen for purposes of defense.
 - The most famous healing center of its day
 - Hippocrates is said to have received his medical training here
 - Galen, the famed physician and philosopher, studied and worked here
- Pagan religions – the great religious center
 - Many temples – these temples were to provide a venue for the religious cult of both rulers as well as Zeus
 - Temple of Zeus Olympus – the savior god, patron god of the city
 - Zeus is said to have been born there
 - Stunning altar to Zeus –
 - Platform was on a foundation 125'x115', over 50' high, set in a colonnaded enclosure
 - The great Altar of Zeus sat on this platform, “where Satan's throne is” (2:13)
 - It was one of the most beautiful altars of the ancient world.
 - Today the “Altar of Zeus” is in the Pergamum Museum in Berlin.
 - It was removed in the 19th century from it's original site by Carl Humann, a German archaeologist, and reconstructed in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin.
 - Temple of Athena – patron goddess of Athens
 - Temple of Roman Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98 to 117)
 - Attests to the strength of the Roman imperial cult in the city
 - Three times Rome honored Pergamum as the temple-warden of the imperial cult
 - Temple of Dionysius – god of vegetation
 - Temple of Asclepius – god of healing
 - At the Asklepion, the most famous medical center in the world
 - Animal cult worship of the god-serpent ad god-bull
- Church of Pergamum
 - Some scholars believe that Gaius, addressed by John in 3John was the first Bishop of Pergamum



Greeting

	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
Pergamum (2:12-17) Compromised, worldly	Remain true to my name; Loyalty to Christ; Remained faithful - refused to deny Him	Sexual immorality; Follow false doctrines; Compromised; Tolerates cults, heresies, idolatry and immorality	Repent!	Hidden manna; White stone with a new name on it

*12 "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:
These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.*

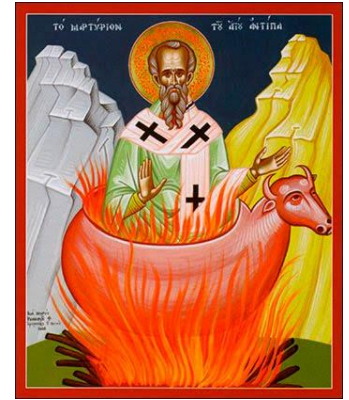
- Once again the Lord's greeting refers to attributes of Christ from the prologue
- This time to the sharp, two-edged sword coming from his mouth, the sword of commendation and condemnation.
 - **Rev 1¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword**

Commendation ☺

13 I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

- Where Satan has his throne – The great Altar of Zeus sat on a platform in Pergamum
 - Today the “Altar of Zeus” is in the Pergamum Museum in Berlin.
 - It was one of the most beautiful altars of the ancient world.
 - We know that Satan is in control of the world today
 - 1 Jn 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.
 - 2 Ti 2:25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.
 - 1 Pe 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.
 - What does it mean that they lived where Satan's throne is
 - Pergamos was a stronghold of Satanic power
 - What made it such a Satanic stronghold?
 - It was a pagan religious center
 - It had a huge thronelike altar of Zeus
 - Also it was the political center of government which demanded worship
- The Lord commends Pergamum's Christians for not denying their faith and accommodating themselves to the very attractive pagan culture of the city
 - Despite the fact that they live in such a difficult place, they are holding fast in a difficult setting. Jesus praises them because they did not deny His faith.
 - We must take great pains that the faith we hold on to is the faith that comes from Jesus.

- Antipas (perhaps the church's leader) was martyred
 - Name means 'against all'
 - According to Christian tradition:
 - John the Apostle ordained Antipas as bishop of Pergamon during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian.
 - Antipas was martyred in 92 AD by burning in a brazen bull-shaped altar used for casting out demons worshiped by the local population.
 - Antipas receives a precious title – 'faithful martyr'
 - A title which was held by Jesus also
 - **Rev 1⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.**
 - He was truly a Christ like man
 - Where is Satan's throne? It is in the world
 - Here is a church that was trying to dwell in the world – It never works
 - Church system trying to join with worldly system – 1 foot in the world, 1 foot in the church
 - A church-state system – the legislating of righteousness, the legislating of religious issues – It can't be done
 - Good behavior has to come from the heart
 - It has to be within a person's heart to do it – you can't make laws that will make people righteous or cause people to live righteous lives
 - That has to be a work of God's spirit within a person's heart



Condemnation ☹

*14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.
15 Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.*

- The rebuke is not only of these specific groups – those who hold the doctrines of Balaam and those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans – but of the church who allows them to continue in their midst.
 - This is a church soft on doctrine and living – adopting a 'live and let live' attitude within the church
 - What Satan couldn't accomplish by persecution – many did hold fast like Antipas – he was accomplishing with deception – using first violence, then alliance.
 - A difficult environment never justifies compromise
 - It's easy for a church in such difficulty to justify this compromise in the name of 'we need all the help we can get', but no church needs that kind of help

Teaching of Balaam (Numbers 22-25)

- Baal
 - Balaam's name derives from the word Baal, which means 'to conquer the people'
 - The name Baal appears about 63 times in The Bible referring to the kind of pagan worship
- Israelites are camped on the plains of Moab opposite Jericho
 - The king of Moab is terrified & seeks the help of the famous prophet Balaam to put a curse on them
 - After several tries, Balaam fails and the king of Moab fires him. But rather than returning home, Balaam initiates "Plan B": if you can't beat the Israelites, join them!
 - We read that the Israelite men began "whoring" with the Moabite women, eating with them and worshipping their gods.
 - See in depth description in [Baalam \(Nu 22-25\)](#)
- "Teaching of Balaam": accommodation and assimilation into the dominant culture

Teaching of Nicolaitans

- Note that it was the ‘deeds’ of the Nicolaitans, not the Nicolaitans themselves
- “Nicolaitans” are possibly followers of Nicholas
 - It’s not absolutely certain who he was or what he taught
 - Thought to be a Gnostic sect, founded by Nicholas of Antioch
 - Known for their unbridled and excessive lusts
- **Deeds of the Nicolaitans**
 - ‘Nicholaus’ or ‘nikos’ – Priest or priesthood
 - ‘Laos’ – laody, the common people
 - Literally means ‘to conquer the people’
 - It is the **establishing of a spiritual hierarchy, where a man comes between you and God** (Catholics)
- The church at Ephesus is also infested with “Nicolaitans”
 - **Rev 1 ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**
- Whatever the teaching was, it falls into the same category as that of the “deceivers” and “antichrists” that John abhors in 2 John 7-8
 - **2Jn 1 ⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁸ Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.**

Admonition (Call to Action)

16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

- Repent
 - What Jesus wants them to do is repent
 - 5 of the 7 churches are commanded to repent, yet this is all too often a missing word among Christians
 - Jesus may first come against them with his word – His means of correction often begins by confronting us with his word
 - Unless they do repent they will have to deal with the Jesus of the 2-edged sword. Judgment will begin at the house of God.
 - The Christian’s bar of soap **1Jn 1 ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**
- *17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*
 - This is a word to everyone who will hear it
 - Each one of us must guard against compromise – especially in the name of being nice
- Hidden Manna
 - The one who overcomes this spirit of accommodation to false teaching and living will be given hidden manna, God’s perfect provision, the true bread from heaven
 - Jesus is the genuine manna
 - **1Jn 6 ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.**
 - Eucharistic implications
 - Jesus promises to those who keep the faith that he will provide a deep, spiritual food to nourish their souls: the Eucharistic implications of Jesus’ statement are clear.

- White stone

- The use of a white stone had many associations in that day. It could be:

- A ticket to a banquet
 - Perhaps a type of admission ticket to “the wedding feast of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9)
- A sign of friendship
- Evidence of being counted
- A sign of acquittal in a court of law

- The white stone was a stone of acceptance, the black stone was a stone of rejection (black-balled)

- I will give them a white stone - I will receive him, I will accept him

- Urim and Thummim

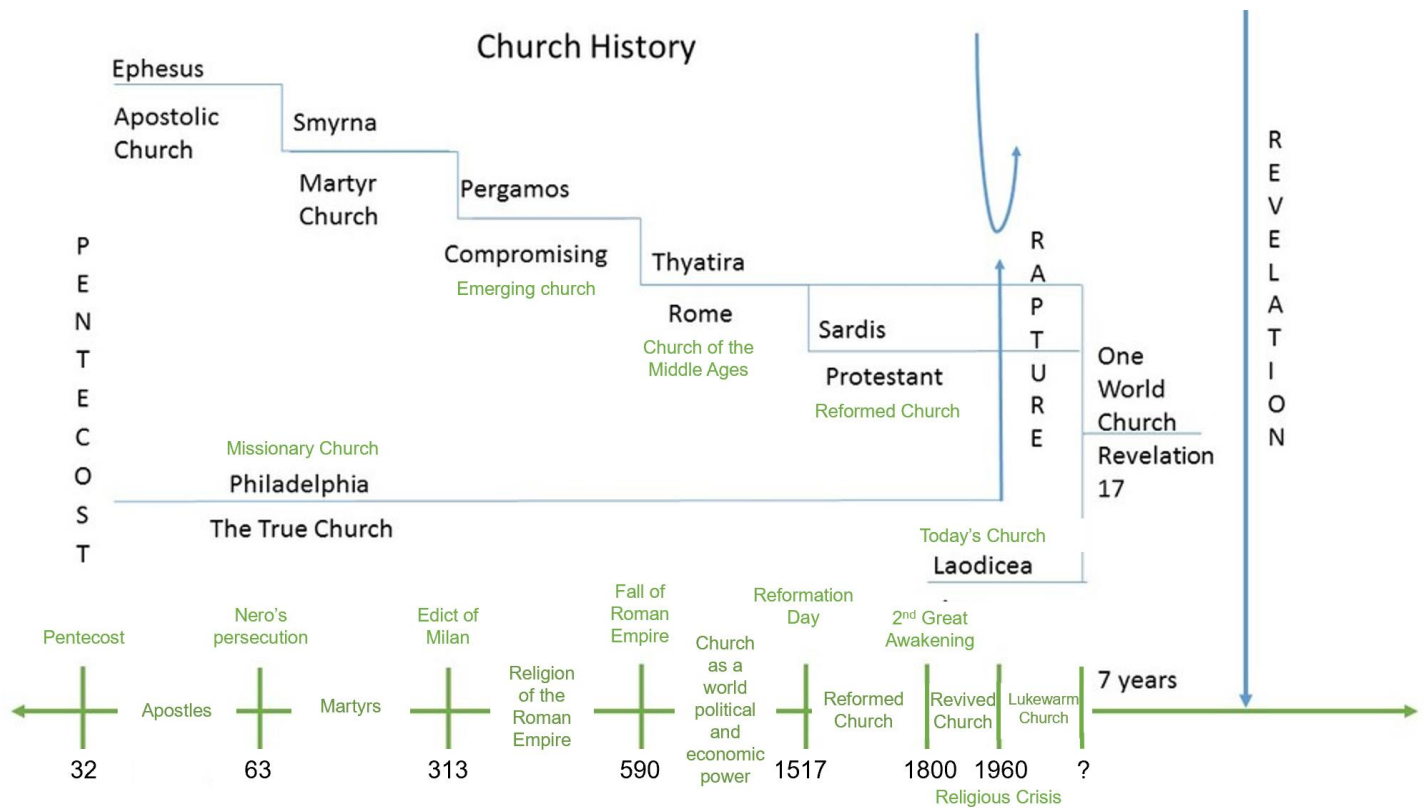
- The Urim ("lights") and Thummim ("perfections") were gemstones that were carried by the high priest of Israel on the ephod / priestly garments.
 - It is unclear whether the Urim and Thummim were on, by, or in the high priest's ephod.
- They were used by the high priest to determine God's will
 - Some propose that God would cause the Urim and Thummim to light up in varying patterns to reveal His decision.
 - Others propose that the Urim and Thummim were kept in a pouch and were engraved with symbols identifying yes/no and true/false.
- No one knows the precise nature of the Urim and Thummim or exactly how they were used. The Bible simply does not give us enough information.



- New Name

- Refers to a believer's new identity in Christ.
- Colossians 3:3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
- Whatever its exact meaning, at the least here it is used as an assurance of blessing
- The believers new name and the name itself is likely more important than the stone itself
 - The revelation of this new secret name has an emphasis on intimacy and knowledge – as in a relationship, like the special pet name for your spouse, or that special nickname for your best friend

Church History (312-606)



The Church Ages - Pergamos, The Third Age, 312 AD-606 AD

From 64 AD to 312 AD, Satan launched about ten vicious and murderous persecutions against the church by the cruel and brutal Roman empire. But despite losing three million martyrs, the church grew faster than it was destroyed. Realizing that brute force from outside could not crush the church, Satan's next tactic was for Emperor Constantine to stop the persecution in 312 AD and then launch an attempt to smother the true Bible-believing church at the council of Nicaea in 325 AD with a counterfeit that looks genuine to the eye that is not trained to look through the lens of Scripture.

This vicious behaviour on the part of the Roman empire saw Daniel describe the pagan Roman empire as a real monstrous beast, that only **had one head**, and that had **ten horns** with **another little horn** amongst them.

Having destroyed other nations, this formidable Roman beast would be broken up by ten barbarian horns or kingdoms that would also cause another horn, a spiritual church power, to rise up in their midst.

DANIEL 7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

DANIEL 7:20 And of the ten horns that were in his head,

(one head, singular)



Daniel 7:8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Eyes speak of intelligence. A spiritual power was rising that was based on the "eyes of man", a religion that was built on human intelligence and not on the Word of God.

This pagan Roman beast represented a brutal pagan spirit that crushed everyone into submission to a one-man dictator or emperor and forced them to obey a common Roman law of government and a common Roman religion which was a compromise that embraced all the pagan gods of the people that they had conquered. This left the masses undisturbed in their false beliefs, making it easier to control them.

Religious unity was the aim of the leaders, not religious truth. Persuade or force people to toe the official line. Crush any dissenters. Repeat the official line even if you do not believe it yourself.

So pagan religion and politics combined to produce this awful hybrid monster.

A horn represents power as we are all scared of the horns of a bull or a buffalo. A horn can do much damage. Many barbarian tribes were involved in the breakup of the Roman empire. The ten horns represented ten barbarian tribes that were involved not just in breaking up the physical Roman empire but in establishing the Roman Catholic church so that it could rise to power on the ruins of the Roman empire and then spread world wide. The Roman Catholic church was the only Roman institution that survived the break up of the Roman empire.

The Huns from Asia were probably the worst and most feared of the barbarians, and they really got things going. They pushed from the east against the German tribes that were on the Roman border and pushed them into Roman territory.

Thus the breakup of the Roman empire began with a severe refugee problem.

Small groups of barbarians could be absorbed into the empire if the men joined the Roman army as mercenaries to fight for Rome. But floods of refugees, driven on by the fierce and murderous Huns, was more than what the empire could withstand. Historians do not know what started this Hunnic avalanche out of Asia. So when God decides to pull the strings, we humans are helpless to resist. Events just go out of our hands. God has control over the good and the bad.

The barbarian invasions were triggered by the destruction of the Gothic kingdoms that were on the Roman borders, by the Huns in 372 -375 AD. The Huns invaded and sacked many Roman cities. Pope Leo 1 spoke to Attila who then turned away from attacking Rome. This greatly increased the reputation of the Pope as the protector of Rome because the western emperor would not protect Rome. In 476 AD Odoacer, a barbarian general from the Heruli tribe deposed the western emperor.

Odoacer, a non-Trinitarian, ruled Italy for a few years until the eastern emperor in Constantinople sent in the Ostrogoths to eliminate the Heruli and rule Italy, which they did. But the Ostrogoths were also non-trinitarian so the Trinitarian Pope was very unhappy.



The map shows the ten tribes whose history we will follow.

The Huns disintegrated when Attila died in 453 AD. But they had pushed the other tribes into the Roman empire. After speaking to Pope Leo they retreated from Rome and this really made Pope Leo famous. People now looked up to the Pope as the effective ruler of Rome. The Heruli entered Italy under the general Odoacer (the black spot) in 476 AD and deposed the western Roman emperor. They ruled Italy until the Ostrogoths eliminated them in 493 AD and then the Ostrogoths ruled Italy. Then the eastern emperor Justinian in Constantinople decided to conquer Italy. First he had to conquer the Vandals in 534 AD in North Africa to stop them attacking him with their strong navy.



The Vandals were eliminated. By co-incidence, they also happened to be non-trinitarian.

Then Justinian's army attacked Italy, and a twenty-year vicious war devastated and depopulated Italy leading to plague and famine. The Ostrogoths were eliminated from Italy by 553 AD. Millions died from the famine and plague which plunged Italy and Europe into the Dark Ages. Thus the non-trinitarian Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths disappeared from the scene to establish the Trinitarian Pope as the strong man of Rome.



Three horns had been plucked up by the roots.

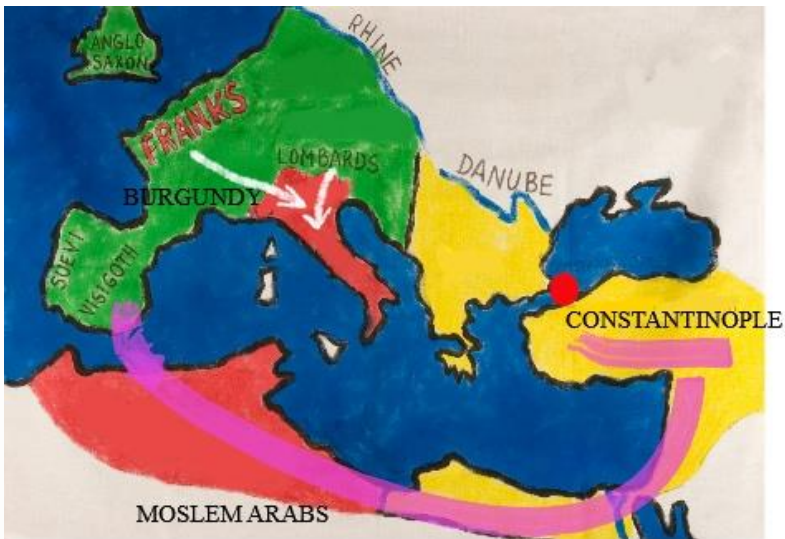
The three non-trinitarian tribes disappeared from history, so there was no effective opposition to the Trinity doctrine. Luther's Reformation would only come almost 1 000 years later. So for close on 1 000 years the Popes preached Trinity and there was no-one of great importance to argue against them. In that time the belief in Trinity was thoroughly established by its endless repetition. Thus the Protestant reformers would leave the Roman Catholic church but take the Trinity doctrine with them. Today, in the last church age of Laodicea, the Trinity doctrine is one of the very few doctrines that unite the vast majority of the churches with the Roman Catholic church.

Then in 568 AD the Lombards invaded Italy. Thus a whole new church age would start soon afterwards with the Pope getting involved with the barbarians. Slowly the Lombards began to be more of a threat to the Pope.

In 634 AD the Muslim Arabs erupted out of the Arabian desert and conquered the Middle East and North Africa and Spain. The eastern emperor at Constantinople was too busy blocking the path of the Muslim Arabs and was unable to defend Rome, so the Pope was forced to revert to a very cunning trick of political involvement amongst the barbarian tribes. The Pope claimed that he had the power to anoint a man as king. This became known as the divine right of kings whereby they claimed that God wanted them to rule as kings. The Pope would anoint a man as king so that only his family could be legally kings after him, and in return, he would defend Rome against the other barbarians. Very cleverly, the Pope chose the strongest barbarian tribe, the Franks who were in the north of Germany and France.

Pepin, who was mayor of the Franks, then forced Childeric, king of the Franks, into a monastery and had himself proclaimed king of the Franks with the support of Pope Zachary in 751 AD.

In return king Pepin came into Italy and beat up the Lombards who were threatening Rome.



Peppin then gave a lot of Italian territory to the Pope which was called the Papal States. This is shown by the beige colour on the map below.



The Pope was now a king-maker amongst the barbarians and a land owner. This gave him great political clout and prestige. The military power of the Franks enabled him to defeat his opponents.

Three horns had been eliminated and the little horn of papal power was growing.

A huge mistake of this age was thinking up survival doctrines in order to cope with a society that was collapsing.

The dominant Roman Catholic church leaders kept modifying Scripture and adding to the Bible to combat their rapidly changing circumstances and meet the needs of the changing times. They often achieved short term gains which later became long term disasters as far as Bible truth is concerned, as they kept having to move further and further from the teachings of the apostles in order to hang on to their political power and their control and influence over other churches and people.

But there were always lesser known Christians in various places and at different times who depended on their deep personal relationship with Jesus and did their best to regard the New Testament as a permanent pattern for the churches. Departure from this pattern had disastrous consequences, and the strength of this true church was their ability to remain true to the pattern and principles contained in the Scriptures. These churches at times were dispersed or degenerated, but similar ones then appeared in other places. Thus the true witness to the saving power of Jesus was always to be found somewhere as there was no organised union of these churches since there was no suggestion in the Bible that one church should control another. Their unorganised unity and mobility enabled these churches to survive persecution. Gathering the people around the written Bible as their centre of unchanging guidance enabled truth to disappear in one place and time and then re-appear in another place at another time as God's Spirit revived new believers.

The size of these churches were unimportant to them.

MATTHEW 18:20 For where **two or three are gathered together** in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

But the Roman Catholic church put their emphasis on having the biggest church and being the most important church. Bishop Siricius (384 – 399 AD) had been the first Roman bishop to assume the title of **Pope** which in Italian and Latin is “papa” and in Greek is “pappas” which all mean “father”. But Jesus said we must call no man “father”.

MATTHEW 23:9 And **call no man your father** upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

By 400 AD the bishop of Rome was taking one-quarter of the money collected by the Roman church.

By the time of Leo I (440 – 461 AD) the bishop of Rome had adopted the title of the pagan chief priest **Pontifex Maximus** (also called Pontiff). Leo wanted the bishop of Rome, now also called the Pope, to be the supreme bishop of all the churches. Leo regarded Papal authority was being the authority of Saint Peter himself. As Pope he claimed he was Peter's representative and spokesman. He alone claimed to be the guardian of orthodox religion.

In 452 he somehow persuaded Attila the Hun not to attack Rome. So the retreat of the Huns gave a great boost to the Pope who was the only man who could save Rome from the murderous Huns.

But three years later Gaiseric the Vandal plundered and sacked Rome for 14 days. Pagan Rome was dying but the Roman Catholic church was becoming more and more important. Getting no help from the western Roman emperor, the Pope was getting more involved in running the city of Rome.

Augustine (354 – 430 AD) was probably the most influential Christian writer of his time. He was appointed the bishop of Hippo in North Africa in 395 AD. The fall of Rome to Alaric the Goth in 410 AD when the Goths plundered the city alarmed Augustine, and he reacted with a book called “The City of God”. If the greatest city on earth (Rome) could fall, he felt obliged to point people to some definite earthly institution that would survive and he chose the Roman Catholic church that people could cling to in chaotic times. His choice seemed justified because the Roman Catholic church was the only Roman institution that survived the breakup of the Roman empire. For instance, the centre of Roman life and entertainment for 390 years was the Colosseum, the world's largest amphitheatre, built between 70 - 80 AD and today it is a ruin. 400 000 people and a million animals died in that blood drenched structure which is a sad legacy of Rome's great engineering skills. This awful slaughter, for the spectator's amusement, justified Daniel's description of the Roman empire as an awful beast. But the Lateran palace, given to the bishop of Rome in 312 AD, remains the official residence of the Pope to this day.

To really make his case that the Roman Catholic church was the world's greatest church, Augustine developed the doctrine of salvation by the Roman church only. Only the Roman church offered the sacraments that can save people.

Augustine took salvation out of the hands of Jesus as our Saviour, and put salvation into the hands of the Roman Catholic priesthood and bishops.

He elevated a system of human religious leaders between the sinner and the Saviour. This was a return to the failed priesthood of the Old Testament.

Nicolaitanism, the elevation of a holy man above the congregation, was developed into a doctrine by Augustine.

Then they put idols in the Church, put a priest in a confession box who you must confess your sins to, and then they ordained a Pope to be the head of Christianity. That is the Gospel of Judas. Then after that, they built schools and educated the preachers instead of having them inspired by God. Then they gave them doctorates, PhDs. The early apostles never built a Bible school.

In his zeal for church unity, Augustine demanded that there be no differences in doctrine or rituals. He saw the Roman Catholic church as an earthly organisation that alone could save people.

He thereby outlawed every other religion.

Thus he was happy that force, pain, and punishment should be used to compel dissenters to join the church.

His intentions were good but having departed from Scripture in his methods; he gave rise to a vast and ruthless system of persecution, torture, and murder. Some historians refer to him as the apostle of persecution. The harmful effects of the error that he taught gave rise to unspeakable misery and cruelty. Tens of millions of people who opposed the Roman Catholic church would be brutally murdered in Europe as well as 15 million Indians in South America, Mexico, and Cuba where the Spanish conquerors landed in the 1500s.

In 321 AD the Roman emperor Constantine legalised donations of land to the church in people's wills. The church soon became a considerable property owner.

Wanting to make Constantinople (built between 225 and 330 AD) a Christian city, Constantine confined the imperial title of Pontifex Maximus (Pontiff or high priest of the Babylonian mysteries) to pagan Rome. This title was finally transferred to Pope Leo I around 450 AD.

Constantine was convinced that God would punish him if there were any splits in the Christian church that disturbed the unity of the church. Thus he felt obliged to use his political power to punish any dissenters and enforce what he claimed were God's laws. The church and state were marrying in an unholy bond. The emperor decided which doctrine was the official religion, even though this required changing what was written in the Bible. Then the iron force of the Roman empire would impose these beliefs on to the people who only had one option, and that was to submit to the Roman Catholic church. Constantine gave the beautiful Lateran palace on the Caelian hill to the bishop of Rome as his official residence together with huge grants of money which made Roman Catholicism a heavily state subsidised church, with the emperor as its head.

This was the next big mistake. Jesus, the Word, was no longer the Head or Absolute authority of the church.

The politician Constantine took over the headship of the Roman church which became the official church of the Roman empire. With the approval of the church majority, he took upon himself the authority to punish and exile anyone who disagreed with the official Roman church. This was a key decision. The church that had been persecuted for about two and a half centuries now took the first step towards becoming a persecutor.

After the Nicaean council of 325 AD, Constantine ordered a severe persecution of those who continued to observe the Christian Passover on the 14th of the first month when it is full moon. Even today it is very seldom that Easter gets celebrated on the full moon.

Constantine banished or exiled those who disagreed with the Nicaean council's decisions.

Men sharpened their ideas to justify themselves for persecuting others.

Theodosius became emperor in 378 AD and issued laws to persecute pagans, and then later his laws condemned anyone who disagreed with the Roman Catholic church. The official Roman Catholic church was indulging in persecution, less than one hundred years after being persecuted. This was the fruit of the church merging with politics.

St Augustine (AD 354-430) taught that error has no rights. According to Augustine, coercion using "great violence" was justified.

He made a distinction between unbelievers who persecuted because of cruelty as against Christians who persecuted because of love. You could kill and torture Christians as long as you loved them.

He also found a way to avoid churchmen getting blood on their hands: dissension against the Church amounted to dissension against the state, so anyone condemned by the Church should be punished by the state.

In 385 AD the Spanish bishop Priscillian was executed for heresy by emperor Maximus at the request of the Spanish bishops. This opened the floodgates of murder.

Pope Leo I (440 -461 AD) commended the Emperor for torturing and executing heretics on behalf of the Church.

The Christian Emperor Justinian issued severe laws against heretics in AD 527 and 528.

From St Augustine onward for well over a thousand years virtually all Christian theologians agreed that heretics should be persecuted, and most agreed that they should be killed.

St Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274 AD) thought it virtuous to burn heretics and favoured the option of burning them alive. He also wrote,

“With regard to heretics two points must be observed: one, on their own side; the other, on the side of the Church. On their own side there is the sin, whereby they deserve not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be severed from the world by death. For it is a much graver matter to corrupt the faith which quickens the soul, than to forge money, which supports temporal life. Wherefore if forgers of money and other evil-doers are forthwith condemned to death by the secular authority, much more reason is there for heretics, as soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated but even put to death”. Saint Thomas Aquinas

The murder machine was building up speed.

So the seed of persecution, planted by Constantine and watered by Pope Leo I would grow into a murderous torrent during the Dark Ages and the Counter-Reformation that opposed Martin Luther.

From around the turn of the millennium executing heretics became ever more common, and the grounds for doing so ever more unlikely. A group of Christians at Goslar in Germany who declined to kill chickens were executed for heresy in 1051.

People thought Constantine was wonderful for “bringing all of the pagans into Christianity.” But Constantine was a sun worshipper who was only baptised on his deathbed and who only “succeeded” in “converting” the pagans by putting Christian labels on their unbiblical customs and observances.

The church means “called out” of the world as she separates unto Christ.

The union of the Roman Catholic church with the State gave the church political power.

No longer subject to her Lord, the Roman Catholic church exchanged spiritual power with Jesus for earthly authority. Her short term advantages were great as the Roman church gained wealth and civil political power as well as being able to persecute her religious opponents. But the Roman Empire to whom the church had sold her soul was in decay and would finally disintegrate in chaos in 476 AD.

Tertullian (about 160 -225) first used the word Trinity (“trinitas” in Latin) to describe three separate persons who shared a common “substance”. But according to him, only God the Father was properly God. The Jehovah Witnesses have a similar doctrine for the Godhead.

Constantine called a Council in the city of Nicaea (just north of Pergamos) to finalise the church viewpoint on the Godhead. The church was now trying to see all three Persons of the Godhead as being equally God.

Constantine introduced the unscriptural word “essence” from Greek philosophy. This is a nice fuzzy word that has no precise meaning. The three Persons were each God because they had the same essence (whatever that means). The 318 bishops were trying to describe an invisible Spirit in human terms. This was impossible since no-one knows what “spirit” is. We all have a spirit of life in us but we have no idea what it is or how it works. This unknown spirit of life gives us each personality, but we still have no idea what personality actually is.

We cannot describe the higher dimensions of the Spirit in terms of our human vocabulary which just does not have the words to describe it.

II CORINTHIANS 12:4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard **unspeakable words**, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

I CORINTHIANS 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, **neither have entered into the heart of man**, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Thus we cannot even imagine what Heaven is like. How much less can we begin to imagine or describe what God is like?

So trying to describe God is beyond any human ability. God is a Spirit and we do not know what a Spirit is nor do we know how a Spirit works.

So Constantine, inspired by Satan, forced the church into the realm of deep mystery by telling them to describe God. In their arrogance, the bishops thought they could do this. Some mysteries can be solved by hiding the truth behind a symbol.

A woman symbolises a church. So the woman on the beast in Revelation 17 is a church. If we have the correct interpretation of the symbol, then we reveal the mystery.

But other mysteries cannot be solved by us. What the seven Thunders uttered in Revelation Chapter 10 was not written in the Bible. So we have no symbol to interpret, and thus we cannot reveal this mystery because it is not written in the Bible.

Thus the only mysteries that man has a chance of revealing are those that are written in the Bible.

The extremely cunning trick, perhaps his most successful fraud of all time, that was pulled off by Satan was when Satan used Constantine to force the church bishops into describing the invisible God by means of unscriptural words that were borrowed from Greek philosophy.

As an illustration of this point let us consider energy which is invisible. So scientists have absolutely no clue what energy is. All they can say for sure about energy is that it is a number that comes out of various calculations. We can calculate energy. We can develop a formula to tell us how much energy is present. But what is that energy? We have no clue.

Trying to describe the invisible is humanly impossible and leads to mistakes. We speak of “forms” of energy. But the word “form” implies some shape. However, invisible energy has no shape. So it is wrong to speak of a form of energy. Energy is just formless energy. No other word can really describe energy.

God is a Spirit, and we do not understand spirits. We cannot see spirits. So we should just stay with what the Bible says about God.

But in trying to describe the invisible God the bishops referred to the cleverest of people, the Greek philosophers, to get some ideas. The Greek philosophers, being pagans, had picked up various ideas from the two most ancient pagan civilisations, Babylon and Egypt, whose ideas had influenced all the other pagan civilisations. These were bright people with very brilliant ideas. But being clever does not mean that an idea is either good or true. Clever men invented the atomic bomb but atomic bombs are not a good invention and humanity would be better off without them.

Divine threesomes abound in the religious writings and art of ancient Europe, Egypt, the near east, and Asia. These include various threesomes of male deities, of female deities, of Father-Mother-Son groups, or of one body with three heads, or three faces on one head.

Babylon and Assyria are in the same area and shared many common beliefs. Babylon conquered Assyria just before Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold in Daniel’s Gentile image, came to power. So Assyria with its pagan ideas was then part of Babylon. The head is where we think. Nebuchadnezzar combined Babylonian and Assyrian thinking into one clever religious scheme.

The next map shows Assyria being close to Babylon. The green portion on the map was the kingdom of Babylon.



The earliest carving that refers to a trinity of gods was found in Assyria. It shows a dominant god as father with two other heads representing two other persons in the godhead. The godhead itself is symbolised by the shape of a bird.

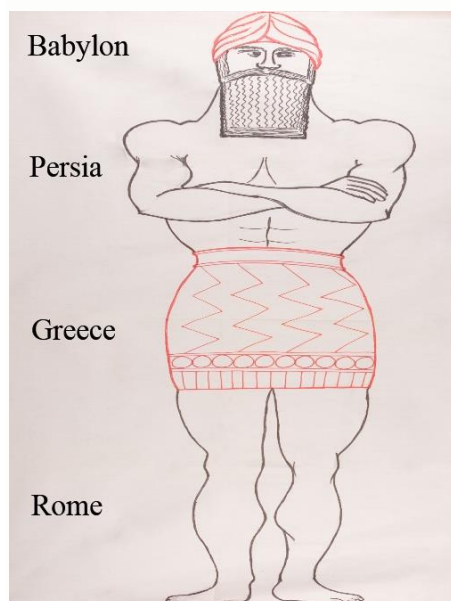


There were many kingdoms before the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar.

Why did Daniel's image start with that Babylonian kingdom? Because the Babylonian priesthood absorbed the Assyrian trinity and the high priest of the Babylonian mysteries was now infected with this pagan superbug or infectious religious virus. Daniel felt that this pagan trinity belief was the most dangerous idea to germinate in the Old Testament and like any good doctor, he planned to follow the infectious path of the Babylonian mysteries with this trinity-concept, that was still pretty rough and not yet well packaged for distribution. But it was still early days, and the Greeks were still to come a few hundred years later, and they would polish up the idea and make Trinity an acceptable Godhead for Christians to believe.

Until then the Pontiff or high priest of these Babylonian mysteries needed a place to lie low when Persia conquered Babylon, so the high priest Attalus fled to Pergamos. Pergamos thus gives its name to this third church age. By 323 BC Alexander had conquered the Persians and called himself god. Then Pergamos was taken over by one of Alexander's generals called Lysimachus who also claimed to be a god-king. His successors in Pergamos were the high priests with their elaborate robes and Babylonian ceremonies, who now also claimed to be god-kings.

The last god-king-high priest of Pergamos, Attalus III, gave his kingdom to Rome in 133 BC. Only then were the mysteries able to infiltrate the church when Pope Leo I, around 450 AD, began to be called Pontiff or high priest of the Babylonian mysteries.



Daniel's vision of the Gentile statue tracked the mysteries of Babylon through the Old Testament. John the Revelator would then, in the New Testament, track their infiltration into the Christian church which would finally be labelled as Mystery Babylon with her harlot Protestant daughters.

Plato, the famous Greek philosopher, invented the word Triad. He claimed that there is a “threesome” quality about nature.

Sky, Earth, Water Sun, Moon, Stars Create, Maintain, Destroy

Thus Plato wanted to describe the pagan idea of god in a three-fold manner, called a triad which Tertullian (about 155 – 240 AD) in Carthage translated into Latin as “trinitas”.

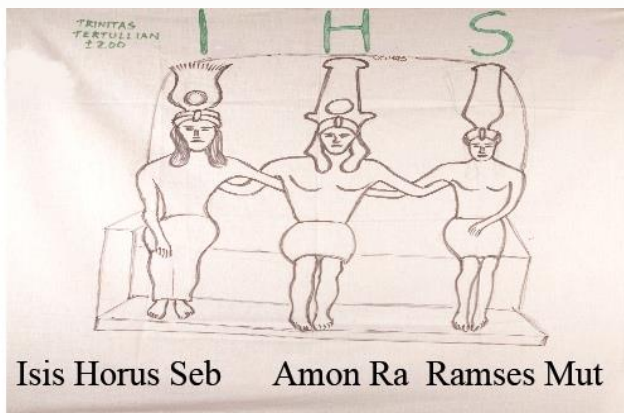
Greek philosophers used the unscriptural expressions “one-in-three” and “three-in-one” which grew into the unscriptural “one God in three Persons”. Constantine, again referring to the Greek philosophers, added the unscriptural word “essence”. Father and Son were of the same essence. This is actually meaningless since we have no idea what a Spirit is. We cannot even say accurately what “essence” means. Jesus then became the unscriptural “second Person of the Godhead”. The bishops simply abandoned Scripture as they added more and more unscriptural statements in their attempts to describe the invisible God. The Trinity doctrine was endlessly modified as the Roman Catholic bishops developed the idea over several centuries.

But they had plenty of illustrations from pagan trinities.

Egypt developed many trinities usually shown as three people on one throne. Three-people-in-one-god.

Isis, Horus (or Osiris) and Seb (or Set) was one Egyptian trinity.

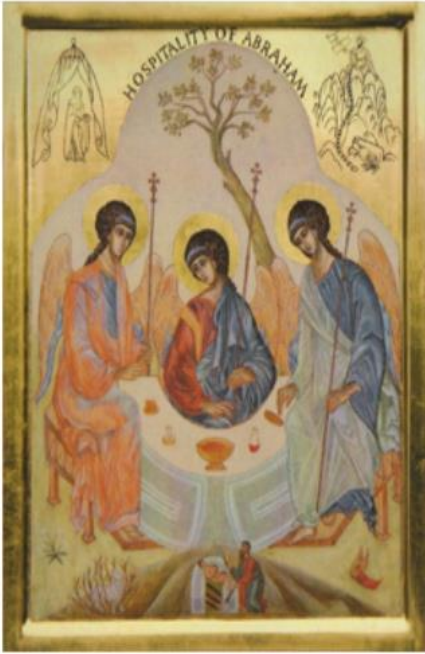
Amon Ra or Amun Ra, Ramses, and Mut was another Egyptian trinity.



This is not a good model for Christians to follow. We are not allowed to picture God sitting on a throne and then have a Saviour (Who is Jesus) either sitting or standing beside Him.

ISAIAH 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

But the next picture is a church painting to represent the Trinity. It copies the Egyptian style. Yet this is how most Christians today picture the Godhead.



Three heads on one body was another attempt to describe one-god-in-three-persons, as is seen in this Hindu carving.



Babylon : Anu Enlil Ea
Hindu : Vishnu Brahma Siva

So what the Roman Catholic church developed was this pagan idea, brilliantly clothed in Christian language. Christianised paganism.

The Roman Catholic church became known as baptised paganism.

JOHN 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time;

So our paintings of God are a waste of time.

The celebrated artist of the Chick tracts describes the Godhead this way:



Notice, like the bird shape in the Assyrian trinity, the use of a dove to describe the Holy Spirit.

God the Father has no face which is very awkward for a Person.

A dove is not a person. This picture looks like two Persons. Thus attempts to show the Trinity are very unsatisfactory.

JOHN 5:37 And the **Father** himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, **nor seen his shape.**

Imagining God, who is a Spirit, as having some shape is contrary to Scripture. We must not do that.



Then Chick uses a bit more sense and goes for three lights to symbolise the Godhead, with an angel standing behind them. But the Bible says God is Light, not three lights. So the Trinity just does not fit into the Bible.

I JOHN 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, **that God is light,**

This triple light of the Chick picture represents a single light that is blurred and out of focus. Out of focus with Scripture that does not say that God is three lights.

So however you picture the Trinity, it just does not fit into Scripture. Thus it became a brilliant mystery to inject into the Christian church at the council of Nicaea. No-one could explain the Trinity then, and no-one can explain it now because all the statements like “God the Son” or “God the Holy Ghost” are unscriptural and yet “God the Father” is Scriptural. But the Trinitarians cannot tell us why this is so.

By this time the bishops were arguing that Father and Son must be two separate Persons but somehow still be one God. This is a concept that has never been resolved nor understood to this day and still remains a mystery. Thus the name Mystery Babylon began to be applied to the Roman Catholic church.

The great historian Gibbon said, “Christianity conquered paganism, but then paganism corrupted Christianity”.

In order to describe the doctrine of the Trinity, the Catholic church had to develop her own words and vocabulary with the help of certain ideas of philosophical origin. *Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

According to the Trinity doctrine, Father and Son are co-equal in the Trinity.

But the Bible contradicts this statement.

JOHN 14:28 ... for my Father is greater than I.

According to the Trinity, God the Father is a different Person to the Holy Spirit.

MATTHEW 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: **for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.**

The person who places the male seed in a woman's womb is the father of the child.

Thus the Holy Ghost, who created the Seed in Mary's womb, must be God the Father. The Child, Jesus, as a Human being, cannot have two fathers.

The Trinity doctrine claims that Christ dwells in the Godhead as the second Person of the Godhead.

But the Bible contradicts this by taking the fullness of the Godhead and placing all of God in Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

: 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Paul also warns us not to be led astray by philosophy as he could foresee the devastating effects of Greek philosophy on Christian thinking as it leads us away from what is written in the Bible.

If God is three separate Persons, then what is the Name of God?

In other words, What is the **one** Name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

If you believe that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate Persons, then you cannot find one Name for all three of them. Thus effectively you have no Name for the Christian God.

That is one of the reasons that Muhammed rejected Christianity and stressed that the name of the Muslim God is Allah. His logic was obvious. God must have a Name.

It is 1 700 years later, and the church has still been unable to find one name for God.

"The second Person of the Godhead" is an unscriptural statement.

"The third Person of the Godhead" is an unscriptural statement. This third Person is the Holy Ghost and He has no Name in the Bible. Three Persons described by only two Names, Jehovah and Jesus, is not a good fit.

But there is no one Name for all three of them. Thanks to the Trinity, the Christian God has no Name.

This was a big mystery when the mysteries of Babylon entered the church. It remains a big mystery 1700 years later.



A Trinity picture from France. There is no one Name for this Christian God made up of three Persons. Notice the triple crown of the Pope that is worn by God the Father.

Rubens (1577 -1640), the great artist, painted a dramatic picture of the Trinity. God the Father looks like an old man. How long can He last if He shows signs of ageing?



Part of the fuzziness of the Trinity concept is that this picture only represents two Persons as a dove does not represent another Person. The Bible tells us nothing about what the Holy Spirit looks like. Nor what His Name is. So any picture of the Holy Spirit is sheer guesswork. And to represent Him as a dove deprives Him of being a separate Person. Thus the mystery of the Trinity continues to confuse us and confound us. The Greeks loved arguing, whether in defense of truth or in defense of error was immaterial. As long as they could argue. So the Trinity arguments have continued for seventeen centuries and will never cease to be a mystery, but they have successfully lured millions of Christians to believe what is not written in the Bible. As such, the Trinity is probably the single most successful doctrine that Satan has captured the minds of men and women with. And it is all based on Greek philosophy which polished up the pagan Babylonian and Egyptian gods so that they could slip into the mainstream of church thinking.

This Council of Nicaea was probably the biggest mistake in church history.

They adopted a Trinitarian godhead that was based on pagan superstitious religions (For instance Isis, Horus, and Seb were an Egyptian trinity).

They allowed a politician Constantine to assume the leadership of the church by calling a council and then dominating the council.

They allowed this politician to add an unscriptural word “essence”, which had been obtained from the Greek philosophers, to the Christian belief of the Godhead.

Greek philosophy became the foundation of church truth.

This opened the door to more unscriptural words from Greek philosophy like Plato’s Triad, three-in-one, One God in three Persons, God the Son, Second Person of the Godhead etc. Constantine spoke Latin so he translated the Greek word Triad as the Latin word Trinitas, which we call Trinity. The western empire spoke Latin so Trinity became the popular word.

Having decided that God was three Persons, it became impossible for God to have one Name for all three Persons. So the Name of God was discreetly dropped in favour of three Titles, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But no Trinitarian can tell us what the one Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is.

So the Triune Christian God effectively lost His Name.

That is also why virtually no churches baptise in the Name of Jesus Christ, the way Peter told us to do. He had the key to Heaven, not us.

Blasphemy is to take God's Name in vain by using the Name as a swear word. No sinner has ever sworn in the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ is the unfortunate swear word that we hear daily. I have even heard a Muslim man swearing in the Name of Jesus Christ. So the sinners know that Jesus is the human Name of God, when God became a Man. The Christians remain ignorant of this fact.

The most far-reaching mistake from the Nicaean council was that from then on the Bible was officially not the only source of truth. The church was free to add in any extra ideas. Even today Bible lecturers teach doctrines that are not in the Bible. When challenged, they ask if the Trinity doctrine is true? "Yes", reply 99 % of today's Christians. Then the lecturer happily says that Trinity is not written in the Bible and you admit it is true, so now you must accept as true other doctrines that are also not written in the Bible. The Pandora's box of error has opened.

Paul said this process was accursed

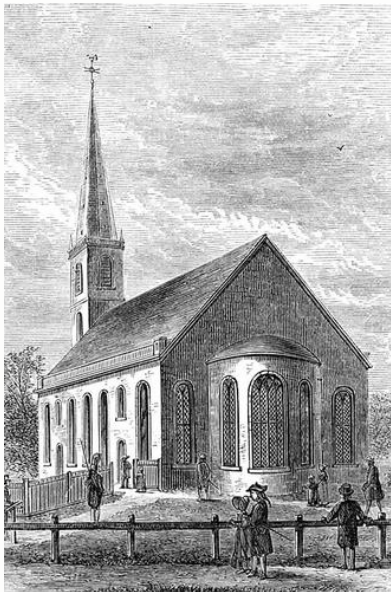
GALATIANS 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

The unscriptural mysteries of Babylon were entering the church. People would argue about the Trinity for centuries and emerge none the wiser. But the main damage that it did was to get people to believe a doctrine that was not written in Scripture. This would open the door to all sorts of other doctrines being believed that are also not in the Bible.

Basically, the door was opened for a flood of paganism to enter the church. To attract the pagans the church gave a veneer of Christianity to the pagan customs. The Chaldeans believed in 40 days of Lent where you gave up something that you liked for 40 days, just before the spring festival of the goddess Ishtar. This was copied by the church who neatly changed Ishtar to Easter. If you perform a pagan rite under a Christian name, then it is fine. So they claimed. Millions still believe them.

Pagans had incense and flowers in their temples. This was copied by the church. It looks so nice, God must be impressed. So they claimed. But they failed to provide a single New Testament example of flowers in a church. Actually, and this is very awkward, try to find an example of a church building that Christians built in the New Testament. They met in houses. The Temple was built long before the New Testament started.

When Constantine stopped the persecution of Christians he gave many buildings and pagan temples to them. Pagans, who invariably look back to Nimrod and his tower of Babel for their inspiration, put a steeple on their temples so that it pointed high into the sky in the direction of where their gods lived, just like the tower of Babel did.



Because the pagan temples that they took over had steeples, when the Christians began to build their own churches, they copied the idea of steeples.

Christians decided to meet the pagans half way by giving Christian names to pagan festivals.



The spring festival celebration of the goddess Ishtar who came down in a large egg onto the river Euphrates and hatched out. Pagans boiled eggs and painted their shells. Their sex orgies were represented by rabbits because rabbits are the fastest breeders. This festival was easily developed into the habits of Easter eggs and Easter rabbits.

These pagan symbols are still the main advertisement, world wide, for the Christian Easter weekend.



Mother and child worship was borrowed from the Babylonian mother Semiramis, wife of Nimrod, and her son Tammuz.

This became Isis and Osiris or Isis and Horus in Egypt. Isi and Iswara in India. Venus and Jupiter in Rome.

Mother and Child statues of Mary and Jesus are still found world wide.

This statue shows Mary with a crown as the **Queen of Heaven**. A pagan title for a pagan goddess.

Semiramis was the original Queen of heaven. The church endlessly copies the pagans.

Semiramis was the Queen of heaven and worshipped as the moon goddess by means of a round bun.

A strip of pastry forming a “T” or “+” was baked onto the surface of the bun to stand for the initial of her son Tammuz. The Roman church chose the “cross” symbol which became the Christian hot cross bun.



The 25 December celebration of the sun god’s birthday (started in 274 AD by the Roman emperor Aurelian) became the Son of God’s birthday. Celebrations in the Roman Catholic church were known as a mass. So the day became known as Christ’s mass. This became shortened to Christmas. After a while many people realized that this had nothing to do with Christ, so they crossed out His Name with a big X and Christmas became Xmas as we know it today.

Then we have the decorated Christmas tree.



JEREMIAH 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, **Learn not the way of the heathen**, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

:3 For the customs of the people are vain: **for one cutteth a tree out of the forest**, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

:4 **They deck it with silver and with gold**; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

:5 **They are upright as the palm tree**, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

We are told not to learn the way of the heathen. But the date of Christmas and the decorated tree come from heathen traditions.

GALATIANS 4:10 Ye observe **days**, and **months**, and **times**, and **years**.

:11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Every **year** there is Christmas **time** on the 25 th **day** of the 12 th **month**. Paul would not be impressed with this festival which entered the Roman church sometime after 350 AD.

The Bible never required us to celebrate birthdays. Only two birthdays are mentioned, those of Pharaoh and Herod. Both committed murder on their birthday. Now we guess a wrong day for Christ's birthday in midwinter when shepherds cannot be out with their sheep because it is far too cold in Palestine with its winter snow. Do you really think that God is impressed?

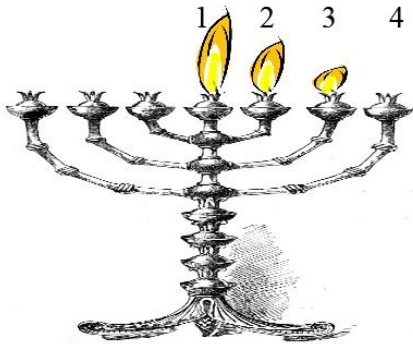
But this pagan birthday is the best known church celebration of the year. Christians are so in love with it that they cannot leave it. They even change the Bible to have the wise men coming into the stable to give presents to Jesus. That is the excuse for all the present buying.

The wise men actually went into **a house** two years later when Jesus was a young child, not a baby. But most Christians reject this Scripture because it contradicts their habit of Christmas presents at the birth of Jesus.

MATTHEW 2:11 And when they were come into the **house**, they saw the **young child** with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Thus the Babylonian mysteries that officially entered the church in 325 AD at the council of Nicaea have most successfully infiltrated the Christian church and are still with us today.

The candlestick represents the state of the church during the third church age. The true light is getting dimmer. Married to politics and paganism, the false church moves further away from the example of the New Testament church that was set up by the apostles. Human leaders dominate the church.



REVELATION 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

A sword combines two sharp edges. The Bible combines the New Testament and the Old Testament. Natural light combines the contradictory behaviour of both a wave and a particle. Jesus in the flesh is a Man, but the indwelling supernatural Spirit within Him is God.

The seven churches in Asia are: Ephesus, Smyrna, **Pergamos**, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.

Six cities have their usual name. But Pergamos has a Greek name. Its usual name is Pergamum. Around 1850 the archbishop of Ireland asked why Pergamos was singled out as the only city to have a Greek name? The answer is that in the third church age (312 – 606 AD) **Greek philosophy** would enter the church thinking at the Nicæan council of 325 AD and after about 200 years of debate and adjustment, finally produce the polished up and super mysterious Babylonian Trinity doctrine that would most successfully take the church outside the Bible.

COLOSSIANS 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through **philosophy** and **vain deceit**, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

:9 For **in him** dwelleth **all the fulness of the Godhead** bodily.

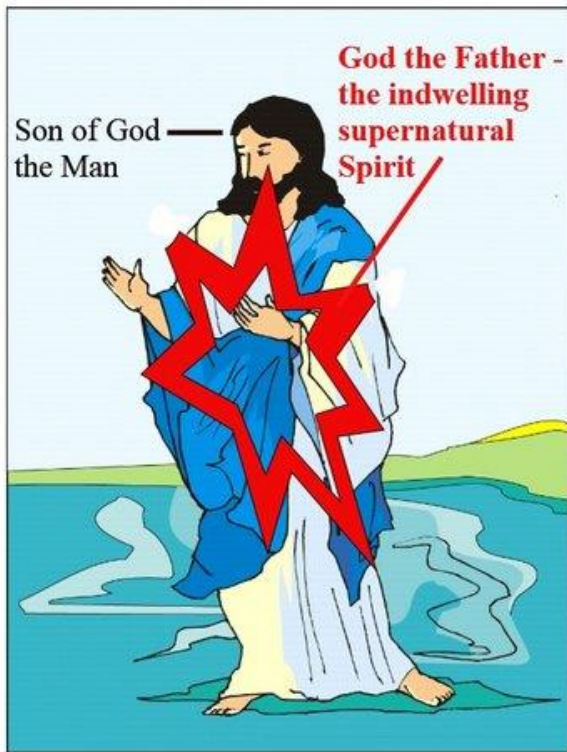
Vain deceit. We are deceived by our vanity thinking that we can puzzle out an invisible God by means of clever Greek philosophy. “Vain” means we have far more conceit than what we have mental capacity.

I TIMOTHY 3:16 And without controversy **great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,**

God made a Human image of Himself and God, as an invisible supernatural Spirit, dwelt inside that perfect Man.

JOHN 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but **the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.**

A man cannot walk on water. Yet Jesus did walk on water which proved that He was more than a Man. The fullness of God dwelling in Him, made Him the Son of God.



A portion of God dwelling in you is thus the only way that you can be a son or daughter of God.

The physical Man Jesus with His Human spirit (which combine to form the flesh) was not all of God, that is why Jesus is called the Son of God and never God the Son.

REVELATION 2:13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

When Cyrus conquered Babylon, the high priest or Pontiff of the Babylonian mysteries fled with his priesthood and treasure to Pergamos. In the east, a king was readily worshipped as a god, but this was not usually the case in the west. Alexander the Great conquered Persia and was regarded, reluctantly by the Greeks, as being a god-king who was to be worshipped because of his brilliant military success. He died and his general Lysimachus took over the kingdom of Pergamos, also claiming to be a god-king. When he died the Babylonian Pontiff took over and became the god-king. Because the original Pontiff who had come to Pergamos had been at Belshazzar's famous last party where the sacred vessels of the Jewish Temple had been desecrated, this Babylonian high priest was regarded by all the pagans as the most authentic Pontiff of all the pagans. The god-kings or Pontiffs of Pergamos were the only legitimate Pontiffs because they alone descended from the last high priest of Babylon. The last god-king of Pergamos, Attalus III, left his kingdom to Rome in 133 BC when he died. Thus Pergamos had been established as the seat of authority for Satan's Babylonian mysteries for about 400 years. The Babylonian mysteries had come to Pergamos to be hidden from the Persians but when the Greeks conquered the Persians, the Babylonian mysteries then had been refined by the cleverness of Greek philosophy. Then these polished up mysteries of Babylon had been handed over to Rome. But no Roman who took the

office of Pontiff was very important until Julius Caesar bribed his way to win the election as the new Pontiff in 63 BC. The elaborate robes and ceremonies from Babylon gave Caesar added prestige. His military fame gave the Babylonian priesthood prestige.

But what stayed in Pergamos was the strong desire to worship a man as god.

This was Satan's real seat of authority over human beings, the strong desire in mankind to hero worship some famous person, and then elevating that person to be equal with God as the "voice of God" or the "mouth of God". A man's quotes replace the Word of God. This worship of a man was common in the east, but not in the west.

ACTS 12:21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

:22 And the people gave a **shout**, saying, It is **the voice of a god, and not of a man.**

:23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

I THESSALONIANS 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a **shout**, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

In the last church age the Message of William Branham is the **shout** to wake up the sleeping virgins. His followers also interpret this **shout** as being the "voice of God" (like Herod was claimed to be the "voice of a god") instead of being the voice of the seventh angel or messenger. They claim that William Branham is infallible.

The Roman Catholics meanwhile believe that the Pope is the infallible voice of God.

The true Bride believes that the Bible is the Word, that God has spoken.

Caesar died in 44 BC and in 29 BC Pergamos got permission to worship him as god. Caesar was thus the first man in Rome to be worshipped as a god. While he was still alive, the Roman emperor Augustus who was the next Pontiff gave Pergamos permission to worship him as a god.

Gratian (reigned 375–383 AD) was the Roman emperor who stopped using the title Pontiff.

From the time of the Roman bishop Leo I (440 – 461 AD), the title of Pontiff or high priest of the Babylonian mysteries had been absorbed into the Roman Catholic church.

"Holdest fast my Name". The true believers either stayed away from the Nicaean council or walked out at some stage.

They knew that all those unscriptural words were not the way to find truth. They stayed with the example of the apostles and baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus rather than in the three titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"My faithful martyr". The false vine, the official Roman Catholic church was starting to persecute the true believers who disagreed with them. Pope Leo 1 complimented the emperor for killing people who opposed the Catholic church.

Denying the Trinity was starting to cost people their lives.

"Antipas" sounds like it comes from Anti pappas. That means anti the Pope as the Pope is called Holy Father. And pappas is the Greek word for father.

MATTHEW 23:9 And **call no man your father** upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Opposing the Pope was dangerous. The father is the head of his home. So the Pope, being called father, was claiming to be the head of the church. But Christ is the Head of the church.

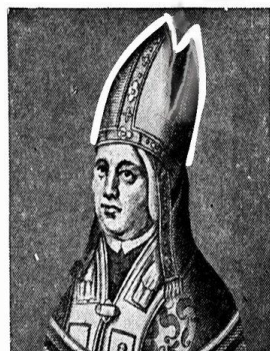
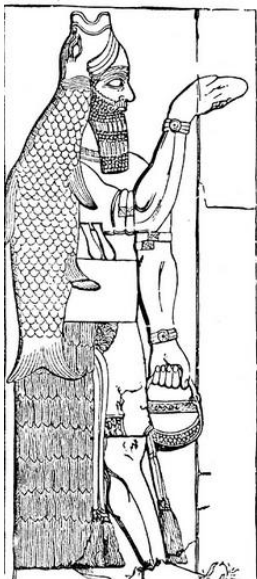
EPHESIANS 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as **Christ is the head of the church:**

REVELATION 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Idols or carved statues were entering the church. Pagan temples became churches but kept their paganised spirit as they corrupted Christianity into paganised churchianity. Statues of gods and goddesses were renamed after Christian saints. A black marble statue of Jupiter became Peter.

The church is a woman. Fornication is a sin committed by an unmarried woman. Adultery is when she is married and commits sin. So fornication means that the Roman Catholic church was not married to Christ. She had no husband. Spiritual fornication means she is involved with men's ideas which plant a seed in her mind, which is the spiritual womb. This seed would grow into a monstrous church organisation during the Dark Ages. Babylonian pagan mysteries had been polished up by clever Greek philosophical ideas. The great pagan-Christian feast was the Nicaean council of 325 AD where the church accepted pagan ideas and gave them a veneer of Christian names. This process would continue as clever

men kept on paganising Christianity until Trinity, Christmas, Christmas tree, 25 December birthday of Jesus, Easter eggs, Easter rabbits, fancy ceremonial robes of the Babylonian priesthood and bishops with a mitre on their heads that copied the fish god Dagon.



Pope, Pontiff, triple crown, church steeples, roosters on church steeples, cardinals, archbishops, metropolitans, indulgences whereby people buy forgiveness for sin, prayers for the dead, baptism of babies, God's Name becoming Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and so the list of unscriptural ideas kept growing.

Balaam was a king, a politician. He got Balaam to unite the Jewish men with Moabite women at a feast of Baalpeor. The Moabites were not proper Jews so the Jewish men should not have got involved with the Moabite women. It was totally immoral. God slew twenty-four thousand Jews. Balaam sold out his gift of prophecy for money and destroyed thousands. Under the lavish money gifts of Constantine, a political emperor, the Roman church sold out their birthright to be Scriptural and fooled around with man-made ideas. These false beliefs would cause millions to lose their souls.

At Nicaea a Trinity doctrine was invented that is not properly in Scripture. It uses all sorts of man-made expressions to justify it. Bible believing Christians should stay away from it. It brings spiritual death to the church as they learn to believe things that are not written in Scripture. Paul never used the word Trinity. He said if we taught anything different to him, we would be accursed. The Roman Catholic church at Nicaea took their first big step along the path towards the Dark Ages. If you fool around with a light, the light will go out. They were now officially corrupting the Bible.

REVELATION 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Nicolaitanism is the elevation of a holy man. A priest or pastor is elevated to be in charge of a church. Then a bishop is elevated even higher to be in charge of a group of pastors or priests. The Roman bishop was then elevated to be in charge of other bishops. An organisation was growing.

The five-fold ministry was elevated above the congregation to form a New Testament Aaronic priesthood. God hated all this human importance. It would ultimately elevate a man to being the "Voice of God" or the "mouth of God" so that a man's quotes would be equal to Scripture or even greater than Scripture.

Constantine lavished money and buildings on the Roman Catholic church which made them submissive financial pawns. A religious organisation was built up with the Roman bishop at the top. Just over one hundred years later this Roman bishop would be called both Pope and Pontiff of the Babylonian mysteries. In addition, as the big boss of the church he would be in favour of persecuting and killing anyone who opposed the Roman Catholic church.

The true believers did not want to be part of this awful Nicolaitan system that dominated the scene and sought the lime light. True believers served God in their own scattered communities, often unnoticed by historians. Occasionally a great man like Martin of Tours was so used of God in his attempts to bring the people back to the original simplicity of the New Testament church that his selfless life and inspirational achievements had a hugely beneficial influence on this age. Satan was building up a centralised, cruel, and despotic church organisation but the Holy Spirit could still work freely in the lives of inspired individuals who centred their lives around the written Bible.

REVELATION 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Nicolaitanism was rapidly building up a false church with the emperor's help. If believers tried to stay in this church, they would get swept along in the flood of error that was drowning truth. The sword that comes from the mouth of God is the Word of God, which is the written Bible. It is a two-edged sword, combining the Old Testament with the New Testament. Bible truth will always oppose human opinion. Jesus defeated the Devil by always quoting, "It is written". In this age the Nicaean council took the people away from Scripture by introducing unscriptural ideas. The only way to please God is to get back to Scripture. The church joined in with politics for the worldly advantages of gaining money and power. As a result the church lost its spirituality. This was the crucial loss because the Bible is God's spiritual sword which means that God prizes the spiritual truth far more than any earthly benefits or ideas. Staying with the Bible is far more important than following clever human wisdom.

True believers saw the lack of spirituality and Scripture in the Roman church and they left. History lost sight of most of them but God did not. True believers are often not in the public eye as their aim is to be faithful to the Scripture rather than to be popular and noticed.

REVELATION 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

The one common sentence to each age is that the church must listen to the Bible. The church must not develop different ideas in order to cope with the changing circumstances of each age. God wants to prove that the same Bible, just the way it is written, can cope with each age and its different challenges. A stone is strong and constant and survives unchanged in buildings, roads, and bridges over the ages. Stones last. Thus a stone symbolises unchanging valour and faith.

God has a new name for each overcomer. These Christians were pushed aside by the official Roman Catholic church. Shunned, and often persecuted and exiled with their possessions confiscated they lived a hard life. Many were killed by the official church. There was often no record of their humble lives and it would seem that they had lived in vain as so often their earthly hopes were just trampled on by the ambitious official church. But then on the other side, they realise that God always has His eye on them. The world forgot their names, but each one got a new name as a white stone was a trophy for the victor in a struggle. Their new name will be a trophy of their courage to remain faithful to the Bible when all around them the church was just heading into paganised Christianity. They stayed true to the baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ. They did not follow the crowd that was fooled into thinking that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was a name. They ate of the hidden manna, the great mystery of God. They knew that Almighty God who had been a Spirit in the Old Testament had now come down to earth and wrapped Himself into a perfect human Body, the Man Jesus.

JOHN 14:10 : but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Jesus Christ is the Human Name of God. That a Man could be God was a hidden mystery. Einstein taught us that light can be a wave (moving like ripples in all directions if you drop a stone in a pond) and a particle that just moves in one direction only (like a bullet). This is a great mystery of Nature.

So Jesus is the Light of the world, as only He can be a Man (limited to one place) and yet the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily as a supernatural Spirit (so He can also be completely unlimited in both space and time).

Thus He is truly eternal Light.

Thyatira (2:18-29) – The Corrupt Church (Poison in the Pulpit)

The Corrupt Church

¹⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: ¹⁹ “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first. ²⁰ Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹ And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

²⁴ “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. ²⁵ But hold fast what you have till I come. ²⁶ And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

²⁷ ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron;
They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—

as I also have received from My Father; ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star.

²⁹ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

- The name Thyatira means "sacrifice"
 - A Greek word meaning "the castle of Thya."
 - An alternative meaning of "sacrifice offering" was suggested by "Hitchcock's New and Complete Analysis of the Holy Bible" and by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum in his book "Footsteps of the Messiah."
 - The first part of the word means continual, unwary, never tiring.
 - The second part means sacrifice.
 - Put them together and this is a place where they never tire of sacrificing something over & over again.
 - This represents the Mass of a Catholic church service.
- History
 - It was originally a Lydian town, bearing the name of Pelopia, then Semiramis, and then Euhippia
 - It was taken by the Persians, and then Alexander the Great, and is ultimately passed to the possession of Lysimachus, one of Alexander's 4 generals.
 - In 301 BC, Lysimachus was defeated by his rival Seleucus I Nicator and it became part of Syria.
 - When Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, his empire stretched from Macedonia to India
 - Seleucus I Nicator was at war with his rival, Lysimachus, in 290 B.C. when he learned that his wife had given birth to a daughter
 - Seleucus I renamed the ancient city of Pelopia in honor his new baby
 - Thyatira is from the Greek word meaning “daughter”
 - Became a Roman city in New Testament times
 - Became an important military city
 - The city was converted into a frontier fortress to guard the way to Pergamos
 - The city which was noted for commerce and guilds (tanners, coppersmiths, potters, and purple dyers)
 - Modern town of Akhisar (population 30,000) – small and unattracted town
- Thyatira was the smallest and least important of the 7 cities

- It had no noticeable presence of political or religious persecution
- Unlike the earlier churches, Thyatira was really more like a large town in its time
- But it was notable as a commercial or business center with many active trade guilds each having their own sponsor God
- The road from Istanbul to Izmir runs through the small and unattracted town of Akhisar (population 30,000) which now occupies the site where once stood the important military city of Thyatira
- In New Testament times, Thyatira stood at the Junction of 3 main roads leading to Pergamos, Sardis, and Smyrna
- The empire had designated it as a military supply post for the Eastern Roman Empire!



- There was a large settlement of mercantile Jews there.
 - When Paul travels to Philippi on his 2nd missionary journey in 50 AD, he meets Lydia – a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:14), who is a ‘worshiper of God’ or ‘God-fearer’
 - Since we know from Acts 16 that there was no synagogue in Philippi, Lydia probably came in contact with Judaism in her home town of Thyatira
 - Acts 16:13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.
- Thyatira was the center of the textile industry in Asia Minor
 - Center for cloth dyeing in New Testament times
 - Known for its dyes, particularly its purple (which was scarlet, rather than purple)
 - It was the heart of the indigo trade. It was one of many color dyes produced in Thyatira.
 - Indigo — the color of blue jeans — was made from an organic compound of plants and was quite rare and very expensive in the ancient world.
 - πορφυρόπωλις [porphyropōlis, por-fu-ro’-po-les] Greek word for “purple cloth”
 - Means “purple” or “red” fabric
 - The colors worn by Roman military officers and the upper classes
 - Produced in one of three ways
 - Caries insect – Produced a dark rose shading into purple
 - Amethyst – Produced a violet into purple
 - Tyrian murex (mollusk) – The highest quality purple dye
 - Has a small bladder containing juice that when extracted is purified and made into varying grades of purple dye
 - Madder root (which is prolific in the area)
 - Fabrics were then double-dyed for consistency, making them quite expensive
 - Thyatira became a well-known center for trade guilds
 - It had become famous in the 1st century for its Trade Unions and Local Guilds
 - Membership in these was compulsory and essential if one was to pursue a trade
 - These were well organized corporate bodies providing specific benefits and taking actions to protect their interests, often owning considerable property
 - Each Guild was under the patronage of some pagan deity and all proceedings and feasts commenced with paying homage to the patron God or goddess.
 - The city which was noted for commerce and guilds (tanners, coppersmiths, potters, and purple dyers)
 - Among the archaeological remains of Thyatira are inscriptions relating to the guild of dyers, as well as inscriptions relating to wool-workers, linen workers, makers of outer garments, leather workers, tanners, and others



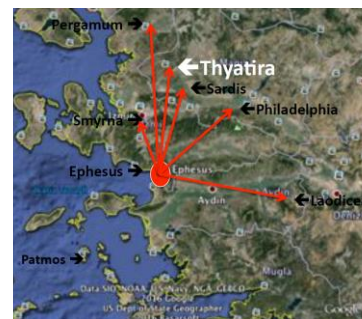
- Compromise - the dilemma of the Christian continues in our own day. Almost every day we have to make a choice between Christ and the world

- Geography

- Small town about 35 miles SE of Pergamum
- Located on the Lycus River

- Objects of worship

- The Emperor
- Tyrimnos - the Thyatiran war hero
- Trade guild gods
 - Ex – Pallas Athena – goddess of war worshipped by the bronze smiths



- Church in Thyatira

- How the church was established is unknown
- The big problem with this church was from within – the development of the Roman Catholic system
 - Thyatira portrays the medieval Papacy from 600 to 1500 AD
 - The goals to establish and enforce the pretensions of the Roman church constitute the major part of the history of the middle ages
 - The Chaldean priest who interpreted the esoteric doctrines of the Babylonian mysteries was called Peter – that is, the interpreter
 - He wore an insignia of the 2 keys of Janus and Sibyl – these 2 keys still appear on the Papal Arms as symbols of spiritual authority
 - The danger to the church at by a tyrant did not arise from the persecutions of Imperial Rome, or from the animosity of Jewish attitudes – Instead it arose from within the church itself, which was even more serious and dangerous to deal with
- “What the Spirit says (is) to the Churches
 - The Nature of the Church Universal – united, yet differing from one another!
 - The Nature of the Church Nationally – united, yet differing from one another!
 - The Nature of the Church Locally – united, yet differing from one another!
 - The Nature of the Church Personally – united, yet differing from one another!
 - Cultures Differ. National Traditions Differ. Race Differs. Demographics Differ – But the Holy Spirit of God Unites !





Greeting

	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
Thyatira (2:18-29) Misguided; Wrong doctrine	Deeds, love, faith Patient endurance; Faithful service; Constant improvement	Tolerates cult activity, idolatry, and immorality; In darkness; Misguided	Judgement is coming – Repent! Hold fast until I come - keep the faith.	Authority to rule over the nations; gift of the morning star

*18 "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:
These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.*

- In his greeting the Lord calls himself the “Son of God”
 - He draws attention to his eyes “like a fiery flame” and his feet “like polished brass,”
 - **Rev 1¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man ... His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace**
 - Stresses his divine authority over all any pagan gods.
- **eyes are like blazing fire** – Speaks of God’s active holiness and purity
- **feet are like burnished bronze** – Speaks of God’s active judgment and righteousness
- The Collective Meaning Is This; That God is warning the church at Thyatira against its allowance of sinful conduct within the “fellowship of the saints”
- Fasti by the Latin poet Ovid (Published in A.D. 8)
 - A 6-book poem in elegaic couplets, in which the poet interviews numerous Roman gods, who explain to him the origins and customs of various religious festivals, often noting the trade guilds associated with them.
 - For a craftsman in Thyatira, membership in a trade guild was essential to both economic and social life

- Trade guild members (both pagan and Christian) were expected to take part in the religious festivities associated with their guild

Commendation ☺

19 I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

- Jesus names 5 positives and tells them they are improving
 - *your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance*
 - Works grk: ergon; works, deeds, doings.
 - Love grk: agape; pure affections, pure devotions, pure love.
 - Faith grk: pistis; pledge, proof, continuance.
 - Service grk: diakonia; ministry, care-given, mission
 - Patience grk: hupomone; a remaining behind, a patient enduring: perseverance, steadfastness
- Love and faith are praised in every book of the New Testament.
 - Hope finds its expression in 'endurance'
 - Service is an expression of love
 - We have a subtle allusion to Paul's Corinthian trio of faith, hope and love
- The faith of this church produces good works in them.
 - They don't just claim to be Christians, they do works out of love for Christ and these works are the outward **evidence** of their true faith.
 - It is believed, from the Greek meaning that the phrase "last to be more than the first" relates to the works of Thyatira. Which means that this church experienced spiritual growth. Their faith and works grew stronger (last works more than the first works) as opposed to that of Ephesus, which experienced a spiritual fall.
 - So how is your walk with Jesus going? The Christian faith is a progressive faith and we grow with each step we take. Are you growing in Christ? Are your works of love and service to God improving and becoming more and stronger?
- Jesus took note of their charity and service.
 - During the dark ages, times were hard. Many times when a person was sick, the only people who would care for them were nuns. These were women who dedicated their lives to God and lived to care for the injured, sick or orphaned. To this day many around the world have benefited from Catholic charities and Catholics who genuinely love God. Christ pays attention when people take care of people.

Condemnation ☹

20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

- Even though Jesus commands them for some good characteristics, they had become guilty of not confronting sin within the church and most likely even promoting it.
- *20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess.*
 - Against grk: kata; listed, marked, itemized, recorded
 - Allow grk: eao; to let alone or leave alone. to leave to itself.

- Jesus rebukes Thyatira for "suffering" Jezebel.
 - That word suffering actually means "putting up with".
 - So Jesus is accusing Thyatira for putting up with Jezebel and her teachings.
 - The chief sin of this church – which was fatal – simply consisted of failing to raise a protest against this woman who claimed to be a prophetess who led them into idolatrous doctrines and practices
 - Jezebel brought aberrant leadership and false doctrine – they were playing with fire but couldn't tell that they were getting burned.
- In Bible prophecy, a woman is a symbol of a church
 - The woman in white in Revelation 12 represents God's true church
 - The harlot woman in Revelation 17 and 18 represents an apostate fallen church
- *By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.*
 - Whoever and/or whatever she was, she was a woman in the church at Thyatira that assumed a position of spiritual authority contrary to God's pattern.
 - The name "Jezebel" represents the IMPORTED, corruption from the outside world brought into the church.
 - The Pastor allowed, permitted, looked the other way so she could introduce (slip in, add to) a compromised worship system of prayer, music, studies, activities that are not "God-Approved".
 - This had infiltrated the church in Thyatira. She is not of the servants of God nor the Family of God. This is a Carnal, Messed Up Church and is in a State of Rebellion. (why? because Thyatira had departed from Orthodox Christian Conduct.)
 - "So why is the violation of those boundaries such a big deal? "ONE FLESH", sexual immorality
 - There is great unifying power within the sexual union between the male and female.
 - God designed it to involve not only bodies but hearts and lives.
 - Sex was designed to consummate the lifetime union between a man and woman.
 - Jesus said, "What God has joined together let no one separate."
 - He designed the male / female physiology so that two of the same, yet different could literally "come together" in an act of physical intimacy that joins them together for life as ONE. They "are no longer two, but one flesh."
 - According to God, the act of a male and a female uniting creates a new entity: a family!
 - This results in the recreation of another human that bears the image of God.
 - The human race can only be propagated by the coming together of a man and a woman, male and female and God has said that that is to be within the bounds of marriage
 - Sex is a gift to a husband and wife to not only make their relationship unique among all other relationships, but to be the intimate ministry possible between one to another."

Jezebel

- Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon
 - 1Ki 16 ³¹ And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.
 - The name 'Ethbaal' means 'Baal is with him'
 - He was a high priest of Astarte, Babylonian mysteries in the Zidonionite Kingdom
 - Became king by murdering his predecessor, and ruled for 32 years
- Jezebel and her family were devoted Baal followers
 - Jezebel aggressively promoted worship of the Canaanite god Baal during the time of Elijah and Elisha in 1 & 2 Kings
 - Jezebel was a prophetess of Baal, the sun god
 - She was a temple prostitute - and she loved those pleasures.

- She had 450 Baal prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah (both started in Babylon)
 - 1Ki 18 ¹⁹ Now therefore, send *and* gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."
- She also killed many of the prophets of the true God (1Ki 18:4)
 - 1Ki 18 ⁴ For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) ... ¹³ Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? ¹⁴ And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here." ' He will kill me!"
- Jezebel married king Ahab to seal a profitable trade alliance between Israel and Phoenicia (now Lebanon)
 - According to law, a king was never supposed to marry a pagan priestess
 - When she came into Israel, she brought all that paganism with her.
 - Jezebel was intent in enforcing Baal upon all of Israel
 - She set up temples of Baal and started child sacrifices to Baal
 - Little girls were put up as prostitutes in the Pagan temples – these people were child molesters and murderers
 - She and king Ahab usher in the worst period in Old Testament history.
 - Children – Ahaziah, Jehoram, and Athaliah
- Jezebel and all the males of Ahab's family are killed by Jehu at the command of God
 - See 2Ki 9 and notes on Israel's kings [10. Jehu \(841-814, 12 years\) – Anointed by God](#)
- Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel
 - She married Jehoram – son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah – and corrupted all of Judah as well

2Ki 8 ¹⁶ Now in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *having been* king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign as king of Judah. ¹⁷ He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. ¹⁸ And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. ¹⁹ Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah, for the sake of His servant David, as He promised him to give a lamp to him *and* his sons forever.
 - She was the mother of Ahaziah, King of Judah, who was killed by Jehu at the command of God

2Ki 11 ¹ When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. ² But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were about to be murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah; so he was not killed. ³ He remained hidden with his nurse at the temple of the LORD for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

⁴ In the seventh year ... ¹² Jehoiada brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

¹³ When Athaliah heard the noise made by the guards and the people, she went to the people at the temple of the LORD. ¹⁴ She looked and there was the king, standing by the pillar, as the custom was. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her robes and called out, "Treason! Treason!"

¹⁵ Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders of units of a hundred, who were in charge of the troops: "Bring her out between the ranks and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "She must not be put to death in the temple of the LORD." ¹⁶ So they seized her as she reached the place where the horses enter the palace grounds, and there she was put to death.

 - Killed all of her grandchildren, who were heirs to the throne, to become queen
 - Jehosheba – Joash's aunt, Athaliah's sister – saves Ahaziah's baby Joash and takes him to the Temple

- She was the only female king in all of Judah and Israel
 - She has a reign of terror for 6
 - She is the absolute worst of the bad girls of the Bible
- Athaliah is killed by order of Jehoiada the priest when Joash became king
- Of all the women seen in the Old Testament, none was more cunning, or more daring, or more scrupulous.
 - She obtained lands through inquisition (Naboth's Vineyard, 1Ki 21:7-16)
 - When the prophet Elijah took a sword and slew all 450 of the Baal prophets, he was only doing what king Ahab should have done
 - Any man that committed idolatry, prostituted a girl, or murdered a baby had the death sentence on his head
 - But in these pagan temples, it was ritualized and embraced by Jezebel
 - She polluted the whole nation of Israel
- The reign of Jezebel corrupted both Israel and Judah

Jezebel spirit

- Jezebel spirit
 - Her name is Phoenician for 'un-husbanded' – Even if married, she is the boss!
 - Her spirit is rebellious, self-loving and devoid of empathy
 - Jezebel loves what God hates and hates what God loves
 - Her spirit seeks to use, manipulate and destroy lives
- You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, who teaches and misleads my servants
 - "Jezebel" is probably not the woman's literal name, but an allusion to king Ahab's wife, Jezebel (a vile, loathsome and despicable woman!)
 - Thyatira's "Jezebel" claims to speak on behalf of God, but she is simply another "deceiver" or "antichrist" who is leading people astray.
 - From Revelation's perspective, such teachers cannot be allowed to roam the community anymore than a ravenous wolf can be allowed to roam the village streets.
 - The Lord promises a dreadful judgment on "Jezebel" and on any who follow her.

Jezebel = Sambatha

- Her real name was Sambatha.
- She was a sibyl in the pagan temple of Thyatira.
 - A sibyl is an oracle or "fortune teller".
- She was very well respected in her city. She decided however, to become a Christian and joined the Thyatira church.
 - Then it was a very simple church with no statues or idols.
 - When she came to the church the people were awed by her allure and presence. They knew she would be a lucrative addition to their congregation because she made a fortune telling people their future. They thought her money and influence would really help to win the town to God. She told the people she was no longer a prophetess for the devil, but a prophetess for God.
- The Pastor did not have the courage to resist her. She brought idols into the church by telling people they were to be reminders of Mary. She brought many other mysteries of the temple into the church. Historically this happened. This woman brought pagan influence into the church in this time period.

Jezebel = Roman Catholic Church

- Jesus rebukes Thyatira for "suffering" Jezebel.
 - That word suffering actually means "putting up with".
 - So Jesus rebukes His people for putting up with the abominations that infiltrated the church.

- Many openly submitted to Roman Catholic apostasy and no earnest effort was made to rebuke and stop the tide of evil flooding God's church.
 - In the Thyatira church age, apostasy was openly and defiantly rampant, even more so than in the Pergamos church age.
 - And just as Jezebel in the Old Testament slew the prophets of God, the Roman Catholic Church slew the true Christians who would not go along with her false teachings.
- The chief sin of this church – which was fatal – simply consisted of failing to raise a protest against the apostasy that led them into idolatrous doctrines and practices
- Jezebel – queen of Israel – Babylonian priestess that introduced Babylonian practices
 - It's interesting that Christ says this woman Jezebel calls herself a "prophetess".
 - So this church would be **claiming** to be doing God's work, but in truth it would be a fallen church, doing the work of Satan. She isn't a prophet of God, she is a prophet of the evil one.
 - The Roman Catholic Church claims to be doing God's work, but in reality, as we can see from her false teachings and her history of killing God's people, she is doing the work of Satan.

Babylonian practices still in the Catholic church today

- Rome claims that she is the only true church – she is the spokesman and the Pope is infallible
- But when you begin to study Rome, you will find that the heart of Catholicism is none other than Babylonian worship
 - God wants you to understand that, in the middle of Thyatira, there is a pagan worshipper who claims to be a prophetess of God that lead the church very far astray – with traditions that are still practiced today
- See extremely important detailed notes on [Roman Catholicism](#) roots in Babylonian practices
 - Mystery
 - Eucharist – Round, IHS, Transubstantiation
 - Catholic Popes (Papacy)
 - Mary
 - Catholic Holy Days
 - Indulgences – Works-Based Salvation
 - Purgatory
 - Statues/idols
 - Rosary
 - Confession
 - Baptismal regeneration
 - Extreme unction
 - Cross
 - Cardinals
 - Priests
- The Thyatira name means continual sacrifice.
 - The first part of the word means continual, unwary, never tiring.
 - The second part means sacrifice.
 - Put them together and this is a place where they never tire of sacrificing something over & over again.
 - This represents the Mass of a Catholic church service.
 - We have established this name comes from continual pagan Mass introduced by Jezebel.
 - The early church, due to pagan influences, warped the celebration of the Lord's Supper into a re-sacrifice / re-offering of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice.
- The Mass was the centerpiece of the Thyatira church.
 - The bread represented the body of the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. The Catholic view is the bread is a real Christ.
 - The offering of the Mass is to crucify Jesus on a daily basis for the sins of man.
 - Any time a Catholic priest conducts any kind of service (marriage, funeral, christening, etc...) he has a Mass. Ultimately, what happens at every Mass, is the priest takes the bread prays over it and it

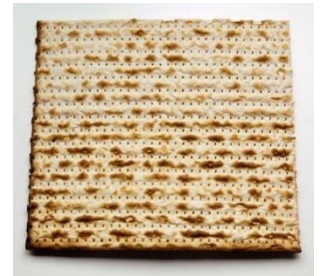
becomes the living Christ. The appearance of the bread remains unchanged. People are told the bread is Jesus Christ dying again for the sins of the world. This is repeated more than 200,000 times a day.

- The Catholics believe after they have prayed over the bread it becomes the living Lord Jesus Christ – the same Christ who walked on the Earth and died on the cross. Protestants say however, the bread is only a symbol of Christ. They believe Jesus has already paid the price for sin and it was only necessary for Him to die once.

- Eucharist – Round IHS communion

- On the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, there are priests. One holds the wine and one holds a plate with three round cross buns. Have you ever wondered why they use round wafers for communion?
- At Passover unleavened, rectangular bread with holes and baking stripes was used.

- The entire Passover meal is a description of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The bread is unleavened. Leaven represents sin. The bread or Christ is without sin.
- The baking stripes represent the stripes inflicted upon Jesus during His beating before the crucifixion – the stripes by which the Bible says we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).
- The holes represent the piercing Jesus received in His hands and feet from the nails, the thorns on His brow, and the spear in His side.
- The wine represents the blood shed as the covering for all sin.



- So why do they use round wafers?

- They mixed pagan mass with Christian communion and the wafers took the place of the bread.
- They are images of the sun god, Baal.
 - A Catholic communion wafer – See the sun god surrounding the wafer?
- The Babylonians worshipped Baal using the small, thin, round wafers as a symbol of the sun god.
 - People in Egypt worshipped sun. On the altars of Egypt were circular sun shaped wafers made from unleavened bread.
 - This bread represented the body of sun god and in middle were initialing IHS (Isis, Horus, Seb – Egyptian trinity).



- Transubstantiation

- (especially in the Roman Catholic Church) the conversion of the substance of the Eucharistic elements into the body and blood of Christ at consecration, only the appearances of bread and wine still remaining.
- Egyptians priests prayed above their round wafers, to make them as holy. Then they told to the people, that miracle had taken place. They said that wafers have changed for the flesh of sun god Osiris. And after the change, the nation ate its god.
- This Egyptian bread god ritual points out perfectly Roman Catholic Church Eucharist, in which catholic priests pray over the bread and changes the wafer to Jesus Christ.

- IHS

- Catholic church of Rome says these letters is for the Latin: "*Iesus Hominum Salvatore*", which mean Jesus Saviour of the people.
- The letters I H S stand for the Egyptian unholy trinity of Isis, Horus and Seb.
- Because teaching of Roman catholic Church is exactly similar as in heathen religions, so maybe IHS letters are "dedicated" also to Egyptian trinity?

- Pope Francis Coat of Arms

- Note the sun and IHS designation



- The main reason that this website is here, is because of the great error and apostasy found within "Christianity" around the world. The Roman Catholic Church has the largest number of members with over 1 billion, and yet the Bible reveals this church to be apostate. And we now also have many of the Protestant churches heading back to Rome, back to the "mother" (Mother of harlots). So while the world is preaching ecumenism, driven by the

Catholic Church, we remain steadfast upon the truth, upon the Rock which is Christ Jesus, and we say, come out of her and stay separate, because God is going to pour out His wrath upon her and anyone who continues to commit fornication with her. Please study the truth for yourself and find out about God's end time remnant church. Follow Jesus, not Jezebel! To those who overcome, God will grant them to rule over the nations with Jesus.

Repentance

- *21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.*
- In His great mercy, Jesus gives Jezebel (this apostate church) time to repent, but she would not
 - In open defiance, Catholicism continues to reject the truth of God's Word and cause many to commit fornication with her and leads them into apostasy. The Roman Catholic Church openly rejected the Word of God and exalted the Popes in place of Christ Jesus and led their followers down the path of great apostasy.
 - It is evidenced Rome never repents. As we look further into Revelation 17:6 we will see Rome continue to be drunken with the blood of saints.
- This church age is the longest. It has lasted from its inception through today. And it has remained corrupt.
 - Thyatira is a vivid picture of the medieval church for a 1000-year period, including the dark ages
 - Within its ranks God has raised pure people to preach the Gospel to her.
 - History tells us what the Catholic church has done with them.
 - She has pulled their fingernails out
 - Tortured them
 - Kept them in dungeons
 - Killed them in any way they could including burning at the stake
 - Catholicism corrupted The Holy Bible to fit her own corrupt doctrine (inclusion of Apocrypha).
 - The Catholic Church murders the protestant.
 - There is a book available called the Foxe's Book of Martyrs. This book gives vivid details of what has happened to Christian's throughout history. Many have been martyred protecting the Christian faith. It is sure to be an eye opener for the reader.
 - If you didn't do what the church wanted, they simply buried you alive
 - The Mexicans did not receive their freedom from European powers until they removed the Catholic church from Mexican politics.
 - Mexican statesman Juarez Benito, a lawyer of Native American descent, helped to overthrow Santa Anna's dictatorship. He limited the privileges of the church and army. He led the liberals to victory in the War of Reform (1858-61). As President (1857-65, 1867-72), he oversaw the transfer of political power in Mexico from the Creoles to the Mestizos. Juarez defeated France's attempt (1864-67) to establish a Mexican empire. He closed all Nunneries & Monasteries because they were used to cloak the European Kings' spy rings. They did however, leave the churches open. One of the churches had a very interesting way of making money. Due to weather and atmosphere the remains of the nuns had mummified. They were showing the remains for a fee of .25. I figured that was worth a quarter. I paid the money and went down into the crypt to the display. One of the nuns caught my attention because her hands were tied and her mouth was open as if she were screaming. I got the impression she had been buried alive. When I asked the guide he said that she was. He continued, "that was 400 years ago - if you didn't do what the church wanted you to they simply buried you alive."

Great Tribulation

²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

- In the context of the letter to Thyatira, it seems best to understand the phrase in its non-technical sense – as denoting a personal time of great trouble for the unrepentant prophetess and her followers
- There are also reasons to take the phrase in its technical sense – meaning the Great Tribulation of Revelation
 - This exact phrase appears both in Matthew's gospel and later in Revelation
 - **Great tribulation** - This exact phrase occurs only 3x - Mt 24:21, Rev 2:22, and Rev 7:14. In Rev 7:14 the Greek literally reads "**the tribulation, the great one.**"
 - Mt 24 ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.
 - Rev 7 ¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
 - Since the encouragement to the faithful in Rev 2:25-26 refers to His second advent, the case for a technical eschatological meaning is valid.
 - In consideration that the main body of the Apocalypse (Rev 4-19) includes a detailed description of this future period, it is exegetically sound to conclude that the threat to the followers of Jezebel is that of being thrust into this period of unparalleled misery.
 - Even if the Tribulation relates specifically to the woman Jezebel in the church at Thyatira, it does not preclude understanding the passage as a type denoting the fate of the apostate church. The apostate church of the last days, which does not participate in the Rapture, remains on earth to enter the Great Tribulation.
- Here is the indication that the Catholic Church would exist right up until the coming of Jesus Christ and the rapture of the church – because he talks of them being allowed to go into the great tribulation. So this church will exist till the end.
 - Other churches no longer exist
 - Ephesus existed into the 1st century – then its lampstand was removed
 - Smyrna existed into the 2nd and 3rd century
 - This church system, joined by Constantine, became divided into Eastern and Western
- I personally see three (3) types of people being addressed here.
 - This is in relation to God's judgment upon the false believers among us.
 - ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.
 - This is in relation to God's condemnation upon the sinning-professor of faith.
 - ²³ I will kill her children with death
 - This is in relation to God's discipline upon the true children of God.
 - ²³ ... and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works
- Kill her children
 - ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.
 - The teaching that this portion of Scripture suggests that there is a group of people within the church that will go through the Great Tribulation Period.
 - This is unnerving truth that shock us.
 - These are letters written in red – these are the red-letter words of Jesus Christ
 - Jesus isn't saying that He is going to kill everyone who was and is a member of this apostate church.
 - There are many who were living in complete ignorance and the truth had not been shown them.
 - God will judge these people according to how they lived up to the light they had.

- The children who Jesus is talking about are those who, after the truth has been shown them, continue to reject the truth in rebellion against God and continue to follow Jezebel in apostasy. Then God's mercy will come to an end for them and they will be killed.
- God's mercy is conditional upon our repentance of our sinful ways and turning to the truth and living by it, through the power of Christ's righteousness. God still has some of His people within the Roman Catholic Church and any other fallen church, which is why He is telling His people to COME OUT OF BABYLON.
- I'm not saying Catholics won't be raptured – all true believers in Christ will be raptured.
 - But sadly, in all Christian denominations and on denominations there will be those left behind because they really did not believe
 - If they do repent, they can escape the great tribulation.
 - The great tribulation will be judgment for their failure to repent – which means that repentance would bring you deliverance or escape from the great tribulation.
- What Jesus wants the Christian in Thyatira to do is repent and hold fast
 - Those in the Jezebel group are committing adultery
 - This probably has the sense of both spiritual adultery and sexual adultery
 - God promises to chasten them, cast her into a sick bed, and those who committed adultery with her into great tribulation.
 - Unless they repent, they will be cast into the great tribulation.
 - I will kill her children with death – with the goal of bringing them to repentance and restoration, but also with the purpose of glorifying himself
 - All the church you shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts
 - To the faithful in Thyatira, God simply says hold fast. They must not stop doing what is good.
 - But to Jezebel and her party, there is no other word then repent – that comes before anything else.
- What can we learn from this today?
 - It is clear that God is not happy with us "putting up with" false teachings and doctrines within our churches.
 - We MUST stand up for the truth and expose any error.
 - And we certainly must not "commit fornication" with apostate churches like the Roman Catholic Church or any other fallen church.
 - There is a great drive to unite the churches today, but we MUST stay separate and not join in.
 - *Rev 14 ¹Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. ... ⁴These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*
 - The spirit warns all who practice or permit such corruption in the churches
 - We must allow the searching judgment and purity of Jesus to confront all such corruption in our midst

Admonition (Call to Action)

24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you): 25 Only hold on to what you have until I come. 26 To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—

27 'He will rule them with an iron scepter;

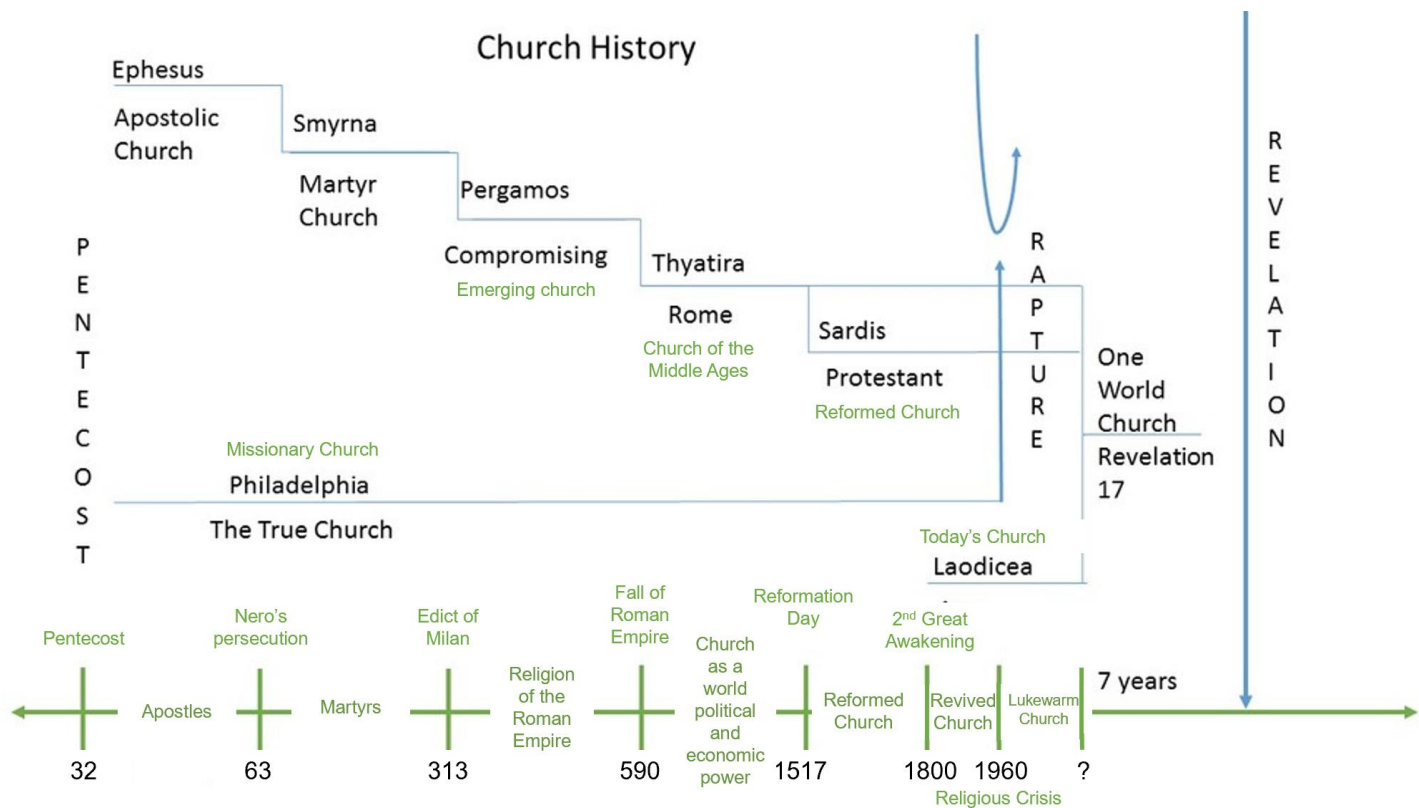
he will dash them to pieces like pottery'— just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give him the morning star. 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- hold fast grk: krateo; to seize or arrested by clinging on to, to grip or strangle. implying that the environment, the atmosphere, the age will become harder and harder
- keeps grk: tereo; to “keep” watching over, to keep guarding, to keep keeping, to keep until it's kept or finished.

- When Jesus said "to the rest in Thyatira" who have not known the "depths of Satan", He is talking about the small groups of people throughout the Middle Ages that sought to remain loyal to true apostolic Christianity.
 - Such people were found both within and outside the Catholic Church.
 - Waldenses and Wycliffe – Particularly important were such groups as the Waldenses on the continent of Europe and the followers of Wycliffe in England. Neither of these groups had the measure of truth that was revealed and proclaimed later in the Protestant Reformation, but they truly lived up to the light that had been revealed to them, and the message "unto the rest in Thyatira" was appropriate to them. Upon them God put no further burden than to be faithful to the light that was theirs, and Jesus says "**HOLD FAST**" that truth which you have!
 - 2 Timothy 2:19 But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The LORD knows those who are his," and "All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil." (NLT)
- *26 To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—27 'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father.*
 - A promise of reward to he who overcomes the threat of this corruption in the church – who do not follow "Jezebel's teaching"
 - 1Jn 5⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
 - Jesus offered a place with Christ in the Messianic Kingdom
 - Rev 1⁵ ... To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever.
 - Rev 20⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I* saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
 - "He shall rule (shepherd) them with a rod of iron; (he will nurture, tend, comfort his own)
- *28 I will also give him the morning star.*
 - He also offers them the greatest of all rewards – Himself (He is the morning star)
 - Rev 22¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."
 - The Morning Star in the Eastern Sky Was and Is the Celestial Announcement that the Night is Nearly Over.
 - There is also a prophetic connection to the Reformation that is just about to dawn.
 - As you go through these messages they not only cover the subject, but they flow with time. This is a promise for something that will happen in the next age. The next age is the Renaissance or Reformation time period. In that age light comes back to the church.

Church History (606-1520)

- The Thyatira period of the church is thought to be during the church "dark ages" when the Roman Catholic Church reigned from about 538 A.D. to the start of the Protestant reformation in the 16th Century.



- Here are some of the major non-Biblical changes in the Roman Catholic Church with coinciding dates:
 - 607 AD - Boniface III made first Pope
 - 709 AD - Kissing the Pope's foot
 - 786 - Worshipping of images and relics
 - 850 - Use of "Holy Water" begun
 - 995 - Canonization of dead saints
 - 998 - Fasting on Fridays and during lent
 - 1079 - Celibacy of the priesthood
 - 1090 - Prayer beads
 - 1184 - The Inquisition
 - 1190 - Sale of Indulgences
 - 1215 - Transubstantiation
 - 1220 - Adoration of Host (Communion Wafer)
 - 1229 - Bible forbidden to laymen
 - 1414 - Cup forbidden to people at communion
 - 1439 - Doctrine of Purgatory decreed
 - 1508 - The Ave Maria approved
 - 1534 - Jesuit order founded
 - 1545 - Tradition granted equal authority as the Bible
 - 1546 - Apocryphal books put into the Bible
 - 1854 - Immaculate Conception of Mary introduced
 - 1864 - Syllabus of errors proclaimed
 - 1870 - Infallibility of the Pope declared
 - 1930 - Public schools condemned
 - 1950 - Assumption of the Virgin Mary
 - 1965 - Mary proclaimed "Mother of the Church".
- As you can see most of the doctrines are fairly new, but the Catholic church acts as if they have always been. They are changing the Word daily to suit their own desires and to manipulate themselves into a place of power. We will see this power in future chapters. The Roman Catholic Church will gather all religions under her, she will be lead by the false prophet, and she will hand the world's religion to the Antichrist. This will unfold in the coming chapters.

Columba died before the 4th church age started. Yet he was the messenger.

Paul taught Timothy how to present the Truth. We aim to present this study with that same attitude.

2 Timothy 2:24

And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient

Columba, the messenger to the fourth church age, died in 597 AD. But the fourth church age only started about 606 AD. How can he be the messenger to that future age?

There are 7 churches mentioned in Revelation chapters 1 – 3. If they only refer to those 7 local churches then they tell us about the good points and personal faults that those people had. Today we obviously have similar good and bad points. However, if these churches refer to 7 church ages then we gain not only an insight into peoples' faults and good points but also gain an impressive panorama of an awe inspiring sweep of church history, told in advance. An insight into the growth of denominational church error as well as God's plans to protect Biblical truth. Quite incredible.

The fourth church age, Thyatira (the name meaning "a dominating woman or church") is the middle age of the seven ages. The middle ages are described by historians as being the Dark Ages. At this time the Roman Catholic church dominated Europe. This was the fourth church age during which the Light of the Gospel went out. Why?

God hates the doctrine of elevating up a holy man, however good he is, in order to for him to be the head of the church.

Thereby the people, the laity, become enslaved to the commandments of man. Jesus Christ alone is the Head of the church. As time moved on the church always fell into the trap of elevating a human leader between the people and God.

The following Scripture summarises the fourth church age.

ECCLESIASTES 7:26

And I find more bitter than death the woman, (a woman represents a church) whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands (the church promises freedom but forces us to conform to her man-made traditions and binds us to her religious opinions): whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her (Columba and his converts); but the sinner shall be taken by her (Pope Gregory the Great and his Roman Catholic followers).

The Roman Catholic church had a subtle plan to bring the world into subjection to her human traditions, which are man-made religious ideas. They were able to produce an inspiring leader, Pope Gregory I, who could command respect in a chaotic world ruined by endless warfare, plague and famine.

From 590 – 604 AD Pope Gregory the Great established the Roman Catholic church on a very firm base which enabled it to survive financially in those troubled times. He was an incredible man with great skills and tremendous energy and compassion for the poor and suffering. All the land which had been donated to the church by wealthy Romans (rather than have the Barbarians confiscate it) was welded together and controlled by him so that its income and agricultural produce was efficiently collected. This saved Rome and paid her debts. Friend and foe held him in high respect. He was a heroic figure who captured the imagination of the Romans as Europe slid into the turbulent dark ages. He died just as the fourth church age started. It was easy to follow such a great and selfless leader.

But, once you follow a man, however great he is, your worship is in vain. Why? Because you have taken your eyes off Jesus Christ and His Bible.

MARK 7:7

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Our biggest mistake is when we take our eyes off Jesus. We do that when we elevate some great man so that we are sufficiently impressed with him, and then desire to follow him and obey him.

REVELATION 2:6

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

REVELATION 2:15

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

Harmless looking deeds in the first church age like looking up to the church leader and following his opinions became binding doctrines by the time of the third church age. By then people were too scared to argue with the leader of the church, and were also too terrified to leave his church. They trusted in the leader and the church for their salvation. So they preferred to simply remained submissive souls, enslaved in a system of man-made ideas.

Nico means to conquer. Conquer the laity. The people are brought into subjection to the preachers.

A human man claims to be the head of the church. Everyone must believe and obey his opinion. This is false.

EPHESIANS 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as **Christ is the head of the church**: and he is the saviour of the body.

The true church only has one Head, namely Jesus Christ. No man must stand between you and God. Only the Man Christ Jesus. A preacher claiming to be the head of any church is simply a mini-Pope.

This was Pope Gregory's first big mistake. He insisted that he, a man, was the head of the church.

This mistake set the scene for the awful Dark Ages. Gregory was a brilliant and dedicated church leader, yet his ministry switched off the Gospel light and Europe plunged into darkness, because he established human leadership as the key to church growth. So the church did grow, but in the wrong way. Though its increase in numbers made it seem successful from a human point of view, its doctrines were not based on the Bible. So it was a spiritual disaster.

Competent though he was, his self-elevation to rule the church just because he was Pope, established a tradition which meant that after him would come many Popes who were far inferior to him in ability, integrity and morality. Some Popes were incompetent non-entities and others were extremely odious and corrupt. But they would all demand the right to rule the church like Pope Gregory I did. Darkness closed in after Gregory's death, partly because of the declining caliber of the successor Popes.

From 590 to 604 AD this best of Popes, Gregory I, became a legend with his ingenious administrative skills and charitable kindness. But despite his impressive good works he effectively set up a system that switched off the Light because he insisted that the Roman Catholic church was the world's most important institution, and the Pope was its supreme and absolute head. Human policies then guided the church into the cold and dirty Dark Ages.

The Gospel light was virtually extinguished as human leadership was exalted and enforced.

Nicholas I, a tough and competent man, was Pope from 858 – 867 AD. He was one of the first Popes to wear a crown to show that he was the equal of kings. This later became a triple crown in the early 1300s to indicate that the Pope was now exalted to rule Heaven, Earth and Purgatory.

REVELATION 6:2

And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

The white horse represented the power of religious deception, because the Bowman had no arrow (he was bluffing). His deeds began as a "harmless" elevation of the preachers above the church members or laity, and this antichrist spirit then grew into a dictatorial rule of the church by its leader, until finally the elevated leader received a crown to indicate the Pope's pre-eminence.

III JOHN 1:9

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

Church leaders who love preeminence do not welcome the apostles or their teachings.

After all, which pastor wants to discover that the word "pastor" is only mentioned once in the New Testament? Thus a pastor has no Scriptural grounds for being the head of the church. There is also no Scripture that says a pastor is a shepherd. So our modern churches are not run on Scriptural grounds.

The preeminence of man impresses us humans, but does not serve God's will.

III JOHN 1:10

Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

No wonder people are scared to disagree with the pastor. He simply kicks you out. The Catholic church calls this excommunication.

It seems that our churches have taken their example from the Catholic church in the Dark Ages. Does not the Scripture say that the Laodicean church is blind? Blind means we cannot see the Light of Scripture.

REVELATION 3:14

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;

:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Pope Gregory's second big mistake was to grant salvation only to those loyal Catholic churches which were in subjection to him.

We humans always feel that "My church is right". But since there are so many differences, not all the churches can be right.

Thanks to Gregory, people did not feel the need to be saved by faith in the Bible anymore, but found it easier to elevate up an important man like himself and then to be obedient to this leader. Then the important leader reassures them that as long as they are obedient to the leader, he will guide them into heaven. Just like today, where we do not argue with our home church leader. If we follow him, he will see us through. Our regular attendance at the "right" church becomes the key to our being "in the truth". Salvation by such works is how we humans fool ourselves.

The philosophy of the Dark Ages was summarized as "No salvation outside the church of Rome." Quite simply, this made spiritual slaves. People who did not know enough about the Bible to realise that their beliefs were actually unscriptural. The blind led the blind. No-one saw the ditch that the church world was falling into.

The Pope was the head of the church, taking Christ's place. He was the final authority, taking the Bible's place.

The Catholic church grew in the Dark Age because Pope Gregory I implemented a brilliantly effective, but totally wrong doctrine.

Jesus gave Peter the keys to open the door to the kingdom of heaven. Peter did this by telling people to repent and be baptised.

ACTS 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Pope claimed that Peter could open the door to heaven and let in whoever Peter wanted to. Basically, Peter decides who goes to heaven. The Pope then made the false claim that Peter had lived in Rome and was the chief Apostle as well as being the Bishop of Rome. There is no history to prove this claim that Peter was ever in Rome. In addition, the Pope, as Bishop of Rome, was Peter's successor and was thus the only man who could wield the power of Peter's keys. If you followed the Pope and gave money or land or military protection to the Roman Catholic church, then Peter would open the door to Heaven for you. The barbarians fell for this belief - hook, line and sinker. This was the single major reason for the barbarians accepting submission to the Pope. So when this highly competent administrator, Pope Gregory I, died in 604 AD he left a legacy of pre-eminence which was based on his integrity and incredible organizational skills. But the Popes who followed him were far less competent and far less worthy than he was, and since they also claimed to be the supreme head of the church (so you can't argue with them) these human leaders, corrupted by all this power, led the Roman Catholic church into the unbelievable sin and corruption of the Dark fourth church age that followed Gregory's death.

Boniface III was elected Pope in 606 AD. He died in 607 AD. But in that short time, building on the reputation of Pope Gregory the Great, he got himself as Pope declared to be the "Universal Bishop". One man now ruled the entire church. Nicolaitanism (elevation of a holy man above others) was now established. This signified the start of the fourth church age, the Dark Age.

REVELATION 2:24

But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known **the depths of Satan**, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

"The depths of Satan"-- The Roman Catholic church left the Bible, followed human leaders and got into a real mess.

Pope Gregory I was the first monk to become Pope. This enabled him to develop an extremely efficient technique to keep the people away from the Light of the Bible. He encouraged the spread of monasteries. Rules for monasteries were organized by the monk Benedict around the years 530 to 543 AD. Monasteries were to be a very useful means of spreading the teachings of the Catholic church through Northern Europe.

The vicious twenty year war from 535 – 554 AD in North Africa and Italy had ruined both countries. The soldiers from Constantinople destroyed the barbarian Vandal and Ostrogoth tribes. Plague and famine followed this brutal destruction and killed millions. One third of Europe died in the chaos as Europe began to slide into the Dark ages.

Then in 568 AD the destructive barbarian tribe called the Lombards invaded north Italy and caused even more havoc. Monasteries became a safe haven where people could find some refuge from the panic and despair of everyday life. Monasteries became a very effective way to control the spread of Catholicism because the monks alone had access to

learning and the Bible. The people outside the monasteries were busy farmers who were largely illiterate, and were totally dependent on the monks for what they knew about God. The Catholic church provided a Latin version of the Bible which only the priests and monks could understand. The people were thus left Scripture-less. By controlling the monasteries, the Pope was able to control the religious beliefs of the people and make sure that they were taught Catholic doctrines and not Scripture. Accordingly, as far as the people were concerned, the Light of God's Word was effectively switched off. Each Latin Bible had to be laboriously written out by hand by the monks. Thus few Bibles were in existence, and those few were mainly in monasteries. Even there they were hidden from the ordinary people because they were written in the unknown language of Latin. Ignorance of the Scripture caused the fourth church age to rapidly sink into a mire of superstition and myth.

Then even more darkness entered.

From about 632 AD onwards the Light of the Gospel went out in the middle East and North Africa (Jerusalem, Antioch, Egypt etc) as the Moslems swept through those areas. The Visigoths who occupied Spain converted to Roman Catholicism around 600 AD so all of Spain also fell under the darkness of the Pope and his Roman Catholic traditions.

So what was God doing as the Roman church led Europe into darkness?

From 563 – 597 AD the Irish missionary Columba established himself on the western Scottish island of Iona or Hy. He had an immensely powerful ministry and thus could not operate in the actual fourth age as his ministry was far too much of a bright and a shining light to the people. He founded 300 churches throughout Scotland where the people became distinguished for their love of God and purity of life.

No dark age would be very dark while this incredible man was preaching and spreading Bible truths. His preaching was like high powered floodlights that really illuminated the darkness. While he was preaching the darkness of the fourth church age was held back as the darkness could not start. Columba was switching on the Light of God's Word.

A light cannot be on and off at the same time. Only when he died could the Catholic church begin to switch off the light.

His teachings spread over Scotland, Ireland, northern Europe and after his death into central England (which was then called Mercia). Small remnants of his followers struggled on through this awful fourth church age. Persecuted and oppressed, they valued the truth more than they valued their lives. But they hung on and laid the groundwork for that formidable and bravest of reformers, Martin Luther, who ignited the fifth church age fire that got people saved by faith and not by works. This one man took on the Roman Catholic church that ruled Europe in a grip of iron.

The fourth church age was a time of darkness, of the Light going out. Thus the fourth church age could obviously not start until the bright light with which Columba illuminated the Bible was finally put out by his death.

In 597 AD, the year Columba died, Pope Gregory I sent Catholic missionaries to England under the monk Augustine. They landed in Kent where queen Bertha, a Catholic princess of the Franks, persuaded her husband to give them Canterbury as a starting place. Then the Catholic monks spent 66 years trying to undermine the work of Columba. In 664 AD, at the council of Whitby which was run by a woman Abbess, called Hilda, they finally converted the king of Northumbria away from Columba's influence because they told him that Saint Peter had the keys to heaven, not Columba. The English fell for this and over the next few decades the Roman church undid much of Columba's good work. By 700 AD the Light in England was mainly out. England then sent Roman Catholic missionaries to Holland and Germany to establish monasteries, and thereby keep northern Europe in darkness and in subjection to the Pope.

The Church Ages - Thyatira, The Fourth Age, 606 AD-1520 AD

The first church age produced churches with a priest or other human leaders.

The second church age produced a bishop who was in charge of the priests or human leaders of the churches in a city. Each city now had its own bishop.

The third church age saw about 318 bishops uniting together under the emperor Constantine as head of the church. Constantine moved east to Constantinople and gave power and wealth to the bishop of Rome which set the Roman bishop on the path to being the main bishop in the western Roman empire.

By 400 AD he was calling himself Pope or Pappas which means Father.

MATTHEW 23:9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

With the Roman empire collapsing, the Pope by 450 AD called himself Pontiff or high priest of the Babylonian mysteries so that he could make inroads amongst the pagan barbarians that were invading the Roman empire.

The fourth church age, since the Roman empire collapsed in 476 AD, forced the Pope to turn to the barbarian tribes who had taken over the Roman empire. This fourth church age saw the Pope first rise to power in Europe and then begin to persecute all those who disagreed with him.

He rose to power by claiming the authority to crown the barbarian kings and convincing them that Peter had the keys to heaven. Since the Pope claimed to be Peter's successor, it was essential for the barbarians to be subject to the Pope. If they disobeyed the Pope then Peter would not open Heaven's door for them.

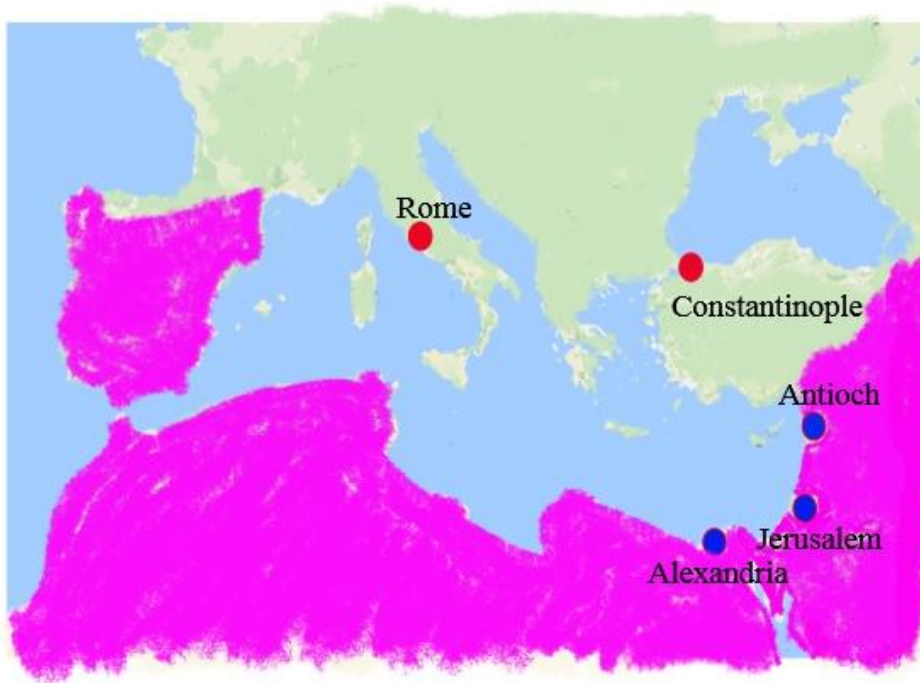
Having married into the political power of the Roman Empire at the Nicaean council in 325 AD to gain political power over her opponents, the Roman Catholic church never realized that the Western Roman Empire was actually crumbling and would disintegrate under the pressure of the barbarian invasions and the stresses of civil wars and the incompetence of weak but cruel emperors. Cast adrift in a chaotic sea of circumstances, the twenty years of fighting in Italy between Greek mercenaries and the Ostrogoth barbarians between 535 and 554 AD, settled nothing other than to devastate the country of Italy which caused famine, plague, and poverty that brought on the Dark Ages. Historians say that tens of millions died. But it did eliminate the non-Trinitarian Ostrogoths from Italy, leaving Roman Catholicism without any real doctrinal opposition in Italy.

The Roman church reacted to its new and unexpected circumstances by very surprisingly clawing its way to political and religious power over the barbarian tribes.

Between 634 – 720 AD the Moslem Arabs conquered Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain. This destroyed the Roman control of the Mediterranean sea where their cities had developed due to sea traders.

The Slavs then cut off the land trading routes to the east.

The purple parts on the next map indicate the Moslem conquests.



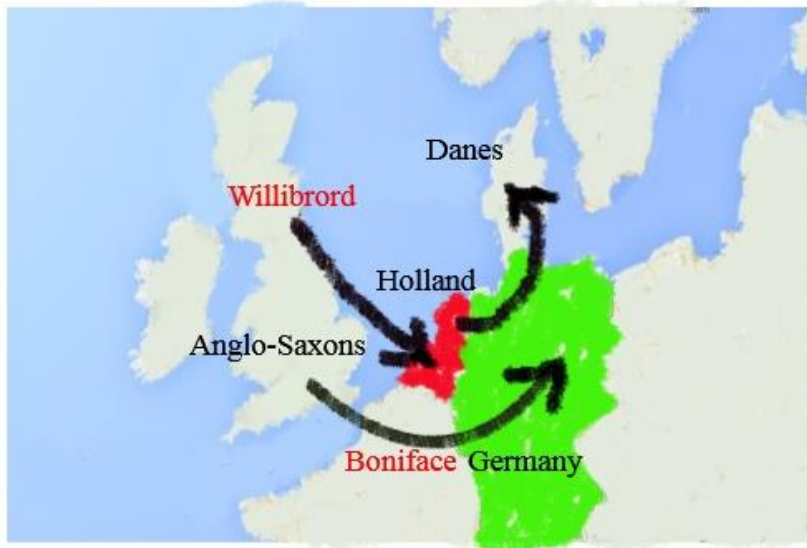
There was no option for western civilization other than to move north, into Europe. The barbarian tribes had their own laws so the Roman empire, which had one law for everyone, broke up and started to form a nation of states as each barbarian tribe had their own laws. When they lost control of the Mediterranean sea to the Moslem Arabs between 634 – 720 AD, the cities that relied on sea trading began to fade and agricultural land became the main source of wealth as civilization moved north away from the Mediterranean sea. Monasteries (also called abbeys or priories or convents) with their schools and hospices became centres for farming and villages grew up around them. The monks were usually scholars who were also trained in certain trades or medical skills. They cleared the forests and began farming so that they

attracted many peasants who followed their example. The first Roman Catholic monastery was founded by Saint Benedict at Monte Cassino, Italy in 529 AD. The monastery way of life attracted many believers who were repelled by the sin and corruption of the official churches and the turbulent social turmoil of the barbarian takeover.

When a monastery was developed, some of its monks would move on and establish a new monastery. In 754 AD the Pope crowned the first barbarian king, Pepin of the Franks. This gave the Pope great prestige and the Anglo Saxon monasteries in north Europe that were under the Pope gained prestige in the eyes of the barbarian people.

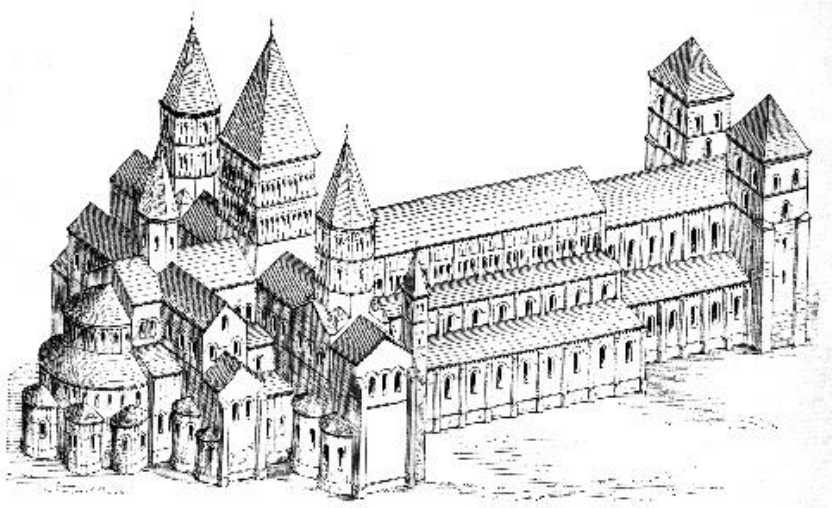
The Anglo-Saxons from England provided a burst of missionary activity in northern Europe. They established monasteries and churches that were in submission to the Pope. Two Anglo-Saxon men, in particular, gave a big boost to the prestige of the Pope and the spread of Roman Catholicism in northern Europe.

Willibrord a missionary to Holland and then to the Danes between 690 – 739 AD spread Roman Catholicism with its submission to the distant Pope in Rome. Thus the Anglo-Saxon missionaries and monks played the major role in boosting the prestige of the Pope in northern Europe at this time.



Boniface a missionary in Germany from 710 – 754 AD established the first organised Christianity in many parts of Germany. The Pope made him archbishop of Mainz, in charge of the German bishops. The independent Frankish churches had become badly backslidden, and Boniface played a major role in reforming them and bringing them into submission to the Pope. Having the distant Pope as the authority figure really impressed the barbarian Franks and they then submitted to Boniface and his Catholic doctrines. The Franks appreciated the chain of command. They obeyed the monks who obeyed the bishops who obeyed archbishop Boniface who obeyed the Pope who obeyed Saint Peter who had the keys to open Heaven's door. It was a nice snug system. This centralised authority was the key to the success of the monastery system of the Dark Ages. Orders were passed down, and everyone did what they were told.

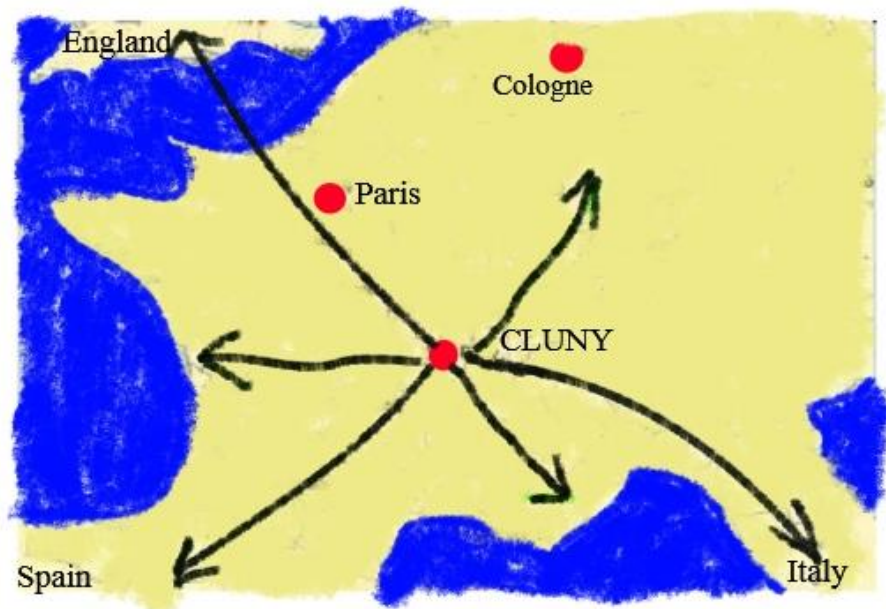
Then in the territory taken over by the Burgundian tribe, from which the name Burgundy in France is derived, came the most famous monastery that was built at Cluny in 910 AD by Duke William in Burgundy.



Cluny monastery in Burgundy

The Cluny monastery (picture from Wikipedia) became acknowledged as the leader of western monasticism.

Responsible only to the papacy, which was in a state of weakness and disorder with rival popes supported by competing nobles, the monks from Cluny spread out north into the heartland of Europe from 950 – 1160 AD to build and control 1 200 new monasteries and Cluny became the most influential monastery in Europe. Their success was due to all these new monasteries being controlled by Cluny and Cluny being subject to the Pope of Rome. The distant Pope was highly regarded by the kings of the barbarians. The Pope claimed the power to anoint a man as king of a barbarian tribe. Thus they respected the monks and bishops who were obedient to the Pope. The Burgundian tribe, thanks to the influence of the monastery at Cluny, established Roman Catholic domination over a large portion of Europe.

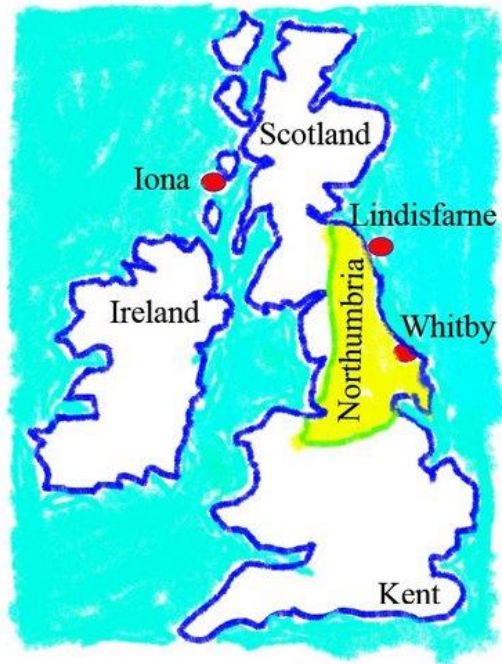


The early Cluniac establishments had offered refuges from a disordered world, but by 1100 AD, Cluniac holiness permeated society. This is the period that achieved the final Christianisation of the heartland of Europe. The high standards of the monks impressed the barbarians at a time when the Popes were very depraved. The Cluny monastery in Burgundy saved the papacy by setting the standards while the Popes dropped their standards. The barbarians saw the monks from the monasteries that were started by Cluny. They were impressed with what they saw. Most barbarians never saw the Popes, so they were not switched off by the Pope's immorality.

The messenger to the age was Columba who studied under some of Ireland's most prominent church figures and founded several monasteries in the country. Around 563 AD he and his twelve companions crossed to Scotland before settling on

the island of Iona near Scotland. Most of his missionary work was amongst the pagan Scots. He set up independent monasteries where the people were encouraged to live as close to the New Testament teachings as possible.

The most famous monastery of his followers was set up on the island of Lindisfarne.



Columba was such a bright light for Bible truth that he had to die in 597 AD just before the fourth church age was starting in 606 AD because Thyatira was the church age where the Gospel light almost went out and this could not happen until his bright light had ended.

The third church age ended with a determined attempt by Pope Gregory, one of the strongest Popes, to eliminate Columba's influence in England by sending Roman Catholic missionaries to Kent in England.

In 597 Augustine landed in Kent as a Roman Catholic archbishop. He converted Anglo-Saxons and appointed bishops over them. From Canterbury, he ruled over these bishops. This was the secret to Rome's success in England. The archbishop of Canterbury was the head of the organised denomination and all the bishops that were trained up and sent out as missionaries were subject to Canterbury and the archbishop was very submissive to the Pope.

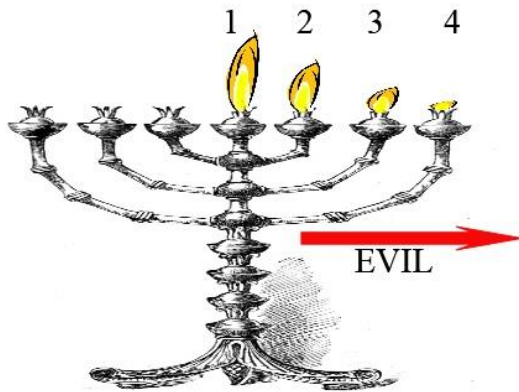
There was an obvious clash between Columba's independent missionaries, with their big monastery on the island of Lindisfarne, and those of the Pope, especially in the kingdom of Northumbria.

This century (600 – 700 AD) also saw the beginnings of Christian culture in England with its chief center in Northumbria, which was the leading English kingdom of the age, as shown on this map of England.

Here the Celtic missionaries of Columba from the north and west, (Scotland and Ireland) and the Roman missionaries from the south and east (Kent) now met to decide the fate of the fourth church age.

So in England, Abbess Hilda organised a synod in 663 AD at her Whitby monastery so that King Oswiu of Northumbria could decide who was right. The Roman Catholic archbishop said that Peter had the keys to Heaven. So if you obeyed his representative on earth, the Pope, then when you died Peter would open the door to Heaven for you. Columba's followers admitted that Columba had no such keys. Thus the king decided in favour of the Catholics because he wanted Peter to open the door for him. It was a very clever argument. Jesus was the Door to Heaven, but they claimed that Peter had the keys and could decide whether to open the Door or not for you. Peter only opened the Door for those who were in submission to the Pope. Peter being the doorkeeper who decided if you could go in became the Catholic's single most powerful argument amongst the barbarian tribes. This lie brought them into submission to Peter's representative on earth, the Pope. This doctrine of Peter enabled Catholicism to spread throughout Europe. But because Peter decided if you were saved or not, Jesus was effectively sidelined as Saviour, and Europe slid into a gross unsaved darkness. Wherever this doctrine was believed, the Light of the Gospel went out.

The monks from Lindisfarne, who would not accept this doctrine of Peter deciding who is saved, withdrew to the island of Iona, and later to Ireland. Columba's followers, like Columbanus and Catald, went as missionaries and set up independent monasteries in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy during the early middle ages. Thus the Gospel light just flickered here and there amongst small groups that continued to be influenced by Columba's missionary followers as they encouraged people to live Scriptural lives.



This is what the church lampstand looked like during the fourth church age. There was hardly any light left. The word “EVIL” indicates that the church had moved away from the simple doctrine of the apostles who wrote the New Testament. A huge Roman Catholic church organisation was rising to power. This was not God's will.

This was the age for building monasteries. The Roman Catholics won over the barbarians using Peter's keys by claiming the Popes were the successors of Peter, even though Peter had never been in Rome.

But if a lie is told often enough, it becomes the truth in people's minds. So the Popes guided the world into the Dark Ages with their Anglo-Saxon missionaries to northern Europe. Then the Roman Catholic Burgundians, who were very subject to the Pope, spread 1 200 monasteries around Europe. The whole of Europe was now in the grip of the Pope.

With the Roman Catholic church ruling Europe, they stamped out the Light, and nine hundred years of Dark Ages engulfed Europe. Life was cold, dark, dirty, and superstitious. People did not even bath. Disease and famine were rife. The average lifespan was less than 45 years. Life was at its worst when the church was in charge of Europe. Politics and religion make a toxic brew.

Why was Rome the dominant church in Western Europe?

Initially, there were four major cities who claimed to have important churches, descended from the apostles.

Constantinople was important because that was where emperor Constantine built his capital. Thus Rome was just one of five important churches.



Then the Moslem Arabs exploded out of the Arabian desert in 634 AD, two years after the death of Muhammad, and captured Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria by 641 AD. They moved across North Africa and captured Spain by 720 AD. The Moslem conquests are shown in red on the next map.



Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria were now Moslem cities. Only Rome and Constantinople remained. So Rome became the only important city church in the West. The Arab fleets then controlled the Mediterranean sea which destroyed Rome's sea trade. Constantinople was threatened by the Arabs and could not afford to send soldiers to protect Rome.

With the sea trade gone, people began to look to the lands of North Europe to develop an agricultural economy. The Franks lay to the north of Italy and they would play a major role in elevating the Pope.

Civilization moved north away from the Mediterranean sea towards the Atlantic ocean. France, Holland, and Germany would grow to economic power when they learned to sail the Atlantic ocean in the 1500s.

Monasteries flourished as centres of agriculture and learning in northern Europe.

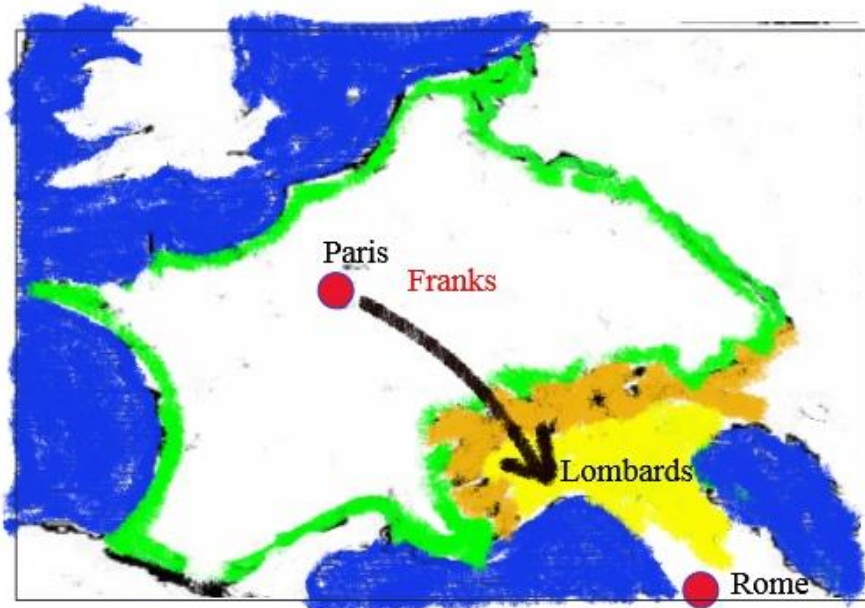
Then the Lombards in northern Italy (today called Lombardy) began to move down towards Rome. The Lombards had played a role in the breakup of the Roman empire. They occupied Lombardy in the north of Italy. But their main role, in God's big picture, was when they moved south into Italy and began to threaten Rome.

This threat forced the Pope to look for help. Constantinople was pre-occupied trying to keep off the Moslem Arab threat. So the Lombard menace forced the Pope to decide to ask the barbarian Franks for help.

This was possibly the most significant change of policy that the Pope made in the Dark Ages.

He turned away from the emperor in Constantinople and turned to a barbarian for help. The timing was perfect. Pepin was the powerful mayor of the palace and Childeric III was the very weak king of the Franks.

An alliance developed between Pepin and the Pope. Pepin deposed the existing weak Frankish king and Pepin got Pope Zachary to agree to make him the new king in 751 AD. Then in 754 AD Pope Stephen II went to Paris to crown Pepin as king. For the first time a Pope had crowned a barbarian king. This made Pepin change from a usurper to a God-ordained king so that only his children could succeed him.



The Pope also took a forged letter which he claimed was from Saint Peter asking Pepin to defeat the Lombards who were threatening Rome and telling Pepin to give the Pope some territory. Because Peter held the keys to let people into Heaven, Pepin was obligated to help the Pope and the Franks went down to Italy and defeated the Lombards. He then gave some territory to the Pope which was called the Papal States.(Shown on the map in a light brown or beige colour). Pepin's son Charlemagne finally conquered the Lombards and enlarged the Papal States. Pope Leo III then crowned Charlemagne, the greatest barbarian king, as emperor in 800 AD, giving the Pope great prestige.

He was now, by far, the most important Christian.



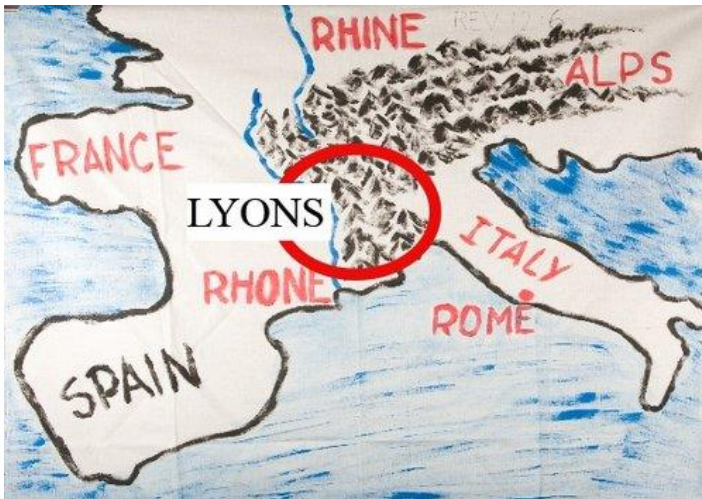
Unfortunately, the East, which regarded the Emperor at Byzantium (Constantinople) as the sole Emperor, resented Charlemagne's assumption of the title of Holy Roman Emperor, and this hardened their opposition, thus contributing to the rift between East and West. Rome and Constantinople became rival churches, each trying to be top dog.

Roman Catholicism was becoming the dominant religion in Northern Europe where Constantinople had very little influence and then, sadly, Rome set out to eliminate all opposition.

But in order to kill people you needed to have kings with their armies who would obey the Pope and kill the Pope's enemies. The Pope was the only man who claimed that he could crown kings and this gave him leverage over the barbarian tribes. The Pope developed a powerful weapon called excommunication. This banned a king from heaven because Peter would never open the door for an excommunicated king. Kings became scared of the Pope and were thus ready to obey him.

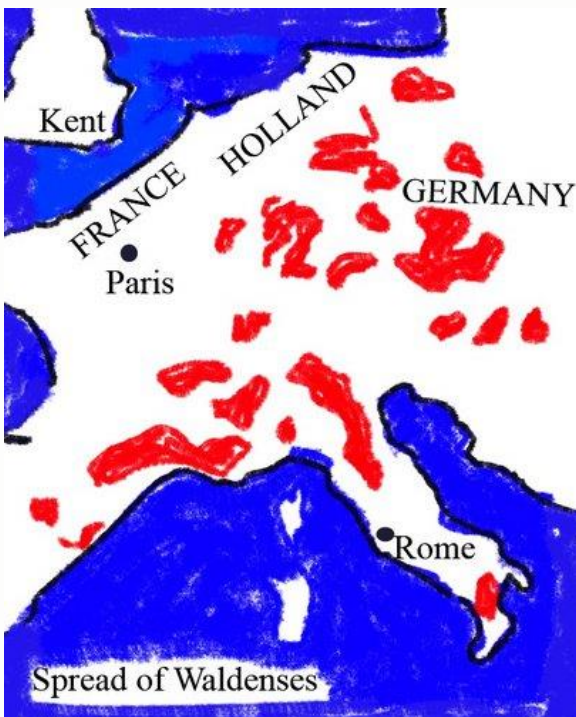
Tens of millions of people died in the Dark Ages during the Counter-Reformation that the Roman Catholics launched to stem the tide of Luther's Reformation. Politics and religion combined to produce a bizarre dance of death. This study will just look briefly at two of the regions where religious massacres occurred.

The Waldenses, who started in the city of Lyons, loved their children too wisely to accustom them to self-indulgence. Before them was a life of trial and hardship, perhaps a martyr's death. They were educated from childhood to endure hardship, to submit to control, and yet to think and act for themselves



They were hunted to death, yet their blood watered the seed sown, and it failed not of yielding fruit. Thus the Waldenses witnessed for God centuries before the birth of Luther. Scattered over many lands, they planted the seeds of the Reformation that began in the time of Wycliffe, grew broad and deep in the days of Luther.

From A.D. 1173-1560 the Waldensians which dwelt in the Italian Alps were visited with 36 different fierce persecutions. They were almost completely destroyed as a people, and most of their literary record was erased from the face of the earth. To survive, they retreated far into the Italian Cottian Alps. Despite the constant fear of death, they sent missionaries into Europe. The map below shows the areas where they had spread to. They paid a great price as more than one million of them were killed.



Through ages of darkness and apostasy, there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome. In Turin in 2015, Pope Francis apologised for the inhuman treatment of the Waldensians.

A second tragic region where the Catholic crusades against the Albigenses in Southern France (from 1209-1229), under Popes Innocent III, Honorius III, and Gregory IX. This was one of the bloodiest tragedies in human history. The number of Albigenses that perished in the twenty years of war is estimated between one to two million. The prosperous and peaceful area that they lived in was totally devastated and ruined.



When Languedoc, the province in southern France, was invaded by these Catholic crusaders, one hundred thousand Albigenses fell in one day!

The Duke of Alva is said to have slain 100 000 heretics.

The 350 years of the Spanish Inquisition in Spain with its fire and tortures left a scar across history.

Martyrs died of the sword, at the stake, in dungeons, and of starvation because of the confiscation of their earthly possessions.

The record of Christianity from the days when it first obtained the power to persecute its opponents is one of the most ghastly in history.

During its rise to power, the Papacy also essentially exterminated the Heruli shortly after 493 A.D., the Vandals soon after 533 A.D., and the Ostrogoths in 554 A.D, all of whom were asserted to hold to the Arian non-Trinitarian belief. Having begun with religious violence the Gospel was further distorted until armed Crusaders thought that they could gain redemption from their sins by killing Moslems in Palestine. In 1099 AD they conquered Jerusalem and slaughtered the inhabitants who were Moslem, Jew, or Christian. The fourth Crusade, launched by Pope Innocent III, was a religiously distorted mockery. Cruel reality saw them sack the wealthy Christian city of Zara, which was under the Pope's protection, out of "necessity" because they needed money. They then razed the city to the ground, only sparing the churches.

Then they sailed on and these ruthless "Christian warriors", claiming that they were representing the Pope, sacked the city of Constantinople with rape and murder in their bloodstained religious zeal (and insatiable greed for wealth), despite the fact that it was one of the main Christian cities and massacred their fellow Christian Greek inhabitants of the city.

The Crusades generally refers to the set of seven distinct campaigns over a 150 year period (A.D. 1099 to 1254) that were enacted to liberate the Holy Land from Muslim control.

Money. Murder. Power. This was a time of religious perversion, dominated by lust and greed. Yet all this was done in the Name of Jesus Christ. It was a complete mockery and merely indicated that the love of God had died out of their human hearts.

They painted a red cross on their shields but that did not hide the Devil in their hearts.

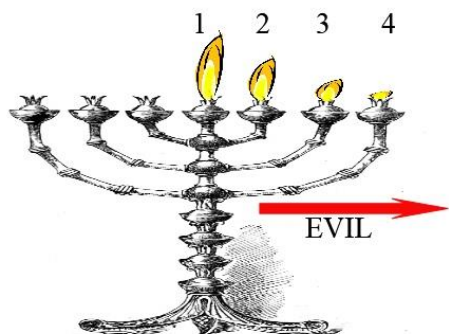
Thus far had the official church deviated from the original Gospel of the Prince of peace.

The following lampstand represents the condition of the church in these dismal Dark Ages.

EVIL means moving away from the simplicity of the New Testament teachings of the first church age.

The light of God was hardly visible anymore, but it never died out completely. There were always some survivors who refused to bow the knee to Rome. A spark carried on through the Dark Ages that would be blown into a larger flame in the next church age as the Reformation started.

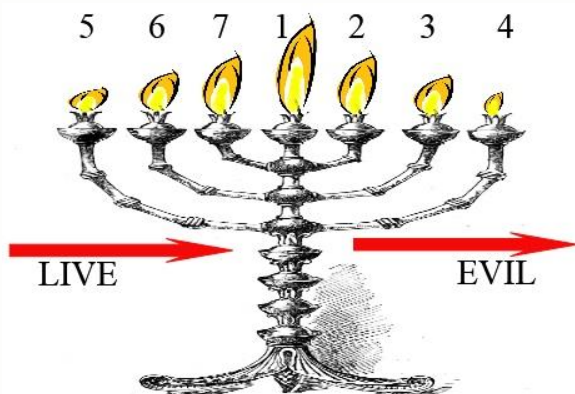
Meanwhile great men like Wycliffe who died in 1384 and Jan Hus who was executed in 1415 AD kept alive the evangelical zeal of repentance and the fact that we are saved by grace, through faith in the atoning works of Jesus Christ, and not by our own works.



These men, and others like them laboured on through those endless years of the Dark Ages until it was God's time for the glorious Reformation to remove the stranglehold of Catholicism from much of Europe.

The first four churches are covered in Chapter 2 of the Book of Revelation which deals with the falling away of the church from the original teachings of the apostles.

Chapter 3 deals with the last three church ages during which God laboured to restore the church back to the original faith of the apostles.



EVIL is just LIVE in the wrong direction, moving away from the first church rather than towards it.

REVELATION 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Thyatira means a dominating woman. A church represents a woman because Jesus calls His true church His Bride.

A dominating woman is the biggest curse on planet earth. When the church controlled and dominated Europe it was the time in church history when Christianity hit its lowest ebb. A dominating church is going to lead the world into the Great Tribulation and is thus the major cause of human damnation on the Day of Judgement. The Judge looks at her evil deeds with flaming eyes. Every horrible deed has been recorded and God will have His vengeance in due time.

Brass speaks of judgement. Fine brass means that not even the smallest error is overlooked. So if we are not repentant and washed in the Blood of Jesus, we are doomed.

LEVITICUS 26:14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;
:19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:
 The mistake of the Dark ages was **churchianity**, the doctrines of man.

These human traditions were **spread by force**. Iron was the strongest metal in Daniel's Gentile image.

Iron is a symbol of brute force.

Iron was Daniel's symbol for Rome. But force follows uncertain paths and produces unintended consequences.

When Satan used the Roman empire to savagely persecute the Christians of the second church age of Smyrna between 170 - 312 AD, he killed millions but produced a purged church that God never criticized in any way.

REVELATION 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

In a brutal age where the Bible was suppressed and most people could not read, the good works of the true saints reflected the Word of God to the people. "Works" is followed by the word "charity" or "love". Their works were based on loving God's Word and wanting to serve Him by loving their fellow man. They did good works as a natural consequence of being saved. They did not, like the false vine, do good works in order to get saved nor in order to get men to admire them.

Their good works were based on charity, on giving.

The false vine was working to get rich and receive wealth and power. In 774 AD Pope Hadrian I presented the greatest barbarian king, Charlemagne, with a forged document called the "Donation of Constantine". Constantine had been dead for more than 400 years but this document claimed that he had given the Roman Catholic church immense possessions and vast territories, in fact all the lands in the West. The wealth of the church really grew after that.

"Faith" was what God noticed, not the increasing wealth and possessions and political power of the church.

ROMANS 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

God is not focused on material benefits, He wants to see how closely people stick to Scripture. Poor believers, many of them hiding in remote valleys in the Alps where they were known as the Church in the Wilderness, stayed with God's Word rather than Rome's doctrines that were enforced by political power. This was the faith that God noticed.

ROMANS 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience

They learned patience the hard way. So many of them were killed. Their earthly hopes were often shattered.

They did not know it, but the long night of the Dark Ages had to endure for about 900 years before things would change. They just had to endure and endure and trust God because their human wisdom could not grasp His Big Picture. The Dark Ages were the dirt that buried the true seed of the apostles' first church. It takes time for a seed to germinate in darkness. But eventually the buried seed rots and a new life miraculously starts to emerge. The Roman Catholic church in the Dark Ages was the dirt that buried the true seed of the first church age so that it could germinate.

"and thy works; and the last to be more than the first". The influence of Columba and his followers was destroyed over the centuries where ever possible but after 1300 AD new names emerged like Wycliffe and Jan Hus who attracted much attention. Their opposition to the Catholic church generated a strong movement amongst many people who resented the corruption and worldliness of the Roman church.

Then much later a Catholic monk Savonarola rose up in Florence who denounced the growing wealth and corruption of the clergy, their despotic rule and their exploitation of the poor. Revolt against the Roman church was gathering. Rome was very busy stamping out these fires of protest.

They executed Hus and Savonarola.

The church retained its brutal magnificence with an emphasis on spectacular cathedrals and elaborate ceremonies. Churches were smothered in gold and jewels, draped in lace, clouded with incense, ablaze with lighted candles, huge altars, splendid robes, large organs, beautifully painted walls and ceilings, and vast choirs.

But the winds of change were blowing. What Wycliffe and Hus lacked were the technological miracle of a printing press and cheap paper.

More and more people were listening to the idea of salvation through personal faith in Jesus Christ, rather than by achieving salvation through church membership and church rituals in what was a rough and pitiless world. The sale of indulgences to buy forgiveness for sin, the useless life of monks, the trade in relics from the past, and the corruption in Rome were causing more and more resentment.

Rome was suppressing all this protest, but there was also a growing love for God's Word that was building up pressure like a volcano that was preparing to explode.

In 1455 Gutenberg in Germany produced the first printed Bible.

Printing underwent an industrial revolution as its use exploded over Europe. Printing spread extraordinarily rapidly throughout Europe.

After the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453 AD, scholars and refugees brought ancient Bible manuscripts to the west. Now the Bible could be put together from all these ancient documents. These Greek and Hebrew scholars gave a real boost to scholarship in the west.

These ancient texts could be translated into the common languages of the people, instead of always having to be in Latin which the common people did not understand. The development of printing was a key issue for the success of Luther's Reformation.

But the Roman church was also increasing their works of killing opponents and gathering wealth.

Pope Innocent III (1198 – 1216) launched one of the biggest religious massacres in history when the Albigenses in southern France were wiped out. The fourth crusade in 1204 destroyed the city of Zara to raise funds and then sacked the Christian city of Constantinople.

Pope Gregory IX (1227 – 1241) began the Inquisition, a church Gestapo that could torture, mutilate, and kill by fire any suspected heretic.

Violence was just becoming part of religious life.

From 1200 – 1300 the Waldenses were eliminated or driven out of many regions. By 1400 they could only find safety deep inside the rugged mountains of the Cottian Alps where many died of cold and exposure.

Rome got her power from the god of force who is Satan.

People thought the world would end in the year 1000 AD and gave all their lands and possessions to the church. Rome grew considerably richer. Then the church made voluntary donations compulsory. In 1081 AD Pope Gregory VII made every house that had a baptized Catholic living in it pay an annual tribute to the Blessed Peter. Gregory, of course, collected on behalf of the long dead Peter. A 33 % death tax on a person's estate went to the church. Wealthy people condemned for heresy had their estates confiscated and these were divided between the church and the state. The church's immense wealth was an economic stranglehold on many countries. When king Francis I ruled France (1515 – 47) a group of 600 abbots, bishops, and archbishops controlled so much land throughout France that their income equalled all the taxes that the king was able to collect.

Then the Popes introduced indulgences. By paying money you could buy your forgiveness for sins.

They invented Purgatory which is where the dead went to suffer for their sins before going to Heaven. Then by paying money, you could get your dead relatives out of Purgatory with immediate effect. This was a great money spinner. The church was making money out of the living and the dead. Business was good.

But now an unintended effect was threatening Rome. Jealous eyes of the political leaders were looking at her vast wealth. When Hus opposed Rome he did not have enough support to break Rome's stranglehold. When Luther opposed Rome, many powerful figures supported him because that would enable them to grab their share of the church's wealth. Ironically, the wealth of the church thus played a big part in their downfall when the Reformation started.

PSALM 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee:

Many who joined Luther's reformation did it for the wrong motive, financial gain. But their support suited God as it enabled Luther to withstand the onslaughts of the Pope.

REVELATION 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit **fornication**, and to eat things sacrificed unto **idols**.

Jezebel, the Roman Catholic church, started with Nicolaitanism, which means an elevated human leader. It began as a convenient idea or deed for growing a church and then became a doctrine that cannot be opposed. They embraced the power of the state and then introduced paganism. The Roman church in this age is a prophetess to tell people that she is predestined to rule the world because her leader, the Pope, is the earthly successor of Peter who alone decides who will enter Heaven as he has the keys to Heaven.

In 1302 the Pope issued a statement called "Unam Sanctam".

It states that salvation is only possible if you submit to the Pope in order to belong to the Catholic church.

She was a false prophetess as she took people away from Scripture by her organisation that became a denomination which then relied on false teaching. Idols are lifeless statues. There is no life in the doctrines of man.

MATTHEW 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Jezebel got the political power of her husband Ahab behind her and then forced her pagan beliefs onto the Jews. In the Dark Ages Roman Catholicism was forced onto the people of Europe by sword and fire.

Fornication is linked to idol worship. The Catholic churches were filled with carved statues of Christ, Mary, the apostles, and numerous saints.

Pope John Paul II, a brave and great leader, was dedicated to praying to statues of the virgin Mary.

REVELATION 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

This age lasted long, about 900 years. There were so many disgusting excesses committed by the Roman Catholic church that it was obvious that they needed to repent. But they hardened their hearts and did not. Even Pope Francis was disgusted with their inhuman treatment of the Waldenses and he publically apologised in Turin in 2015 AD. But the Pope's of the Dark Ages never repented or apologised. Instead of repenting for all the Dark Ages murders, when the Reformation started they then turned their murder machine against the Protestants in Europe and the Indians in central and South America and if anything, they stepped up the murder rate.

REVELATION 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed (hell), and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

The official Roman church, having lost her spiritual vision, would now focus on temporary wealth, political intrigues, and the comfort of worldliness. Luxury murdered her spiritual zeal but walked grinning in her funeral. But the great tribulation is the final end of the apostate church. Spiritual adultery is to receive a man-made doctrine into the womb of the mind where it grows from being the seed of an idea into a deed that dominates our actions and then hardens as a habit into a doctrine that dominates our thinking. The mark of the beast in the hand (our works) and in the forehead (where our brain is that thinks). Thus the mark of the beast is brainwashing or mind control. Believe anything that is not Scriptural. Just do as the church says, do not worry about what the Bible says.

But church leaders were too often chiefly interested in accumulating wealth, power, material possessions, and a privileged lifestyle.

REVELATION 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Who are the children of the Roman Catholic church? The Protestant churches that would come out of her. Rome had built up such a strong denominational spirit based on human leadership that the Protestants would go down the same path. The only difference is that they would call their human church leaders “pastors” instead of “priests”. Then each Protestant movement would denominate around their man-made doctrines.

Spiritual death is separation from God. The Roman church had moved away from the New Testament teachings of the apostles, so now God moves His Spirit away from the church and as a result, there is no check on the disgraceful, self-enriching, and disgusting lifestyles that the church leaders sank into. They were still alive physically, claiming to be Christians but inwardly God had left them and they were spiritually dead.

Death is simply organised religion which is a substitute for a personal experience with Jesus Christ.

Organised religion is denominationalism. This thrives under human leadership which is Nicolaitanism.

A typical example was the Crusaders.

They claimed to kill in the name of Jesus, but also robbed, raped, and destroyed in their greed for land and loot. Their desire to kill was the evidence of the evil in their hearts. “Christian killers” are the warped fruit of the poisonous hybrid formed by mixing religion and politics. Just look at the track record of ISIS who are from the Moslem religion.

The above verse clearly speaks of different churches. One branch of these churches does not know the truth. This false vine is unaware of the personal relationship of the believer with Jesus. Jesus searches the “reins” and “hearts”. From the heart we express our innermost feelings and deepest love. The reins of a horse are used to guide the horse. So our reins are the motives that we use to guide our hearts’ deepest choices.

Men loved their church more than they loved the Bible.

Men were greedy for gain. They served God for personal benefit or to enrich themselves.

God knows our motives and rejects any desire for gain or reward. He wants us to serve Him purely out of love for His Word.

“and I will give unto every one of you according to your works”. This was a dark and ignorant age. Evil was rampant. Life was cheap. Yet there were those who tried to live by the Bible. Their good works reflected their inner faith. They were the minority and usually unnoticed. Yet their lives set a high standard that was a rebuke to the majority who lived in sin without any fear of God.

REVELATION 2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

The official Roman church in the Dark Ages sank to such depths that one hesitates to offend the eye by remembering all this evil. However hard you try, you would struggle to find a more depraved person than the Borgia Pope Alexander VI (1492 – 1503). He finally died at a meal by drinking an arsenic-laced drink with which he had hoped to kill his invited guest. His servants somehow had muddled up the glasses.

This age was such a long, horrid, and violent period. God was happy if Christians could just believe in Scripture and personal salvation through faith in Christ’s sacrifice for us, because very few believed that. They had stood the test of patience and endurance. They had kept the flame burning, even though it was small. They had played their part with longsuffering and dogged determination.

The harsh and hard work of breaking Rome’s stranglehold over Europe would be left to others in the next church age.

Revolt was simmering under the surface, especially in northern Europe. Thanks to the protests and martyrdom of Jan Hus the state of Bohemia, the region around the city of Prague in Czechoslovakia, was strongly anti-Catholic. By 1384 when he died, Wycliffe’s Bible translation into common English was starting to break the power of the use of the Latin Bible, which ordinary people did not understand.

In 1378 the cardinals, rather foolishly, chose two Popes. This two-Pope fiasco or “Great Schism” continued for forty years until 1417 and really weakened the prestige of the Pope.

The Waldenses, their numbers reduced by numerous crusades or murder campaigns against them, were still holding out against the Roman Catholic church in the Cottian Alps in southern France.

From 1450 onwards the different regions of Europe were swept by a rising feeling of nationalism. Instead of all of Europe being subject to the Pope, they had a growing feeling of wanting to be separate distinct nations especially in the mountainous Alpine regions of Switzerland where towns or cantons united because it was difficult for outsiders to attack them. This league of cantons actually became independent in 1499. Here the reformers Zwingli and Calvin would defy Rome. The Renaissance, which was a revival of learning and new ideas, started in Italy which made people begin to think for themselves and start to question all the traditions of the Roman church. New ideas were circulating, especially with the discovery of the whole new world of the Americas in 1492 by Columbus. The Roman church ruled Europe through the Latin language which ordinary people did not understand. Gutenberg's printing press, invented around 1440 and spreading through Europe by 1500, enabled the rapid spread of religious literature in the common languages. No one would use this more effectively than Martin Luther. The map below shows some of the strongly anti-Catholic areas in Europe when Luther, as a single monk, stood up to defy the huge church system that owned about one-third of Europe and dominated the kings of Europe. A one-man David versus a colossus that was a Goliath-like church.



The stage was set for a spiritual seismic earthquake. All it needed was a rugged, rebellious, and fearless monk with a hammer, a church door in the German city of Wittenberg, and a document called the “95 Theses” which argued against Indulgences, the ability to buy forgiveness of sins from the Pope.

REVELATION 2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

The true church clung onto salvation by faith. They practised their good works though they saw little earthly rewards for this as they were usually hunted down and persecuted. But they never gave up. The long night of the Dark Ages never seemed to end. But they carried the baton of faith and handed it over to the reformers who would hit Rome like an earthquake.

REVELATION 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

This age taught us one powerful lesson. Never give up. However hopeless it looked, however badly they were hammered, however many were killed they nevertheless never gave up. God had planted them there and they served him faithfully, even when they went to an early and painful death. These saints had something that can only be described as spiritual toughness. Like a boxer who had been knocked down, they just kept getting up and carrying on with the fight of faith, serving God despite their earthly hopes being shattered. Satan hit them with everything he had, but they kept on coming. Endurance was the Christian virtue that testified of their tremendously rugged faith. This was not an age for Christian sissies. They lived in an awful age but never gave up on doing good works. That was their strong point, they never gave up just because their circumstances were awful.

Character is formed by difficulty and defeat. Their harsh circumstances produced strong and fearless characters which makes them fit to rule in the Millennium. God was training His future rulers.

REVELATION 2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

The survivors of Armageddon and the heathen who never heard the Gospel will be the nations that are ruled in the Millennium. These unsaved people will be given an extended life of almost 1 000 years. But on condition that they behave themselves. Then they can decide if they want to accept Jesus. Their children will live in this “first Heaven” which is the first taste of Heaven on earth when Jesus rules over the Millennium for 1 000 years. Righteousness will flow from sea to sea. All will be peaceful. But despite living under these conditions for hundreds of years, when Satan is released they will rush to him like a flood. This will disprove the favourite argument of unbelievers, "If only I had lived in a Christian home or Christian community then I would have accepted Jesus". These people will live in peace and safety and see Jesus, yet will abandon Him as soon as they get the opportunity.

The saints of this fourth church age saw sin at its violent and degraded worst so when they are in charge they will tolerate no evil. The nations that they rule will toe the line or else! The Millennium will be a wonderful place for the righteous but any evil or error will be met with zero tolerance. Here the Bride will judge the nations and rule them justly but very firmly. The iron rod speaks of strict discipline, not the brutal and vicious iron force of Rome. But those who refuse to obey will be demolished.

REVELATION 2:28 And I will give him the morning star.

The morning star appears in the east, just before the sun rises, for nine months and then it changes to become the evening star for nine months. 900 years of Dark Ages had to pass before it was time for God to move. For true believers it was an endless night. But finally, the stars begin to fade as the sun moves up closer to the eastern horizon, just before it becomes visible. Eventually, only one star is left shining, the brightest star which is the morning star. Actually, this is the planet Venus which lies between the earth and the sun. It reflects the sunlight towards us and this is the last sign we get before it too fades and the sun rises over the horizon.

The morning star means that the sun is about to rise. It means that the light is going to get brighter and brighter as the sun takes over from the morning star that was faithfully reflecting the sunlight on a small scale.

True Christians, each reflecting a bit of God's light had bravely held the fort and now God Himself was going to allow a glorious Reformation to burst on the scene and spread the dazzling light of salvation by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ, far and wide. Over the centuries, this basic Gospel truth of repenting and accepting Jesus as Saviour would spread around the world.

The morning star, because of its closeness to the sun, shines brightly only when the sun is about to rise. Then it fades as the sun rises in its full glory. So these saints, in the darkest night of the Dark Ages, by just being able to shine for the Gospel were proof that Satan could not ultimately win because they were reflecting the Light of the Bible. Jesus, just like the natural sun, would illuminate the world with the Light of “Justification by grace through faith” and disperse the darkness. Satan can only triumph for a season. Then he meets his match and licks his wounds.

REVELATION 2:29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

God repeats this to every age. God's Spirit will only tell us what is written in the Bible. Man will always seek some substitute so that he can modify the Bible in order to try to cope with his changing circumstances. God keeps saying that we must not deviate from Scripture just because of the changing world we are in. Staying with the New Testament church teachings was what God wanted even though this had not made much of an impression in terms of big numbers of believers.

The big numbers and the important people were in the Roman Catholic church. But God was not impressed with them.

God would actually shake up this huge church organisation by using an obscure monk in the unimportant city of Wittenberg.

Sardis (3:1-6) – The Spiritually Dead Church

The Dead Church

3 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,

‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. ⁴ You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

⁶ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

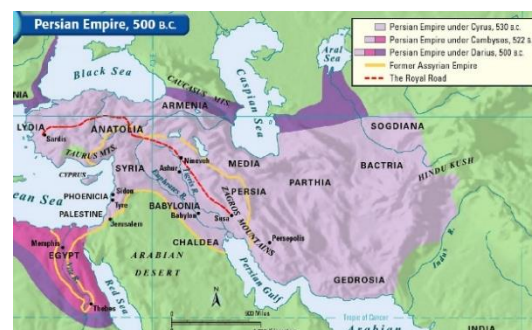
- The name Sardis means "escaping"
 - Three meanings have been proposed: "prince of joy," "that which remains," and "those escaping."
 - We relied on Dr. Fruchtenbaum's scholarship which supports "escaping."
- History
 - It probably dates back to before 2000 BC
 - In 1200 BC, Sardis was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia
 - One of the important cities of the Persian Empire
 - Reputed to be one of the oldest cities of Asia and one of the greatest cities in the world
 - Mentioned by a number of Greek writers including Aeschylus and Thucydides as a city of renown
 - Defeated by King Cyrus of Persia in 359 BC
 - Defeated again by Antiochus III of Syria in 218 BC
 - The wealth of the Lydian kings arose from trade and commerce with the East
 - Became part of the Roman Empire in 129 BC
 - It was the seat of the Proconsul under the Roman Empire
 - The metropolis of the province of Lydia in later Roman and Byzantine times
 - Sardis was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17 and completely rebuilt using its own wealth to do so.
 - When John wrote this, Sardis was a city that had seen its best days and was beginning a period of decline
 - It was a wealthy city, but was living on the glories of the past
 - Sardis was a city known for its softness, luxury, apathy and immorality
 - By 200 AD, Sardis lay in decay
 - Today, Sardis is a small village of Sart
- Earthquake of 17AD
 - Publius Cornelius Tacitus – “In the same year of 17 ad. twelve famous cities in the province of Asia were overwhelmed by an earthquake. Its occurrence at night increased the surprise and destruction. Open ground – the usual place for refuge on such occasions afforded no escape, because the earth parted and opened up and swallowed the fugitives. There are reports of mountains subsiding, of flat ground rising high up in the air, of fires bursting up and out among the debris. Sardis suffered worst and attracted most sympathy.”
- Geography
 - 45 miles northeast of Smyrna (Izmir today); 30 miles southeast of Thyatira

- Sardis was situated on a lofty plateau 1000' above the broad Hermus Valley at the foot of Mount Tmolus
- Sardis appeared to be impregnable. However, the sheer precipitous cliff was clay and suffered continual erosion. The untrustworthy mud left occasion of cracks which could be exploited.
 - The false confidence of the geology was reflected in the character of the inhabitants
 - False confidence
 - Appearance without reality
 - Promise without performance
 - Outward appearance of strength betrayed by want of watchfulness and diligence
- It had significant natural resources chief of them being Gold.
 - Gold was so plentiful there that the river (a creek) that flowed thru the city center would perpetually deposit gold dust at its bottom and shore.

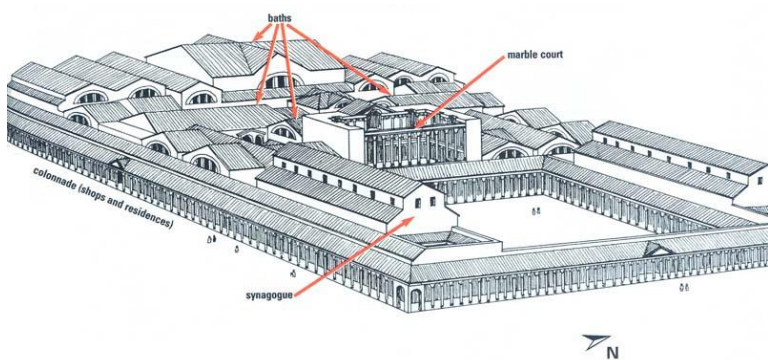
- This is where coins were first minted in the ancient world.
 - In fact, from about 560bc to about 546bc Sardis was ruled by the King of Lydia, King Croesus, who was renowned for his great wealth until defeated by the Persians and made a slave.

- Persian Royal Road

- Began at Persepolis, capital of Persia (Iran of today)
- Sardis was the end station on the Persian Royal Road
- Like the other cities in the book of Revelation, its position on the trade routes made it an important city and a commercial powerhouse.

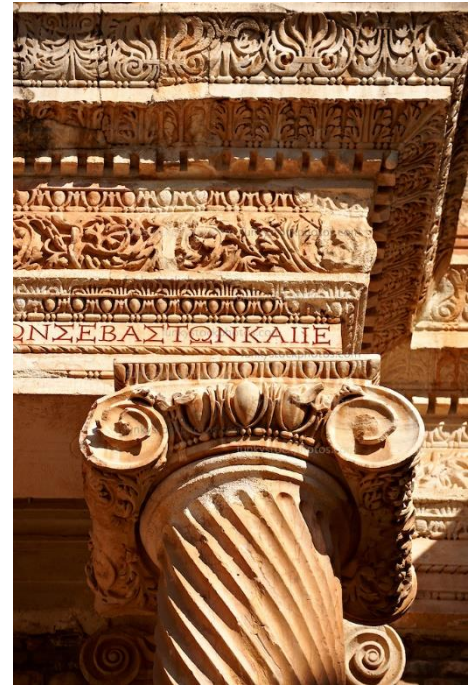


- Sardis was the center of the industrial arts in the ancient Lydian Kingdom
 - It was famous for its manufacturing and intricate dyeing of woollen objects and carpets, much like Thyatira.
 - Toward the end of the 1st century A.D.—at the time of Revelation—it was an extremely wealthy and prominent city.



- Synagogue

- Across a vast expanse of lawn opposite the gymnasium, Sardis boasted one of the largest and finest synagogues in the Roman Empire, built in the middle of the 2nd century.
- Moses seat on the left, Torah closet on the right.
- The synagogue's intricate mosaic flooring attests to the wealth of the city and to its prosperous Jewish population.



- Sardis was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17 and completely rebuilt using its own wealth to do so. The rebuilt city included a vast gymnasium/bath complex.
 - Notice the extraordinary detail and exquisite craftsmanship of the gymnasium (picture on right).



- Pagan religions
 - Paganism flourished in Sardis. The Christian community was small and weak, and a lot of them returned to their original religions.

- There were Temples to Cybele, Artemis, Diana
- An impressive acropolis housed the twin temples of Artemis (Diana)
 - Built by the Emperor Antoninus Pius (A.D. 86-161), he dedicated this temple to his wife, Annia Faustina
- The goddesses Artemis and Cybele were commemorated on local coins
- Church at Sardis
 - How and when the church there was started are unknown

Greeting

	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
Sardis (3:1-6) Spiritually Dead; Alive in appearance only	-- (none)	The church is dead; Church in appearance only; Incomplete deeds; Form without substance	Wake up! Repent! Empower and strengthen what little remains. Turn to Jesus again.	The faithful will be honored and clothed in white. Their names will never be blotted out from the Book of Life but will be acknowledged before God and the angels.

*1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis write:
 These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.*

- Once again the greeting recalls aspects of the Lord noted in Revelation's prologue:
 - the "seven spirits" (1:4) of God – Holy Spirit
 - the "seven stars" (1:16) – Leaders of the churches
- 7 Spirits
 - Rev 5 ⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.
 - Is 11 ¹ There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
² The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
 The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 The Spirit of counsel and might,
 The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.
- 7 Stars
 - Rev 1 ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, ... ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.
- Jesus is introduced in terms which emphasize His character – as the Lord of all spiritual power and authority
 - He has the 7 spirits of God – the Holy Spirit – in Himself and He gives the Holy Spirit to the churches
 - He has the 7 stars – which represent the angels or representatives of the churches.
 - Jesus is in control over these churches and their source of spiritual life

Condemnation ☹️

I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

- By reversing the pattern of words of commendation / condemnation, John draws attention to the negative, to the condemnation, placing it front and center.
- Unlike the previous churches, Sardis did not face persecution, nor did they suffer from false teachers.
 - The church in Sardis presented no significant threat to Satan's domain, so it wasn't worth attacking
- *I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.*
 - Reputation
 - grk: onoma; you have a particular authority or reputation, a noted cause, you have a name, there are names among you. there are persons there. (a history).
 - As Jesus says to each church he also says to Sardis – I know your works
 - He knows what they've been doing – and what they've not been doing – in His name
 - We are not told how the works are incomplete, only that they are.
 - Perhaps they're being done for the wrong reasons - for self-gratification or for public display
 - That's often the danger in wealthy well-endowed parishes and communities. They have an expansive campus, beautiful buildings, state-of-the-art multimedia systems, fine furnishings, well paid staff and programs for every age group and demographic. But it's all for the wrong reasons. Like Narcissus, they have fallen in love with their own image.
 - Lk 8 ¹⁷ For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light.
 - Heb 4 ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account.
 - To all outward appearances they seemed to be prospering! Yet, says the Lord, the church in Sardis is spiritually dead.
 - Greek word for dead – Nekros
 - “void of life”
 - “a corpse without a soul”
 - Jesus also knows that they have a name or reputation that they are alive
 - If you looked at this church, you would see signs of life and vitality.
 - In the church of Sardis, like the city of Sardis, everything seemed alive and good.
 - The verdict – they are dead.
 - Despite their reputation, Jesus sees them for what they really are
 - A good reputation is no guarantee of true spiritual character
 - Jesus saw them for what they really were despite, their good appearance
 - The church in Sardis is:
 - “A perfect model of inoffensive Christianity” (G.B. Caird)
 - “It was not scandalous wickedness, but decent death; the form retained, the heart gone.” (T.B. Baines)
 - “The church of Sardis was at peace – but it was the peace of the dead.” (William Barclay)
 - Dead Protestantism
 - If you don't believe it's dead, go to Europe – you'll go into a post-Christian era
 - It is dark – the church is dead – the protestant reformation in Europe is dead
 - You say you are alive, but you are really dead

- *2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die*
 - Wake up!
 - grk: gregoreuo, gray-gor-yoo'-o; to keep yourself awake, meaning literally or figuratively, to be vigilant, alert and watchful.
 - Failing to be a "Watchful" Church, Their Christianity had become Predictable and Mundane – no longer vigilant, no longer alert, no longer watchful
 - What Jesus wants them to do – wake up and get going!
 - Examine and protect, strengthening what they have
 - The city of Sardis had been easily conquered twice before – because overconfidence that had led to a lack of watchfulness.
 - Strengthen grk: sterizo; to go around and shore up, re-establish, re- confirm, make resolute.
 - Remain grk: loipoi; things that are needful, things that matter, things that last, things that are unshakable, things that cannot fall down.
 - You are ready to die
 - You have been slowly dying, you have been dying for a long time and you are in fact at the point of death. – you're mostly dead.
 - A dying or dead church is very; Self-Centered. Self-Impressed. Self-Content. Self-Promoting
 - That Church Has Lost It's Prophetic Voice – The Return of Jesus Christ is No Longer Taught. The Urgency to Reach the Lost is No Longer a Priority.
 - This is How You Spiritually Die – You stop being Watchful. You stop Strengthening. You stop Remembering. You stop Holding On. You stop Repenting.
 - Even though they were apathetic and asleep, they were not hopeless!
 - Jesus had not given up on them – it isn't too late!
- *I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.*
 - I have not found your works perfect before God – shows that their works, though present, haven't measured up to God's standards
 - God doesn't accept all service directed to Him. He requires a particular intent and purpose in all our works.
 - His standards are internal - the state of our heart in ministering to Him makes all the difference.
 - Just because we are busy, does not mean that we are working acceptably before God
 - These dead churches are so comfortable that they are not open to change and to vision and to the generations that follow after them.
- *3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent.*
 - Remember grk: mnemoneuo; to call to or up in the mind, to draw up as if from a well, to excavate - by taking what is on the bottom and bring it to the top and what is on the top and putting on the bottom.
 - Heard grk: akouo; to listen with the ear, to hear with attention, to have intentions to gather with the ear all that you can.
 - Hold Fast grk: tereo; to grasp, grab hold of, lay a firm grip to what is slipping thru your hands.
 - Repent grk: metanoeo; to make a course correction, to reverse course to correct or to reverse one's mind or purpose.
 - What they must do:
 - Remember how they first received and heard the word of God
 - Hold fast to those things
 - Repent by turning and restoring the gospel and apostolic doctrine as the authority over their lives
 - In other words, they needed to get back into the word of God!
 - *1st Thessalonians 2 ¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*
 - This is the kind of attitude that they needed to contemplate with regards to the word of God!
 - Like Ephesus, they are told to repent
 - Greek word for repent is metanoó
 - literally "to turn around" 180 degrees – to get back to where you were at the start

- *But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.*
 - This was a terrifying reminder the citizen of Sardis.
 - In the (2) two military campaigns that succeeded against Sardis – they both succeeded during the night while they were sleeping.
 - Jesus combines the 2 historical fears of those of ancient Sardis. He does this by reminding them of:
 - (1) that great earthquake and
 - (2) When their great city (the Impregnable) fell to the Persians under Cyrus and again to Antiochus III The Great.
 - This is where mainline denominationalism increasingly finds itself.
 - They do not believe in a rapture or even in a millennium
 - They teach that the promises of the Millennial Kingdom, the sayings of Isaiah, and the teachings of Revelation are simply allegorical and thus they will be totally caught off guard by Jesus return
 - Don't look for the rapture
 - Don't look for a real kingdom established on Earth
 - There is a great danger in failing to watch
 - Jesus will come upon them as a thief – at a time completely unexpected by them
 - This coming can refer to both an immediate judgment and Jesus unknown return (the rapture)
 - Because they have not been watchful, they will not be ready and prepared for His sudden coming
 - Ro 13 ¹¹ *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* ¹² *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.* ¹³ *Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.* ¹⁴ *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

Commendation ☺

4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

- Jesus is making it clear that not everyone who attends the church in Sardis are saved people.
 - It's a church but not everyone inside the church are of the church.
 - Let Me Tell You How God has Used this Global Quarantine
 - (1) It has broken the habit of going to church.
 - (2) When the church regathers, it will regather with those who want to be here, not because they should be here or ought to be here.
 - There is no greater energy on earth than the church when it is in love with Jesus – the world will never forget what hit them, Love Galore!!!
- Defiled grk: moluno; a prim. word; to stain, defile: —defiled (2), soiled (1).
 - (I did wash you – I'll wash you again)
- Worthy grk: axios; to be of solid weight, ie. like the coins of Sardis – valuable by weight.
 - (I did redeem you – I'll redeem you again)
- Clothed grk: periballo; to throw around or wrap around, to put on,
 - (I did cover you – I'll cover you again)
- Although the church as a whole is spiritually dead, there are still a few people who remain faithful, deeply engaged with Christ and living out their faith in a life of personal piety and active love.
- Even among the dead Christians in Sardis, there was a faithful remnant
 - In Pergamos and Thyatira, there were a few bad among the good
 - In Sardis, there are a few good among the bad

- ‘even in Sardis’ – May refer to the city's notoriously immoral reputation
 - Even in a city that wicked, there have been some who have not defiled themselves by joining in sin
- Why does Jesus refer to defiled garments?
 - In the heathen worship of the day, the gods could not be approached with dirty clothes
 - Here the symbol of purity is plain – He gives his pure ones white garments
 - The garments Jesus gives us are white
 - This was a color of triumph to the Romans
 - It is a universal association with purity
 - Jesus also promises that these pure ones will walk with me
 - This picture of close fellowship and friendship is reminiscent of Enoch who walked with God, and then was not for God took him
 - *Ge 5 ²¹ Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. ²² After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. ²³ So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. ²⁴ And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*
 - The greatest reward for purity is greater intimacy with God
 - This is ultimately a better motivator than the fear of punishment or calamity (though these also can motivate)
 - The pure can have greater intimacy with God – not because they have earned it, but because they are simply more interested in the things of God and interested with all of their life and will
 - *Mt 5 ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.*

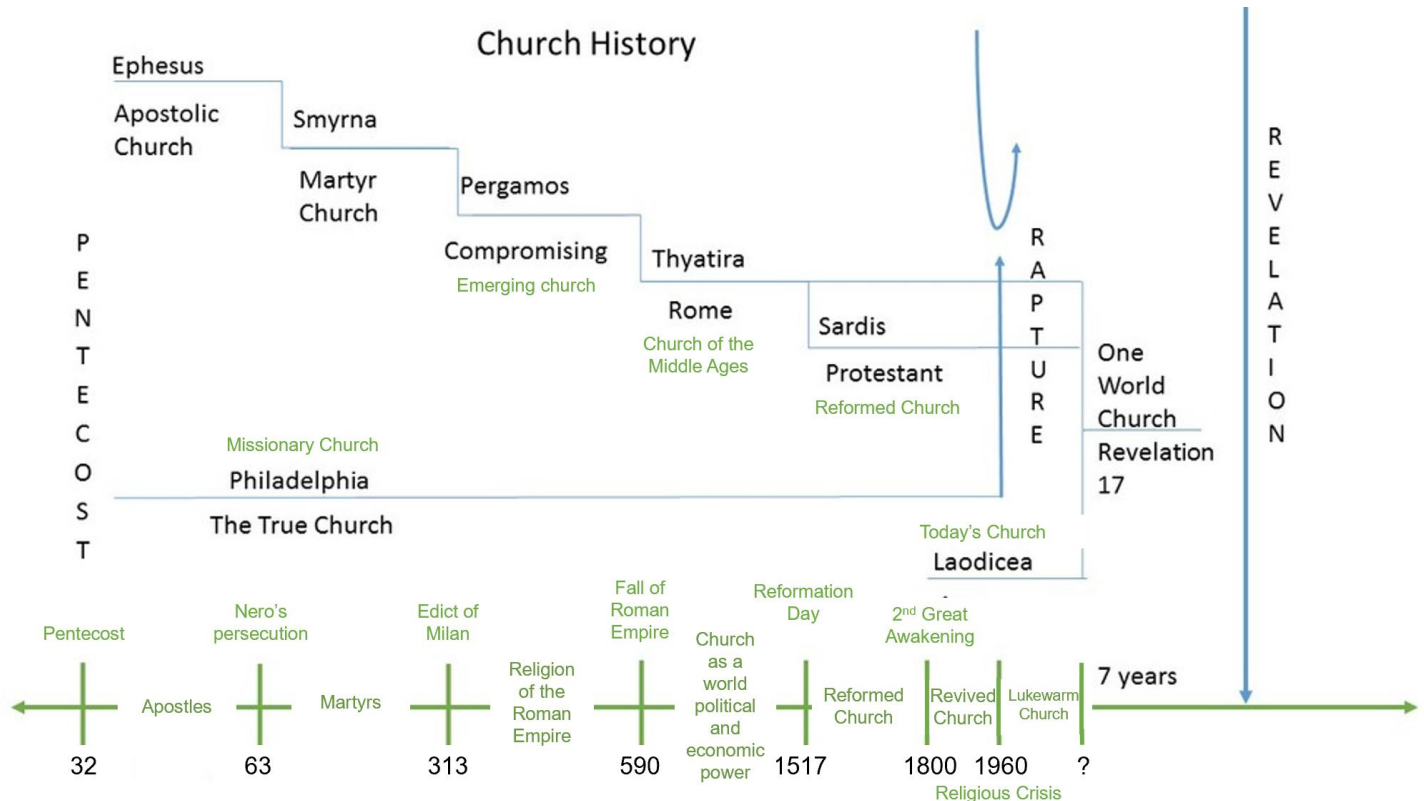
Admonition (Call to Action)

5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- The promise of reward to overcomers
 - Jesus identifies the overcomers with those few names who have not defiled their garments – They are wearing the white garments received from Jesus
 - Jesus explained the absolute necessity of this being clothed by God with his garments of purity and righteousness in his parable of the wedding feast
 - Matthew 22 ¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹² So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”
 - Real righteousness is receiving God's covering instead of trying to cover ourselves
 - The difference between the dead majority (imperfect works but good reputation) and the few names who were pleasing to God was purity and the closeness with Jesus (that is always related to purity)
 - The deadness and spiritual facade of most of the Christians in Sardis was related to their impure lives – and their embrace of the impurity and sin of the world around them
 - One must wonder if deadness comes before impurity or the impurity comes before deadness, but they are surely related
- The overcomers are assured of their heavenly citizenship
 - In the ancient world, death or criminal conviction could blot out the name of an ancient citizen from the city's book of the living (the city register)
 - Because Jesus makes reference to names being blotted out, some think that all human names are initially in the book of life and individuals are blotted out as they personally reject Jesus

- But we should not think that names are being constantly erased and then rewritten
 - The focus here is on assurance – not a fear of Jesus who sits in heaven with an active eraser
- Jesus promises the overcomer that He will confess his name before my father
 - I am not ashamed to confess Christ, but I am amazed that he is not ashamed to confess me!
 - Our acceptance of Jesus is important. His acceptance of us is far more important!
 - We must all hear what the Holy Spirit says to the church at Sardis
 - It is easy to drift in sleepy apathy towards spiritual deadness – especially when you have a good reputation
 - There's always hope for the dead church because Jesus specializes in raising the dead!

Church History (1520-1750)



The Church Ages - Sardis, The Fifth Age, 1520 AD-1750 AD

Nicholas V (1447 – 55) was the best Pope of the century. He realized that a desire for reform was sweeping Europe. He sent the great cardinal Nicholas of Cues to lead the reform movement in Germany. But he also permitted the Portuguese, who were exploring the west coast of Africa, to get involved in the lucrative African slave trade. Wrong ways of earning money was always the downfall of the church. Earning money in dubious ways is still a problem for Christians today.

After Nicholas the Popes did nothing to support and guide the strong local reform movements that were springing up all over Europe. The Popes focused shamelessly on collecting money to build St Peter's basilica or church and other Vatican monuments, using two and a half thousand loads of stone blocks from the deserted Colosseum which had been built by 60 000 Jewish slaves after the fall of Jerusalem. About 400 000 people had been killed in the Colosseum, including many early Christians who were thrown to the lions. Building St Peters as the biggest church in the world obsessed the Popes once building began in 1506. It took 120 years to build. They avidly collected money by any means.

The Catholic reformers, who were not interested in big building projects, began to look to political leaders for support. Individual churches initiated reforms inspired by middle class religious zeal as towns and workers began to unite together which gave them economic and political power.

Powerful religious forces erupted around the year 1500. People wanted reform, they wanted to get closer to God. The Popes provided no leadership as their obsession was for land, even if they had to go to war, as well as an endless greed for money. Pope Leo X (1513 -1521), desperate to build St Peters church, got one third of Rome's money by selling the offices of bishops and archbishops and cardinals as well as selling indulgences whereby you could buy forgiveness of your sins. A growing discontent with Rome simmered strongly under the surface. Europe needed a strong leader who could give direction by carving out a channel that these religious forces could flow through and sweep together to form an irresistible tide.

Historians admit that Luther preached little that was new. Jan Hus had preached much the same a hundred years before in Bohemia. But Luther's greatest quality was to satisfy the growing need of that time for a strong, determined, and faith-driven leader.

Luther and the other reformers became the first to skillfully use the power of the printing press to give their ideas a wide audience and kindle the enthusiasm of millions. No reformer was more adept than Martin Luther at using the power of the press to spread his ideas. Between 1518 and 1525, Luther published more works than the next 17 most prolific reformers combined. Luther translated the New Testament into German which demolished Rome's hold over the German people as church services previously had been held in Latin which people did not understand.

Luther's reform had three simple steps.

1. **Man is saved by grace through faith alone.**

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

The Catholics relied on faith combined with good works.

2. **Truth is established by Scripture alone.**

PROVERBS 30:5 Every word of God is pure:
II TIMOTHY 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof,
for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
II TIMOTHY 4:2 Preach the word;

The Catholics relied on the Bible and church tradition.

3. **There is no priesthood between the congregation and God because of the priesthood of all believers.**

I PETER 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,

The Catholics depended on a Pope and a priesthood who alone could administer certain sacraments that were necessary for salvation. The Pope alone had the right to interpret Scripture.

In 1302 the Pope had declared that there was no salvation outside the Catholic church.

Slowly these Catholic beliefs crept back into the Protestant churches.

Before too long, as it still is today, many Protestants believed that they must get truth from the Bible as well as their leader's quotes.

Christians do not or cannot prove what they believe from the Bible, by linking its verses together. They always end up quoting what some person has said.

Many non-Catholics believe that salvation depends on accepting Jesus as Saviour and then also depends on regular church attendance in a specific denomination or church. Salvation, they are convinced, is only sure when you are in a certain denomination or church group and you do not argue with the church leaders.

1963 THE THIRD SEAL

"If it ain't connected with my organization, it is--nothing to it."

Non-Catholic leaders or pastors were, and still are, elevated to stand between God and the people.

There is a priesthood of the five-fold ministry that claims to have formed between God and the congregation.

A huge spontaneous following flocked to Luther carried along by the deep religious feeling of the age, long before any princes took a hand in the Reformation.

Printing and preaching spread the message of the Reformation. The first years were unorganized and spontaneous and salvation spread rapidly around Europe, guided by the Holy Spirit.

The corruption and immorality in the Catholic church had disillusioned many. Dante, a firm Roman Catholic and the greatest Italian poet of the Dark Ages, around the year 1300 put Popes Nicholas III and Boniface VIII in hell in his poem "Inferno". Reformers were fighting against entrenched corruption and unscriptural doctrines.

Thus Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin did not wish to reform the papacy they wanted to abolish it.

They wanted to abolish monasteries as unscriptural. They regarded the Roman Catholic church institutions as corrupt but were more concerned that the priests had corrupted the faith and were false teachers. The reformation was more of an attempt to restore Biblical Christianity which resulted in a full-scale attack on the Catholic church doctrines and rites. It took on the nature of a revolution.

MATTHEW 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

In the corrupt and money-grabbing state that the Catholic church was in 1500, the reformation came not to reform but to destroy.

Luther's great success was to launch the doctrine of Justification by faith. No human merit can save a person. God does not accept us because of our good works. Human intellect is chained in darkness and can only choose between different degrees of sin. All we can do is accept Jesus because of His good works but it is only God's grace that enables us to do that. Salvation relies entirely on the merits of the sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary. Nothing we can do can in any way compare with what He did. All we can do is sincerely repent of our own sins and eagerly accept His sacrifice on our behalf. That way we accept Him as our personal Saviour. There was no way in which we could save ourselves.

Why did the Reformation start in Germany?

In France and Spain the king had great power over the princes.

But Germany was different with no strong centralized government. Seven electors from seven different regions elected the German king who was also called the Holy Roman emperor. The German kings had endlessly fought against the Popes, and this had weakened the position of the German kings. Thus the German electors were able to stand up to the German king. Charles V was elected as Holy Roman emperor (or German king) in 1519. He was also king of Austria, Spain, Netherlands, half of Italy and parts of France. As such, Charles V was the most powerful king in Europe.

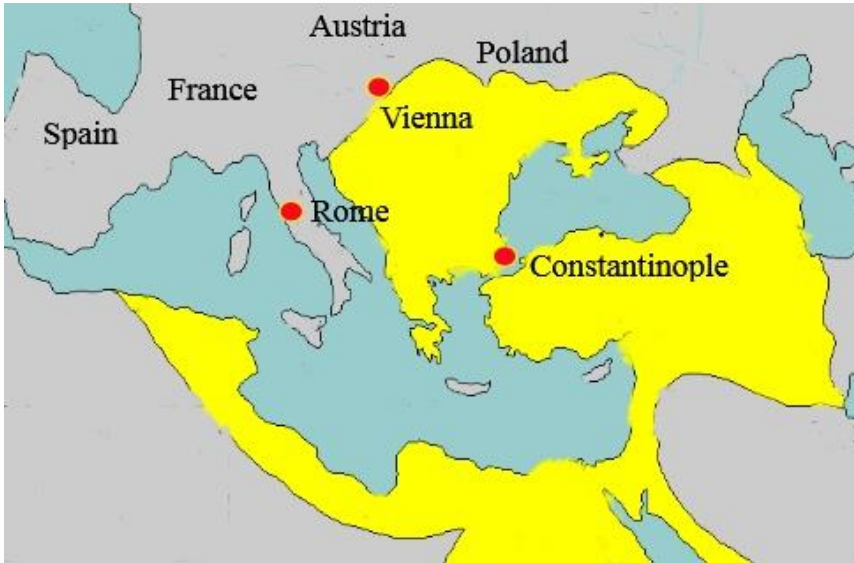
He decided to give his full support to the Pope.

As such, Luther had a formidable rival to oppose him.

But Germany, as far as Charles V was concerned, was his weakest power base because it was not one kingdom but was broken into numerous smaller independent regions. Elector Frederick III of Saxony, though a Catholic, was able to protect

Luther because the great Dutch theologian Erasmus could not find anywhere where Luther contradicted Scripture. So Frederick III, being a just ruler, felt it was unfair to persecute him. This was a remarkable act of religious tolerance.

Charles V had another problem. His empire was too big. Communication and travel were slow in those days. So he put his brother Ferdinand, a cruel persecutor of Anabaptists in Austria, in charge of Germany and Austria. But the Ottoman Turks were moving up to Vienna in Austria so Ferdinand, who needed all the help and money that he could get from Germany, was not going to try to persecute Protestant Germans. The Ottoman Turks played a crucial role in tying down the resources of the Holy Roman Empire (basically Germany and Austria) and thus the military strength of Charles and Ferdinand was directed against the Turks and not against Germany.



The yellow in the above map shows the final extent of the Ottoman Turk empire by 1580.

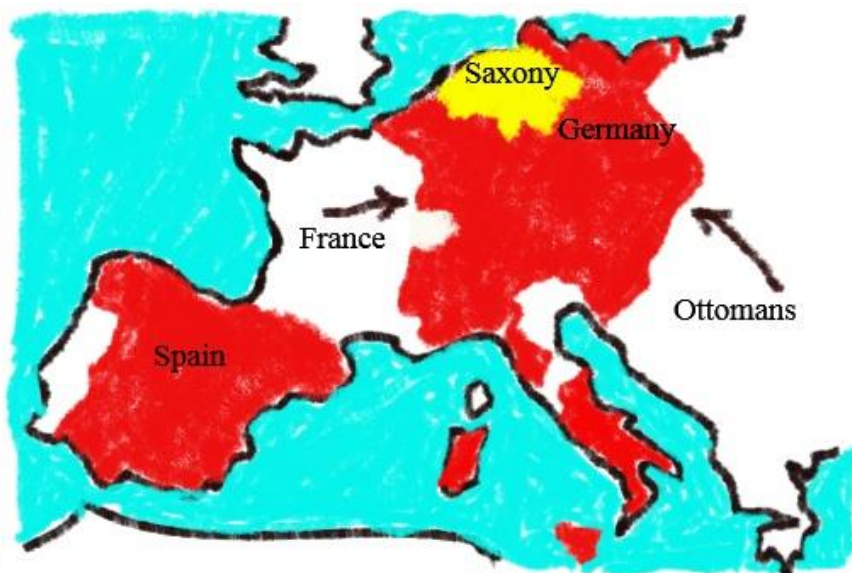
In addition, Charles V, a Roman Catholic, was endlessly fighting France, whose king was also Catholic. This tied up his resources and effectively took the attention of Charles V away from Germany.

This effective balance of power created a situation where the world's most powerful man was unable to silence a turbulent monk who in 1517 had nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in the city of Wittenberg in the German state of Saxony in protest against the selling of indulgences whereby people thought that they bought forgiveness for sins.

The world was electrified by this remarkable scenario.

Europe at last found a voice that had been raised to utter what most of them felt, that the whole system of indulgences was a fraud that had no place in the Gospel.

Europe watched in fascination as a poor monk now faced and fought the whole vast Papal religious and political power.



After the Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453 they dominated a large portion of eastern Europe. As the Ottoman Turks pushed towards Vienna they became an alarming threat towards Europe. France, and at times even the Pope, would make an alliance with the Ottoman Turks in order to limit the power of Charles V. Thus Charles V was caught between two strong enemies, as is shown on the map above, who took up much of his time, effort, and wealth.

His complete empire in Europe is shown in red in the above map.

Saxony, where Martin Luther lived in northern Germany, was safely far away from Charles V even though it was part of his empire. God had performed an amazing balancing act of political power.

In Germany, certain of the seven electors combined to oppose Charles V which severely limited his power in Germany and thus Charles V was powerless to act effectively in Germany. In addition, due to his struggle against France, he spent most of his time outside of Germany, leaving Luther free to continue with his Reformation.

The Suevi and Visigoths had become the Portuguese and Spaniards and they had opened up central and South America where they looted huge amounts of gold and silver for the Catholic church and added vast new empires to the Catholic church making Charles V the most powerful king on earth. This was Luther's main political opponent.

The huge problem with this church age was that religion and politics were completely intermixed. And politics always puts the emphasis on money. Thus money played a dominant role in this church age.

The Popes wanted money for building up St Peter's church and the Vatican city.

Looting South American gold and silver made up for all the losses Rome suffered due to countries in northern Europe breaking away from Rome and becoming Protestant.

The poor wanted to reject Catholicism so that they could loot the monasteries and the houses of the rich.

The princes wanted to reject Catholicism so that they could seize all the valuable church properties.

The sheer wealth of the Roman church made it a tempting target for Protestants to loot.

Many became Protestants just for the financial gain. This was a very poor motive.

Philip of Hesse, one of the most important Protestant rulers in Germany, dissolved the monasteries and nunneries in his territories and although he was only able to keep 41 % of the money for himself, his financial gain was considerable. He had a good name because he refused to kill "heretics" or religious dissenters. By introducing Protestantism into his state, he also increased his control over the church. This was a big mistake as the reformed church became dependent on political power for protection and money.

By breaking with Rome the princes were able to achieve their ambition of usurping the authority of the Pope and the bishops. The princes now began to rule some of the Protestant churches.

The Reformation was starting to replace one set of elevated human Roman Catholic leaders with another set of elevated human Protestant leaders.

In the territories ruled by a prince the religion of the ruler was binding on his people.

We humans have an infinite capacity for self-deception to justify our decisions. The self-gain in terms of power and money was often the reason for a person's choice of faith.

In 1534 King Henry VIII broke from the Catholic church who refused to give him a divorce so that he could re-marry. Thus he broke with Rome and England, for all the wrong reasons, set off on the path where they would finally become Protestant in 1559 under his daughter Elizabeth I.

PSALM 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee:

Such is God's power that he used the violent anger of the English king who wanted to divorce and re-marry (which is not allowed in the New Testament) to break Rome's hold over England.

MARK 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Tetzel was selling indulgences for the archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg in the city of Wittenberg when Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door. The archbishop had borrowed money to buy more than one bishopric, so he needed the sale of indulgences to settle his debt. The Pope had a finger in the pie because he would get half the money for building St Peter's church in the Vatican in Rome.

Luther's indignation exploded in the form of his 95 Theses against indulgences and many other antiPope tracts.

At the Diet of Worms in 1521 when Charles V told him to recant and deny his teachings, Luther gave this classic answer which made him the leader of the biggest upheaval to hit the church.

"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen".

Church unity, which for hundreds of years had been submissive to the Pope, was finally shattered.

82 words stated in three sentences, launched a new church age and changed Europe forever, religiously and politically.

North Europe went Protestant and starting with the Dutch Calvinists they developed the enormous power of a capitalist economy.

Central Europe accepted Protestantism but succumbed largely to the Catholic counter Reformation that started about 1540.

From the year 1540 to 1570 "it is proved by national authentic testimony, that nearly one million of Protestants were publicly put to death in various countries in Europe, besides all those who were privately destroyed, and of whom no human record exists" (J.P. Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, 1838, p. 400).

Southern Europe remained a Catholic stronghold.

In mountainous Switzerland Zwingli, then Calvin picked up the Reformation fire. John Knox went to Scotland and uprooted Catholicism more effectively than it was done in any other country. Many were angry with the Catholic church in Scotland, which owned more than half the real estate and gathered an annual income of nearly 18 times that of the Scottish king. This was too big a financial prize for the Protestants to ignore.

Luther's big failure was to be involved in politics.

The tyranny of the monks who saw their position and privileges vanishing, were violent without measure. The Pope's authorities decided to use their old methods of cursing and killing to crush this new movement. Luther wrote about Freedom in Christ and the peasants and workers interpreted this as freedom from their lords and princes. They failed to grasp that Justification by Faith should lead to living a Christ-like life. Because Luther condemned the monasteries as being a perversion of the Gospel, the peasants felt that they could loot and ransack the monasteries. So the spiritual

freedom that Luther preached became intertwined with the desire for political and financial freedom of the oppressed peasants. Between 1524 -1526, demanding freedom, 300 000 peasants and land workers rose up in revolt against their oppressive and despotic lords and princes, pursuing their material and financial aspirations with evangelical zeal. They hoped that this new Protestant religion would enable them to rob the houses of the rich and free them from paying taxes to the Catholic church. Luther, sadly, grew too dogmatic and backed the despotic princes against the people. 100 000 peasants were killed which cast a bleak shadow over the Reformation in Germany. This fatally tied the Lutheran church to the protection of the princes and as time went on the Lutheran church became a state church of the conservative upper and middle classes.

Luther also made the mistake of condemning the Jews. Hitler finally rose up to fulfill his condemnation of the Jews.

63-0318 THE FIRST SEAL

When Martin Luther made the proclamation that all Jews ought to be run off and their buildings burned down because they were antichrist... See? Martin Luther made that statement himself in his writing.

Now, Hitler just fulfilled what Martin Luther said. Why did Martin Luther say that? Because he was a reformer, not a prophet. God that... My prophet blessed Israel. He said, "Whosoever blesses you will be blessed, and who curses you will be cursed." How can one prophet stand and deny what the other prophet said? He can't do it. It's got to be in harmony.

After carrying out several brilliant reforms, Luther then continued with certain Catholic church traditions.

Luther carried over from the Dark Ages church of Rome the general practice of baptizing infants.

He also adopted the Catholic system of parishes where a priest was in charge of an area and then a bishop was in charge of a number of priests.

Another mistake that Luther made was to accept the Roman Catholic Trinity. He emphasized being Scriptural but ignored men like Erasmus of Rotterdam and Thomas More who pointed out that the words used to define the Trinity were not in the Bible. Zwingli and Calvin, the other two great reformers in Switzerland, also backed down from opposing the Trinity. When Servetus, a Spanish doctor, dared to take the great step of rejecting the Trinity as unscriptural, which all the great reformers were not prepared to do, the reformer Calvin had him burned at the stake.

The Anabaptists tried to restore adult baptism but the reformer Zwingli in 1525 approved that Anabaptists should be drowned. The reformers used a clause in the law of Justinian, the Roman emperor who died in 565 AD, which had demanded the death sentence for anyone who got re-baptized or who denied the Trinity. The Reformation, based on a return to the Bible, was grinding to a halt.

The reformers believed that the political security of a country meant that everyone must obey its laws, as passed by the government, as well as obeying the religious laws of the leader of the country. There had to be uniformity of belief. If the leader of the country was Protestant, you had to be Protestant. If he was Catholic, you had to be Catholic. Politics and religion had become too intertwined.

The union of church and state was maintained. Political leaders could punish dissenters.

The religion of a territory became identical with the religion of its prince. The only religious freedom of choice that you had was to emigrate to a country whose prince shared your beliefs.

The emergence of kings and princes as the ones to decide the religion of their dominions gave the religious struggle a new political violence. Except for England, the kings in Europe became Catholic. Provinces and cities resisted the power of kings to control them and they, especially in northern Europe, became Protestant so that they could gain their own political independence.

Then Calvin came up with a convincing explanation of predestination which reduced man to being a robot who was either saved or not saved purely by God's will. This extreme view demolished any form of human free will.

It would take a lot more insight before Christians would be able to grasp that free will and predestination could co-exist. The mistake of this age was not realizing that they only had part of the truth. With extreme bravery they had broken the Roman Catholic monopoly and dazzlingly presented Justification by Faith to get people saved. But instead of leaving the difficult and controversial ideas open until they could be resolved better when God revealed more truth in later years, they insisted on establishing viewpoints which were based on some Scriptures and ignored others.

Thus the Reformation slowly ground to a halt as the different groups in Europe formed denominations that entrenched their own ideas. They would ignore any further revelation of Scripture. So God would finally have to bypass them.

The reformers had made a good beginning, but then they stopped in their pursuit of what the original church believed. So the Reformation was a big step forward but it would be left to a later generation of men like John Wesley and the missionaries to take the Gospel further.

Wesley became famous for saying, "The world is my parish".

This laid the basis for the golden missionary age of Christianity where the technological development of big ships could carry missionaries over the oceans and railways could take them inland.

By 1500 the papacy was spiritually bankrupt but Luther's reformation forced the Catholic church to start reforming themselves which led to the establishment of the Jesuits in 1540 who preached total submission to the Pope ("If the Pope says white is black then I will believe it", said their founder Ignatius of Loyola) and the Council of Trent that met three times between 1545 and 1563. Then they established and were able to launch a very effective counter reformation against the Protestants which won back lots of territory in central Europe from the Protestants.

The Protestants declared that the Pope was the antichrist but the Catholics took the future prophecies back into the past and claimed that the emperor Nero was the beast and that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was the Tribulation. People who preferred this interpretation reverted back to Catholicism.

This was a clever tactic whereby future prophecies are neatly nullified. According to them, the Bible is a record of past events that does not tell us of the future.

Today Message believers consider the great Cloud that appeared in the past in 1963 near the city of Flagstaff in northern Arizona to be the fulfillment of the future Coming of the Lord or of the future coming down of the mighty Angel of Revelation Chapter 10. Thus they claim that the mysterious seven Thunders have already uttered. Placing the future into the past, thus repeats itself as a classic tactic of spiritual error.

The Inquisition in Rome established in 1542 rooted all Protestants out of Italy by tracking them down confiscating all their goods and lands, imprisoning them or killing them. The Spanish Inquisition established in 1478 had kept Protestantism out of Spain.

The great reformer Calvin had to flee persecution in France and go to Switzerland.

By 1560 a vigorous Catholic church was fighting back.

The fighting got literal. For almost a century the Catholics and the Protestants would be at each other's throats in a civil and religious war.

The ambition of the Catholic kings for centralized control over all their countries and the desire of Protestant cities and provinces to defend their own local liberties thus became a political power struggle with an added intense religious dimension. The certainties of faith were mixed inextricably with the passions of politics. The struggle became absolute, incapable of compromise.

This awful time ended in the 30 year's war in central Europe between 1618 and 1648. It was the deadliest and most destructive religious war in Europe where 6 to 8 million people died. Devastation, famine, and disease as well as mercenaries and soldiers looting and terrorizing the inhabitants became the standard conditions. The war ground to a halt as most of the countries involved became bankrupt. Territories lost up to a third or more of their inhabitants. The south-west of Germany had hardly one-third of their pre-war population left. Sheer exhaustion stopped the fighting. It took 100 years before some regions of Germany in 1750 got back to their 1618 population numbers.

The one exception was the Dutch Republic.

In 1648 they had fought the Spanish to a stand-still and finally ended their revolt against Spain and then enjoyed a time of great prosperity and development. They became one of the world's foremost economic and naval powers. The economic boom of capitalism was starting to take off in Protestant countries.

Sardis was a church that looked strong but was actually weak.

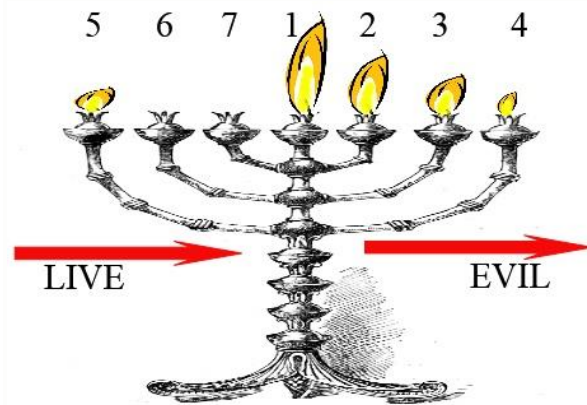
They began well but then reacted to the conditions of the age, the frightening waves of awful violence and like Simon Peter they took their eyes off the Bible that they had started returning to, and began to sink.

But despite their faults, this fifth church age turned a dramatic corner.

Thanks to them people now began to get saved. Luther was the first man to lead a revolt against Rome that actually enabled people to escape and form Protestant countries that could stay separate from Rome.

The seven-branched candlestick that had gone so far away from the early church in the Dark Ages of the fourth church age, now had a flame on the other side. Justification. The just will live by faith. Despite all the problems and errors of the age, this great truth had caught hold in people's hearts.

HABAKKUK 2:4 : but the just shall live by his faith.



The huge improvement was one of direction.

For the first time since the apostolic age, the church had taken a step of restoration towards the early church, rather than away from it. EVIL spelled backwards is LIVE. The church had rediscovered salvation by faith. There was still a lot to restore but they were starting to head in the right direction, back towards the first church age. The church was coming alive. The sun was starting to rise after the long dark night of the Dark Ages.

REVELATION 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Sardis means "the escaped ones".

Luther, the great angel or messenger to his age, had managed to escape from Rome. But God has seven stars, seven messengers who were allocated to the seven church ages that would cover the 2 000 years of church history. There are still two more church ages to go. God manifested a different aspect of His Spirit to each of the seven ages because each age faced totally different situations and conditions. It looked like God was behaving in seven different ways. Seven totally different men would be raised up to guide each age in their seven different ways. Truth got lost in stages and now truth would be restored in stages, making each age and its challenges different.

But the followers of the reformers made a big mistake. They thought that they were the last church age and that the reformers had restored the full truth. The reformation churches built their doctrinal walls around themselves. The reformers tried to reveal the whole Bible, not realizing that enough truth had not yet been revealed. The reformers were the green leaves of the restored church that grew out of the dirt of the Dark Ages where the true seed had been buried since the council of Nicaea.

The works of these reformers were tremendous. Aided by the printing press they spread salvation far and wide. But their followers then called themselves by human and other man-made names like Lutheran, Calvinist, Anabaptists.

Thus the reform movement stopped and they built monuments of big church buildings.

Meanwhile, the life moved out of them as they denominated around the quotes of their leaders and the Life would go into the tassels that would blow the pollen over the field in the great missionary age that would follow. But the green leaves were drying up as time went on. They had carried the Life for a while but life moves on and sadly they did not, as they rejected further revelation.

Death by organization and denomination.

Each church believing that they had it all. So God had to raise up another church age of the greatest of missionaries to pick up the baton that had been dropped by the followers of the reformers.

REVELATION 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

They had justification by faith. They had taught people the need to be saved. They had broken from many Roman Catholic beliefs. But in that cruel age, instead of focusing on what they got right which was salvation, Protestants began to persecute people that they disagreed with.

They also relied on the state for money, protection, and the enforcing of their doctrines.

They attempted to interpret all the Bible and in the process they established many wrong doctrines. Infant baptism. A church hierarchy of bishops and archbishops that was above the pastors. Each church was dominated by a pastor. Churches took on human or man-made names. Anglican church. Presbyterian church. Zwinglian church. Huguenots. Doctrinal errors were established like Trinity, Eve ate an apple, a seven-year Tribulation.

Denominational zeal replaced revelation of the Scripture. This age got off to a good start but was then unfulfilled.

They put their denomination first. It was more important to them than the Bible.

REVELATION 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Justification by faith was a great start. But then they moved on to state control of the church and forcing people to believe what the leader of the territory believed. Protestants even drowned Anabaptists just because they practised adult baptism. The great reformer Zwingli began preaching in Zurich in 1519 but was killed in 1531 because he tried to apply an unsuccessful food blockade against the Catholics in Switzerland. They attacked unexpectedly and killed him.

Protestants did well to break Rome's stranglehold but did much wrong also that they needed to repent of. The Gospel was mixed with political violence. Many Protestants wanted to confiscate the wealth of the Roman Catholic church. They became too involved with earthly pursuits and relaxed their guard.

God removed from them their spiritual desire to understand more truth. Thus they got so far, and then stopped.

REVELATION 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Amongst the politics and the violence and the desire to loot the rich Catholic churches and the homes of the rich Catholics, there was a minority who actually served God just to draw closer to Him and to live by His Word. They surrendered their lives to Him, repented of their sins and genuinely accepted Jesus as their Saviour. Many were unnoticed by historians, just being ordinary men and women. But the focus of their lives was on serving God and getting others saved. Their motive was neither wealth nor the awful religious violence that swept this age until about 1650. They sought to persuade their enemies, not to kill them even though they were often killed. But the tide would turn and after 1650 there was more tolerance as Catholics and Protestants realized that a century of devastating religious warfare had left Europe split into two camps, Catholic and Protestant, neither of which were sufficiently strong enough to be able to destroy the other.

This can be compared to the deadly civil war that began in Syria in 2011. By 2017 there were about 400 000 dead and about 12 million displaced refugees. The cities where fighting happened had large areas reduced to rubble. Can anyone claim victory in this tragic scenario? The ancient Romans would devastate an area and reduce it to ruin, and then call this peace. Around 1650 there were many parts of Germany that looked like modern day Syria. It would take another hundred years before the population of many parts of Germany returned to the numbers who lived there in 1540.

REVELATION 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Those who were able to get saved and spread the Gospel of Justification by Faith, despite all the senseless violence and horrific cruelty that was rampant in this age, had tragic circumstances that they had to overcome. But with great courage they were prepared to die for their faith. Many were blotted out and destroyed in the savage counter-Reformation that the Roman Catholics launched around the year 1540. White garments speak of their upright righteousness. Though blotted out

physically by ruthless enemies, no-one could blot their names out of the Book of Life that God keeps in Heaven. That is all that really counts because they will all come up in the resurrection and then live on earth forever. Those who killed them lived a little longer on earth but will end in the Lake of Fire, which is a dismal prospect.

God will stand for those who had the courage to stand for Him. That is one virtue that Martin Luther infused into this church age: courage.

REVELATION 3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

God's plea to each age which is ignored by the majority. Get back to the Bible. The Spirit will only teach you what is in the Bible.

But somehow men will continually have more faith in the unscriptural quotes of their leaders than in what is actually written in the Bible. Human wisdom cannot guide us through troublesome times. We just need to stick to God's Word, even though it costs us. This age had many martyrs. Brave Protestant reformers stood up to Rome but sadly we also read of Protestant reformers agreeing to the killing of other Protestants. That would never have happened if they stayed with Scripture.

Philadelphia (3:7-13) – The Faithful Church

Endurance. Holiness. Repentance. Revival.

The Faithful Church

⁷ “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”’: ⁸ “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. ⁹ Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. ¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name.

¹³ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

- The name Philadelphia means “brotherly love”
 - From the Greek word philadelphos, meaning "brotherly love."
 - philía – “love” or “friendship”
 - adelfós – “brother”
- History
 - King Eumenes II of Pergamum acquired the area of Philadelphia in 189 B.C.
 - He named the city in honor of his brother, Attalus II of Pergamum
 - Attalus II was his successor & one that *cognomen Philadelphus* (one who loves his brother)
 - Doing so earned the nickname “philadelphos” or “brotherly love”
 - Philadelphian coins showed the 2 brothers is completely alike – In height, features and dress
 - It was the first of many cities to be named Philadelphia, including Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, founded in 1682 by William Penn
 - Founded to be an open door for Greek culture
 - Philadelphia was in the administrative district of Sardis,
 - In the shadow of Sardis, Philadelphia never achieving the fame, glory and wealth of its neighbor.
 - 17 AD Earthquake
 - Philadelphia was a naturally beautiful area with hills and mountains as well as canyons and valleys. However, like almost all places of the globe – the greater the geological activity, the more beautiful the area, but it comes at great expense – EARTHQUAKES! Earthquakes were an uneasy “normal” in Philadelphia.
 - Philadelphia and 10 ten other cities were totally destroyed by a massive quake that some have estimated (guess) to be between 8 to 9 on the modern-day Richter scale.
 - It was rebuilt by Emperor Tiberius.
 - Became a strong fortress city and was called the ‘Gateway to the East’
 - Famous for its grape industry, textiles and leather goods
 - Philadelphia was the last of the Byzantine cities and was finally captured by the Turks in 1390.
 - Philadelphia prospered for more than 1,400 years until Muslim invaders brought their Jihad expansion into Europe. The Christians in Philadelphia were captured and caused to form a line as they were marched into the Great Theater of the Gods where they were systematically beheaded.
 - Christians lived there until the early 1900s
 - Now known as Ataşehir

- Geography

- Located on the Hermus River about 28 miles southeast of Sardis in Asia Minor
- The city was well situated on the Royal Postal Route of the Roman Empire
 - From Rome to Troas to Pergamos, Sardis and to the interior of Phrygia
 - It was a virtual gateway to the high central plateau of Asia minor
 - Thus became a missionary center for spreading the Greek language and manners into the Eastern parts of Lydia and Phrygia
- The missionary character of the city seems to be stressed in the letter to the church of Philadelphia
- It was strategic for many reasons.
 - It was a vital stop along the great trade routes of the ancient world.
 - The region was extremely fertile for the growing of crops of almost any sort but one in particular added to its fame and its economy – Grapes! And of course where there are grapes there is the industry of wine making.
 - Philadelphia was the “Napa Valley” of Asia Minor.
 - Wine being so valued to the Philadelphians it was only natural for them to adopt the worship of Dionysus, (Bacchus) the god of intoxication and sex.



Only sparse, unexcavated ruins remain of biblical Philadelphia.

- Pagan religions
 - Because of its many temples and shrines to Babylonian and Greeks gods, Philadelphia was called “The Little Athens of the Empire.”
 - Wine being so valued to the Philadelphians it was only natural for them to adopt the worship of Dionysus, (Bacchus) the god of intoxication and sex.
 - People also worshipped the sun and serpent gods
- Church of Philadelphia
 - Toward the center of Aleşehir, the remains of the early 7th century basilica of St. John bare silent witness to its Christian past.
 - When and how the church was established is not known, but it prospered for many centuries

Greeting

	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
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Philadelphia (3:7-13)	Though you have little strength, you have kept my word and have not denied my name; Obedient, powerful; Patiently endured persecution;	-- (none)	Continue to be faithful and I will keep you from the hour of trial	An eternal place in the presence of God; A new name; A place in the New Jerusalem
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7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

- Overriding Motive in Which Jesus is Speaking – v9 *that I have loved you*
 - Ep 3 ⁸ *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*
- Jesus is introduced as the sovereign God - He is holy and true
 - These do not describe tendencies within Jesus, but His very being – clear characteristics of Yahweh
 - “I Am The “Great I AM” Who Loves You”
 - And this is why My love for you matters – Everything You Need Is Found In Me.
- “These Things Says”
 - Just those three words here grammatically and theologically establish that whoever is speaking is One of absolute authority. In other words there is no one else who is qualified or is able or has the authority or has the position or the place but this One alone who is speaking.
- *Holy and true*
 - Ágios – The “holy one”
 - “The Holy One of Israel” is a common reference to God in the Hebrew scriptures,
 - Here Jesus identifies with the Father, recalling Jesus saying in John’s gospel, “The Father and I are one” (Jn 10 ³⁰ *I and My Father are one.*”)
 - 1Pe 1 ¹⁵ *but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”*
 - Ps 104 ¹ *Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, ²Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. ³He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind,*
 - aléthinos – The “true”
 - The idea is real or genuine, as opposed to unreal, fake, or counterfeit
 - Jesus is true in all of his being
 - He is the real God and the real man
 - He is the keeper of the keys and doors
 - Rev 6 ⁹ *When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*
- *holds the key of David*
 - This is a figure from Isaiah – expressing power and authority, especially to admit and exclude
 - Is 22 ²⁰ *‘Then it shall be in that day, That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah; ²¹I will clothe him with your robe And strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand.*

He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem And to the house of Judah.

²² The key of the house of David [Messiah] I will lay on his shoulder;

So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.

²³ I will fasten him *as* a peg in a secure place, And he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.

- The “key of David” reaches back to Eliakim
 - Eliakim replaces Shebna as King Hezekiah's palace administrator
 - Eliakim – Name Means; “God Will Set Up” or “God Establishes”
- The allusion affirms that David's authority rests on Jesus, the promised Messiah, David's heir.
- *What he opens no one can shut,*
 - Doors God can open
 - Act 14 ²⁷ Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.
 - 1Co 16 ⁹ For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are* many adversaries.
 - 2Co 2 ¹² Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord,
 - Col 4 ³ meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
- *and what he shuts no one can open.*
 - Shuts – ‘to lock tight’
 - Because knowing who I AM is the answer for all of your life's issues and challenges and difficulties. I am the God who is the becoming one.

Commendation ☺

8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. 10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. 11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

- Jesus offers words of support, and the promise that he will keep them safe until his imminent return.
- I am your defender!
 - The Sovereign Hand of God (vs.) The Revealed Word of God.
 - The Sovereign Hand of God – as you pursue the Lord and desire to yield to the will of the Lord, He “unlocks doors”
- *8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.*
 - Jesus knows their great faithfulness – Stayed faithful with the little that they had to work with
 - Living in the shadow of Sardis, with its prosperous economy, political clout and large, wealthy Jewish community, Philadelphia lacked the resources they needed to fulfill the opportunities the Lord had placed before them. He had opened the door, but they were hesitant to step through it.
 - They have an open door set before them
 - May represent their opportunity to enter God's Kingdom – In contrast with their exclusion from the synagogue (verse 9)
 - May represent their missionary opportunities
 - The emphasis is on unhindered openness – there is nothing that can keep them from their access to this door

- *I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.*
 - They have a little strength
 - contend with weakness
 - To be moving forward yet aware of one's frailty and inability.
 - It is a statement that means that one is surrounded by opposition yet will not give up.
 - It describes someone who knows and believes and lives in an ungodly world but keeps moving forward toward the goal, the prize – the finish-line.
 - Does not imply weakness, but rather real strength – They were weak enough to be strong in the Lord
 - For many of us, we are too strong, too big, too sure of our own strength to see God do a great work in us through His strength
 - Paul is a great example God's strength was made evident in his weakness
 - *2Co 12 (Thorn in the Flesh) ⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to ^[b]buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
 - The Christians in Philadelphia have also been faithful to Jesus and His word
 - The idea behind being faithful to his name is not only expressing allegiance to Him, but in also being consistent with His character
 - Some churches who claim great faithfulness to the word of Jesus, deny his character. They represent the manner and style of Jesus as something very different from what the Gospels show.
 - These features – opportunity, reliance on God, and faithfulness to Jesus – almost seem commonplace, unspectacular or even boring. But Jesus was completely pleased with this church!
 - The church of Philadelphia is commended for keeping the word of the Lord and not denying His name. Success in Christian work is not to be measured by any other standard of achievement.
 - It is not rise in ecclesiastical position
 - It is not the number of new buildings which had been built through a man's ministry
 - It is not the crowds that flock to listen to any human voice
 - All of these things are frequently used as yardsticks of success, but they are earthly and not heavenly measures.
 - Look closely at what Jesus is saying. "I've given you these open doors of opportunities and I have shut down other doors that you don't need to be involved in. Do not worry about the fact that you have a little strength because you have stayed true to my word, my doctrine, my instruction, my commands and you have not tainted your witness nor in any way have you embarrassed Me by denying my Name."
- *9 I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.*
 - "Synagogue of Satan"
 - This is a reference to those who had "come out" of the traditions of man-made Judaism and "embraced" Jesus as Messiah. But over time they began to gravitate back toward their human rules and rituals and legalism.
 - *Heb 6 ⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*
 - A verdict upon the Christians of Philadelphia – they are to be vindicated and preserved

- Again, we have Christ referring to “those of the assembly of Satan,” people who call themselves Jews, but are not; rather, they have fallen far from God’s covenant.
- Apparently the Christians in Philadelphia were being persecuted by the Jews, but these persecuting Jews were Jews in name only, having no spiritual connection to Abraham or to the people of faith
- I will make them come and worship before your feet
 - God promised Israel that gentiles would honor them and acknowledge their God
 - Now Jews will play the role of the heathen and acknowledged that the church is the Israel of God
 - Phil 2 ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
 - 1Co 14 ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. ²⁵ And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.
 - Speaks of unbelievers falling down in the midst of Christians to worship God
 - This establishes that it isn't Christians were being worshiped, but God is being worshiped in the presence of Christians
 - The best way to destroy the enemies of the Gospel is to pray that God would change them into friends
 - The main thought here is a vindication before self-righteous spiritual persecutors
 - God is promising that the Christians in Philadelphia will be vindicated before their persecutors
- “I Am The ‘Great I AM’ Who Loves You”
 - And this is why My love for you matters! He Is Our Protector & Defender.
 - The Church of Philadelphia had Enemies within and without.
 - Jesus assures them that He would be the One to defend them.
 - The One who loves you (is for you) is the One who:
 - (1) will defend you.
 - *I have placed before you an open door*
 - (2) creates in your life custom opportunities to be a witness
 - *that no one can shut*; for (because) *you have little strength*,
 - (3) is inseparably linked to The Word
 - *you have kept my word*,
 - (4) The One who loves you is the One who is loved by you
 - *and have not denied my name.*
- *10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*
 - Jesus gives them a promise of protection from the hour of trial on the whole world
 - Most see this hour of trial as a reference to the Messianic woes – the great tribulation – which precedes Jesus earthly Kingdom
 - ‘persevere/endure’ is in the past tense – Something that the Christians had already done before the hour of trial, which has not yet come upon the world
 - The promise is a reward for past perseverance, not the equipping to persevere in the future
 - Does this promise to keep you from the hour of trial imply an escape before the great tribulation or does it promise protection in it? Each side believes this verse easily supports their position.
 - Those who believe the church will be here on Earth during this time of great tribulation focus on persevere and say the context demands the view of a protection that enables the faithful to persevere in this period.
 - Why would Christ invite his bride (the church) to the wedding feast and the marriage supper of the Lamb, but beat her to death first during the great tribulation? That makes no sense.

- Those who believe that Jesus will come for his church before this time of great tribulation note that protection is promised from the very hour of trial, not just the trial itself, and point to the world wide inescapable cataclysm predicted in the great tribulation
- The test is directed against those who dwell on the Earth
 - The ones being tested by this hour of trial are not primarily believers, but those who dwell on the Earth – those whose home is the Earth, who are not citizens of heaven
 - This “refers not to believers, but to unbelievers who are the objects of God's wrath” throughout Revelation (David E. Garland)
- “I Am The “Great I AM” Who Loves You” and this is why My love for you matters!
 - I AM Coming Again For Those Who Are Waiting For Me – RAPTURE!
 - Tit 2 ¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.
 - 1Th 1 ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
 - 1Th 2 ¹⁹ For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?
 - 1Th 3 ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.
 - 1Th 4 ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.
 - 1Th 5 ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.
 - Jn 14 ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.
- *11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*
 - What Jesus wants them to do is hold fast
 - The church must not depart from its solid foundation of faithfulness to Jesus and His word – and evangelism
 - They must continue in the things mentioned in verse 8, even if they seem unspectacular by some modern church standards
 - That no one may take your crown
 - This is not a crown of royalty due to one because of birth, but a crown of victory
 - Not the idea that it can be stolen – If they fail to hold fast, their crown might be given to another
 - Jesus is encouraging his saints to finish their course with victory – to play the 2nd half just as strongly as they have played the 1st half
 - 2Ti 4 ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
 - Nowhere are we told to prepare for the great tribulation

Condemnation ☹️

- Like Smyrna, Jesus has no words of condemnation for Philadelphia
 - They aren't a martyr church, but the genuinely love the Lord and they are trying very hard with limited resources, all the while being persecuted.

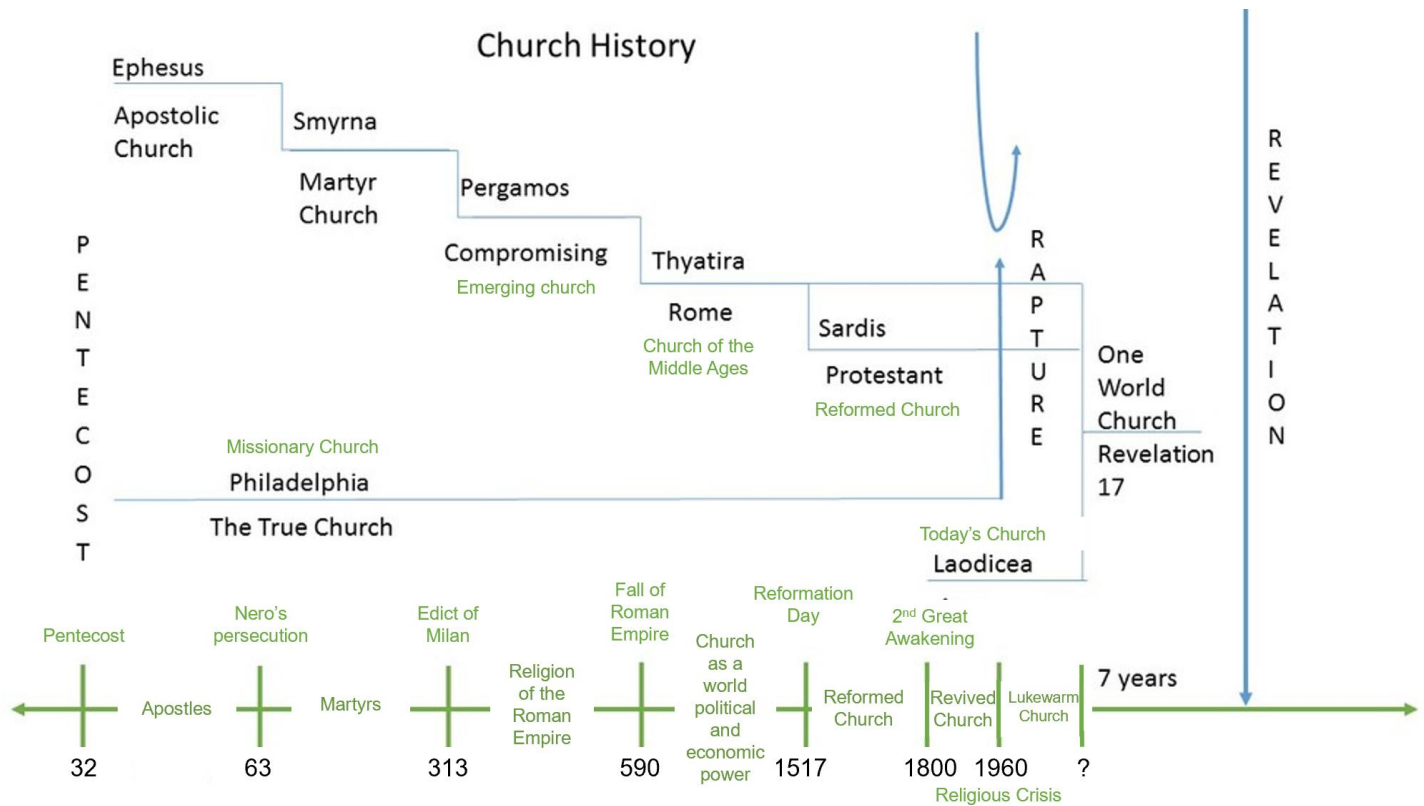
Admonition (Call to Action)

12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- The promise of reward to overcomers
 - The reward for Philadelphia's love and steadfastness will be great – A secure place in the New Jerusalem (which we'll see in Revelation 21-22)
- *12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.*
 - Pillars were pictures of strength, stability and dignified beauty
 - This was a very graphic reminder of when the 17AD massive earthquake devastated not only Philadelphia but also Sardis and 10 other cities in the region. Fear totally gripped the people for years.
 - In Philadelphia's frequent earthquakes, when a building collapsed, often all that remain were the huge pillars. Jesus offers us the same strength.
 - Historians write that “Almost all that was left from the violent upheaval and the opening up of the ground were the pillars that supported the gods in their temples. The deities themselves in whom the people trusted, in the end could not support themselves and were found in ruin” - Ramsey
 - Overcomers are told that they will be a pillar in the temple of my God
 - In the Greco-Roman world the practice was that the kingdom or the realm or the empire would celebrate the life of a notable hero by inscribing their name upon a pillar. That pillar was then placed in a strategic spot or even adopted in a great temple location for all to see.
 - Jesus is saying – like those pillars there in Philadelphia that remained in the day of trouble – you will stand even better. There is no need for you to worry about the shaking and noise and the fear that is all around you.
- *Never again will he leave it.*
 - The overcomer will have a place of permanence and stability with God – In contrast to their uncertain place in this world
 - When that earthquake struck - it is said that many thousands were killed as they ran out of the pagan temples and shrines and places of worship to get outside and away from the massive stones falling.
 - Flavius Josephus tells us that people “Refused the going into the city-center from that time forward. Instead they began to build their homes more like tents or makeshift dwellings out in the countryside and away from anything that could fall.
- *I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.*
 - The overcomer also receives on his person many names
 - Name of God
 - Name of the new Jerusalem
 - A knowledge of Jesus' “new name”
 - In knowing him in his fullness as the risen and glorified Christ
 - In union with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, for all of eternity
 - And that's a pretty nice place to be!
 - These names are:
 - Marks of identification – that we belong to Jesus
 - Intimacy – we are privileged to know him in ways others or not
 - This also can fit well with the image of a pillar
 - In the ancient world, a faithful city servant or distinguished priest was sometimes honored by having a special pillar added to one of the temples and having it inscribed with his name

- *13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*
 - We all want to hear the praise and encouragement Jesus gives to the church of Philadelphia
 - But if we are to be like this church, we must stay on the foundation of Jesus Christ
 - On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand
 - Both Smyrna and Philadelphia have no criticism
 - Both of these cities are the ones remaining still today
 - Let's remember that each of the churches had a different perception of themselves than what the Lord had – how sobering to us in our own conceits

Church History (1750-1906)



The Church Ages - Philadelphia (Brotherly Love), The Sixth Age, 1750 AD-1906 AD

Philadelphia means Brotherly love. This represents the love of the evangelists and missionaries who were prepared to suffer and die in order to spread the Gospel to the unsaved heathen who were all over the world. But sadly, in the political realm, there was also the greed and violence of the colonial era. Both God and Satan were moving. The Tree of Life (the Spirit of Christ) and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (the inspiration of the Devil) continued their struggle for the minds of men on the world-wide stage.

Various sources, including the "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change", use the year 1750 as a baseline year for the start of the Industrial Revolution which began in England.

The Industrial Revolution was a period from 1750 to 1850 where changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology had a profound effect on the social, economic and cultural conditions of the times. It began in the United Kingdom, then subsequently spread throughout Western Europe, North America, Japan, and eventually the rest of the world. The Industrial Revolution marks a major turning point in history; almost every aspect of daily life was influenced in some way. (www.freeman-pedia.com/industrial-revolution)

In 1750 Portugal stripped the Inquisition of its power. This limited the ruthless persecution of Protestants and Jews by the Roman Catholic church in Portugal. This created a better atmosphere in which evangelism could proceed.

In 1750 the king of Dahomey, a country in west Africa next to Nigeria (today called southern Benin), earned 250 000 pounds from overseas sales of slaves. This was a disgusting abuse. William Wilberforce in England became born again in 1785 and worked tirelessly to get the Slave Trade Act passed in 1807. Slavery was abolished in 1833 in the British Empire.

Around this time the Seven Years War was a global military war between 1756 and 1763, involving most of the great powers of the time, and affected Europe, North America, Central America, the West African coast, India, and the Philippines. England defeated France. This opened the door for England to take over India.

Then came an irony of success. England also beat France in Canada, and the English took over Canada. The 13 American colonies were then free from the threat of the French. They no longer needed English protection and rebelled against England in 1776, declaring their independence.

The North Americans then pushed inland and cruelly conquered the American Indians (which was a stain on the American flag), and yet they were being prepared to become the champions of the Gospel in the last church age as they were free from Popes and Kings. They also developed an incredible intensity, and will to fight for what they considered to be a good cause.

The Civil War from 1860 - 1865 revealed that if they thought fighting was necessary and just, then they had a will to fight for their cause that equalled or surpassed any other people. Almost 700 000 soldiers were killed. No nation in Europe could even have put an army of 700 000 men into a war. Some historians doubt if all of western Europe could have combined to produce an army of 700 000 men. The great battle of Waterloo was "repeated" in the Civil War more than twenty times. So the Americans were learning to fight on a massive scale. North and South fought for four years with bravery, persistence, and brilliance.

Americans would use those qualities as they push the Pentecostal revival against the opposition of the established churches in the seventh church age. America, in the last church age, produce more full time Gospel preachers than all the rest of the world combined. American money sponsors Gospel outreach all over the world. America, in the last church age, supports Gospel outreach on a massive worldwide scale. The intensity of natural fighting in the civil war was manifest in the intensity with which they pushed the spiritual battle in the Pentecostal era. Then William Branham, with his lack of education, would need those same qualities to push his incredible insight into the written mysteries of Scripture against the fierce opposition of the highly qualified denominational church preachers. They had their theological doctorates, but he had the most amazing supernatural ministry. His insight into Scripture was unrivaled.

Gold was discovered in 1848 in California. Millions of settlers rushed to this frontier in a wild race for riches. But in just 20 years 80% of California's Native Americans were dead. An estimated 100 000 Native Americans died during the first two years of the gold rush. Many died from new diseases. California became a state in 1850. A state policy of genocide saw about 16000 Native Americans murdered in cold blood as the state rewarded the killers. Tens of thousands were turned into slaves, many of whom were worked to death. This was the ugly face of America.

But God chose the Californian city of Los Angeles for the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit at 312 Azusa Street. This was the start of God's great supernatural move in the last church age.

So there is a confusing mixture of good and evil interacting in the same place.

Let us look at the background to the events between 1750 and 1906, which represent the sixth church age of Philadelphia - brotherly love.

REVELATION 6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

:6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

The antichrist spirit was riding on a dark outpouring of demonology that involved money. The horrific abuse of slavery, as well as a torrent of stolen and blood-soaked wealth, enabled the rise of capitalism. A dark shadow of corrupt capitalistic colonialism swept the world in those days. Money from the awful slave trade helped to build up the economies of England and Europe.

Spain and Portugal looted tons of gold and silver from South America and Mexico. This was the dismal start which saw Europe hacking out overseas colonies. Smallpox and other European diseases, taken over to the Americas by the Spanish, killed 90% of the indigenous inhabitants in America who had no immunity to these European diseases.

Then England looted India, Britain's richest colony, for 190 years at the point of British bayonets, which helped England establish and take the lead in the new industrial revolution that started around 1750. Industrialization required much violence, huge waste, and lots of other people's money. India, unwillingly, was forced to pay by means of so-called taxes so that England could develop the steam engine during the 1760's and 1770's, and build up her industrial power. These steam engines were used for mining, industrial scale manufacture, and rapid transport by steamboat and steam train. Industrial factory labour meant millions in England were forced into repetitive, grindingly hard work under the petty tyranny found in bleak factories and cramped unsanitary accommodation. They were poor people, standing on their feet for 12 hours a day, with shocking air pollution from the burning coal that made steam. The British navy just captured men who were walking around coastal towns and press-ganged them by forcing them to become sailors. Thus they built up the world's strongest navy.

The churches produced dedicated evangelists and missionaries who blew open the pagan world as the Gospel spread. But many churches got into the money-making racket by selling corrupted Bible truths as if they were the Bread of Life. Denominations were built around the oppressive conformity to the traditions and commandments of men. God was presented as a Trinity of three Persons who were each God, but yet there was only one God. This mental muddle dumbed down Christians and made them incapable of thinking for themselves. God lost His name as three People cannot have *one* name. Being subjected to this belief they rejected the water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ by saying that Peter had made a mistake.

ACTS 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Christians thus were forced to accept that there were mistakes in the Bible. Today there are very few Christians who believe that the Bible is infallible.

Saint Paul, when he came to Ephesus, confirmed the name of Jesus in baptism.

ACTS 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The "name" of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit somehow became the name of God. Intelligent people were led to believe that three titles were suddenly a name. This is spiritual blindness, which is a form of mental gymnastics where words lose their meaning.

Then it was a small step to accept the unscriptural Christmas and its pagan, decorated tree.

Nowhere in the Bible were we asked to celebrate the birth of the Lord.

JEREMIAH 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, **Learn not the way of the heathen,**

:3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

:4 **They deck it with silver and with gold;**

Yet the tree is the central decoration of the christmas festival.

Putting the name of Christ onto a pagan tree does not make it truth.

Nicolaitanism flourished as a priest or pastor became head of each church. Darkness was replacing Light, but "Christianity" became a profitable business.

The Roman Catholic church had decided on selling indulgences to pay for their huge Saint Peter's church in the Vatican in Rome. An indulgence meant you could buy forgiveness for your sins, without having to bother to repent of your sins. You could even buy forgiveness for family members who had died. The Pope had invented the doctrine of purgatory whereby you went there to suffer for your sins after death. If money was paid, you got out of purgatory and went into Heaven. This way the Pope was able to make money even out of the dead. Good business, but rotten religion.

God protected the oil of the Holy Spirit and the wine of the stimulation of revelation in a holiness revival sparked by John Wesley in England. This eventually matured into the great missionary movement that was started by William Carey going to India in 1792. The beauty of the missionary movement was that they were far away from the European churches and their unscriptural errors. Dealing with the pagans, they had to put the emphasis on a personal salvation experience with Jesus Christ. This kept the missionary movement, as it kept spreading, much closer to the truth of Scripture.

God had become a Man. The fullness of the Godhead dwelled in Jesus and thus God had taken on a human Name, Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only Name that can save us. That was the salvation experience in the missionary world.

COLOSSIANS 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Back in Europe the Trinity ruled, which did not help people find the name of God.

God the Father, if He was a separate Person to Jesus, never died and was buried. Nor was He resurrected. So God the Father played no role in what is represented by the water baptism, which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

"God the Father" is never mentioned in the Old Testament. "God the Son" is never mentioned in the Bible, nor is the expression "One God in three Persons". But this idea that the "name" of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was actually the name of God was taking over the official denominations and their unscriptural Bible schools that they were setting up. The church world was splitting up into more and more denominations.

REVELATION 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is **holy**, he that is **true**, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

The sixth church age began around 1750 AD. It was a time of change as James Watt in Scotland finally developed an effective steam engine in 1776. Steam engines would go on to power boats to take missionaries overseas, and would be used for steam trains to take missionaries inland. God allowed England to rule about one quarter of the world so that the English could spread the Gospel. In addition English could become an international language for the spreading of the King James Version of the Bible.

This Bible had been translated by 47 scholars and was printed in 1611. Then it was thoroughly checked and corrected for 158 years before being finally printed in 1769. The third of the four beasts around the throne of God in Revelation Chapter 4 was a Man. This age followed the second beast, the Ox age of slaughter during the Dark Ages. God gifted human wisdom with great artists like Michelangelo, great musicians like Beethoven, and great writers like Shakespeare. In this gifted age of human inspiration, God poured out onto those scholars the deep understanding of how to translate the original Hebrew and Greek texts.

Thus the King James Bible emerged as the most accurate Bible, which would be taken around the British Empire as English began to spread around the globe. It was not just accurate in terms of technical translations, but more importantly in terms of conveying the thoughts of God.

The preaching of John Wesley and George Whitefield took evangelism out of the church pews and into the streets and open fields. This laid the foundation for the great missionary movement that was to follow. Wesley emphasized **holiness** as a doctrine. His own life was a testimony to the holiness of Christ.

Wesley taught people that **truth** was in the Bible, not in politics. By getting the people to ignore politics and focus on Scripture, Wesley played a major role in saving England from the horrors of the French Revolution.

The missionary age, by emphasizing the basics to the heathens overseas, actually presented Jesus to them as being Almighty God. Thus the Door to understanding the Godhead was opening. The theologians back in Europe would keep emphasizing the Trinity, but many people were beginning to see Jesus as the Son, the human Man that the fullness of God's Spirit dwelt in. Instead of Jesus and God being two separate People, the idea was slowly developing that the Spirit of God dwelt inside the Body of Jesus. Once the Door began to open to the revelation that God was the Spirit in Jesus, then nobody could completely close that Door again. The revelation of the Godhead would continue to develop despite intense opposition from the Trinitarian churches who were the vast majority.

REVELATION 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

This is a lovely symbol of the magnificent missionary age. William Carey, a shoemaker and gifted linguist, went to India in 1792. Thousands of missionaries were to follow him. This was the golden age of outreach. The famous missionary Hudson Taylor went to China in 1853. David Livingstone went to Africa in 1841. The missionaries were generally poor but dedicated, endlessly hammered but incredibly tough. They fixed their vision on the far off heathens, and blazed a selfless and determined trail that remains incredibly inspirational.

They had little strength because the power of Pentecost would only start to be poured out in 1906 at the Azusa Street revival in 1906.

Held back by the accepted doctrine of Trinity, they did not yet have enough spiritual strength to restore back the water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

Yet what they did achieve was staggering as the Gospel spread around the world.

REVELATION 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

On Judgement Day the people who were wrong will have to bow low before the feet of those who were right and who will be doing the judging.

I CORINTHIANS 6:2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?

The synagogue of Satan is a negative. Aptly describing this age, where the amazing feats of inspired missionaries were accompanied by the greed and brutality of the colonial powers who felt that they were Christian nations. In addition the denominational church systems were gaining strength as they bound people into submission to human leaders and unscriptural beliefs.

The term *synagogue* is of Greek origin (*synagein*, "to bring together") and means "a place of assembly."

The synagogue did not play a major role in Jewish worship in the Old Testament. There is only one reference to synagogue in the Old Testament.

PSALM 74:8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

The central venue for worship was the Temple and the priesthood.

The words Rabbi, Pharisee, and Sadducee do not appear in the Old Testament.

The Jews were captured by the Babylonians around 600 BC and then they began to modify the Old Testament to suit their circumstances.

In the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, synagogues are mentioned about 65 times. So synagogues had somehow, secretly and insidiously since the Babylonian captivity, grown to play a significant role in Jewish worship.

Error spreads. As synagogues became central to Jewish faith, so man-made positions also sprouted up like poisonous weeds. Rabbis, Pharisees (businessmen religious leaders), and Sadducees (aristocratic religious leaders) appeared on the scene. In an unscriptural structure there is plenty of room for ambitious men to take the lead. Ambition and money are closely bound together. Jewish religion focused on big business. Jesus chased the money-makers out of the Temple. Judas betrayed Jesus for money.

The Jews did not stay with the Old Testament. They had modified it by boosting up the importance of synagogues and that opened the door to new types of ambitious religious leaders.

The New Testament church made a similar mistake. They took the word "pastor" which is only mentioned once in the New Testament (and condemned prophetically six times in the Old Testament in Jeremiah) and elevated that man up to be the head or ruler of each church.

JEREMIAH 23:2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have **scattered my flock, and driven them away**, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

People have to agree with the pastor who unscripturally claims to be the head of the church. Disagree with him and you are told to leave "his" church. Thus the dissenters are scattered, and any hope of reforming the church dies. The Catholic church threw out their best monk, Martin Luther. The Anglicans got rid of their best preacher, John Wesley. By refusing to embrace newly revealed Bible truths, the denominational churches were condemned to spiritually stagnate.

Pastors thus hold power by force. They force people who disagree to leave. They are then left with the people who know too little to argue, or who are too scared to stand up for truth. So churches become populated by people who show little interest in learning the deeper truths of Scripture. Eventually they know so little about the Bible that they cannot recognize deeper patterns of a revelation.

Let us consider an example: Christians marvel at the Lord Jesus for feeding the 5000 and the 4000 but they can see no deeper meaning in these miracles. When Jesus questioned the disciples about these events He put the emphasis on them understanding how many baskets of rejected scraps they had taken up. We ignore that issue. Who cares about the left over scraps? So what we dismiss as unimportant, Jesus regarded as the focus of the whole miracle.

MATTHEW 16:9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

:10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?
There were 12 baskets and seven baskets. What did it mean?

He expected the disciples to think in Bible patterns.

The Tabernacle of Moses had a seven branched candlestick as well as a table of shewbread that had twelve loaves.



The seven-branched candlestick, in the holy place in the Tabernacle, represented the seven church ages, which would light up the world with the Word of God during the 2000 years of church history.

In the Tabernacle there was also the twelve loaves of shewbread that had to be eaten inside the holy place. This represented the 144 000 who will be saved from the 12 tribes of Israel during the Tribulation. These Jews have to be back in the promised land of Israel, their holy land, which is the only place where they will meet Messiah.

So the Tabernacle was representing the two groups, the church and the 144 000, that would receive the Gospel that the Jews were going to reject when they killed Jesus.

Let us return to the 12 baskets and seven baskets of scraps that were left over. This referred to God's great salvation plan. The Jews would reject the Gospel at Calvary. This symbolized the rejected scraps of bread that they did not want to eat. Bread is a symbol of the Word. Bread is thus a symbol of Jesus.

JOHN 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life:

The rejected bread would be picked up by the disciples and written into the New Testament. The seven baskets of rejected scraps symbolized the seven church ages where the Bride could receive the bread for their age from the hands of the disciples who had written the New Testament.

Then there would be 12 baskets left over to go to the 12 tribes of Israel as the 144 000 get pulled out by the two prophets in the Tribulation.

We have since moved on from the Man-missionary age to the prophetic-Eagle age where we have been given a deeper insight into Scripture.

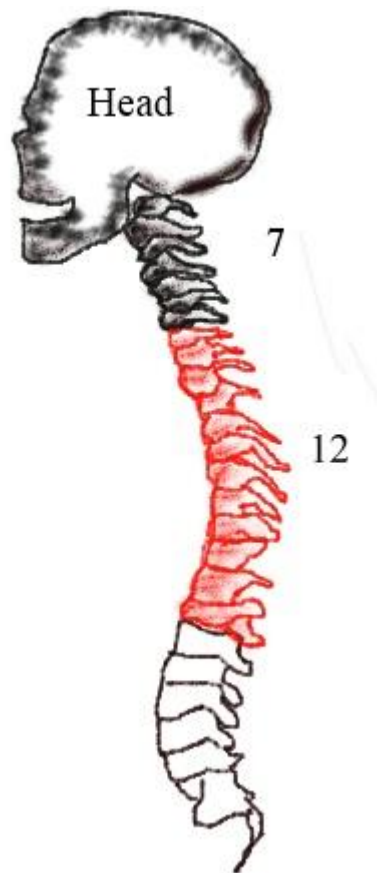
The Bible never set up a pastor or a priest as the human head of the church. Jesus Christ alone is the Head of the church.

EPHESIANS 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

The church is the body of Christ. Only Christ is the Saviour of the church. No pastor, nor any other man, can save the church.

In our natural bodies, the head is connected to the body by the vertebrae in the backbone.

We need backbone to stand up for Bible truth. The head is attached to the body by the backbone.



The first 7 vertebrae form the neck. The next 12 vertebrae hold the ribs.

The Bride in the seven church ages, and the 12 tribes that emerge from the Tribulation as the 144 000, are what attach Christ to His Body.

But Satan wants to connect the church to a different head. The Roman Catholics claim that the priest is the head of the church. The Protestants claim that the pastor is the head of the church.

Any human claiming to be the head of the church is just totally wrong.

The elevation of a holy man above the congregation is called Nicolaitanism. God hates that.

REVELATION 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Error begins as a deed that sneaks in and gets copied by others until it is accepted as a doctrine because everybody does it.

Having a man as the head of a church is very efficient in terms of building up an organization or denomination. But God never wanted the church to go that route.

REVELATION 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate
:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

If we promote a man to be the head of the church, then God requires us to repent. From His mouth comes the sword of the Word. No Scripture places a pastor or priest in charge of a church. That is a false doctrine.

God hates a church having a human head because Jesus is the Head of the church. The Bible never says that a man is the head of the church. No body can have two heads.

You must choose. Either a pastor is head or Jesus is Head, but not both.

EPHESIANS 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Pastors desperately justify their unscriptural position as head of the church. The word Nicolaitan (one-man-boss-of-the-church) "doctrine" is accompanied by the boast of prophetic illumination. A false doctrine, in the name of a prophet, is

used to justify religious deception, illustrated by the white horse rider where human quotes replace Scripture. Then human domination and dictatorship rises ambitiously to rule the church. This is represented by the red horse rider who destroys any opposition and dissent and loves political involvement that boosts his importance. Finally the demonology unleashed by the love of worldly wealth corrupts Christianity with big business ambitions. "The tithes all belong to the pastor", is what modern churches claim. But there is no such Scripture.

So the pastor collects all the tithes from the people (which is not his money) and then he pays himself and only pays any other preachers who agree with him. In order to get paid, the other preachers soon learn to agree with the pastor. So a system of one-man-control is effectively set up. The man who pays is always accepted as boss. The people who get paid by him have a motto: "Whose bread I eat, his song I sing".

Any dissenters soon realize that they are not wanted. This is a sad but very effective system for binding people into error.

Let us go back to the missionary age that grew between 1792 and 1906.

God allowed Britain to develop the most powerful navy in the world so that later they could help take missionaries around the world in the missionary age. The British began the industrial revolution by developing the steam engine in Scotland, so that they could make steam boats to sail more efficiently on the seas and railway engines to open up the countries for rapid movement inland. The secret or hidden purpose of this technical revolution was to enable missionaries to move around the world to take the Gospel to other countries.

But the industrial revolution also enabled Britain to conquer other countries because of the superior weapons of war that Britain had. Britain then thought in terms of her own authority and gain, not the welfare of the colonies.

As Gospel ministers mistakenly set themselves up to rule the church, so Britain set herself up to rule the colonies.

This nicolaitan doctrine of elevating a "better" person to rule the subjected congregation was first invented by the Roman Catholic church. This policy spread to politics, and became the way that Europe dominated the suppressed colonies. Then the Protestants copied the Catholic model of running a church by elevating a pastor to rule the congregation that had to conform to his beliefs.

The European nations elevated themselves and thought that they were much "better" and far "superior" to the local people in the colonies. The only purpose of the colonial people was for them to be subjected to the rule of the colonial masters. Europe thought that they were the superior nations because of their technical and scientific advances. They regarded any colony as an inferior nation and this sowed the poisonous roots of racism.

A mentality of "a superior pastor who knows-all-that-is-needed as he is the head of the church and thus he will see the people through", sowed the seeds of denominationalism that would spawn 45000 different kinds of denominational and non-denominational churches by the year 2000. The church world has simply become a swamp with no solution in sight. Every denomination insists that they are right. Yet all are different. So something is very wrong.

Racialism and unscriptural denominational doctrines are problems that would never be resolved. They haunt us to this day. The hatreds that were sown by degrading the people of the colonies into second class citizens in their own countries have left a legacy of bitter fruit that we are still reaping today. Shakespeare wrote in the play Macbeth, "To win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths".

The missionaries preached truth in far-away lands, but the politicians and businessmen took control of those lands because they had better weapons of war and then ruthlessly looted these colonies. The colonial people were caught between two opposites. The missionaries who selflessly preached salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins set a great example. But the people in the colonies suffered from the organized robbing of the wealth of the colonies which made Britain very wealthy. This loot, especially when stolen from the richest colony which was India, financed the expenses of the industrial revolution. Wealthy empires are built up on slave labour or robbing colonies. The colonized nations became second class citizens in their own countries. This led many people in these countries to hate the Bible as it was the Handbook of the hated colonizing nation. Thus darkness spread.

The black horse of money-making demonology saw about 35 million Indians starve to death during the 190 years of British rule in India from 1757 to 1947. Greedy of gain, and with brutal hypocrisy, they exported most of India's food to England which caused many famines in India, and millions starved. But Britain grew rich and built up her industrial capacity on this wealth. The missionaries brought in Bibles which was good, but the British colonizers had moved in with

bayonets and brandy. That was bad as they used barbarity to pacify the local people. So the colonial era left a bitter legacy for the local people.

Some historians record many of the horrors of the British colonization of Africa, and the monstrosity of the slave trade. The opium wars in China, where the Chinese were *forced* to buy opium, saw about 100 million Chinese die an early death due to this awful drug addiction. Bribing, murdering, stealing, and plundering became the way of life for many European colonists. Such were the depths of depravity that the demons of money drove those colonial powers to.

We can also try to imagine what influence this demonic money-lust had on the churches.

Dedicated missionaries were trying to free people from being in subjection to sin on one hand. On the other hand the depraved colonial money makers were subjecting the people to a ruthless life of inferiority. The official churches were setting up rigid organizational structures that were based on the hierarchy of the elevated Roman Catholic clergy. A priesthood of a fivefold ministry was lifted up between the people and God. They forgot that all Christians are priests. The only Person who is above a priest is the High Priest, Jesus Christ.

I PETER 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,

As a born again Christian you are thus a priest. As a priest there is only one person above you, Jesus the High Priest.

Unscriptural man-made beliefs became the regular diet of the church-goers, who slowly and insidiously slipped further and further away from being able to prove their beliefs just by following verses through the Bible.

The Bible illiteracy of the Roman Catholic church-goers slowly spread through the Protestant churches.

It became regular practice for Protestant preachers to say. "This is a mistake in the King James Bible, it should be ...". Thus the King James Version of the Bible ceased to be the Absolute Word of God to the Protestants.

The Roman Catholics had never believed that the Bible was supreme. They regarded the Bible as merely equal to the decisions of their councils and church synods.

Today Protestants regard the Bible as merely equal to the opinions of the pastor. And if the pastor and the Bible disagree, then Protestant church-goers regard the opinion of the pastor as greater than that of Scripture.

Westcott and Hort in 1881 produced a New Testament translation based on a document found in the Vatican and one found in a Sinai monastery. Hort did not believe that any Bible was infallible, but he was a great admirer of Darwin's theory of evolution. He agreed with the Catholic idea that infant baptism was the salvation of a person. Westcott did not believe that the first three chapters of Genesis should be taken literally. But Westcott and Hort have been so elevated as Greek scholars that their translations have replaced the King James Bible. Some translators have even claimed that there were 40,000 mistakes in the King James Bible. This opened the door to new translations, and now there are over 100 different English translations. Plus they have to keep revising some of the new translations. So church-goers no longer believe in an absolute truth of Scripture. There are so many confusing versions of the Bible that these new translations have become a swamp.

Christians were also being forced into submission to denominational traditions.

Christians began by accepting Jesus as Saviour and Head of the church, and having a personal relationship with Him. But then they were fooled into accepting the pastor as head of the church and adopted a follow-my-leader approach. They relied on conforming to church doctrines and expectations. A church experience replaced their initial Jesus experience. They sought approval from the church members in a group consensus. We easily put up a church-façade to be accepted, and we do not dare to drop the pose.

A culture of religion and conformity to a church leader became the new normal for the so-called Christian experience.

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

Patience -- Travelling to a strange land and then having to learn the language. Missionaries being killed by violent heathen tribes, as well as by all kinds of tropical diseases. It was a long, slow process.

But God, as reward for their sacrificial lives, promised to spare their age from a huge problem area that will haunt the last church age. Our last age is the impatient age of rush and stress, and instant "cut and paste" knowledge from our social

media and news media bombardment that is skin deep and full of fake news. So many preachers express so many opinions that all these flashing lights on the stage create a confusion. The original Dark Ages could not see because they suffered from a lack of light. Our age is battered by too many conflicting lights, which effectively blind people so that they cannot see either. Our age is a paradox, we are in the dark about what truth is because there are *too many* lights.

This last age is the uniting of all the spirits of evil in the last church age, which is creating an iceberg of misinformation out of their doctrinal fabrications that will deceive all the churches. Meanwhile their motives of deception lie out of sight under the surface.

The infiltration of evil into the good has proceeded so far, until it is almost impossible to find Bible truth. The endless variations of the Bible that have been produced, make it almost impossible to regard the King James Bible as the Absolute truth. The quotes of the end time prophet have replaced Scripture. The sign post has become the way and the destination.

The unifying of all evil makes the last church age an age with problems that are impossible to solve.

One huge problem area is the failure of *success*.

Vaccination and medicine have conquered many diseases. Chemicals in the form of pills (tablets) have extended our average life spans from 60 years to 80 years. Most old people take pills of one form or another. Vaccinations have removed the curse of a high infant death rate. These advances have been a great blessing and a huge success of the medical world. But the consequence of this good news is that the world is rapidly getting overpopulated. Fewer people die, and more live to old age.

When the industrial revolution started at the start of the sixth church age in 1750, there were one billion people on earth. From the Flood of Noah which was before the year 2000 BC up to 1750 AD, is 3750 years. So it took 3750 years to produce the first billion people.

Today the world is producing a billion new people in about 15 years.

So the population of the world has increased seven and a half times since 1750, and is 7.6 billion in 2018.

To feed everyone and provide accommodation, clean water, medical help, work, clothes, transport, and other essentials is becoming a problem that has no end in sight. Slums grow endlessly around our cities. The poor and unemployed are vulnerable recruits for religious and political extremism.

Another problem area that the missionary age was spared was the rapid growth of China in numbers and in wealth. China has suddenly become a huge threat in the East. Pollution in China is incredible. Their industrial centre is a square that is about 1400 kilometers long and 1400 kilometers wide. The amount of raw materials that they consume is incredible as they are now the manufacturing centre for the world.

The greatest environmental disaster in the world today is air pollution. It is killing 4,400 people every day in China alone. Similar deaths are happening in India.

There is no obvious solution to that problem.

The rapid advances in Science have created many blessings, but that successful progress has spawned huge pollution problems. Plastics that refuse to biodegrade, poisons, contaminated water, polluted air that claims millions of lives of people with lung ailments, climate change with the ongoing droughts, floods, heat waves and devastating fires -- all these warn us that we are starting to pay a huge price for the benefits of science. Pollution is a failure of science.

Science is a false savior. It enables us to solve an immediate problem, but in the process it creates a bigger long term problem. Our reliance on science as a crutch to enable our future success appears to be more of a shimmering mirage in the long term.

The paradox of progress is that much money is produced, but is grossly imbalanced in the way it is distributed. The poor get poorer, and a tiny minority of the very rich get much richer. The wealth imbalance grows. Yet there is a middle class that is better off than before, but despite that they suffer much from stress and unhappiness. Crisis and complaint affects so many people. Better standards of living have not stopped people suffering from depression.

The biggest problem of the last age is the uniting of the white horse of religious deception, that makes us believe things that are not written in the Bible, with the red horse of political power, which represents our inability to govern ourselves successfully. Then the demonology of money power rides in on the black horse. These three spirits make a toxic mixture.

There are only three horses, and one antichrist rider. The three horses, white, red, and black, unite and merge in the last church age to produce a single pale horse that represents such a confusion of error and unbelief in the church world that it produces Death. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil produces its final fruits of human wisdom that have a satanic inspiration.

"Good" fools us with bits of Scripture, and we notice not the "evil" that is unscriptural.

All mixed up together into a pale, corpse-coloured horse. A dead horse walking.

"Pale" comes from the word "chloros" which can also mean "green". A corpse goes pale at first as the blood flows away from the skin. (Pale in art means adding white.) Then the blood darkens as there is no oxygen being breathed in to make it red. (Dark is what happens when you add black.) Then the dark red colour (which unites white, red, and black) goes green as the corpse begins to stink and rot. So Death rides on a dead and rotten combined church system that stinks in the nostrils of God. This is the awful Tribulation.

This is the shocking state of the end time church that lulls and entices church-goers to their deaths in the Tribulation.

But God spared the missionary age from this awful predicament. It would not happen in their age.

Charles Darwin started his evolution theory in 1859, but it would really bear its evil fruit in the last church age as it turned scientists into atheists, and caused many Christians to doubt the opening chapters of Genesis. Thus they lost their faith in the written Scripture.

Karl Marx wrote his Communist Manifesto in 1848, but it would only produce its real horror in the last church age when Stalin starved 20 million Russians to death, and Mao Zedong starved about 60 million Chinese to death, in order to establish these two powerful Communist countries. Mercifully, the missionary age was spared this inhuman demonic outpouring of a communistic death cult.

Death riding a pale corpse coloured horse is a relevant symbol for the end time.

I TIMOTHY 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

Scientists call evolution a brilliant theory. Paul calls it useless babblings.

MATTHEW 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, **if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.**

If we do not remain strictly with the written Scripture, we will be fooled by quotes and interpretations of quotes.

We will be fooled if we try to be clever and accept scientific theories like evolution and the Big Bang. These theories contradict the Bible and thus they cannot be true. So do not be fooled by them.

MATTHEW 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Take the ideas from the quotes and then prove those ideas by running them through Scripture. Eventually you must only use the Bible to establish your revelation.

This method is difficult because it means you have to know what is in the Bible.

Few will choose this method.

LUKE 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

At the end there will not be many who stay with Scripture.

REVELATION 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

The danger to this age was their focus on good works. Good works are crucial, but do not save anyone.

But they began to think that salvation was by faith as well as depending on good works.

The biggest trap for Christians is to have a personal salvation experience with Jesus, and then to begin to rely on a church experience. They think "I am saved thanks to my regular church attendance and the fact that I never dare disagree with the pastor". "Group think" is deadly as it stops you thinking for yourself.

"That no man take thy crown": God has a special purpose in your life.

When you let the church expectations tell you what to do or when you follow the church leader, you cease to be yourself. You become an artificial "other" person, made in the image of those other persons around you. So you lose your crown because you ceased to be what God wanted you to be. We follow the herd and the herd instinct controls our decisions. God has no real say in our lives anymore.

Christians grow lazy and instead of searching through the Bible for themselves, they just rely on what the church leaders say.

A pastor who emphasizes quotes produces church members who emphasize quotes. Meanwhile we are supposed to be restored to the early church. Those from Berea searched the Scriptures daily.

ACTS 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

They were taught by Paul himself, that great apostle and messenger to his age.

Yet they checked what he said with the Scriptures.

We must leave nothing to chance.

II CORINTHIANS 13:1... In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

A quote must be proven by running the idea through the Scriptures.

That is the minimum of two witnesses that is required for a revelation to be correct.

Being comfortable and complacent in a church group appeals to us. We prefer to be popular and accepted. The last thing we want to do is rock the boat by disagreeing. We think that God is impressed with our man-made worship and beliefs. Searching out the deeper mysteries that are written in the Bible involves too much effort.

When Christians are unable to answer a question in the Bible, they soon learn to cover their ignorance by saying, "It does not affect my salvation". But if you are genuinely saved by having repented and accepted Jesus as your Saviour, then nothing can take that experience away from you. As such, nothing can affect your salvation. So that is no excuse for Bible ignorance.

The foolish virgins say, "Must I know?", but the wise virgins say, "I must know". It is all about attitude.

The Word is Jesus and your lack of interest in portions of the Word simply indicate a lack of interest in the Lord Jesus.

That is not something to be proud of.

We should always be keen to know as much about Him and His plans as what we can.

REVELATION 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

A pillar connects the foundation to the roof.

A pillar is someone who is firmly connected to the Bible foundation that was written by the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles.

EPHESIANS 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

By stressing Christ as the focus of evangelism and outreach, the missionaries were building on a sure foundation.

A pillar stands alone.

You have to overcome the peer pressure in the church where there is a strong desire to exalt the church leader.

Being people, we have a human need to belong to a group which causes us to stop thinking for ourselves and to stop questioning the church doctrines and traditions.

Christianity, once we are involved with a church, easily becomes a pretense and becomes churchianity.

We wear a mask that the other people expect us to wear.

Other people, not the Bible, tell us what to do and believe.

In the process we become "second-hand" Christians.

- We would never dare ask where the date 25 December comes from. It is not in the Bible.
- We would never dare ask where the word "Christmas" comes from. It is not in the Bible.
- We would never dare mention that nowhere in the Bible are we asked to celebrate the Lord's birth. That only two murderers, Pharaoh and Herod, ever celebrated a birthday in the Bible.
- We would never dare mention that the wise men went into a house, not a stable, and saw a young child, not a baby. Only Mary was present. No Joseph. No shepherds. It was two years after His birth. Thus there were no presents in the stable when He was born.

MATTHEW 2:11 And when they were come **into the house**, they saw the **young child** with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him:

We would not dare mention that Jeremiah 10 condemns the Christmas tree as a heathen custom. It actually dates all the way back to Babylonian customs.

But you see, if we mentioned these things, we would not be popular. Just like John the Baptist mentioned to Herod that he could not marry his brother's wife. So Herod killed him. On his birthday.

MATTHEW 14:3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

:4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

John was very unpopular for telling Herod that it was sinful to marry his brother's wife.

So John was killed on Herod's birthday. The Bible obviously does not make birthdays important.

MATTHEW 14:6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

:7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

:8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

An evil man killed the great fore-runner of the first Coming of Jesus, John the Baptist, on his birthday.

So do you really think God is impressed with birthdays?

We humans have decided to put great stress on a birthday. Then we think that God is impressed with our ideas. Then to make it worse, we impose our ideas on God. Then we select a date for the birthday of Jesus. But the date we chose is the birthday of the sun god.

The Roman emperor Aurelian chose this date of 25 December. But he was also a vicious killer of Christians. His nickname was "manu ad ferrum" or "hand to sword". He solved problems by simply killing dissenters. So even 25 December is soaked in Christian blood.

Plus this date is in midwinter when Israel is freezing cold.

Jesus warned the Jews against fleeing in winter as they would freeze to death.

MATTHEW 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

But when Jesus was born there were shepherds out with their sheep at night.

LUKE 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Thus it could not have been mid winter.

Caesar Augustus was not so stupid as to send people far away to their home towns to pay taxes in mid winter.

So the fact that we believe all this obvious error is just proof that we have been dumbed down by church priests and pastors.

We now believe that we can make up any nonsense, and make it acceptable to God as worship.

Heaven help us for believing such pitifully wrong ideas and heaven help the priests and pastors who blinded us sufficiently so that we can believe such unscriptural error.

Instead of teaching us what is in the Bible, the Roman Catholic church trod the truth under as they grabbed hold of pagan customs. Then they fed this junk food to their Protestant daughters.

JEREMIAH 12:10 Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

Now, if you try to tell the Bible truth about this Christmas hoax, then you are not wanted in the church. They prefer the desolate wilderness of heathen traditions. Then they stick on the name of Jesus and call it Christianity's major festival. What a farce.

But Christmas became more and more popular in the 1800s.

So accepting church traditions, and being popular with the group, is more important to us than truth.

But God is looking for pillars that can stand up for themselves.

But those pillars have to be able to overcome the hostile reaction to the truth.

The same way that the missionaries had to be able to overcome the hostile reaction of the heathens who often wanted to kill them. And who often did kill them.

Jesus has a new Name. New Jerusalem is our future dwelling place.

One day all will be new.

So we need to let go of pagan error and denominational unbelief.

We need to make a new start and strive to be Scriptural.

Keeping in with pagan ideas will doom us to miss God's revealed truths.

REVELATION 3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The ear is the secret to success. Can we hear the Word of God and follow it. Can we stand up against the errors of the church.

JOHN 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:

God's Spirit does not come to make us popular.

It comes to tell us what is in the Bible.

Bible truth alone can save us from the great Tribulation.

"The name of my God": It was slowly dawning on the people that Jesus Christ is the human name of God.

His new city that comes from Heaven. That is where our reward is.

The missionaries gave up the ambitions of their lives in this world and served God amidst hardship, sacrifice, and danger. In this life they lost much, especially when they had to struggle against tropical sicknesses with inadequate medicines.

But their focus was on the future. Their reward will be a mansion in that new city. That made all their sufferings more than worth it.

The strength of Christianity is to suffer and maybe lose in the present in order to gain in the future.

JOHN 14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Nothing that we can build for ourselves on earth can in any way compare to what Jesus is preparing for us in the future.

He said there are many mansions in His Father's house.

To us, that sounds back to front. We always think that a mansion is a big house.

That just proves that we have no idea what Heaven is like.

We cannot visualize Heaven in terms of what we know on earth.

Actually, we do not even know what an atom looks like so there is no chance that we will know what Heaven looks like.

I CORINTHIANS 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

So Heaven will be totally different to anything that we can imagine. All our ideas of Heaven will be turned upside down.

It will be wonderful beyond our imagination and very different, even contradictory, to how we think now. Because our sinful human minds are just totally incapable of understanding God's great plan for us.

Jesus has a new name.

REVELATION 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and **he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.**

No man will know this name in advance.

It will be revealed at His second Coming when we are changed into new immortal bodies.

I THESSALONIANS 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: **and the dead in Christ shall rise first:**

:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

But before we are caught up to meet the Lord, the dead saints from the past church ages will be resurrected in their new bodies. Then the many heroes of this magnificent missionary age will shine as bright stars forever.

DANIEL 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

:3 And they that be wise **shall shine** as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness **as the stars for ever and ever.**

We can only salute them with deepest respect.

They played their role in the drama of life with incredible commitment and bravery.

The more we learn of them, the more we marvel at their dedication.

"and I will write upon him my new name": The Bride takes on the name of her Husband on her wedding day.

The saints from this missionary age will wear the new name of Jesus with pride. They certainly occupy a special place in His Body when we think how they lived in poverty and spread the Light of truth. Meanwhile their fellow countrymen were conquering and looting the colonies.

The denominational churches back at home were binding the people into oppressive systems that stifled human thinking.

The Roman Catholic church kept developing more and more unscriptural beliefs.

The Pope was wearing a **triple crown**.

REVELATION 6: 2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; **and a crown was given unto him:** and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

"He went forth conquering": The overseas empires of Spain and Portugal and France spread Roman Catholicism worldwide.

Light and darkness were spreading.

The spirit of antichrist on a white horse of religious deception.

The spirit became incarnate in a man who could wear a crown.

John describes an outpouring of demonology that looks like a plague of destructive locusts.

REVELATION 9:11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

These demons have a king over them. His name means Angel of Death in Hebrew and Destroyer in Greek.

Religious demons are controlled by a crowned church leader, the Pope. He is the angel or messenger of the bottomless pit. He has no sure foundation of Scripture. He just builds up his unscriptural beliefs from any ideas that he can pull out of the bottomless pit.

Then this flood of demons take any unscriptural beliefs that are not written, like Trinity, evolution, and seven Thunders, to all the preachers who are the heads of their churches.

The pit of hell is being open and deception that is not written in the Bible is pouring out.

REVELATION 9:10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails:

A "tail" in the vision means a "tale" or story that they tell.

The sting in the tail is that unscriptural beliefs will take us into the Tribulation. We are living in the preview of that time. Wait till the real event actually happens.

The Holocaust when six million Jews died was a preview of the Tribulation.

Church goes building up their beliefs on unscriptural ideas is the preview of what the Tribulation will be like when Death takes his ride.

Abandoning the Scripture at the end. Satan's final deception.

"Abaddon" sounds close to "Abandon". Satan driving and forcing us to let go of Scripture as we build up our beliefs.

But the greater the darkness, the more the light shines out.

If you have backbone to stand up for the truth of the written Word.

Laodicea (3:14-22) – The Lukewarm Church

Endurance. Holiness. Repentance. Revival.

The Lukewarm Church

¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,

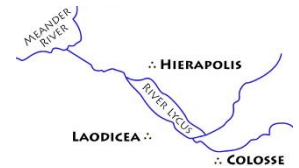
‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”

- Jesus is introduced emphasizing His faithfulness as our authoritative Lord – Listen to Me! (v14)
 - ¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:
- I know everything about you – I am your source of everything – So why will you not honor Me? (15-16)
 - ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.
- You have lost Biblical truth and become self-sufficient and prideful – So you do not recognize Me (17)
 - ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—
- I can help you! – Receive from Me what you need! (18)
 - ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.
- I love you! So, as a father, I discipline you. Repent! Let Me into your life! (19-22)
 - ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. ²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’ ”

- The name Laodicea mean “people ruling”
 - From the Greek word laodikeia, which is a combination of two Greek words: laos (meaning peoples) and dike (meaning justice or judgment).
- History
 - Originally called the “City of Zeus”
 - Laodicea was rebuilt and renamed by the Greek ruler Antiochus II (261–246 BC) in honor of his sister-wife, Laodice before their divorce in 253 BC
 - Antiochus resettled 2,000 Jewish families from Babylon in Laodicea, establishing a large and flourishing Jewish community.
 - Became the capital of ancient Phrygia
 - Rome granted Laodicea the title of a “free city”
 - It was the chief city of a Roman conventus, a league of 24 cities in the region.

- Cicero lived in Laodicea in 50 BC
- Destroyed by an earthquake in 60 AD
 - Laodicea was so wealthy that it refused Roman aid and rebuilt the city successfully relying on its own resources
- Now known as Denizli
- Wealthy
 - Laodicea was an important, wealthy city with a significant Jewish population
 - It is frequently noted that Laodicea prided itself on 3 things
 - Financial wealth
 - An extensive textile industry
 - A popular eye salve which was exploited around the world
- Geography
 - Laodicea is located on a fertile plain overlooking the Lycus River
 - It is perched on the long spur of a hill overlooking a 6-mile wide valley with the Lycus River (a tributary of the Meander River).
 - 80 miles east of Ephesus on a major Roman trade route.
 - 50 miles southeast of Philadelphia, not far from Colossae
 - It was the twin of Hierapolis (6 miles away) which was renowned for its hot springs
 - Location, location, location
 - Located at the crossroads of the major trade routes in the area
 - Laodicea enjoyed the commerce that flowed between the east and west trade routes as well as the north and south trade routes.
 - Finished off the Roman Imperial Mail Route
 - It's location also benefited the rest of the Roman empire due to the fact that Laodicea was a key banking location as well as one of Roman's most important supplier of medicine and a very rare and very beautiful black wool.
- Under the Romans, Laodicea quickly became an important center of trade
 - Wealthy
 - Laodicea was by far the wealthiest church of the seven churches mentioned.
 - They had a desirable "zip-code" and they had the highest annual income per household in Asia Minor.
 - Known for international banking
 - Medical
 - It had renowned medical school – Famous for its eye salves
 - The school became famous for the development of an eye salve made of spice and Phrygian powder.
 - Textiles
 - Known especially for its high-quality black wool.
 - It exported fine woolen garments.
 - They manufactured expensive cloth made from soft black wool
- Laodicea is in the midst of a massive archaeological project which has unearthed a stadium, baths, gymnasium, several temples, two theaters and a Senate building. A highly successful commercial and financial center, remains of a theater, aqueducts, baths, gymnasium and a stadium still survive to testify of its former glory.





○ The Cardo, the “Main Street” of Laodicea, with its marble paving and columns is evidence of the city’s great prosperity

○ The remains of a large aqueduct contain thick encrustation, as do the underground sewage pipes, which are sometimes entirely choked up.



- Wealthy

- Laodicea was by far the wealthiest church of the seven churches mentioned. They had a desirable “zip-code” and they had the highest annual income per household in Asia Minor. Again - Banking. Textiles. Medicine

- Lukewarm water

- The water in the area is typically lukewarm and highly calcified.
- Hierapolis (“City of the Sun”) is on the opposite side of the valley also bears witness to the lukewarm, highly calcified water.
 - The dazzling white mountainside is in fact years and years of lime deposit left by some 17 hot water springs ranging in temperature from 35c – 100c that flow down the mountainside.
- Their Laodicean water supply came on a 6 mile aqueduct from the hot springs of Hierapolis
 - Because the water came from the Hot Springs, it arrived and unappetizingly lukewarm
- The poor water supply made Laodicea vulnerable to attack through siege
 - They were, therefore, quite accommodating to any potential foe – wanting to negotiate and compromise instead of fight



- Pagan religions

- Zeus Azeus and Men Karou were the main Phrygian gods
- It was a center for Caesar worship (Like other cities in the region)
- Center for the worship of Asklepios - had a famous medical school there in connection with his temple

- Church at Laodicea

- Most scholars believe that Epaphras started the church there (Col 1:7, 4:12, 13)
 - Col 1:7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,
 - Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.
 - Col 4:13 I vouch for him [Epaphras] that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. 14 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.
- Paul was aware of their spiritual struggles (Col 2:1)
 - Col 2:1 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.
- Laodicea means “the people rule.”
 - Suggests that there is a system of religion where there is a “man-made, man-run, man-centric, and man-controlled church.
 - Implies that Jesus is not actually or factually welcomed to lead His church.

- The grave danger of a “self-centered” theology and sociology, where man’s desires and pursuits become the focal-point of one’s existence. This form of worldview is beginning of Communism, Humanism, & Socialism.

Greeting

	Praise	Criticism	Command	Promise
Laodicea (3:14-22) Materialistic; Complacent	-- (none)	Apathy and indifference; Lukewarm - Neither hot nor cold; Materialistic; Wealth over spirit; You rely on riches and don't realize your wretched condition	Turn from your indifference; Repent and be zealous	I invite those that overcome to sit with me on my throne - Share the throne of Christ

14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

- Jesus is introduced emphasizing that he is the faithful authoritative Lord – In contrast to his compromising subjects
 - So why will you not listen to Me?
- *Amen*
 - This declaration by Jesus is an undeniable claim of deity.
 - To identify Himself as “The Amen” is to say, “So be it, Truly, Verily, It is true, this is true. - -
 - Grammatically speaking it is an expression reserved solely for the God of the Bible.
 - It is akin to saying; “Thus Says The LORD”.
 - Typically in response to something read or said: “so be it.”
 - Jesus is the ‘Amen’, the ‘so be it’, the ‘it is done’
 - Jesus is the personification and the affirmation of the truth of God
 - It is also used of God as being the end or fulfillment of all that is, for example:
 - “Know, then that the Lord, your God, is God: the faithful [Amen] . . .” (Deuteronomy 7:9)
 - It is used here of Christ in the very same way.
- *faithful and true witness*
 - Jesus is the faithful and true witness – In contrast to the Laodiceans who were neither faithful nor true
 - By “faithful” he means faithful to speak the truth and faithful to do the truth.
 - By “true witness” he means true to testify and true to be the true.
 - **John 14⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**
- *ruler of God's creation*
 - Arche – Greek word for “Source” or “origin”
 - Ex. Archaeology – the study of beginnings
 - Jesus is the beginning of the creation of God
 - The idea behind the word for beginning [arche] is that of a ‘ruler, source or origin’
 - It is not about being first in a sequential order
 - This verse does not teach that Jesus was the first being created, but they he is the ‘ruler, the source, and the origin of all creation’
 - **Jn 1¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.**

- Col 1 ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
- Heb 1 ¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
- Here, Jesus Christ Announces His Authority.
 - The overwhelming fact that Jesus Christ is The Almighty God revealed in human flesh – now glorified
 - Revelation 1:8 (1) “I am the Alpha and the Omega, (2) the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, (3) “who is and (4) who was and (5) who is to come, (6) the Almighty.”
 - Revelation 4:8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: (1) “Holy, (2) holy, (3) holy, (4) Lord God Almighty, (5) Who was and (6) is and (7) is to come!”
 - Revelation 11:17 I saw the host of heaven saying: “We give You thanks, (1) O Lord God Almighty, The One who (2) is and (3) who was and (4) who is to come,
 - Revelation 21:22 But I saw no temple in it, (1) for the Lord God Almighty and (2) the Lamb are its temple.
 - 1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was (1) manifested in the flesh, (2) Justified in the Spirit, (3) Seen by angels, (4) Preached among the Gentiles, (5) Believed on in the world, (6) Received up in glory
 - Titus 2:13-14a looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our (1) great God and (2) Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who (3) gave Himself for us,
 - 1 John 5:20 And we know that (1) the Son of God has come and (2) has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who (3) is true; and (4) we are in Him who is true, (5) in His Son Jesus Christ. This is (6) the true God and (7) eternal life.

Commendation ☺

- Jesus has nothing good to say about the church at Laodicea
 - It is the only church that gets absolutely no commendation from Jesus
- However, this was not always the case. The apostle Paul made mention of the believers at Laodicea several times.
 - Col 2 ¹ For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
 - Col 4 ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. ¹⁵ Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house. ¹⁶ Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

Condemnation ☹

15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

- The picture of lukewarmness would have particular relevance to the Christians of Laodicea because of their water supply. This is vivid imagery, reflecting the characteristic lukewarm, calcified water of both Laodicea and Hierapolis.

- *15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.*
 - I know your works – I know everything about you
 - Cold
 - grk: cold. Ice-cold, meaning to refresh.
 - Referring to the icy cold waters that flowed out from the foot of the mountains.
 - Hot
 - grk: zestos, to boil hot or boiling hot water
 - Lukewarm
 - grk: chliaros; to become warm, tepid, neutral. Without movement, without effect, without purpose
 - The two geological realities of Laodicea
 - The hot mineral waters Hierapolis flowed by stream down into the Lycus River.
 - It was then that the icy cold waters met up the same river to create a disgusting, good for nothing “water source”
 - The waters that flowed out of Laodicea were famously known to induce nausea and vomiting. In fact, the chemicals found in that water are still used today to induce vomiting in the event that someone has been poisoned.
 - Physics 101
 - Both hot and cold require constant fuel. But nothing is required to maintain lukewarmness. That which is lukewarm has reached a state of equilibrium and if left in that condition of stagnancy is followed by putrefaction.
 - Hot – a believer is following Jesus closely and is being used by God powerfully, that Christian discovers that there must be a constant source of power to keep his heart hot and in the right place.
 - We also know that for something to be ice cold the environment around it must maintain an atmosphere that is near freezing or below. Cold also must be fueled by something colder.
 - Lukewarm people
 - What do we mean when we say someone is lukewarm? It’s a picture of uselessness
 - Hot water heals
 - Cold water refreshes
 - But lukewarm water is useless for either purpose
 - Picture of indifference and compromise – It takes on the temperature of its surroundings
 - Like Sardis, the church at Laodicea is wealthy and complacent, neither hot nor cold
 - The church has become little more than a social club of do-gooders, part-time Christians who congratulate themselves on what fine people they are
 - Does Jesus mean to say that:
 - These Christians are basically cold, but warmed up by their religious trappings
 - That they are essentially hot, but cooled down by their apathy and self-reliance
 - Both are possible, but since He is talking to His church, there is an emphasis on the latter
 - Empty religion
 - Laodicea exemplifies empty religion
 - Has there been a greater curse upon the Earth than empty religion?
 - Is there any soul harder to reach than the one who has just enough of Jesus to think they have enough?
 - Tax collectors and harlots were more open to Jesus than Scribes and Pharisees
 - Satan will have us anyway he can get us, but he prizes a lukewarm religionist far above a cold-hearted sinner

- You make me want to puke!
 - grk: emeo; to spue – to violently expel, to eject / vomit with all force.
 - “I will spit you out of my mouth” really means “You make me want to puke”
 - The name Laodicea means ‘rule of the people’
 - This church well represents a church run by majority rule, instead of God
 - “Its name designates it as the church of mob rule the democratic church in which everything is swayed and decided by popular opinion clamor and voting” (Joseph Augustus)
 - This lukewarm Christianity is utterly distasteful to Jesus – He refuses to abide with it and warns that he will spew you out of His mouth
- Of all Jesus’ words of condemnation spoken to the churches in Revelation, these are the most damning . . .
 - If the church were cold, not caring one way or the other about Christ, he could work with them;
 - If they were on fire, even if the fire were burning in the wrong direction, he could work with them
 - But this lukewarm complacency makes Jesus sick!
- *17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.*
 - The verdict – Thinking they are rich, they are really destitute
 - Notice here they had lost their biblical values. When that happens – you lose conviction, and when that happens you lose vision, and when that happens you lose purpose, and that happens – you trust in your own effort, and self-power.
 - Wealthy
 - The (possible or probable or inevitable) danger of riches
 - Dt 8 ¹¹ “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² lest— *when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴ when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;*
 - 1Ti 6 ⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.
 - Pro 23 ⁴ Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease! ⁵ Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For *riches* certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven.
 - Pride
 - Jesus warned them that they lack spiritually the very things Laodiceans prided themselves on possessing – wealth, sight, and fancy clothing
 - Laodicea was well-known for its wealth, eye salve and textile industry
 - The Christians at Laodicea lacked spiritual poverty – Their pride was significant
 - If they had never had a sense of their own spiritual bankruptcy before God, then their conversion should be doubted.
 - “Need of nothing”: The loss of a sense of need, as the drowsiness that besets a freezing man, is fatal (William R. Newell)
 - “They had become proud of their own church. They were delighted in their own opinion of themselves. They would be the kind of church that would say “look what we’ve done. We achieved this by our superior approach to ministry and by the latest and greatest techniques”.
 - They had drifted from what was plain and clear in the Scriptures to a more socially acceptable, easy-believe-ism condition.

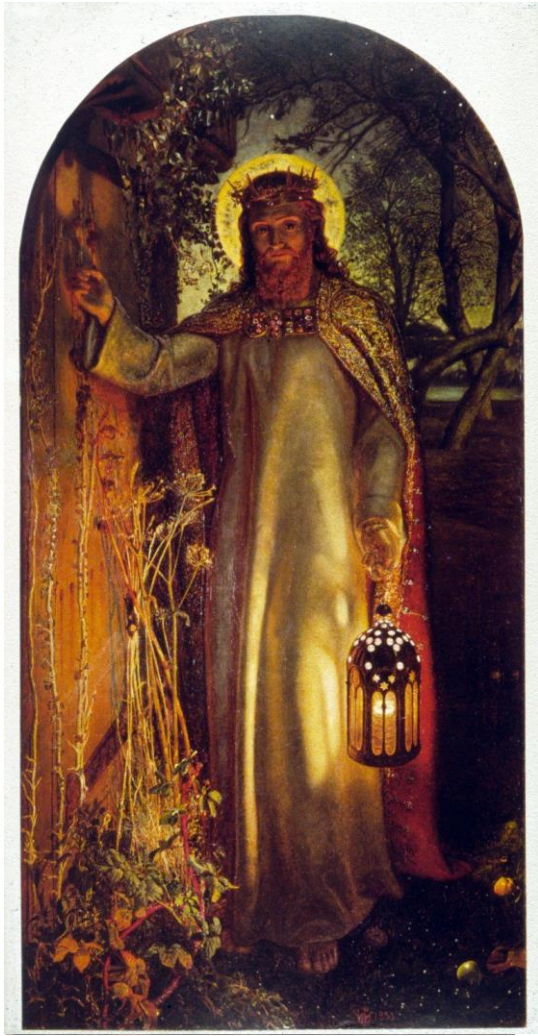
- Jam 1 ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

Admonition (Call to Action)

18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. 21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

- What Jesus wants them to do – look to Jesus for what you are lacking
 - As long as we believe that we can meet our own needs, we are as destitute as the Laodiceans
 - We must seek these things from Jesus, instead of relying on them ourselves
- *18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*
 - Laodicea was well-known for its wealth, eye salve and textile industry – they were self-sufficient
 - How could we buy these things from Jesus?
 - Not by works
 - Jesus would say “All this self-sufficiency must be expended in the labor of getting from Me (Jesus) these absolute necessities.” (David Guzik)
 - If you are self-sufficient – then you are a very poor person. Your wealth is based upon how dependent you are upon God
 - Lk 12 ¹⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.” ’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’
 - Jesus will supply all our needs! Just look to Him!
 - Is 55 ¹ “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. ² Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread, And your wages for *what* does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³ Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live;
 - Rev 22 ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.
 - Jn 7 ³⁷ On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
 - Refined by fire
 - 1Pe 1 ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

- Shame of your nakedness
 - To the Hebrew mind (and to the people of Israel), nakedness implied that you had been taken captive and you have been stripped of all dignity.
 - If you've studied anything about the World War II tactics of Adolf Hitler and Himmler and their henchmen, then you know well that no matter what the Nazis did to the Jews, the first thing they did was to strip them naked.
 - Evil has a terrible power to strip away our meaning or purpose and our value.
 - The sad thing as humans is that we seek to clothe ourselves apart from the goodness of God.
 - What was Adam's first act after he had sinned? It was to sew for him and Eve a suit of leaves.
- *19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.*
 - With such a sharp rebuke, should we think that Jesus has lost his love for this errant church?
 - No – Jesus' great love is expressed in his rebuke. It is God's final punishment to leave a man alone.
 - It can also be the demonstration of a pastor's love – how many preachers love their saints enough to risk their resentment by obeying 2 Timothy 4:2 to reprove and rebuke
 - *2Ti 4 ²Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*
 - Repent
 - Jesus commands them to make a decision to repent and to continue in zeal
 - 'Zeal' which comes from the same word as 'hot' in verse 16
 - Jesus detests lukewarmness – He would really have them be hot with zeal rather than cold
 - Why does Jesus say I could wish you were cold or hot in verse 15? At least you can feel cold
 - The lukewarm Christian had enough of Jesus to satisfy a craving for religion, but not enough for eternal life
 - The thief on the cross was cold towards Jesus, and clearly saw his need
 - The apostle John was hot towards Jesus, and enjoyed an intimate relationship of love
 - Judas was lukewarm following Jesus – enough to be considered a disciple, but not giving his heart over to Jesus in fullness
 - Deep down, there is no one more miserable than the lukewarm Christian
 - They have too much of the world to be happy in Jesus but too much of Jesus to be happy in the world
- *20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*
 - Jesus gives to His lukewarm church the great invitation – expressing his great desire to enter us and fellowship with us, but only at our invitation
 - The idea of Jesus at the door applies to the sinner and to the saint alike
 - Jesus wants to come into us, and dine with us – In the sense of having a deep intimate relationship with us
 - Where is Jesus? On the outside, knocking to get in
 - Laodicea is the church of the excluded Christ, as are many churches today
 - The key to opening the door is first to hear His voice
 - It is as we give attention to what Jesus has to say to us that we can be rescued from our own lukewarmness and enter into a zealous relationship with him



William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, painted *The Light of the World* (1851-1853), an allegory illustrating Revelation 3: 20—“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”

Hunt said: “I painted the picture with what I thought, unworthy though I was, to be by divine command, and not simply as a good subject. The door in the painting has no handle, and can therefore be opened only from the inside, representing ‘the obstinately shut mind.’”¹

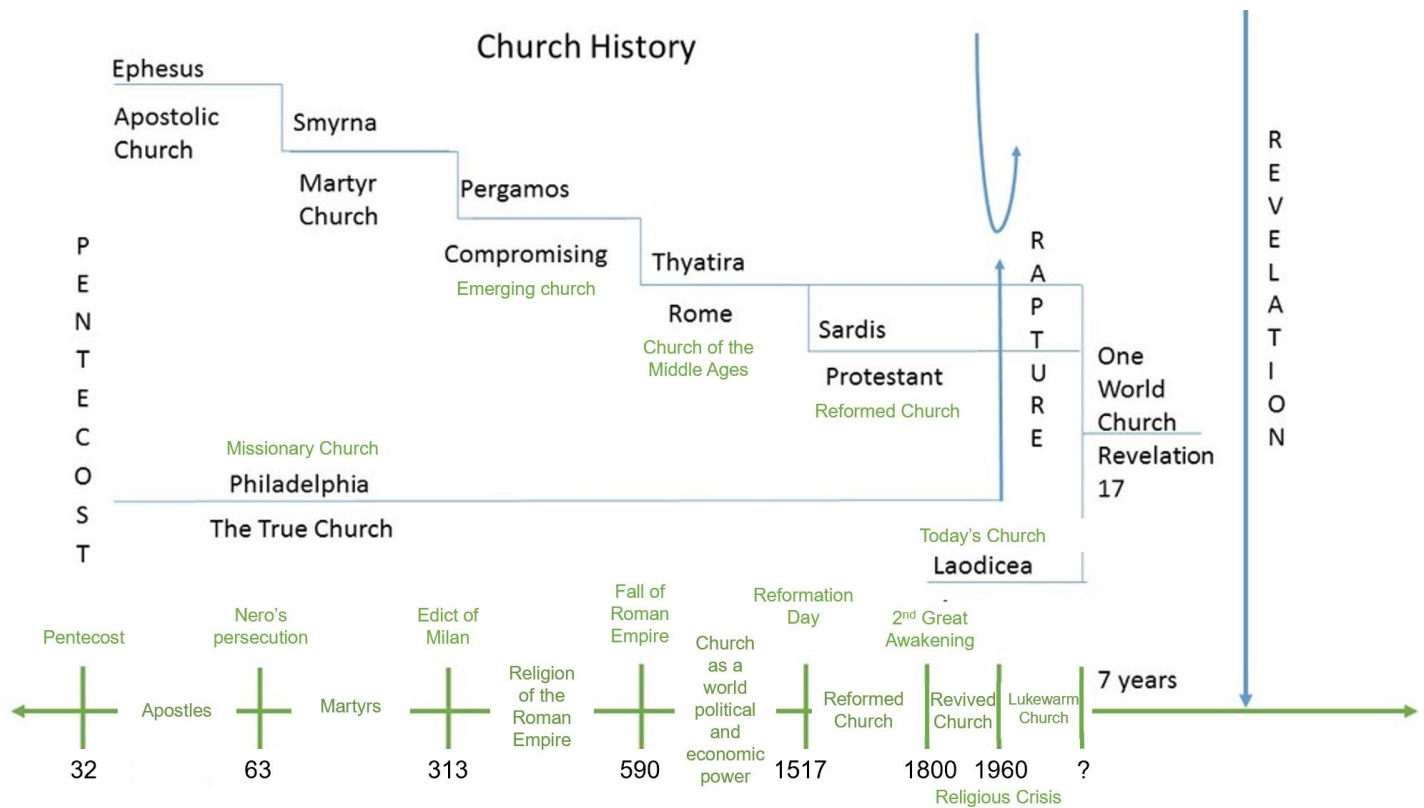
The original oil on canvas hangs in a side room off the chapel at Keble College, Oxford; a life-size version was hung at St. Paul’s Cathedral, London; and a third, smaller version, painted between 1851 and 1856, is on display at the Manchester City Art Gallery.

¹ W.H. Hunt. *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*. (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 350.

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- *21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*
 - We need to hear what the spirit says to all the churches – not just one church.
 - The church was summarized in chapters 2 and 3.

Church History (1906-Now)



The Church Ages - Laodicea part 1, The Seventh Age, 1906-

Laodicea, the last church age, is a great paradox.

A turbulent age of amazing scientific progress and social chaos when deceptive error and evil reach their climax. Comfortable lifestyles and prosperity, yet far too many anxious people who are dependent on anti-depressants.

The final tombstone on the grave of our church age may well be,

"The pleasure of what I had was lost by wanting more".

Greed, selfishness, and egotism define our age -- which invented the "selfie".

Greed has made us lose the way. Our cleverness does not stop us from being hard and unkind. We easily adopt a flawed version of reality as our personal delusion. Our entanglement in this material world increases at the expense of our spiritual vision.

We think we are wonderful Christians, but we cannot find a single prophecy or parable that deals with the church at the end of the age, that says anything complimentary about us. Unless "asleep", "blind", "naked", "wretched", "lukewarm vomit" are regarded as praise. Harsh words from an all-seeing God, Whom we cannot bluff.

With 45,000 different denominational beliefs, much harm has been done by saying "Believe as I do", rather than to get people to believe in the Bible. Church-goers feel that if you do not believe as they do, then you should be forced to comply. This behavior is where freedoms go to die. To convince others, you need Bible evidence of what you believe. That's what is missing.

In a shoddy and materialistic world, the church is described as being a combination of seriously hot to get souls saved, and then lamentably cold in terms of being interested in understanding Scripture. These combine to produce a disillusioning lukewarm church-going "group-think" experience. This replaces the personal first love a person had for Jesus and the Bible when they first repented to get saved from hell. Thus, saved Christians soon learn to conform to the "cookie cutter" pattern of their specific denomination. The individuals learn to stop thinking for themselves. Church-going requires the

individual to blend into the church traditions, like one more addition to an identically and neatly cut-down-to-size hedgerow.

REVELATION 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;

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

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

The Word of God comes from the mouth of God.

Spued, or vomited, from His mouth means that the church has become increasingly unscriptural.

The churches have enough Scripture to get people saved, but then also encourage ignorance of Scripture and enough Scriptural error to seriously mislead these people. They keep saying that we do not need to know the difficult Bible verses.

But we are supposed to have the Holy Spirit and Bible Truth.

JOHN 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The Word or Bible is not regarded as an object of love to be treasured just as it is written. The Bible is rather regarded as an object of loveless speculation. We pick and choose and modify the words, until we get it to be the way we want it to be.

Welcome to our Laodicean church. Not the church *in* Laodicea.

The church "*of* the Laodiceans".

Laodicea means "people's rights".

If we are to miss the Tribulation, we must know the truth. Being saved from hell by the Holy Spirit does not qualify us to miss the Tribulation. There is a difference between getting saved from hell, and getting saved from the Tribulation.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12 ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

This is not salvation from hell. That happened when you repented and accepted Jesus as your Saviour.

This is to make sure that we are saved from going into the Tribulation that is looming ominously ahead of us.

MATTHEW 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.**

When the disciples asked Jesus about the **end-time events**, **His main concern was that the church would be deceived.**

Our biggest danger is that we will be easily fooled to move away from Scripture.

This is a paradox as we live in this great age -- where knowledge has increased amazingly. But we lack the wisdom to tell the difference between truth and error.

DANIEL 12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

We run around everywhere in cars and aeroplanes. A sure sign of the end.

We did not need to know very much to get saved from hell. We just had to know that Jesus was our only Saviour, and then we needed to repent.

But to miss the Tribulation is another issue. To achieve that, we have to know what the Bible mysteries are talking about. That is going to take hard work and a lot of searching of the Bible if we are to avoid being fooled by the unscriptural beliefs and traditions of the churches.

I CORINTHIANS 2:16 But we have the mind of Christ.

After we get saved, and as we grow in grace, then God gives us the mind of Christ.

With the mind of Christ we are able to understand the Bible when It is taught to us.

But Jesus was not confident that He would find much faith on earth when He returned.

Faith only comes by believing the written Word of God.

LUKE 18:8 ... Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

ROMANS 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Thus, at the end-time, the churches will not be able to prove what they believe from Scripture.

The church can be dedicated to evangelism, but that does not make church-goers interested in understanding the Bible. For most church-goers today, the Bible remains a Book of sealed mysteries. But Daniel was told that it would only be sealed until the end time.

ZECHARIAH 14:7 But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that **at evening time it shall be light.**

The last church age is a strange twilight zone where the enthusiasm for salvation (daylight) does not extend to Bible knowledge of prophecy and difficult Bible passages (lack of Bible knowledge is the darkness of night time). Church-goers know a few bits, and ignore other bits of Scripture. All very confusing. Each church claiming to know which bits of the Bible can be ignored, and which bits can be changed. That is the main reason why they disagree with each other, because each church makes their own changes and omissions of Scripture to suit themselves. Thus 45,000 different church opinions (denominations) have emerged.

Another paradox: The Bible is in so many homes, and yet it remains the most unread of books.

War, on an industrial scale, has been a dismal characteristic of the last church age.

War has been one of man's oldest and most futile activities. The more he has killed, the more he still wants to kill.

The very first battle **on record** is at Armageddon 1469 BC.

Egypt's Thutmosis III defeated the Syrians and their allies.

The very last battle on record is the battle of Armageddon at the end of the three and a half year great Tribulation. That is when Jesus Christ defeats the combined demonic horde of "big business"-religion and the political-church hybrid system of the final Beast-Pope with his ten allied military dictators. Their ten armies will have forcibly imposed a culture of ruthless conformity during the Tribulation. Dissenters will all have been killed off.

The church age of the Laodiceans fades into the Tribulation that ends at Armageddon, with mankind fighting against God. This is exactly at the same site where recorded war started three and a half thousand years ago, when Satan inspired man to fight against man. The circle finally closes. Basically that means humans have learned nothing of value in three and a half thousand years. No wonder our time on earth is up. Even God gives up after long enough in the face of endless human stupidity. Albert Einstein suspected that human stupidity is perhaps the only infinite attribute in our finite physical universe.

Armageddon means an "Invading mountain".



The prophet Daniel saw a Stone that no hand cut out, smite the Gentile image in the feet with its ten toes. The image crumbled.

DANIEL 2:33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

The Stone grew into a Mountain. Thus the third Coming of the Lord is an invasion at Armageddon that destroys the ten dictators who give their military power to the Beast.

REVELATION 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

They have power as kings. They are not crowned, but rule as kings. They are dictators. God will grant them power briefly (one hour) during the three and a half years of the great Tribulation.

REVELATION 17:13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

The Pope is a church dictator. At the end, Satan's superman will somehow usurp the religious church power and money power of the Vatican (the smallest city state on earth -- Daniel's "little horn") and emerge as the final Pope. The final figurehead of the Beast church system. He will perhaps call himself Peter 2 since the Roman Catholics falsely call Peter the first Pope. (Actually the bishop of Rome only began being called the Pope around 400 AD)

DANIEL 11:21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

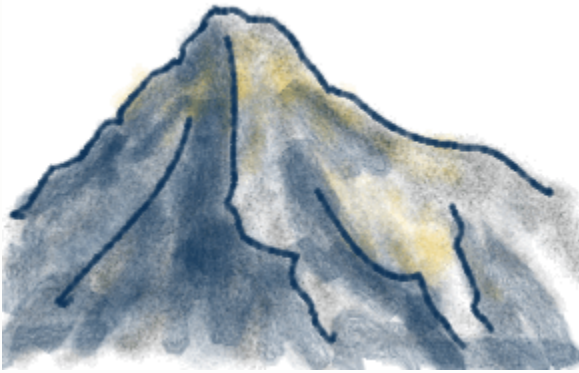
This final usurping Pope will not be given the position of Pope as a result of being voted in by the council of cardinals.

The ten dictators will conform to his demands and flatteries, and give him their military power and strength, so that he can rule the earth as the final Dictator. The dictators will be in different places, and each can control their region of the earth as they will not have to move their armies far to suppress rebellion or opposition. It takes at least six months to move a modern army far away from America. And two or three simultaneous rebellions will stretch the American military to its limits. So ten dictators, scattered over the earth, will be a far more effective global police-state force. But it needs centralized control by the final Pope to run a one world government.

DANIEL 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

:35 and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

But the final Pope, who will destroy the saved foolish virgins or church-goers in the Tribulation, will be destroyed with his armies at Armageddon when Jesus returns.



Jesus then sets up a true world kingdom, with Jerusalem as the centre of government, so that His Bride can rule the world.

LUKE 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

The Mountain represents a kingdom. That is the 1000 years of peace when Jesus rules the world with His Bride, which is the true church from the seven church ages.

Then it is easy to understand the demonic hatred against President Trump when he recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. That is a sign of the times to the Devil that his time on earth is almost up. The murderous rage of the demons who know that the writing is on the "wall of time" for them, now that the Jews are back in their homeland with their true capital. Demons have ruled the world for 6000 years since the fall of Adam. You can imagine their anger when they realize that their time is almost up.

Bias and a hatred for Israel dominate people's thinking.

Cyprus was taken over by Turkey. Tibet was taken over by China. The Crimea, parts of Georgia, and parts of Ukraine were taken over by Russia. In their civil war, Syria bombs civilians with chlorine. China tortures dissidents. Venezuela restricts access to food. Burma is engaged in ethnic cleansing of a Muslim minority. Five million are killed in the Congo around the year 2000. Thousands of suspected drug users and pushers are killed in the Philippines. ISIS brutally commits mass murders in Syria and Iraq. Thus, needing to restore world peace, the United Nations Human Rights Agency rather trains the bulk of its outrage on Israel. Israel becomes the scapegoat for international hatreds.

In Laodicea, the new normal is the misinterpretation of data and hatred of the Jews.

Misinterpretation of William Branham's quotes (such as their prediction that Hillary would win the 2016 American presidential election), instead of references to the Bible, becomes the basis of Message doctrines.

Brother Branham never said that the seven Thunders have uttered. But most of the Message believers claim that the seven Thunders have uttered, and build up their differing unscriptural beliefs on that idea, which helps to fragment the Message groups.

Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you". But we are not listening to Him. We prefer to listen to the Message preachers who got it wrong, but still insist on dominating the groups. Power is addictive. So is money.

The church of the Laodiceans is a rich church with material blessings, but is also poor and bankrupt spiritually -- and is sadly unaware of that fact.

The uneven distribution of this world's wealth leads to 10% of the population owning 90% of the wealth. A minority live in luxury, because society is so unequal. Inequality leads to a lack of trust. People then believe that dictatorship will work to provide employment and spread the wealth more evenly. That is why the Germans voted for Hitler.

That is obviously not a very suitable system.

As Rome takes over the world's wealth, most people will conform to her demands, because she will take over the industrial manufacturing sector and provide work.

The final Pope will end up owning the whole world's economy. That will be the maximum inequality of wealth, and the death throes of our capitalistic civilization.

DANIEL 8:23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

Daniel speaks of Satan's final superman.

DANIEL 8:24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

The final antichrist Pope will be given the military might of ten dictators, with which he will dominate the world.

He will make a covenant with the Jews to take control of all their Wall Street Stock Exchange money. When he breaks this covenant, the Jewish money power on the Stock Exchange will be destroyed together with all their investments.

DANIEL 8:25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand

Craft is handicraft -- Manufacturing.

When America's economy collapses there will be a jobless depression with multitudes out of work. Only Rome will be able to raise the money to take over America. Having attracted 1.2 billion converts, the Roman Catholic church can be regarded as an attractive or beautiful woman. She has a history of cruelty. As a cruel and beautiful woman, she will rule America. President Roosevelt in America and Hitler in Germany created big public projects in order to provide the unemployed with work. By boosting manufacturing and providing work, the Roman Pope will govern America until it is time for Russian nuclear missiles to destroy America.

The Vatican have the cash, gold, and wealth. The Jews own the stock exchange money of Wall Street. So the final Pope will make a covenant with the Jews in order to take control over their money too.

The world's manufacturing industry will all be under centralized control.

63-0318 THE FIRST SEAL

So I didn't do it, but I got to go all through the Vatican. Why, you couldn't buy it with a hundred billion billion dollars. Why, you... And just think, "The wealth of the world," the Bible said, "was found in her."

Before her destruction by an atomic bomb, Babylon (Rome) is described as a city of enormous wealth that she gathers from gold, jewels and investments and her 1.2 billion converts.

REVELATION 18:10... that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

:12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

:13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

63-0318 THE FIRST SEAL

And after the church is taken away, Rome and the Jews will make a covenant with one another. The Bible said they would, with the holy people. And now notice, they'll make it, because why? This nation is going to be busted, and the rest of the world that's on the gold standard is busted. You know that. If we're living off of taxes, due bills for forty years from now, where are we at? There's only one thing can happen. That's to call in the currency and pay off the bonds; and we can't do it. Wall Street owns them, and Wall Street's controlled by the Jews; the rest of it's in the Vatican, and the Jews has got the rest of it in Wall Street with the commerce of the world.

...

Like this fellow down here in (What's his name?) Castro did. He done the only smart thing he ever did do then, when he destroyed the bonds: paid them off and destroyed them. Notice, but we can't do that. These guys won't let us.

The rich merchants of the earth hold it [the bonds], and then there's only one thing to do: **The Catholic church can pay it off.** She's the only one that's got the money; she can do it, and she will do it.

And in doing this to get it, she'll compromise with the Jews and make a covenant, and when she makes this covenant with

the Jews... Now, remember, I'm taking this from the Scriptures. And now, when she does this and makes this covenant, we notice in Daniel 8:23 and 25 he will cause craft to prosper (And craft is manufacturing.), in his hand.

And he makes this covenant with the Jews, and in the midst of this three and a half years, he breaks his covenant as soon as he gets the thing wrapped up and gets the money of the Jews tied up. And when he does that, oh, my, oh, my, he's called the antichrist until the end of the church age, for he and his children are against Christ and the Word.

Now, when he gets the money all under control, then he will break this covenant with the Jews, as Daniel here said he would do it, in the midst of the last half of the seventy weeks of Daniel. And then, brother, what will he do? **He will have all of the world trade and the commerce, a pact with the world, 'cause he will hold the wealth of the world completely.**

The end-time events are involved with raising money.

DANIEL 11:20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

This will be a successful effort to collect great wealth.

All the wealth piling up in one place makes wealth distribution even more uneven.

So money becomes the downfall of the age, as the collected money produces a one-world economic industry.

Babylon, the original source of Gentile religious and money error, was seen as a head of gold. Golden ideas like trinity, "Your stars foretell", decorated trees for the 25 December sun god's birthday festival, and collecting the wealth by looting the surrounding areas that had been conquered.

But God showed her as balances that were found wanting. Too much on the one side, too little on the other side.

A big wealth imbalance opens the door for Satan to move.

Then the final satanic superman Pope takes over.

DANIEL 11:21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

Then the mark of the beast, religious brainwashing, takes over.

REVELATION 13:16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. If you are not part of the political-religious-church organization, then you cannot earn a living in the Tribulation.

REVELATION 3:14 And unto the angel of "the church of the Laodiceans" write;

:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

We sit comfortably in the padded seats of the church and complacently expect God to entertain us with a dazzling show of miracles amongst the lights, stage, entertainment, disco music, and high-tech video screens. Relying on the quick fix of feel-good motivational-type preaching that is little better than self-improvement pop psychology. But the value of entertainment withers away after a while as do the "whipped cream style" emotional motivational sermons. We need something more substantial than endless self-improvement. Focusing on self is not the secret of spiritual growth.

The biggest paradox is the widening gap between the ideal of the New Testament church, which was poor, persecuted, and Scriptural, and the disillusioning reality of the modern-day church.

"The church of the Laodiceans" that preaches Jesus as Saviour to the world, and yet has thrown Jesus, as the Word of God, out of the church.

That is why it is "the church of the Laodiceans". It is not "the church of Jesus" -- because He stands outside.

REVELATION 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice,

The saddest verse. Jesus standing unwanted outside the church that preaches Him.

Notice, He only appeals to an individual, not to the whole church. The churches in their group-think clusters have moved away from Scripture.

For example, try finding a Scripture that tells us to celebrate the birth of the Lord. Try finding a Scripture that says "Christmas", "Christmas tree", and "25 December".

MATTHEW 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him:

So the wise men took presents to a **house** where Jesus was a young Child, and only Mary was present. No presents were taken by the wise men to a Baby in the manger in a stable. To admit this puts one in conflict with the biggest profit-making season of the financial year.

So big-money power dominates, and an artificial alternate reality replaces Bible truths.

People want presents and decorated Christmas trees more than they want the Bible. "Increased in goods" is typical Laodicea, hence the obsession with presents.

The end of the year pagan "sun god" Yuletide festival made the apostle Paul despair and feel that he had wasted his time on Christians who celebrated popular annual occasions. December 25th was just a form of worldly bondage -- actually bondage to heathen Babylonian beliefs.

GALATIANS 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

:10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

The 25th day of the twelfth month of December, Christmas time, and every year. The heathens had it as Yule time, when the sun god was reborn and began to move higher in the sky. "Yule" was an ancient word for "child".

GALATIANS 4:11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Getting involved in annual celebrations is not what the early church did.

The church of the Laodiceans has just stuck the name of Jesus onto the pagan sun god's birthday. And modern church-goers are happily fooled. The church of the Laodiceans prefers to move away from the teachings of Paul, as Paul was not in favour of women's rights and women preachers.

I PETER 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands;

I TIMOTHY 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

No woman teachers allowed! That alone would undermine so many Laodicean churches, as they no longer stay with Scripture. Christmas is also totally unscriptural.

Claiming falsely that three wise men were in the stable, and then copying the pagan "Christmas" tree, which had nothing to do with the stable, is blatantly contrary to Scripture.

JEREMIAH 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, **Learn not the way of the heathen**, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

:3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

:4 **They deck it with silver and with gold**; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

Jeremiah said that God is unimpressed with the gold and silver decorations on pagan trees.

Yet Christmas is the holiest celebration of the year as far as Christian churches today are concerned.

Even worse, 25 December is mid winter and freezing cold in Israel. No shepherds were out at night with their sheep at that time. They would simply not survive. This is another clear contradiction of Scripture.

LUKE 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

LUKE 2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

These shepherds were out with their sheep at night, so it was not mid-winter.

But does it worry us in the Laodicean age? -- Not at all. Who cares? We think Christmas is just great. Worshiping God is all about our rights. What we like doing.

REVELATION 3:14 And unto the church **of the Laodiceans**.

Please note: Laodicea means peoples' rights.

The church **OF** the Laodiceans -- the church of the people. The church that the people have made up.

II CORINTHIANS 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

A woman symbolizes a church.

Modern women rely on **make-up** to be attractive to people. Modern churches **make up** their own beliefs in order to be attractive to people. They tell people what the people want to hear.

Our final age has developed its own church system.

We will serve God our way. God must be impressed with our traditions and bright ideas because **we have the right to worship God in the way we want to**.

We like disco music, so we have drums in the church. But the Bible never speaks of a drum. Who cares? We like drums and disco dancing.

All 45,000 different kinds of denominational and non-denominational churches have the right to serve God in their own different ways, according to modern thinking.

Forget Scripture -- we have a right to follow our traditions and do what we like doing.

Sport athletes criticize umpires who try to apply the rules. Athletes justify breaking rules in their fight for human rights. In the same way churches criticize or ignore the Bible when it contradicts what they feel are their rights.

The ultimate paradox of the last church age. People can do any **wrongs** as long as they are doing so for the sake of somebody's **rights**.

Welcome to the church age of the Laodiceans.

Confused, contradictory, angry, demanding, dissatisfied, self-obsessed, fearful, anxious, depressed, and Bible-illiterate or Bible ignorant, because they only read those verses that suit their own beliefs. The rest of the Bible is simply ignored as wrong, contradictory, myths, unnecessary details, or irrelevant. Thus the church-goers play duck-and-dodge with all the Scriptures they know little or nothing about. How insulting to God, in our ungrateful age

Money, pride, selfishness -- the unholy trinity worshiped by Laodiceans while our daily cares lead us astray.

"Churchianity" is a religion that is all about power, profit, proliferation, and petty competition.

The leaders get a little further ahead on the ladder of religious power, and get their hands on their piece of money pie.

Churches believe *parts* of the Bible. But an unfortunate brew of ignorance and wishful thinking, that produces wild distortions, are now taken to be Gospel truth. We just believe whatever our church preaches.

1963 was a key year as God revealed the mysteries of six of the seven Seals to William Branham in America. A cloud photographed at an astonishing height of 43 kilometers at sunset, over the city of Flagstaff in Northern Arizona, on 28 February 1963 was believed by many Message followers to be the mighty Angel of Revelation Chapter 10 coming down at Sunset Peak, which is 200 miles further south in southern Arizona. The Angel is imagined to have come down to meet William Branham. But he was only at Sunset Peak about a week after the cloud was photographed -- 200 miles north of Sunset Peak. He was hunting javelina pigs. The hunting season only opened on 1 March, the day *after* the cloud was seen. On 4 March William Branham preached a sermon "An Absolute" in Houston, Texas about 1000 miles east of Sunset Peak. Thus he only got to Sunset Peak on 6 March. He knew nothing about the cloud until a couple of months later.

Notice the confusion of times and places.

Then, sadly, William Branham thought that the cloud had been formed by seven angels leaving him in the morning of 8 March.

There was no cloud formed when the angels left him.

Nobody checked the dates or the places.

Message believers claim that you cannot correct the prophet. But they cannot explain why 28 February, the date of the cloud, was before the hunting season opened. So they just bluster to intimidate. Brother Branham, great prophet that he was, got his times and places muddled up.

This places the Message believers in a vacuum. They build their Angel doctrine on wrong facts that they cannot defend. That can only impress the totally brainwashed.

So these mistakes are now enshrined as facts in a doctrine. But the doctrine tends to change when the people are questioned about these facts.

William Branham eventually classified the cloud as the sign of the Son of man in the heaven, not as the Angel of Revelation 10 coming down.

65-0718 TRYING TO DO GOD A SERVICE WITHOUT BEING THE WILL OF GOD

And then in that great observatory, so that the world will be without, they're still wondering what happened. In Tucson, them big observatories took the picture of it up there; still wondering what happened. What is it? They still put in the paper, "Does anybody know anything about what, how it could have happen?" There is no fog up there, there's no air, there's no moisture; thirty miles high in the air. Oh, my!

"There shall be signs in the heaven above. And when these things take place, earthquakes in divers places, **then shall appear the sign in the heaven, of the Son of man.**" "That day," in Luke, "the Son of man will reveal Himself again; being revealed, Himself." And the world will look like Sodom and Gomorrah. Oh, my!

MATTHEW 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:

But the story grows as it gets repeated, and all too many Message believers insist that the Angel of Revelation chapter 10 has come down.

Although they tend to disagree about where and when the Angel came down.

So the facts concerning the time and place morph into different vague statements when you question them closely. But they need the Angel on earth to justify their belief that the seven Thunders *have* uttered.

However, William Branham never, ever said that the seven Thunders have uttered.

But they do not want to spoil a good story with unwanted facts.

Unfortunately, there are now a number of different versions of the seven Thunders. Each one claiming that it alone is right. All rather confusing. The seven Thunders are *not* written in the Bible. Yet each version points to seven different things that *are* written in the Bible which are claimed to be the Thunders. This is a very obvious mismatch. What is written cannot be the fulfillment of what is not written.

We have to dig deep until the quicksand of our information is safe to set foot on. Glibly accepting a batch of quotes in a docile, submissive manner is no guarantee of truth. That is why there are so many Message churches, because the quotes have produced so many different opinions.

Facts should lead us to opinions. We must not have opinions, and filtering only the facts that you want to accept.

Remember, only dead fish go with the flow.

Christians today falsely, but readily, believe that there are contradictions in the Bible. Half the time man's own life is a string of contradictions. We blame everyone but ourselves.

The only sure anchor that we can have in our turbulent age is to believe that the King James Version of the Bible is the Absolute Truth, with no mistakes.

This study will attempt to do a brief overview of our age to gain a background before we consider the spiritual events as described in Revelation Chapter 3.

The church age of the Laodiceans started in 1906 with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California.

It was a prosperous time. People were very self-confident. Scientists thought that they had solved all the problems of Physics.

This confidence did not last long, as Albert Einstein produced his amazing but difficult theory of relativity between 1905 and 1916. Then followed the crazy insights of quantum mechanics in the 1920s and 1930s, which are hugely accurate as long as you do not try too hard to understand it all. Never again would scientists feel that they have understood all of physics. Especially when Dark Energy and Dark Matter suddenly and unpredictably appeared. Why Dark? Because we have absolutely no clue what they are.

Then the American Apollo astronauts brought back moon dust that was older than the moon rocks, and older than earth rocks. Things get more confusing as we learn more. To make it worse the chemical composition of the dust upon which the rocks sat differed remarkably from the rocks themselves, contrary to accepted theories that the dust resulted from weathering and breakup of the rocks. The rocks had to have come from somewhere else. So now we are more confused about the moon than ever. Scientists simply do not know how it formed.

Scientists developed the theory of the Big Bang to show how the universe began.

Then they discovered the unknown Dark Energy and Dark Matter which form 95 % of the universe. The Big Bang neither predicted nor explained Dark Energy and Dark Matter. Thus the Big Bang can only be applied to 5 % of the universe at most. This makes it a very inadequate theory. Nobel Prize winner Steven Weinberg and Professor Alan Guth, who were once great champions of the Big Bang theory, have now distanced themselves from it.

Steven Weinberg says that the more we understand of the universe, the more pointless it gets. Thus we have another paradox. Science, which is the basis of the technology that makes our lives so comfortable, cannot offer us a future after death. Science offers us no real purpose for living either, as it cannot tell us where we are going.

A sad paradox happened. Many Christians abandoned faith in Genesis Chapter 1 because it disagreed with the Big Bang theory of Science. Now scientists are abandoning the Big Bang themselves. So the Christians who regarded Genesis Chapter 1 as a myth, to please the scientists, now have got nothing. With the moon dust being older and different to the moon rocks, scientists cannot even tell how the moon was formed. So if they claim to know how the whole universe formed, that is a joke. The Big Bang turned out to be just another *theory* that could not explain new scientific evidence that was discovered.

Saint Paul gave us good advice.

I TIMOTHY 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

If a science theory contradicts the Bible, it is not science. It is just false science. Fake news.

When the Laodicean age started in 1906, engineering skills were developing at a great rate thanks to the industrial revolution.

Then in 1912 engineering self-confidence took a bad knock. The world's biggest boat, the Titanic, hit an iceberg at high speed and sunk with two thirds of the passengers. The officer with the key to the cabinet that had the binoculars locked inside was replaced just before the boat sailed and he left hurriedly, accidentally taking the key with him. With no binoculars the lookouts got too close to the iceberg before seeing it and trying to change course. A tragic paradox. A tiny key doomed the greatest ship.

A person had claimed that the Titanic was so big and well-built that not even God could sink it. Unfortunately God was listening.

This event really shook the self-confidence of the people. Such a big boat, yet so easily sunk on its first voyage. Many wealthy men were on board, happy to show off their wealth by being on board. Had they been poorer they probably would not have been on board. Then they would have been better off as they would not have drowned. This was a definitive moment at the start of the last church age. Man had built his biggest metal monument, and it was just not good enough. A shudder of fear rippled out. In facing the challenges of life, man realized that he was very clever -- but unfortunately not clever enough.

A spiritual lesson. Jesus gave Peter the keys to heaven.

MATTHEW 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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

Peter unlocked the Door to heaven with this key when he said:

ACTS 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Hardly any churches use this key.

They baptize in the name of three titles, without ever knowing what the name is. Ask them what the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is, and you just get a blank look and some meaningless mental gymnastics as they duck and dodge. Known as the "Trinity evasive shuffle".

But without the key the churches cannot see the name of God, as three People cannot have one name. Looking so darkly through the glass they will be unable to avoid the massive iceberg of the great Tribulation that our megachurch system is heading towards at top speed.

Knowing the human name of God for water baptism is a small key, but without it there is going to be a massive collision at the end of the church age. The name of Almighty God is the Lord Jesus Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Everything that God is, can be found only in Christ.

MATTHEW 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth **a son**, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us**.

Jesus Christ is God appearing in the form of a Man.

Then in 1914 the states of Europe who had crushed the colonies with their superior weapons of war, decided in a moment of madness to declare war on each other. Internal European competition between the powerful states of Europe had led them to aggressively rush into making colonies. Greed, hypocrisy, and self-seeking propaganda enabled Europe to grow richer and more powerful as they cruelly looted the colonies. What you sow, you reap. The powerful European states then attacked each other.

An assassin Princip killed the Archduke of Austria and his wife, and his pistol shots launched the first World War. A war so violent with its chemical explosives that it was called "the war to end all wars". Twenty million died. Then a wave of Spanish Flu swept the devastated world to kill another 65 million people. This combined horror only succeeded in setting the stage for the second World War, and its even greater physics explosives of the atomic bombs.

War encouraged brilliant scientists to develop bigger and better weapons of death.

The first World War was horrible enough in its murderous hatred to unleash the dark demonic forces of dictatorship.

54-0513 THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Now, this is the third Angel's message to the world. And you know what the third Angel's message; it's going forth now in this day. This is the flying of the third Angel message, if you're a Bible reader.

There was three woes followed it. The first one happened in World War One. Second one happened in World War Two. You see what we're going in now. All right. We're at the end of the road.

REVELATION 8:13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

This event actually happens in the Tribulation. This feast of the trumpets will be calling the Jews back to Israel during the Tribulation.

But in order for the Bride to get some idea of what these events mean, the Bride sees a preview of the three woes.

World War 1 saw the release of the spirits of dictatorship. This was the first woe of our last church age.

The conditions of the peace treaty after the first World War were so harsh that poverty was widespread. A big inequality of wealth where the majority have little is a fertile breeding ground for dictatorship.

The Catholic dictator Mussolini rose to power in Italy. Lenin, who killed tens of thousands, and Stalin who killed millions, rose to power in Communist Russia. Germany produced Hitler, and this natural dictator, when he rose to power in 1933, was instrumental in dominating Germany so that the Germans would learn to hate the Jews, who are natural Israel.

The second woe was in World War 2 when the German dictator Hitler unleashed these demonic spirits on natural Israel in a ghastly Holocaust using Zyklon B poison gas. This was part of their extermination campaign which killed six million Jews by 1945. The victorious allies found enough stocks of Zyklon B poison gas that could have killed another 20 million people. Demonic madness with an endless lust to murder. This was just a preview of the Tribulation to give the Bride some idea of what the Tribulation will be like.

When the second World War ended, the demons had to stop this industrial scale death of killing millions of Jews.

These demons were unleashed by these awful dictators. Where are they hiding now? They will still be there in the great Tribulation as the awful Holocaust of the Jews was just an *amateur* Tribulation -- a mere warm up for their future horrific slaughter of mankind.

After the second World War these demons had to change their tactics and move into the churches, as the church is spiritual Israel. Their job is to stop the Christians believing in the King James Version of the Bible, and prevent all the churches from returning to the beliefs of the early church of the apostolic fathers.

As soon as we start believing something that is unscriptural, then we start dying spiritually.

So the aim of demonology is to make us sufficiently Bible-illiterate to the extent that we cannot establish what we believe from Scripture. Thus over 100 different versions of the English Bible have been developed. All those different variations and changed words will make it almost impossible to find the actual truth.

Then these spirits orchestrated a complete denial amongst the churches that William Branham was the end-time prophet.

Then for those believers that realized that he was the end time prophet, the spirits encouraged the people to deify brother Branham by calling him "the Voice of God". Then the quotes of brother Branham replaced Scripture, and these "Message believers" (an unscriptural term) were fooled into thinking that truth could be obtained just by interpreting quotes. That was the lazy way out. Studying the Bible is way too much hard work.

Bible knowledge amongst Message churches declined drastically.

Moses brought the Jews out of Egypt in the first exodus.

Jesus brought the church out of the Jews in the second exodus.

The Bride must come out of the modern church in the third exodus.

No church is strictly Scriptural anymore.

The modern day Christians are the spiritual children who should be turned to the apostolic fathers who wrote the New Testament.

MALACHI 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
:6 And he shall turn ... the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

If we fail to return to the beliefs of the New Testament church, then we will be thrown into the Tribulation with its horror of nuclear bombs, and their curse of lingering radiation effects and the cancers that these cause.

So the spiritual children (the end-time Christians) are being killed spiritually by not being taught the truth of the Bible mysteries, just like the children got killed naturally in the days of Moses and Jesus.

Ignorance of the Bible will be no excuse.

REVELATION 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

A strong angel -- The seventh angel to the seventh church age of Laodicea.

REVELATION 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

His powerful message was to condemn the church system for being unscriptural. Babylon, the mother harlot, represents the Roman Catholic church, which calls herself the mother church as the Protestant churches came out of her. She is seriously flawed as demonology has moved in and taken over.

The natural dictators unleashed the demons on natural Israel. When the war ended, the demons had to stop their natural killing and enter the church system for the spiritual deaths of modern spiritual Israel, the church, due to their unbelief in Scripture.

Thus it is no surprise that so many priests and church leaders are being exposed as child abusers.

REVELATION 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

The mother harlot is also the mother of harlots. This is the Bible description of the Protestant churches that came out of the Roman church.

So the entire church world is described as a bunch of harlots.

This should make us very suspicious of modern day churches who only tell us the bits of Scripture that suit their man-made doctrines and opinions.

REVELATION 18:4 And I heard **another voice** from heaven, saying, **Come out of her**, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Another voice -- This is *not* the voice of the seventh angel, but the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit telling us to come out of the modern church systems.

Another voice -- This is not repeating the quotes of William Branham.

If we repeat his quotes, that is the voice of the seventh angel.

Another voice is a personal revelation from God in the heart of the individual.

A personal relationship between the individual and Jesus. Jesus is the Word. No submission to a human leader. *This* is the voice of the Word that convicts an individual when he or she *reads a verse in the Bible*.

The churches are unscriptural in many ways, which is bad, but the people do not want to know that. People are desperate to think that their churches are fine. Thus they prefer to live in the "bubble" of their group-think delusion, that is designed to instill adherence to a creed rather than to reduce sin or Bible ignorance.

So this third exodus is only for those few Christians who dare to believe that their church is wrong, and who want to be strictly Scriptural.

MATTHEW 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. The few despised individuals who learn from the quotes of the seventh angel, and then *prove* their beliefs by following their ideas *through the verses of the Bible*.

Individuals who are in love with the ideal of being like the first church, but not in love with the pleasures and treasures of our modern world, and who refuse to conform to others.

Church-goers are impressed with churches that have big membership numbers.

MATTHEW 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: **for many be called, but few chosen.**

Ignorance is impressive if it has bulk. A sea of nonsense sends out impressive tides to sweep us away.

Very few will move off the popular path in order to find Bible truth.

But there are limits on this seventh angel's ministry. He was sent to restore us back to the first church. He was not sent to make up his own ideas.

For the chosen few, the last age believers have to be just like the first church age believers. "The last shall be first".

There must be no difference between the first and the last church ages.

MATTHEW 17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

His final message is a restoration of the last age back to the first church age.

MATTHEW 19:30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

The first and the last are the same. There is no real difference between them.

Let us go back to the states of Europe again.

Having spent all the wealth that they had looted from their colonies on the senseless and self-destructive two world wars, the countries of Europe were close to bankruptcy, and then they proceeded to lose their colonies.

The same blood-lust demons who had been unleashed in the war were active as the colonies gained their freedom. Millions died during the vicious emancipation of many of the colonies from their European colonizing states.

America and the Soviet Union, the two super powers, engaged in a "no win" Cold War. They developed enough nuclear bombs to kill everyone and still have enough bombs left over to make the corpses bounce. Overkill became a new word.

It was referred to as "Mutually Assured Destruction" -- MAD. A very apt description of demon-inspired physics.

The brightest brains in physics could only bring us to the edge of a nuclear Armageddon. Humanity has been educated above our intelligence. We have opened a Pandora's box of destructive power that we do not have the wisdom to control.

This prediction about America was made in 1964 by American **radio personality Paul Harvey**.

If I was the Devil.

I would set about whatever was necessary to take over the United States.

I'd subvert the churches first, and I would begin with a campaign of whispers.

With the wisdom of a serpent, I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve: "Do as you please."

To the young, I would whisper that the Bible is a myth. I would convince the children that man created God instead of God creating man. I'd confide that what's bad is good and what's good is square and bad.

Then, I'd get organized, I'd educate authors in how to make lurid literature pornographically exciting so that anything else would appear dull and uninteresting.

I'd peddle narcotics to whom I could. I'd sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction. I'd tranquilize the rest with pills.

If I were the devil, I'd soon have families at war with themselves, churches at war with themselves and nations at war with themselves until each, in its turn, was consumed.

And with promises of higher ratings, I'd have mesmerizing media fanning the flames.

If I were the devil, I would encourage schools to refine young intellect but neglect to discipline emotions. I'd tell teachers to let those students run wild. And before you knew it, you'd have drug-sniffing dogs and metal detectors at every schoolhouse door.

Within a decade, I'd have prisons overflowing and judges promoting pornography. Soon, I would evict God from the courthouse and the schoolhouse and then from the houses of Congress.

In his own churches, I would substitute psychology for religion and deify science. I'd lure priests and pastors into misusing boys and girls and church money.

What'll you bet I couldn't get whole states to promote gambling as the way to get rich?

I'd convince the young that marriage is old-fashioned, that living in sin is more fun and that what you see on television is the way to be.

And thus, I could undress you in public and lure you into bed with diseases for which there are no cures.

In other words, if I were the devil, I'd just keep right on doing what he's doing."

1965 was a bad turning point for America as president Johnson really escalated the Vietnam war.

Historians say that America tried her best to commit suicide between 1965 and 1980.

Brother Branham's ministry ended in 1965. America basically rejected his message. Thus it is no surprise to see America losing out for the next 15 years.

The Vietnam war was actually set in motion by president Truman when gave military aid to France in their Indochina (as Vietnam was then called) war against the North Vietnamese. By 1954 the Americans were paying for 80% of the French war effort. This directly involved the United States in Vietnam. The very experienced war general, Eisenhower, who was American president from 1952– 1960 knew it was wrong to get involved, but sadly kept America in the war, sending American military advisers to support South Vietnam. Such was his mistaken aim of stopping the spread of Communism into South Vietnam that he never insisted on a free election in Vietnam. Kennedy, the next president, who was a Catholic, was encouraged by Pope John 23 to help the Catholic South Vietnamese president. But Kennedy made a hopeless compromise. He kept increasing the military aid, but it was never in decisive quantities. Kennedy secretly authorized a coup, which ended in the assassination of the South Vietnam president in 1963.

JOB 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Kennedy himself was shot and killed three weeks later in 1963.

Pope John 23 had also died in 1963.

President Johnson escalated the war in 1965, but foolishly tried to run it from America. About 58,220 Americans would die. The American press and Mass Media had their moment of power, and destroyed president Nixon over the Watergate spy scandal. Congress then snatched defeat from the jaws of victory as America abandoned South Vietnam which became the first war that America lost.

This was a defining moment in the last church age.

The Cold War got dangerous in Vietnam. It served as a warning to us that we cannot rely on human strength.

JEREMIAH 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

The great superpower of America lost a war for the only time in that century.

ECCLESIASTES 9:11 I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,

This was a warning. America thought they could ignore brother Branham's attempt to bring them back to Scripture because they had such a strong military.

But God allowed their confidence in their very strong military might to be badly shaken.

The whole sad saga had involved the good general Eisenhower who knew he was wrong, and was then encouraged by the religious Pope John 23, who had no right to be interfering in politics. It ended with the American Press and Media, who were never elected, having the final say on the events.

This was a stark warning to our age. Bad leadership, political and religious, comes at a heavy price.

America's rejection of the end time prophet, by refusing to be restored back to the New Testament teachings of the first church age, saw warfare change into the hit-and-run of terrorism and unwinnable wars. The military term for this is a tactical stalemate.

The Press and Mass Media now edit the news facts in order to tell people what the Media wants them to hear.

Church leaders mix portions of Scripture with church traditions and politically correct opinions. By not staying strictly with the revealed mysteries of the written Bible, and actively denying these revelations, modern churches are effectively being led into the future Tribulation with all its horrors.

Our age is easily fooled because the press and media have the ability to even exalt murderers as saints. For example Che Guevara. His face and iconic beret appears on so many T-shirts. The ideal revolutionary hero who came to free mankind from bondage. He's revered as some sort of man-of-the-people idealistic revolutionary and martyr. But in fact he was a murderer, whose revolutions failed to bring freedom to anybody, only more control and fear. His motto was, "A revolutionary must become a cold killing machine motivated by pure hate. We must create the education of The Wall!"

(The Wall is a reference to the bullet-marked brick wall where Che's enemies stood before his firing squads.) -- "Cold killing" and "Pure hate" are certainly not Christian attributes.

Ours is an age that is dominated by the bias of the mass media.

Laodicea has become an age of fake news that created an artificial alternative reality.

While killing millions in the wars, mankind's ability to kill was overtaken by the mosquito. World-wide, malaria is the biggest killer. So despite being efficient killers, we take second place to the humble and delicate mosquito. Common sense says that we should have waged a much bigger attack against the mosquito, rather than attacking each other. But thinking clearly and sensibly is not a product of the church age of the Laodiceans.

Let us consider the rise of Russia, the king of the North, who plays a big, bad role at the end time.

The 'darkest continent' on planet Earth is our human mind when it is made up, and thus totally closed to any facts or Scriptures that disagree with our current church opinion. That is why Jesus stands outside all our churches. In our darkened Bible-ignoring age, God is raising up a powerful destructive agent in the north. Bible-ignoring means we just focus on those Scriptures that suit us.

By 1917 the Pentecostal movement that began in Azusa street was starting to denominate. God hated that. So in 1917 the Communist revolution began with Lenin in Russia. A new state of Russia would grow in power, until it will finally destroy America.

For now God has to keep the Russians in check.

America had the freedom of Pentecost and the freedom of the end time Message, but with time the Americans would move both of those movements out of the Scriptures and into the realm of unscriptural beliefs, just like the other denominations.

JEREMIAH 4:6 Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.

Prophecy can have a double meaning.

In Old Testament days Babylon came from the north of Israel. In our days, Russia lurks menacingly up in the north.

HOSEA 11:1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

God called Israel as a nation out of Egypt in the Exodus.

But the same prophecy is used when Jesus as a boy of about 12 years old is called back to Israel from Egypt where He went at the age of two.

MATTHEW 2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

JEREMIAH 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts **hath a sacrifice in the north country** by the river Euphrates.



The small patch of red in front of the E of Euphrates, represents Israel.

Russia, from the north, will ultimately be destroyed. God regards her as a sacrificial animal to be slaughtered at the end of the Tribulation.

Another paradox: The West would help to industrialize Russia and build up her power, until she would become a formidable enemy. Then the West would have to oppose this strong rival.

Before World War 2, Stalin robbed the peasants, urban entrepreneurs, churches, and art collections to fund the industrialization of the Soviet Union (USSR). In exchange for the money stolen in this manner, Americans, Germans, and a few other nations, delivered about 1500 industrial and power plants to Stalin. The West did not mind being paid in stolen money. The Soviet GDP jumped far above anything its predecessor the Russian Empire could have managed.

About 50 million people ended up being imprisoned, unpaid in the Gulag of harsh labor camps and used as slave labour by Stalin. It takes slaves and looting to build up a powerful country. The total area of all these concentration camps was about equal to the area of France.

After World War 2, several thousand industrial plants were relocated (a polite word for stealing) from occupied Europe, and from China, into the USSR (the Soviet Union). This looting of the countries that Russia invaded at the end of the war secured the next wave of spectacular growth that Soviets enjoyed, well into the 1960s. Then, starting with Khrushchev, a huge problem arose. The abundant input sources started running out. The newfound oil in Siberia helped a lot. But the countryside ran out of people to man the new workplaces that the oil proceeds helped to create.

Productivity, without ever getting close to Western levels, grew progressively less. More and more people, more and more machines, produced increasingly smaller outputs. Besides, the capital assets that were already there, now required an awful amount of resources for maintenance and repair: even when new, they hadn't been top-notch in the first place.

The 1970s oil crisis made apparent the obsolescence of the industrial infrastructure that had transformed the advanced nations. In response, these countries embarked on reforms that were destined to propel them forward in the scientific-technological revolution. A high-tech information age was starting. Russia was falling behind, and needed a ruthless strong man like Putin to take charge. Dictatorship, under the veil of democracy and "free" elections, was back.

One man, Putin, gets elected to power in 2000, and then just stays in power by taking over TV stations and by imprisoning opponents. One opponent was shot dead near the Kremlin.

Turkey's president Erdogan was elected in 2002, and has been in power since then by imprisoning opponents.

So it seems that the rise of dictatorships is again a current theme in politics. We have to get used to a democratic vote that actually installs a dictator. This will be much easier for the final Dictator or Beast to take over in the Tribulation.

Another paradox is man's ability to grow more food by using chemical fertilizers, but at the same time we humans kill each other with chemicals.

Fritz Haber, a Jew, comes to mind as the Chemist of Life and Death. Haber was a brilliant Jewish German chemist who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1918 in chemistry, for developing methods in 1909 to produce ammonia from nitrogen in the air. This is still known as the Haber Process. Ammonia was used to make artificial fertilizers, which did wonders to increase crop production. It was called creating "bread from air".

However, this master chemist then sadly went on to develop poisonous gas as a war weapon, because of his fervent desire to be recognized as a German patriot. In Germany there was a strong anti-Jewish sentiment, and he desperately wanted to be accepted as a German, not as a Jew. By 1915 he felt driven by an excess of patriotism to invent poison gases for use during the First World War. This gassing of Germany's enemies was described as being an unspeakable horror. Then, even more unfortunately in the 1920s, Haber, who came from Jewish descendants, helped in creating poisonous gases as pesticides. This research was later developed to produce Zyklon B, the infamous gas used in killing at least one million Jews in German gas chambers at Auschwitz, Majdanek, and other extermination camps. It is a sad irony in history that the Jewish man who gave food, and thus life to so many, also played a part in developing the poison gas that would plunge the Jews into their biggest nightmare.

The food production for almost half the world's current population depends on his revolutionary method for producing nitrogen fertilizers.

Some people have called it the most important technological invention of the last century.

Fritz Haber's name should be a household name, even much more so than Einstein or Newton. But as a merchant of death his name has darkened.

This symbolizes the last church age where the fourth Seal was revealed.

REVELATION 6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

The fourth beast around the throne was a flying eagle with its penetrating eyesight.



The voice of the eagle is the voice of the seventh angel as brother Branham recorded his sermons, with their amazing spiritual insights, on tape recorders from 1947 to 1965.

REVELATION 6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death,

But something goes wrong. Instead of the age ending in a glorious revival of truth, the age ends when the red, white, and black horses of evil unite -- religious deception, politics, and demonic money power -- to blot out Truth. The Holy Spirit goes up at the coming of the Lord. When Life leaves the earth, then death enters the earth for the Tribulation.

The seventh church age that should have brought Life as the written mysteries of Scripture were revealed, actually brings Death as people try to interpret unwritten mysteries.

Just like Haber -- His inventions brought so much life, but he is remembered more for the death he invented. He was trying to be accepted as a German. But in the end they rejected him as a Jew anyway. Trying to be accepted by people is not the way to find truth.

Church leaders preach Life when they preach Scripture. Then they get many of the written Bible mysteries wrong. That is bad, as they glibly give their own opinions. Error introduces death. This is especially so when they try to interpret the seven Thunders that are not written. They are desperately trying to belong to a group that is so-called "in the Message". Which is an unscriptural label, just like "Lutheran" or "Methodist". Whatever they say the Thunders mean, they have got it wrong because they have no symbols to interpret -- just their wild guesses which open the door to death.

Their followers will curse them in the Tribulation, because they will then realize that their favourite church leaders have actually led them to their deaths. All the saved Christians that go into the Tribulation will die if they refuse to take on the mark of the beast, which is denominational brainwashing. You belong to what a church says, not to what Jesus as the Word of God says.

REVELATION 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Bacteria in plant roots also create fertilizer out of nitrogen in the air, but only enough to feed about half the world's population. The other half depend on artificial fertilizer. Because 3 out of 7 people you know live only thanks to Haber.

He brought food to billions of people with fertilizers, but more than a million died in war and gas chambers.

We live on the edge of ourselves, terrified of the darkness within.

Unable to prove from Scripture what we believe is darkness.

The most powerful discovery in Science is that all things are made of atoms.

The most dangerous discovery in Science is when they learned to split the atom.

Now marriages split up, which is socially dangerous.

The biggest mistake in Science is our reliance on science to provide for our needs, and to protect us from harm and danger.

Science has made staggering progress in those directions. But at a cost. The amazingly useful plastics industry that solves so many everyday problems, has now become a monster of pollution that does not want to go away and degrade.

Medicine is amazing in keeping us alive for longer, and allowing babies to survive childhood. But in the process it is creating our single biggest problem, because it is helping to overpopulate the earth.

Electrical power has revolutionized our lives, but generating this power just cannot shake off the shackles of pollution. Clean energy runs at about 10% of our needs, if we are lucky, and has no great possibility of reaching 30% on a world-wide scale. One billion people still live without electrical energy. By producing an extra billion people every 15 years or so, we need to produce more energy at a faster rate than what clean energy can develop.

Nuclear power is great, but has the hazardous waste disposal problems, plus the threat of nuclear annihilation that makes a small nation like North Korea a world danger.

Power in politics has the same problems. It cannot escape from the stain of corruption, and dishonesty, and greed.

Power in the church is corrupted by an insatiable desire to collect money, which results in a church leadership succession that becomes a family business.

The medical world is plagued by new viruses and antibiotic-resistant superbugs. As we find a new solution, a new danger crops up. We do not win the race against microbes, and we struggle to keep up. We eliminate measles, then we stop inoculating because of fear of autism, and then measles breaks out again. Which is worse, autism, or the harm caused by measles? We are left guessing.

Modern drugs have done wonders to combat disease, but there is also a hidden and growing army of drug addicts. Good and bad just seem to march in lock step.

Clean water is becoming increasingly scarce as population grows, and the pollution of fresh water grows with it.

Transport is essential to modern life. Yet choked streets in rush hour traffic is an accepted modern hazard. More than half the world lives in cities in order to survive. But do not try to count all the slums and shanty towns that grow around the cities. Science has developed a throw-away lifestyle that produces mountains of garbage. Few countries have the self discipline to enforce effective recycling programs.

Looking into the long-term future there is not too much to be optimistic about. Science creates solutions, as well as numerous new problems that will not easily go away.

Science and Technology are not the Saviours that we thought it would be.

Global warming merely proves that Science has enabled us to interfere with nature on a global scale. Science has educated us beyond our intelligence. We make progress, but cannot cope with all the unintended consequences and pollution of that progress. The good in Science is being offset by the harm and evil that emerges as a backlash to progress. Scientific knowledge is both good and dangerous. At a certain level of knowledge, we simply lack the wisdom to handle its consequences.

I seem to remember that we were warned to 'stay away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'.

But we eat greedily of its scientific fruit.

Mother Earth is polluted, poisoned, overcrowded, and overheated.

Science does not offer us a great future in the long term for our grandchildren.

What have we done to Nature's Eden? Are we about to be thrown out?

Perhaps by the God that scientific atheism has desperately tried so hard to dethrone as it endlessly teaches us that He does not exist?

So science seeks to get rid of the spiritual relationship with God, and makes us victims of materialism. So we lose both ways. A lose-lose relationship.

What a paradox. God gave scientists a better intelligence than what most of us have. And the scientists then used their better intelligence to try to prove that God does not exist. Talk about a waste of brain power.

Sin is our greatest enemy. But we sinful humans have invented, and then applied, aspects of science. Science has developed into a paradox.

It is something that can now destroy so much, as well as helping us so much.

Our inability to cope with the destructive side of science is mainly because of our own sinfulness.

Because we cannot conquer sin in our own strength, the harm of science will degrade our lives. Ultimately we will wish we never went down that road of scientific invention. Ask the Syrians what they think of aeroplanes, weapons of war, and poison gases.

We cannot avoid the kickbacks of Science. They just allow us to perform harm on a greater scale.

Armageddon will eventually wipe out our civilization.

That shows that God is not impressed with what we have scientifically produced.

Sugar has become the public health enemy number one. This is a form of colonial revenge, as sugar was the main reason for Europe developing certain colonies, especially in the Caribbean islands between North and South America. The fires and high temperatures used to extract the sugar led to the early deaths of millions of slaves, and was a major reason that 10 million slaves were taken from Africa to South America and the Caribbean islands. (Another two million slaves perished or drowned on the ghastly slave ships as they crossed the Atlantic). The dead slaves were continually replaced by more unfortunate sugar-producing slaves, who were doomed to a quick death. Half a million slaves went to the cotton fields of the southern states of the USA. Picking cotton was a very cruel form of slavery, but less hazardous, and there they multiplied to become 4 million when they were emancipated in 1865 by Abraham Lincoln, the great American president. John Wesley preached salvation and holiness in England from about 1750, to lead a great revival. William

Wilberforce in England became born again as part of this revival, and worked tirelessly for 20 years to get the British Parliament to abolish slavery by 1807.

The blood-stained hands of the sugar plantation owners provided the sugar that Europe became addicted to. By 1965 America had rejected the attempts of William Branham to restore the end time church back to the Bible beliefs of the early church. Then the sugar madness started in America. The Americans learned to develop the large-scale conversion of glucose into fructose. Thus they managed to invent high fructose corn syrup, which is a concentrate of glucose and fructose. This potent combination is considered to be lethal by public health advocates. The public call this potent mixture "sugar". The consumption of high fructose corn syrup in America increased tenfold between 1970 and 1990. No other food group grew at this rate. Americans got fatter and obesity increased because high fructose corn syrup produces no rise in leptin, which is the hormone that makes us feel full. Increased sugar intake is also linked to diabetes.

This was at the same time that Message believers were developing their various dangerous Thunders beliefs, which focused on the mysteries that are not written in the Bible. So they took less interest in the written Bible, and focused on making up doctrines by interpreting quotes. This began the slow but steady movement away from being Scriptural in what they believe. Now the Thunders people can no longer prove what they believe from Scripture. This puts them in the same camp as the Pope, because he cannot prove most of what he believes from Scripture either.

REVELATION 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH

Unscriptural Rome is the mother of harlots, with her infallible Pope. Message people have been fooled into believing that various written facts in the Bible are actually the unwritten seven Thunders. A complete mismatch. Different Message people use different written facts to interpret what is not written, and thus we have numerous seven-Thunder doctrines to further confuse the issue. They say brother Branham's quotes are the 'Absolute' as he is 'the Voice of God', and as such is infallible. Just like the Pope is declared infallible by the Catholics.

The Voice of God is not promised anywhere in the New Testament. Message believers say the mighty Angel of Revelation Chapter 10 has come down, but disagree amongst themselves just where and when He came down. They thus claim He has been down for over 50 years, and has achieved what? Nobody really seems to know.

Many claim the Angel was the Cloud of 28 February 1963 formed by the wings of seven angels, photographed in the semi desert state of Arizona, that stayed at a height of 42 kilometers and never came down. They also claim that the Lord came as the Cloud in a secret way, as a secret Presence called Parousia. But the angels only came down invisibly eight days later, on 8 March 1963, to meet brother Branham near Sunset Peak, 200 miles south of Flagstaff. Sunset Peak is part of the Sonoran desert that includes the city of Tucson. The seven angels left him, invisibly, and formed no Cloud.

Thus the Lord or the Angel came in the desert, because Sunset Peak is in the Sonoran desert. But this has to be wrong because Jesus does not come in the desert.

Tucson, where brother Branham was living, is in the same desert. So his ministry was not the coming of the Lord either.

MATTHEW 24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

Was the coming down of the Angel, or the coming of the Lord actually the Cloud of 28 February, that stayed at a height of 42 kilometers, or was it the invisible angels that came down on 8 March? Message believers are not sure, and disagree like Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed on their home made doctrines.

But the seventh Seal, preached on 24 March 1963, brings Him back to earth. So the time gets very confused.

63-1110M SOULS THAT ARE IN PRISON NOW

The Seventh Seal brings Him back to earth.

But to further complicate things, the seventh Seal has not opened yet. So He had never yet came down by July 1964.

64-0719M THE FEAST OF THE TRUMPETS

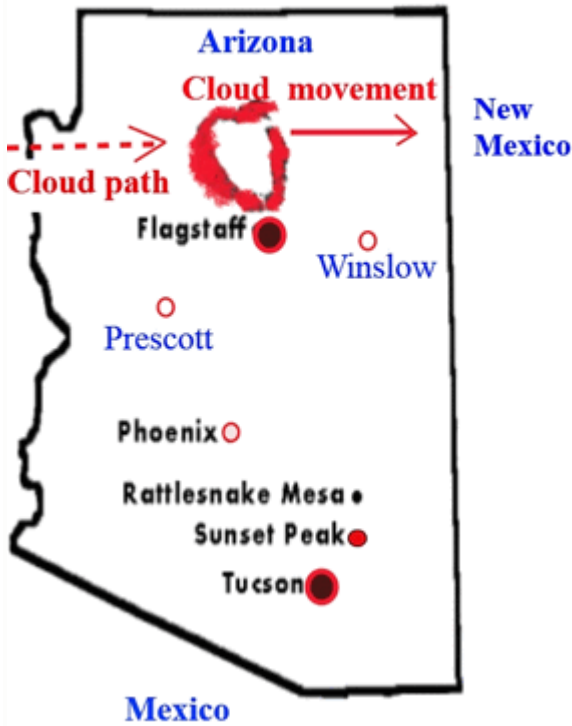
The Seventh Seal hasn't opened yet, you know. That's His Coming.

Actually, in July 1965 which is five months before he died, brother Branham was still looking for the Coming of the Lord.

65-0725 WHAT IS THE ATTRACTION ON THE MOUNTAIN

We send greetings up in the mountains, **Prescott**, Arizona, to Brother Leo Mercier and his group that's up there waiting for the Coming of the Lord.

The city of Prescott is between the city of Flagstaff and Sunset Peak. So neither the high altitude Cloud of 28 February 1963 over Flagstaff, nor the seven angels that came to brother Branham near Sunset Peak on 8 March 1963, were the coming of the Lord as far as he was concerned.



Brother Branham's followers have messed up his quotes to produce a Thunders Mess-age.

This is nothing new.

Remember the sons of Thunder, James and John, who wanted to pull down fire on the villagers who disagreed with them?

Jesus said that they did not know what spirit they were of.

Exactly the same as the modern Thunders believers. They have neither quotes nor Scripture to vindicate their mental gymnastics.

What spirit are they of? The unscriptural mommy Catholic church.

As soon as you are unscriptural, you become a daughter of Rome.

MARK 3:17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, **The sons of thunder**:

LUKE 9:54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

:55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, **Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.**

:56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

Disagree with Mess-age Thunders believers, and see how anxious they are to destroy your reputation.

Things have not changed. Same spirit.

65-0725 WHAT IS THE ATTRACTION ON THE MOUNTAIN

We send greetings to those in Tucson, that's gathered tonight, waiting for the Coming of the Lord. Down into Houston, Texas, to those who are waiting for the Coming of the Lord. Up in Chicago, to those who are waiting for the Coming of the Lord. Up on the East Coast, New York and Connecticut, and the great groups up there, that's waiting for the Coming

of the Lord. We don't have room here to seat them, so we just have to send them the Word through the--the medium of the telephone. We send greetings to Brother Junior Jackson tonight, and his group down in Clarksville. Brother Ruddell, up on sixty-two, and his group, waiting for the Coming of the Lord. And we're gathered here tonight at the home church, the tabernacle, waiting for the Coming of the Lord.

As 1965 was ending, brother Branham was still looking for the coming of the Lord.

MATTHEW 24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, **he is in the secret chambers**; believe it not.

There is no secret presence, no hidden dimension. Jesus dwells in the hearts of men and women.

MATTHEW 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy **coming**, and of the end of the world?

"Coming" is the Greek word "parousia". This can also possibly mean a secret presence. But Jesus said we must not believe in a secret presence or secret chambers.

1 THESSALONIANS 3: 13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ **with all his saints**.

"Coming" is the Greek word "parousia". Why is it not a secret presence? Because Jesus comes after the resurrection and we will see Him with all His saints.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence (emprosthen) of our Lord Jesus Christ at his **coming** (parousia)?

Paul knew he would see his converts in the presence of Jesus when Jesus comes.

This "presence" does not use the word parousia. So do not go overboard on trying to link "parousia" to "presence".

We have not yet seen Paul and the resurrected saints. So Jesus has not yet come.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

At the coming (parousia) of Christ, Who was the first Man to be resurrected, the dead shall rise from the grave.

MATTHEW 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming (parousia) of the Son of man be.

:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming (parousia) of the Son of man be.

The coming of the Lord will rescue the saints, and sweep the world to its destruction in the Tribulation.

Message preachers claimed that the Cloud ended the Laodicean age.

Brother Branham did not say that.

65-1204 THE RAPTURE

We all know we're living in the Laodicea Age. There will never be another age to it. It can't be. So, we're living in the Laodicea Age

This was one of his last sermons, and he believed that we were still in the Laodicean age.

Laodicea, the age of paradoxes.

Medicine allowed millions to live longer, and now there is about eight times the population that there was when the sixth church age started around 1750. This population growth cannot be sustained if everyone wants to live at the modern western standard.

More people were killed between 1900 and 2000 than in any other century. It was the cruelest, most blood-soaked century, and yet the world population exploded as it increased four times -- from one and a half billion to six billion people. Alongside the almost unimaginable slaughter of our industrial-scale wars, and in the shadow of nuclear annihilation, hundreds of millions of people have enjoyed peace and plenty on an unprecedented scale.

Lenin and Stalin in Russia, Mao Zedong in China, and Hitler in Germany, all mass-murdered millions because they seriously thought that they had to kill their way to paradise.

The 1960s saw the development of the contraceptive pill which focused on limiting the size of a married woman's family so that she could cope. But it radically loosened and swept away all forms of traditional sexual morality, especially the abstinence of the unmarried and divorced.

Britain and France got into the second World War on a fantasy that they could somehow -- nobody knew how -- help Poland against a German invasion. America, as the world's strongest free republic, won the war against Hitler's police state Germany with the help of Stalin's Russian police state.

The empires of Europe collapsed as the former colonies gained their freedom. Then America developed her own financial empire as the dollar became the world's most important currency, when American business spread dramatically around the world. The global market domination by America is only ending now.

Europe had given the world modern nationhood. Now the European Union is an attempt to try to melt the nation-state away again. The 27 nations combine to form the world's biggest economy. The common euro money system and visa-free travel is trying to establish one big country similar to the United States of America.

Many churches have made the mistake of thinking that the European Union is the beast with ten horns. But having 27 nations (26 when England leaves), instead of just ten, wrecks that theory. The beast with one head and ten horns was the Roman Empire. The ten horns were the ten barbarian tribes who helped to break up the Roman empire, and then were used to build up the power and reputation of the Roman Catholic church on the ruins of the Roman Empire.

DANIEL 7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.



DANIEL 7:8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots:

A little horn comes up amongst the ten, and uproots three of them.

The Roman Catholic church is Trinitarian. The Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Vandals were the only three non-Trinitarian tribes who broke up the Roman Empire, and occupied Italy and North Africa.

These three tribes, by about 550 AD, were completely destroyed by the emperor of Constantinople to protect the Pope in Rome. Thus there was no opposition to the Trinity belief as the world went into the 900 years of Dark Ages. Then the Vatican City was built, which is approximately one square kilometer in size. It became a city when a wall was built

around it by Pope Leo IV (847 – 855). The population is about 800, of which only about 600 have Vatican citizenship. Many of the Vatican citizens live abroad. It is the smallest city state on earth, in both size and population. Its independence was recognized in 1929 by Mussolini. That was the year the world went bankrupt, which started the Great Depression. God indicating the spiritual bankruptcy of anyone who recognizes the independence of the Roman Catholic church.

In India, Ghandi led an amazing peaceful protest against the British that made them abandon their Indian colony just after the second World War. Then a Muslim-Hindu clash erupted as Muslim Pakistan separated from Hindu India. One million were killed. Ten million people had to move either north or south in what was the biggest forced removal in history. It was a hideous conclusion to Gandhi's peaceful lifelong campaign.

Einstein was also a man of peace who hated war. In another grim irony, his famous equation $E=mc^2$ laid the foundation for the development of the atomic bomb.

In science, chaos means that a small event can have big unintended consequences.

In 1979 the Shah of Iran had to flee from a revolution. These Iranian revolutionaries took American hostages. Trying to rescue the hostages, the incoming helicopters ran into two fierce sand storms (haboobs) that made the rescue end in disaster. The Russians saw this failed attempt as proof of American military weakness because they had lost the Vietnam war. So Russia attacked Afghanistan. America thought they were clever by training and arming the Afghans and their allies to form a formidable fighting unit that eventually beat the Russians. The Russian empire, called the Soviet Union, collapsed soon afterwards.

The Americans thought they had won. But they had also produced these tough fighters in Afghanistan, which included Bin Laden.

Bin Laden, a Saudi Arabian who had fought in Afghanistan, was angered when Saudi Arabia asked America to defend Saudi Arabia from Saddam Hussein. America won the 1991 war against Iraq, but that made a mortal enemy of Bin Laden. He moved to Afghanistan, and there plotted the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001. This was the defining moment of the beginning of the new century, as it put America, with her huge military-industrial complex, back on the warpath.

Two fierce sandstorms ignited a trail that led to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by America.

Rather like the two pistol shots of Princip that would lead to the first World War. Then the unhappy peace terms led directly to the second World War.

This kind of evidence indicates that the last age of Laodicea is run by turbulent and chaotic spirits. Small events can have big and unexpected outcomes.

But there is a spiritual significance to the war in Iraq.

The prophet Jeremiah not only prophesied the destruction of Babylon but also that the city would never be rebuilt and inhabited.

JEREMIAH 50:29 Call together the archers against **Babylon**:

JEREMIAH 50:39 Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: **and it shall be no more inhabited for ever;** neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.

Saddam Hussein, dictator of Iraq, decided to rebuild Babylon in memory of himself and Nebuchadnezzar who was the king of Babylon in the prophet Daniel's day.

Then America invaded Iraq in 2003 to protect their oil supply and look for weapons of mass destruction. A vicious war broke out which saw Saddam being executed. But, whatever the reason for the American invasion, the main purpose was that God wanted to protect Jeremiah's prophecy. Saddam Hussein wanted to destroy a prophecy. So God used America to get Saddam destroyed.

We learn not to fool around with Scripture.

One thing you can be sure of. No prophecy in the Bible will ever fail.

In addition, Iraq has been so badly damaged by the two American invasions that many people now claim that it is a failed state. Thus Iraq, as a once powerful enemy of Israel, has been effectively neutralized for a while.

So God is defending His people Israel.

Syria is so entangled in a civil war and the destruction of its cities, that Syria is not a threat to Israel at the moment. Iraq and Syria represent two powerful states that cannot, at the moment, effectively attack Israel. God has blunted their teeth and made them less dangerous. Why? Because Jesus will return to the Jews in the Tribulation. So the Jews have to survive. Having fewer dangerous enemies makes their survival more sure.

The most chaotic American presidential election was in 2016. Hillary Clinton was a firm favourite to win and every professional poll made her the definite winner.

We cannot trust the news because people tell each other what they want to hear.

But Hillary shockingly lost to "bad boy" Trump who shrugged off endless scandals that would have sunk any other candidate.

Why did he win against all the odds?

Because he promised that he would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by moving the American embassy to Jerusalem.

Once again we are dealing with the fulfillment of prophecy that over-rides any other problem areas.

ISAIAH 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Through the muddled ripples of everyday events the tidal wave of prophecy moves silently, but quite irresistibly on.

But can we recognize who God is using?

A vaster background is needed to foresee things.

Personal actions by world figures are often just a distraction.

The plan of God unfolds despite all the opposition of human free-will and human flaws.

Moses was a murderer, but God used him so effectively.

There are complications to truth that only a deep insight can penetrate.

We need to know the Bible better so that we can recognize the clues.

If we get it wrong, we will be left behind in the Tribulation.

Laodicea part 2, The days of the seventh angel's ministry up to 1965

This is part 2 of the study on Laodicea. You can find part 1 at <https://churchages.net/en/study/the-church-ages-laodicea-the-seventh-age-1906-part-1>

The seventh church age is the church of the Laodiceans. This word can mean "people's rights or justice". This aptly describes our modern trends. Everybody wants their rights. But there is no great stress on responsibilities.

Ours is the last church age, that began in 1906 with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. By 1917 the Pentecostal movement was splitting up and denominating. The truth was not revealed for long before human leadership corrupted the church.

The main responsibility of our age is to find the hidden meaning behind the content of the written symbols in the Bible.

DANIEL 12:9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed **till** the time of the end.

At the end time, God expects Christians to understand the Bible.

The seed that will be harvested in the seventh church age has to be identical to the seed that was planted in the first church age. That is the law of nature for plants.

God has never yet had a church age that could believe what the first church age believed in the New Testament. That is the purpose for which we get saved today.

God wants to give us an eagle eye to love and appreciate His plan of redemption, just as it was revealed to the first church age, and then lost in the Dark Ages. Now the full truth has to be restored in our age.

We have to choose between a personal revelation of the truth of what is written in Scripture, or the group-think ideas propagated by each of the 45,000 different types of churches or denominations. This is a real swamp of conflicting ideas that you should avoid, as each church believes some of the Bible and ignores, misunderstands, or contradicts the rest of Scripture.

61-1119 PERFECT STRENGTH BY PERFECT WEAKNESS

Oh, my, talk about the lid off of the kettle: demons going around, powers of the devil under the name of Christianity, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, theological seminary doctrines, leaving the Bible alone.

The first World War unleashed the spirit of dictatorship in Russia and Europe.

The second World War saw these dictators like Hitler unleashing a flood of demonology on natural Israel, as seen in the Holocaust that killed six million Jews.

When the physical killing stopped, then these demons entered the ecumenical movement of the churches. They spiritually kill the end-time children by stopping them from returning to the Bible beliefs of the apostolic fathers who wrote the New Testament. Unbelief in Scripture is spiritual death.

61-1119 PERFECT STRENGTH BY PERFECT WEAKNESS

And, brother, the lid's come off of hell (That's right.) and streams of demon power is pouring from everywhere. It's conquered the nations. It's conquered politics till it's rotten to the core. It's conquered the churches until they know nothing but denomination.

In the first World War fought from 1914-1918, women in Europe worked in factories and cut their long hair for safety sake. Why did they not wear hair nets and keep their long hair?

After the second World War men began to grow their hair long and wore hair-nets for safety in the factories. So the Devil fooled both the men and the women, by the pressures of their situations, into disobeying Scripture.

I CORINTHIANS 11:14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

A woman's long or uncut hair is a symbol of her subjection to her father, and then later to her husband when she marries.

I CORINTHIANS 11:15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

:5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered **dishonoureth her head:** for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

:6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

The head that a woman dishonours if she cuts her hair, is her husband.

EPHESIANS 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife,

:23 even as Christ is the head of the church:

:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

The church is the Bride of Christ. So a woman cutting her hair rejects the headship of her husband, and thus symbolizes the church rejecting the headship of Christ, Who is the Word of God. The church no longer desires to live strictly by Scripture. The head controls the body. But the modern church does not want to be controlled by the Bible.

During the years between the first World War and the second World War there was an abrupt decline in religious belief, especially amongst the educated. For example, William Temple, bishop of Manchester and later Archbishop of Canterbury, chose progressive politics as a substitute for any kind of evangelism.

In the 1920s there was also a further moral degeneration that had began in the horrors of the first World War. The psychologist Freud got sex as a topic of discussion into printed literature. This was a dangerous topic as the churches never revealed that sex was the original sin, which is why Eve was punished in childbirth. God only permits sex during marriage. Thus people were unaware of the serious nature of sexual sin.

I CORINTHIANS 6:18 Flee fornication.

Fornication is sex while unmarried.

MARK 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

If you were legally married and then divorce, you cannot re-marry. If you do, you are committing adultery. Too many churches today freely re-marry divorced people who have living ex-spouses.

The last church age would be undermined by sexual permissiveness, which would flourish during the dangers of the second World War. Then immorality exploded in the 1960s with the invention of the contraceptive Pill, and the decade of hippy permissiveness inspired by the drug induced beat-music of rock-n-roll. Many of the famous singers exercised no restraint on their indulgent lifestyles, and died by the age of 27 years.

Beat music, free love, drugs, and eastern mysticism was spearheaded by the Beatles band from England, who came to fame in 1963. In addition, 1963 was also the year that most women suddenly began to wear miniskirts, which stress nakedness. In 1963, most women also began to imitate men by wearing pants. Satan was desperately fighting back to destroy the youth spiritually by getting them away from Scripture.

Why? Because the third Exodus of individuals coming out of the swamp of the church's Bible-ignorance hit a peak moment when brother Branham revealed the six Seals to unfold the hidden mysteries of Scripture.

65-0123 BROKEN CISTERNS

And I am wondering that how that we in America call ourself a Christian nation, and in the Presence of God; **and each year we, our women, take off more. And you ought to be putting on more.** And more of Christ you put on, the more conscious you will be of your own conditions. Sometime I see the way people act on the street, I wonder if it's just exactly mentally right. Seems like they don't realize that when they do that, what they are doing, they're making themselves a bait for the devil, and to send souls to hell. That's right

I TIMOTHY 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel,

DEUTERONOMY 22:5 **The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man,** neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Modern church-goers do not believe that clothes are important. They simply ignore these Scriptures.

However, the Bible warns of an ungodly trinity that is sweeping mankind along to Armageddon.

REVELATION 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

The dragon is Satan. The beast is the Roman Catholic church who is the mother of organized religion with its unscriptural traditions. The false prophet is the prophet of the false Catholic religion, who is the Pope.

This evil trinity are releasing a flood tide of demonology into the church.

REVELATION 16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

There are about 1,200,000 Roman Catholic converts in the world today. They are the biggest church.

This trinity of devils are performing a world-wide miracle, which is the uniting of the Non-Catholic or Protestant churches into the ecumenical movement. About 600,000 of the 800,000 Protestants on earth today are in this movement (in 2018). This organized and united Protestant religion is in the image of the organized Roman Catholic beast. The final church miracle will be the ecumenical Protestant image of the beast uniting with the beast, the Roman church.

As Satan's trinity pushes the church world towards our doom at Armageddon, Jesus has a brief moment to issue a warning.

He does not say we must get saved. He does not say we must live holy. He does not say that we must have the Holy Ghost baptism. These are the issues that the churches stress at the end time. They are all valuable issues.

But Jesus prefers to warn us against the flood tide of demonology. When a tsunami wave comes in, people are advised to run away from it. They should not try to oppose the tsunami in their own strength. With a spiritual tsunami of demonology sweeping through the churches, our best advice is to get away fast.

Then as a final warning before disaster hits, Jesus says, "**Watch out for how you dress**". In God's eyes a modest dress code is very important. Dress must not reveal our body parts.

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

Why is it important to keep our clothes and avoid any exposure of body parts?

The only naked man that Jesus met was 'Legion', who was demon possessed.

So it takes demons to inspire us to wear revealing clothing. The more we expose our bodies, the more we indicate our degree of demon possession.

LUKE 8:26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

:27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, **which had devils long time, and ware no clothes**, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

LUKE 8:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, **out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind**; and they were afraid.

The moment he was back in his right mind, without anybody telling him to do so, he dressed himself. So normal people in the Bible covered their bodies.

The danger of our last age is not the revealing dress. The danger is the demons in us who are inspiring this revealing dress.

61-1119 PERFECT STRENGTH BY PERFECT WEAKNESS

Who's strong enough, who's wise enough? **Who's powerful enough to tame this legion stripping the clothes off of our women** in the name of preachers, Methodist, Baptist, and even Pentecostal? Painting their faces like Jezebel, and bobbing their hair, and wearing pants just like men, our preachers, not enough get up about them to tell them about it: devil-possessed... It was the legion that tore his clothes off of him. Who is this roaring devil?

All those demons released from the pit during the era of the two world wars are now in the churches, stripping the clothes off the women. Look for the half dressed women in the church and you will see where the demons ended up.

These were released as dictatorial demons by the natural dictators like Hitler. Dictators defy correction by other people. Try to get church women to dress modestly like ladies, and they are immediately defiant. Dictatorial demons make dominating women.

I PETER 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands;

But church-goers dress how they like. That is their right, they claim. notice the difference between '*rights*' and '*responsibilities*'.

REVELATION 16:16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

So the modern day church heads for the Tribulation, fooled by the flood tide of demonology. Being saved means we will not go to hell. Being saved does not however mean we will escape the Tribulation. Salvation from hell cannot be achieved by works, just by repentance. But we need the knowledge of Biblical truth to be saved from the Tribulation.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12 work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

While the churches embrace error, we have to keep seeking truth right up to the end.

MATTHEW 10:22 ... but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Only the Bible can guide us down the path that leads to the resurrection of the dead, and then the changing of the bodies of the living Bride.

ROMANS 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body**.

We have to study to show ourselves approved so that we can recognize the resurrection and have our mortal bodies changed to immortality.

II TIMOTHY 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God,

PHILIPPIANS 3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

This is the resurrection of the Bride at the end of the church ages. Paul did not take the resurrection for granted, even though he was saved and Spirit filled.

The main purpose of brother Branham's ministry was to reveal the mysteries of the Bible that we need to know in order to be saved from the Tribulation.

The churches have done a good job in getting people saved from hell. But then they lead the converts away from Scripture into man-made church traditions. Listening to a man, rather than to Jesus the Word, means that they will not be married to Jesus. His Bride must be in full subjection to His Word, the Bible.

In 1963, William Branham revealed the mysteries of the six Seals in Revelation Chapter 6. This was a key year as far as revealing truth was concerned.

These revealed the rise of the Roman Catholic antichrist church from the first church age to its world-wide power at the end of the last church age as Catholic beliefs infiltrate the Protestant churches. They also revealed God's plan to protect the Jews during the church ages, and then His return to the Jews during the great Tribulation.

Light eliminates darkness. Pope John 23 died in 1963, and John Kennedy, the only Catholic president of America, was assassinated in 1963. The revealed Word has far more power than what we realize.

The first World War unleashed the spirits of dictatorship.

The senseless slaughter of the first World War from 1914-1918 was needed to create the desperate convulsions of a great struggle and the sense of a ruined world. Then the radical and ruthless spirit of dictatorship could get its grip of terror on the saddened and bewildered people of Europe.

Then a massive pandemic of Spanish Flu raced through the world to kill another 65 million people, if not more, during 1918-1919. This really left the people reeling and scared.

God was very angry with the Pentecostal movement for splitting up into various man-made denominations by 1917. The word "denomination" is not in the Bible.

- The First Exodus was Moses bringing the Jews out of Egypt. The Egyptians killed the Jewish babies.
- The Second Exodus was Jesus bringing the church out of the Jews. Herod killed the Jewish babies.
- The Third Exodus is to bring the individuals of the Bride out of the church. We are the children that must be restored to the beliefs of the apostolic fathers who wrote the New Testament.

Thus the youth must again die. That always happens at the time of an exodus.

After Napoleon's defeat in 1815 Europe became prosperous, and her pampered youth enthusiastically wanted war in 1914. They were ruthlessly sacrificed, in their millions, due to senseless tactics like charging pointlessly into machine guns. The growing desperation and savagery of the war allowed each national state to extend its control over the economy, and exercise despotic power over its own citizens. The state was growing in dictatorial power.

The horrific brutality developed by the state, that was needed to win the war, allowed each national state to develop greater destructive powers and abilities to oppress. The spirit of dictatorship was effectively unleashed in the first World War (1914-1918). The state had assumed dictatorial powers over its people, and now the stage was set for a dictator to take control of the state.

In 1906 Pentecost began as a Spirit-led movement to restore the supernatural power of God back into the church.

Sadly, by 1917 Pentecost denominated, as men sought to control the movement of the Spirit. The spirit of dictatorship by human leaders thus entered the Pentecostal church. This was just the image of the Roman Catholic church-beast, where the Pope rules the Roman Catholic church as a human dictator. God was angry, and in 1917 He proceeded to raise up the weapon of ungodly communist Russia, which He will use for the final punishment of America. Remember that God had once used pagan Babylon in the Old Testament to conquer and capture the disobedient Jews.

In 1917, Lenin was sent to Russia by Germany to start a communist revolution and take Russia out of the war. This was a paradox as communist Russia would rise up and then crush Germany in the next war.

President Wilson of America and the Allies imposed a peace treaty on Germany that was a formula for economic disaster and future war. In this uncertain and hesitant atmosphere cruel dictators emerged as gangster statesmen.

First to seize power, and thus very **famous**, was Lenin in Russia. Lenin hated religion, and feared only the influence of saintly Christians. His total intolerance and grim lack of humanity made him ruthlessly dominate his communist organization. Obsessed by force, and demanding absolute powers, he murdered tens of thousands with his organized violence and unrestricted licence for terror. He brought into existence a vast machine for slaughter and cruelty, established by his **fame** as the pre-eminent revolutionary leader at the end of the first World War.

In 1924, Lenin died and Stalin took over, and soon became supreme dictator of Russia by killing millions.

In 1922, Mussolini rose to dictatorial power in Italy, boosted by his reputation as a **womanizer** with 169 mistresses. The Pope stopped a priest from running an effective opposition political party to Mussolini. This enabled Mussolini to win the election.

Man's three weaknesses: fame, women, and money.

Lenin had the fame, Mussolini the women. Money was the key idea in the Great Depression of 1929, when bankruptcy soared and Hitler came to power in Germany.

In 1929, Mussolini declared the Vatican City an independent state. It is the world's smallest state and is described by the prophet Daniel as the "little horn". The Roman Catholic church is symbolized as a woman, a prostitute, in Revelation Chapter 17. Official recognition of this church prostitute, who is to dominate the world, is the exact opposite of what the Bible stands for. The natural bankruptcy of the nations reflected the spiritual bankruptcy of Mussolini's actions.

REVELATION 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

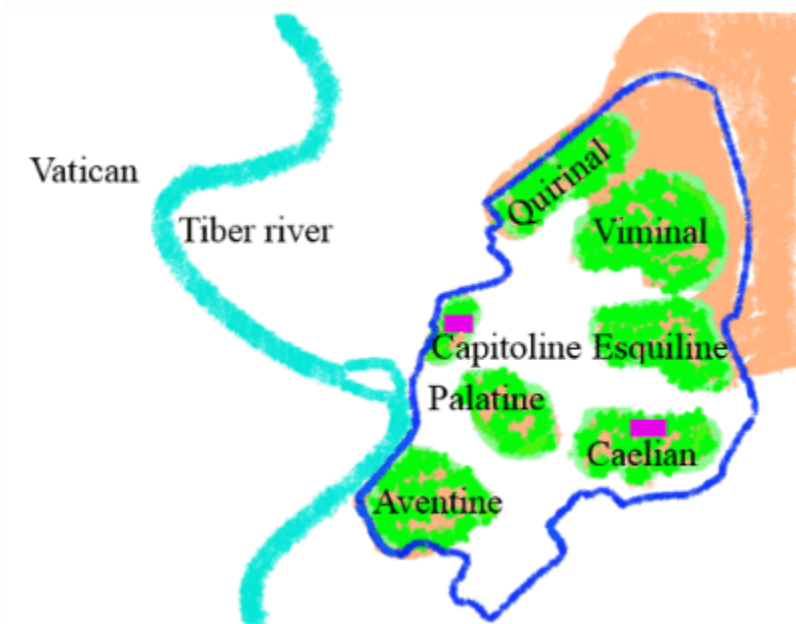
:3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven *mountains*, on which the woman sitteth.

:18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

From the clues we see that this seems to have something to do with Rome, the City of Seven Hills.

Under their Republic, around 500 BC, the Romans built a wall (shown in blue) around the seven hills that they had their villages built on. The wall turned the villages into a city. Known as the city of seven hills. On the other side of the river was an area known as the Vatican. In 324 AD Constantine built a church on the Vatican territory and buildings were slowly added there over the centuries.

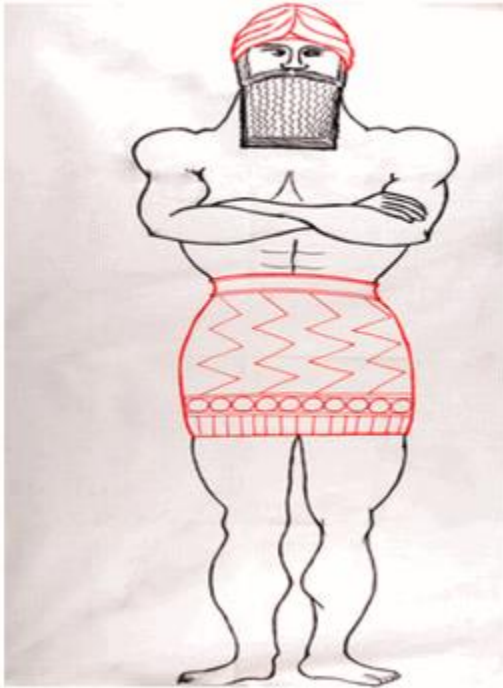


But a hill is not a mountain. So there is a deeper mystery involved here.

And the city of Rome does not rule over the world leaders. By 2018 there have been 48 prime ministers of Italy since the dictator Mussolini died in 1945. A new prime minister in about every year and a half is not the stability that can rule the world.

What does a "mountain" mean in prophecy?

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had a dream of a metal image of four Gentile kingdoms: Babylon, Medes and Persians, Greeks, and Romans.



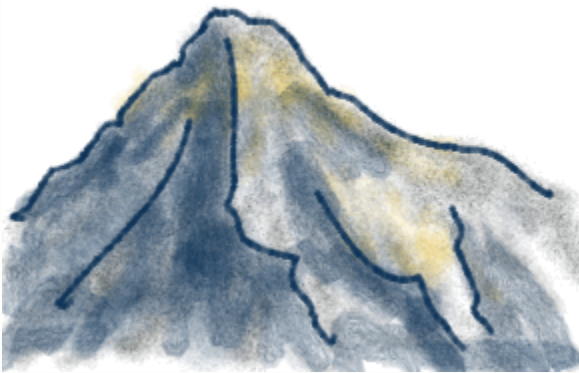
The prophet Daniel saw a stone hit the feet of a Gentile image.



The image crumbled and the stone grew to become a mountain.



DANIEL 2:36 and the stone that smote the image became a great **mountain**, and filled the whole earth.



The nations of the earth are going to be smashed up at the third coming of the Lord when He comes for the battle of Armageddon.

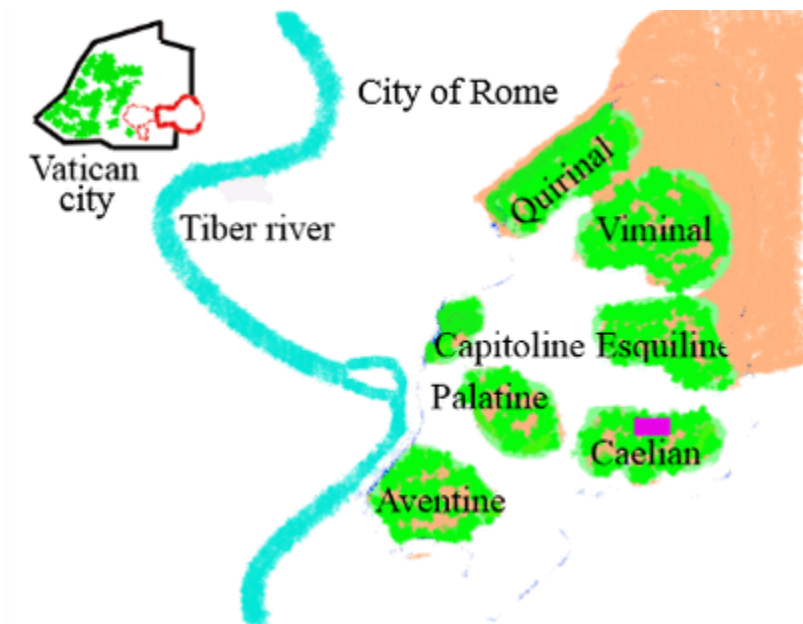
DANIEL 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall **the God of heaven set up a kingdom**, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

A mountain refers to a kingdom.

The 1000 years of peace, when Jesus rules the earth after the battle of Armageddon, is often called the Millennium. This is the Kingdom that God will set up.

Matthew 13 has a succession of seven parables referred to as the "kingdom of Heaven". This refers to God's plan with his church during the last 2000 years.

Thus Matthew chapter 13 is a description of the seven church ages. So each church age is a kingdom or mountain where God and Satan fought for the minds of men.



In 852 AD Pope Leo 4 built the first wall around the buildings on the Vatican.

With a wall around it, the Vatican became the Vatican City. In 1870 the Pope was confined to the Vatican City.

A wall no longer surrounds the city of Rome. Rome is not the enemy of truth -- it is the walled Vatican city.

REVELATION 17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven *mountains*, on which the woman sitteth.

The Roman Catholic church is the only enemy of God which has been on all seven mountains, which are the seven kingdom of heaven parables that represent her presence in all seven church ages.

Then, in 1929, the dictator Mussolini recognized the Vatican city as the world's smallest independent state.

This made the Vatican city the "little" horn of Daniel's prophecies.

DANIEL 7:8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

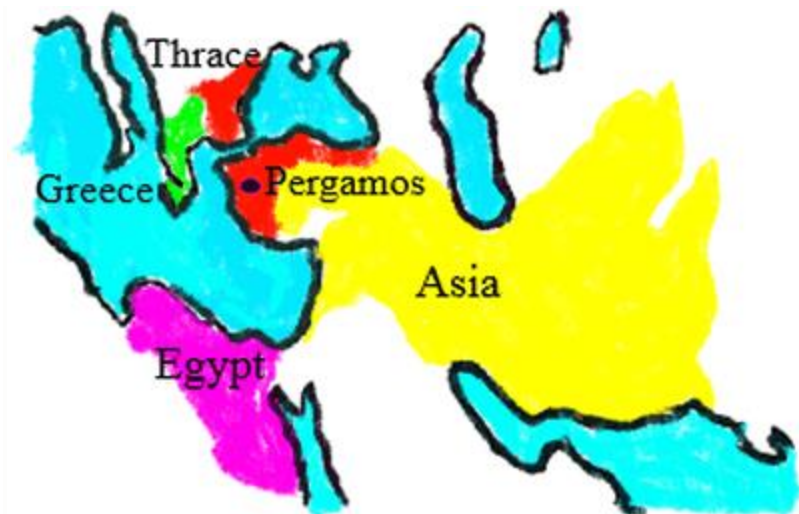
Ten Barbarian tribes that helped break up the Roman empire, also helped to establish the Pope as the leader in Europe. Three of these barbarian tribes were non-Trinitarian. The Trinitarian Pope was rescued between 533 - 554 AD, when the emperor of Constantinople destroyed the three non-Trinitarian barbarian tribes that threatened the Roman Catholics in Italy and North Africa. These three tribes were the Vandals in North Africa, and the Heruli and Ostrogoths in Italy. Therefore, as Europe went into the Dark Ages for hundreds of years, there was no opposition to the Trinity doctrine. As a result, when the Reformation started, people just took Trinity for granted. That is all that they had been taught for hundreds of years.

Then, the prophecy in the next chapter of Daniel changes to the Greeks, as Alexander the Great's empire split into four parts. Alexander is described as a great horn that waxed, or got very great, with his conquests.

DANIEL 8:8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

Alexander the Great's kingdom, after about 20 years of intense fighting, split into four kingdoms. Greece (shown in green), Asia (yellow), Egypt (purple), and Thrace which was a kingdom with two parts (shown in red).

"The four winds of heaven" mean there is a spiritual aspect involved. This was not just a natural war. The spiritual factor is the Pontiff or high priest of the evil, but impressive, Babylonian mysteries who had relocated from Babylon to the city of Pergamos. Pergamos, as part of the split-up Greek empire, thus became the seat of Satan.



REVELATION 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write;

:13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is

DANIEL 8:9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

Nimrod was the father of unbelief after the Flood of Noah. He built the tower of Babel at Babylon. Thus pagan Babylon has always been the ancient enemy of God.

Daniel tracks the path of the Babylonian mysteries from the Greek Pergamos (the brass belly and thighs of the Gentile image) to the pagan Roman Empire (the iron legs of the Gentile image). Then the iron changes its form and breaks up into bits as the Roman empire broke up, and the Pope took over the title of Pontiff of the Babylonian mysteries.

In this prophecy the little horn (the mysteries of pagan Babylon) comes out of one of the four Greek kingdoms. Lysimachus, a general of Alexander the Great, ruled the kingdom of Thrace (shown in red). Pergamos was part of this kingdom. That is where the Babylonian Pontiff lived.

When the kingdom of Lysimachus later collapsed, there developed the prosperous and rich kingdom of Pergamon between 281-133 BC, which had the city of Pergamos (or Pergamum) as its capital.



That was the city where the Pontiff of the Babylonian trinity mysteries fled to when Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon. Priest-king Attalus III gave the kingdom of Pergamon to Rome when he died in 133 BC. Those

Babylonian mysteries were thus handed over to Rome, and in 63 BC Julius Caesar bribed his way to become the famous Pontiff of the Babylonian mysteries. All the Roman emperors then took the title of Pontiff.



In 378 AD, Theodosius became Roman emperor, and he refused to accept the title of Pontiff. By 400 AD the Pope was calling himself Pontiff. Thus the trinity mysteries of Babylon entered the Roman church to make her Mystery Babylon, with the mysterious unscriptural Trinity doctrine that nobody can explain.

Various unscriptural statements have been thought up to explain the Trinity.

The following words or phrases are not found in the Bible:

- Trinity
- One God in three Persons -- this is Greek philosophy
- First Person of the Godhead
- Second Person of the Godhead
- Third Person of the Godhead
- Father and Son are of one substance
- God the Son
- God the Holy Ghost

Yet "God the Father" is mentioned in the New Testament. There is no mention of "God the Father" in the Old Testament. Trinitarians cannot explain this.

Very surprisingly, "God the Son" and "God the Holy Ghost" are never mentioned in Scripture.

Then God loses His name. Three People cannot have one name.

Ask a Christian, "What is the name of God?" Notice the hesitation and mental gymnastics as they try to squirm out of the question. There is no single one name for the Trinity God of the churches.

The Trinitarians repeat the formula, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost", but they cannot tell us what that name is. Three titles are not a name.

The Trinity was a confusing concept when it was introduced by force at the Nicene Council in 325 AD, and enforced on the church by the emperor Constantine. It remains confusing to this day as nobody understands it.

But when the seventh angel or messenger comes then the mystery of God should be finished.

REVELATION 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

So brother Branham, as the seventh angel, had to reveal that Jesus on the outside was a Man, but *in* Him was the fulness of God's Spirit.

COLOSSIANS 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

So God Who dwelt as a Spirit *above* the Jews became a Man to dwell *with* us. Jesus then died and sent His Holy Spirit back to earth to dwell *in* us. God is holy by nature. Spirit is the substance of God. So God is the Holy Spirit.

MATTHEW 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost placed the Seed of eternal life in the womb of Mary. Whoever places a seed in a woman's womb is the father of that child. So the Holy Ghost is the Father of Jesus. Thus the Holy Ghost is God the Father.

God became a Man, and took on the human name of Jesus Christ.

In denial of the truth about Jesus being Almighty God, the Catholic church thus took over the pagan trinity mysteries of Babylon. The pagan trinity was polished up by Greek philosophy during their stay in Pergamos. They introduced the three-in-one and one-in-three idea that is completely unscriptural, but would later effectively deceive the church world. Greek philosophy introduced the unscriptural idea of Father and Son being of one substance. Converting the pagan Babylonian trinity into a church Trinity is the major doctrine that unites the different churches in the ecumenical movement. Thus Trinity is also the major doctrine that unites Catholic and Protestant churches. The daughter Protestant churches have learned their basic error from the mother Catholic church.

DANIEL 8:9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

The Vatican city state eventually emerged as the head of the entire Roman Catholic church, and became great towards the east which is the breeding ground for demonology.

GENESIS 4:16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the **east** of Eden.

Cain went east, and his lying and murderous demons went with him.

REVELATION 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

The Roman Catholic church, as the mother harlot, produced daughter Protestant churches that came out of the mother when they broke away in the Reformation. At first the Protestant churches were clean, but as time went on they also began to develop unscriptural doctrines, just like Roman Catholicism had done.

By accepting man-made doctrines and traditions, the Protestant churches eventually became harlots -- just like their mother.

EPHESIAN CHURCH AGE

When Luther came out of Catholicism, the people stayed free for awhile. But when he died, the people simply organized around what they thought he believed, and set up their own creeds and ideas, and repudiated anyone who said opposite to what they said. They went right back to Catholicism, with a slightly different form. And right today many Lutherans are ready to go all the way back.

The Pope rules the church as a dictator.

The Protestants copied that model by making the pastor the head of the church. The spirits of dictatorship, that were unleashed at the start of the Laodicean church age, have found their places in the church systems.

The *south* may refer to the church world as the Queen of the south, the Queen of Sheba, is well spoken of in Scripture.

MATTHEW 12:42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

A woman represents a church. The true church is called the Bride of Christ.

Thus the doctrines of Catholicism such as Trinity, and baptizing in the name of three titles instead of in the name of Jesus Christ, as well as Christmas and Easter eggs and Easter rabbits, and sprinkling babies as if that is baptism, have also spread into the non-Catholic church world. (Rabbits were unclean meat for the Jews).

The pleasant land in Daniel 8:9 is Israel. The Vatican has great wealth in gold and precious stones, and will seek to make a covenant with the Jews because of all the Stock Exchange wealth that they possess.

These verses that refer to the "little horn" describe the rise of the Pope to world power as head of the tiny Vatican city state, which controls the world's biggest and richest church, the Roman Catholic church. From there his political power also stretches into many countries, because there are many Catholics spread out all over the earth.

The Vatican is the smallest city state, but from there the Pope has great influence over church rulers and political rulers. The funeral of Pope John Paul II was the biggest gathering of rulers from the different countries that we have seen in modern times. The Roman Catholic church is the only church that can trace its history right back to the first church age. So the Roman church has the reputation of being a great survivor. That is why the barbarian tribes that broke up the Roman Empire admired the Popes.

The Catholic church has thus been the enemy of truth during each of these seven "kingdoms" or church ages, as it sought to set itself up as the mother church who desired to rule the world.

Pope Leo 12 in 1825 had a medal printed of the Roman Catholic church as a woman sitting in authority above the whole world which she uses as her seat.

She holds out a cup of doctrine to the world, just as Revelation Chapter 17 describes.

REVELATION 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, **having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:**

Purgatory, penance, indulgences, infant baptism, idols, rosary, making the sign of the cross, priests not being allowed to marry -- all these are unscriptural ideas.

Roman Catholicism is represented by the bits of iron in the feet of Daniel's Gentile image. The clay is the Bride. The feet of the image represent the seven church ages, that end in the Tribulation of the ten toes, which are the ten dictators who give their military power and strength to the final beast-Pope.

REVELATION 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

:13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

They receive power *as* kings. That means they rule, but are not crowned. So they are dictators.

Lenin with his intense revolutionary zeal became so **famous** that he was deified by the communists. He and Stalin, with his concentrated savagery, unleashed a brutal dictatorial spirit that built up Russia into a very powerful northern country. Now the world has Russia, this great Bear, or the king of the North, that God will unleash on the West one day as punishment for turning the Pentecostal movement into man-made denominations.

In addition, the American churches mostly rejected the revelation of Bible truth brought by William Branham. Those who realized that he was the end-time prophet were mainly fooled into elevating the man, by using his quotes and their interpretations of his quotes to replace Scripture. The voice of the seventh angel has now been promoted to deity as the "Voice of God".

This is completely wrong. The Scriptures are above the quotes of any man.

1965 THE LAODICEAN CHURCH AGE

... a true prophet will always lead one to the Word and bind the people to Jesus Christ and **he won't tell the people to fear him or what he says**, but to fear what the Word says.

Notice how these people like Judas are out for money.

Message pastors have got very rich. The Message is big business.

This copies the Roman Catholic mother church, which is the world's richest organization. Protestant church leaders also want their hands on some of the loot.

There is no Scripture that says a pastor is the shepherd of the sheep.

Despite it being unscriptural, pastors claim to be the shepherd of the sheep which they claim, unscripturally, is their flock.

They thus believe that it is their duty to shear the sheep. Judging from their houses, cars, and bank balances they are expert at shearing.

The Roman Catholics have a succession of Popes, chosen by men, to build up their spiritual empire over the years.

Protestant pastors have also turned the Gospel into empire building, but as a family business, because leadership involves the succession from the pastor to his son (or sons) as the next generation of pastors.

So, effectively, God has got no say in who the leaders of the church are.

That is also not surprising, since Jesus stands outside the church anyway. What goes on inside the church thus has very little to do with Him.

REVELATION 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;

:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock:

By emphasizing different quotes, brother Branham's followers have developed numerous different Message-beliefs that conflict with each other. These different doctrines have splintered the movement into competitive groups. This reminds one of the two legs of Daniel's Gentile image that split up into ten toes. Message believers have thus been led away from Scripture, just like the denominations. When asked to prove their doctrines, they refer to certain quotes, but have to ignore other quotes which contradict their viewpoint. Their critical error is that they do not check their beliefs with the Scriptures.

Yet brother Branham came to bring us back to Scripture.

65-0725M THE ANOINTED ONES AT THE END TIME

So we'll know, to prove this, back and forth, by the Word; not by some man's idea, some theory.

I don't care who he is; any other man, **myself or anybody else**, **"If he speaks not according to the law and the prophets, there is no Light in him."** See? That's what the Bible said. "Let every man's word be a lie, and Mine be true," **regardless who it is.**

The communists did the same thing. They regarded Lenin as being the "prophet" of the communistic revolution. But after Lenin's death, his main follower was Stalin. Under Stalin's leadership the communists began to move away from Lenin's teachings. If you argued with Stalin, you were shot or had to flee into exile. Only Stalin's obedient and brutal yes-men survived. But the further they moved away from what Lenin taught, the more they compensated for this by glorifying, idolizing, and deifying Lenin. Many Message groups have caught this spirit.

They move away from Scripture to follow their interpretation of some quotes, and then they compensate by glorifying brother Branham.

Mussolini, as a **womanizer**, established the mother harlot of the Roman Catholic Vatican church on an independent basis as a City State. He also gave the Vatican huge financial benefits. Mussolini was used to living with and paying prostitutes.

This enabled the Vatican to become a massively successful world money power, as well as a world-wide church power. The Vatican thus also became deeply implicated in world politics. This is the church system that Satan's antichrist will take over as the final Pope in the Tribulation. So the stage is set.

DANIEL 11:21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

It seems that the final antichrist Pope will not be elected, as usual, by the council of cardinals. But he will have the support of ten military dictators. Somehow, irresistibly he will talk his way into usurping this supreme position in the church world.

Then there are the Jews.

They have done remarkably well in this last church age.

They were scattered two thousand years ago but were prophesied to return to Israel and Jerusalem. Jews dominate the world Stock Exchange and are intensely hated, especially by the militant Muslim nations.

So how could God get them back to Israel? God needed Hitler to organize a preview of the great Tribulation, with all its horrors. Hitler organized an "amateur Tribulation", which we called the Holocaust, where six million Jews were murdered in World War 2 by Nazi Germany. Only by that awful event could God briefly get the nations to feel sorry for Israel. Feeling guilty, the nations voted in favour of giving about 15% of Palestine back to the Jews. The rest went to the Palestinian Arabs. The Jewish portion grew to about 28% at the end of the 1967 war.

The financial disaster of the 1929 Great Depression made **money** the key issue. Hitler rose to power in a bankrupt Germany. Germany was desperate to blame someone for the fact that they lost the first World War, and Hitler stoked up their fury against a convenient scapegoat, the Jews. Some Jews, like Trotsky, had played a leading and brutal role in the vicious Russian communistic revolution. Fear of communism enabled a fantasy of Jewish plots to spread further hatred against the Jews in Germany. The Jewish control of the Stock Markets incited further anti-Jewish sentiments.

The Depression, that started in 1939, demoralized the democracies, and produced a lack of will to deal with the aggression of the dictators, who illegitimately seized power by violence.

In the Dark Ages and the counter Reformation that ended around 1648, the Roman Catholic church had killed tens of millions of opponents in demonically inspired killing sprees. Then the mass murders mercifully stopped as people began to believe that Christians should not kill each other. All these awful demons of destruction were then bound up in a satanic pit by circumstances, as John Wesley and the missionaries convinced people to repent and live holy lives. Hitler's role as a dictator was to unleash these destructive demons from the pit of hell, where they had been confined by the churches that believed in righteous living. The traumatized chaos after the horrors of World War 1 allowed these demonic forces to escape. They would never have been allowed to exercise their evil in normal, peaceful times. These demons had to be unleashed by natural dictators onto natural Israel, the Jews, during World War 2.

On an industrial scale, Hitler collected and murdered six million Jews from all over Europe during World War 2. Then in 1945, the killing had to stop as the Allied nations were horrified by what Hitler had done.

These evil spirits now had to enter the ecumenical church movement that was trying to unite all the churches together. This movement was born in the German prisoner-of-war camps where different denominations were confined together. It became an official movement in 1948. Each church would be ruled and governed by a human leader, as that was the image of the Pope, who ruled the Roman Catholic church as a dictator.

In 1933, God and Satan were getting set for the conflict.

In 1933, Hitler became chancellor of Germany.

In 1933, Roosevelt was elected president of America. He ran for four terms using democratic elections as a mask for a preliminary dictatorship.

The 1920s and 1930s were the age of emerging dictators. Roosevelt put oil sanctions on Japan, which forced them to attack America at Pearl Harbour. Thus America entered the second World War. Roosevelt then ordered the development of the atomic bomb. The secrets of the atomic bomb were sent to Russia from America in unchecked diplomatic bags during the war. Thus both America and Russia could threaten each other with nuclear destruction when the Second World War was over. A nuclear Armageddon now hangs over the world.

54-0509 THE INVASION OF THE UNITED STATES

But let me tell you, when Mr. Roosevelt (The man's dead. Let him rest; I trust he is.) come in, and run in three or four terms, and taken over, **just a preliminary dictatorship.**

60-1204M THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

"President Roosevelt will be the rascal of all of them." And that's right. He was.

60-1208 THE THYATIREAN CHURCH AGE

And now, and as I started the Sunday school I fell into a trance. We was having it over here at the old Masonic home, Charlie Kurn's place, little group of us. And I seen this President Roosevelt leading the world to a World War.

Roosevelt won the election in 1940 to stay out of the war, but soon schemed to get America into the war in 1941. This enabled the huge military-industrial complex to form in America to build weapons for the Western Allies and Russia. Arms sales became a massive business during and after the war. The military-industrial complex favoured the Korean War and Vietnam War, as that was a real boost for their sales. Lucrative Middle East arms sales saw 13 Arab-Israeli conflicts and wars, as well as numerous Muslim-Muslim wars. From 1945-2001 there were 194 major conflicts worldwide. Since Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe in 1991, more than two and a half million people have died in violent conflicts. There are plenty of weapons around to fuel inter-racial and inter-tribal hatreds.

In 1933, Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany and joined forces with Mussolini of Italy, so that he could begin the second World War which produced a death count of about 60 million people. Six million of these were from his attempts to exterminate the Jews. Famine, plague, and starvation spread the death toll.

Roosevelt, Hitler, and Mussolini all died in April 1945.

ZECHARIAH 11:7 And I will **feed the flock of slaughter**, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.

:8 Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. The Jews were the flock of slaughter in the Holocaust, that only stopped with the death of Hitler.

But God was also moving.

In 1933, a Light appeared over brother Branham when he was baptizing in the Ohio River in the name of Jesus Christ.

64-0427 A TRIAL

And that Voice came down and said, "As John the Baptist was sent forth, to forerun the first coming of Christ, so will **your Message** forerun the second Coming of Christ."

This was a crucial commission.

The commission did not emphasize the importance of brother Branham as a man or as a prophet. If you read it carefully, the emphasis is on the Message that he preached. His Message was the revelation of the mysteries that are hidden in the symbols and patterns of written Scripture. These revelations are supposed to take us back to the beliefs of the first church age.

The main purpose of brother Branham's ministry was to reveal the mysteries of the Bible.

63-0318 THE FIRST SEAL

Takes the Book of Seals and breaks them and shows the seventh angel, for this alone, the mysteries of God, is the ministry of the seventh angel.

He was a great prophet, but God did not emphasize the man -- He emphasized the truth that he preached.

The basic principle is that the seed that is harvested at the end is identical to the seed that was planted at the beginning. This is part of the great mystery of God, because the church that has grown through the seven church ages is His Body.

Most important -- This commission did not elevate brother Branham in any way. He was not granted importance as a man. The importance lay in the Bible mysteries that he revealed.

REVELATION 10:7 But in the days of the **voice** of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Notice again that the emphasis is not on the seventh angel who is brother Branham. The emphasis is on his **voice**.

Brother Branham began taping his messages between 1947 and 1965. Then he left the scene. These dates represent the **"days of the seventh angel"** when he was in action with his spectacular ministry.

From 1966 onwards are the "days of the **voice** of the seventh angel", as we have to learn the Bible mysteries from the audio and printed sermons.

Once again the emphasis is not on the man, but rather on his taped messages.

While he was preaching in the "days of the seventh angel" from 1947-1965, many of his followers did not really understand what was going on. Most of the Bride who are alive today were not saved by 1965, and very many were not even born by that date.

So if we relied on the "days of the seventh angel", then you had to have your act together by 1965. Most of us fail that test.

But there have been more than 50 years since 1965 in which people have listened to his tapes and books. Slowly we have grown to better understand the mysteries of Scripture. Slowly we have learned to be restored back to the beliefs of the early church of the apostles.

These 50+ years have been the "days of the **voice** of the seventh angel". He left the scene, but his voice stayed behind to teach us the mysteries of Scripture.

"the mystery of God **should** be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets".

This part of the verse does not apply to brother Branham. If it refers to him, then it implies that he did not fully reveal the mysteries. But he knew what he was talking about, and he revealed the written Bible mysteries as well as demonstrating an awesome supernatural power.

So the "*should*" refers to the people in the Bride. We *should* understand the mystery of God, Who is the Word. We *should* know that Jesus Christ is God. We *should* know that Jesus is the Head of the church, not some human leader. We *should* know that the church is the Body of God, and at the end the church has to be the same as what it was at the beginning.

ACTS 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, **and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

The first church searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul preached agreed with what was written in the Word. Paul knew what he was talking about, but he was soon to leave the scene. What was important was that the people of Berea had to understand for themselves, from Scripture, what Paul was teaching.

Notice, they checked their great messenger against the Scriptures!

REVELATION 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

EPHESIAN CHURCH AGE

He found them to be liars. How'd they know that? They wasn't quoting with the Word.

No apostle today can say anything different to what the original apostles said. Everything must be checked against the written Scriptures.

So the focus of the Message of William Branham was not to emphasize the importance of the man. The focus was rather that individuals should be able to prove for themselves from Scripture, what brother Branham was speaking about.

63-1110 HE THAT IS IN YOU

Believe all the Message. Believe That.

If it isn't written in the Bible, then don't you believe it.

But if It is in the Bible, then the Holy Spirit that's living in us is duty bound to perform that if we believe It. Is that right? I know it's hard. See, nothing comes easy.

When you can follow your beliefs through Scripture and prove them by only linking Bible verses together, then you have understood his Message.

Let us see what two disciples of John the Baptist did when they heard John speaking.

JOHN 1:35 Again the next day after **John** stood, and two of his disciples;

:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

:37 And **the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.**

The disciples who heard the voice of John knew that he was not pointing to himself -- he was pointing to Jesus. The quotes of John pointed towards Jesus. And then the disciples did not have to keep repeating John's quotes, as they were able to follow the Word by themselves.

From brother Branham's quotes we **learn how to read** the symbols and patterns of Scripture. Then we can **read** the Bible verses for ourselves **to learn** what day we are in today.

At school you first learn how to read, then you read to learn for yourself.

In Revelation chapter 4, the apostle John gives us a view into Heaven. God sits on a throne surrounded by four beasts that act as 'bodyguards' to His church which is His Body.

REVELATION 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

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



The lion represents the early truth of the apostles who wrote the New Testament.

The ox represents the labour and slaughter of Christians during the Dark Ages by the Roman Catholic church.

The man represents the wisdom of the Reformers like Martin Luther, who preached salvation by faith, and John Wesley who preached holiness.

Pentecost was to spread the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, which is represented by the wings of a flying eagle.

Brother Branham was sent to communicate the information or revelation that explained the hidden mysteries, to give us a deeper insight into the written Word. This is represented by the incredible eyesight of the eagle.

So brother Branham's ministry launched an information revolution that started in 1947 with his tape recorded sermons to make the Bible mysteries understandable.

Suddenly, for the first time since the days of the apostles, Christians could begin to grasp the history of the church and the deeper mysteries of Scripture.

In the natural world, three scientists in 1947 invented the first transistor.

This invention revolutionized electronics. Electronics has revolutionised the spread of information using the internet.

We need this internet to spread our understanding of Scripture.

In 1947, America broke the sound barrier to show their new-found dominance of the skies with their aeroplanes. This was symbolized by their national bird, the bald headed eagle. America began to rule the skies. Brother Branham began to reveal the written mysteries of Scripture.

In 1958, brother Branham preached the Serpent's Seed, which exposed the original sin in the Garden of Eden. Now the first few chapters of the Book of Genesis could be joined together, understood, and integrated in with the rest of the Bible, instead of just being regarded as an ancient myth.

In 1958, a scientist joined transistors together on the same silicon chip. This made electronics very small and very powerful, in what is called an integrated circuit.

Those Christians who used brother Branham's quotes to reveal Scripture would be small in number, but would have a powerful insight into the mysteries of the Bible.

This Light from the revelation of original sin was too strong for darkness, and Pope Pius 12 died in 1958.

In 1960 Khrushchev, the head of Russia, took off his shoe and banged it on the podium at the United Nations. This was very strange behavior by a head of state. But it drew the world's attention to his shoe and his foot. Hitting the podium with a shoe speaks of violence. This is significant because God has raised up Russia to deliver the final judgement on America.



What does taking off a shoe and his foot represent spiritually?

In Daniel's Gentile image the feet of clay and iron represented the seven church ages. Taking off a shoe reveals the foot. This is the revelation of the seven church ages.

So, also in 1960, brother Branham preached a series of sermons on the seven church ages, to explain what had happened during the 2000 years of church history.

Then in 1963, brother Branham revealed the mysteries of the six Seals in Revelation chapter 6.

These Seals acted as shoelaces. When they were undone, they enabled the shoe to be removed from the foot. Thus the Seals revealed the inner spirits that were operating in the church ages. The Seals revealed the antichrist spirit as he rode through the seven church ages, and also attempted to eliminate the Jews.

This revelation of the six Seals lifted the veil of mystery off the written Bible, so that we could understand the hidden mysteries of Scripture.

When the laces were sealed up, Pentecost looked at the laced up shoe, and could only see the tongue of the shoe that was under the laces that they could not undo. So Pentecost emphasized tongues, and had very little knowledge of church history. Hence they stayed with the Roman Catholic Trinity, Eve eating an apple, Christmas, and baptism in the name of three titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Yet they had no idea what that name is.

John the Baptist knew that he was the messenger to introduce the first coming of Jesus. He could point out Jesus as a Man amongst men.

MARK 1:7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

But John knew that he could not undo the laces of the shoes of Jesus. That would reveal His feet, which represent the seven church ages. That revelation would only come in the days of the voice of the seventh angel. The seventh angel would reveal the hidden growth of the antichrist spirit as it rises to world-domination in the church system during the 2000 years of church history.

Footwashing thus represents the church during the seven church ages being washed with the water of the revealed Word for each age.

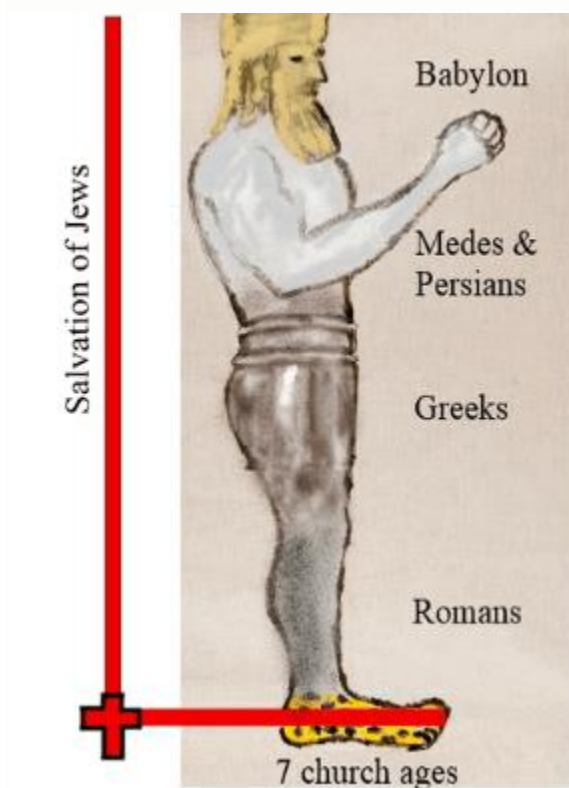
Daniel saw the clay as miry clay -- Wet clay.

DANIEL 2:43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with **miry clay**

The Bride washed by the water of salvation released at Calvary, when a Roman spear pierced the side of Jesus.

JOHN 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

The Gentile image was made of four metals which have no life in them. These were four Gentile Kingdoms, from Babylon, to Media and Persia, to the Greeks, and then the Romans. Meanwhile the red bloodline of salvation ran through the Jewish nation, that was not part of the Gentile image.



Then at the cross, salvation **crossed** over to move away from the Jews, into the feet of clay and iron, which represent the seven church ages. Only the clay in the feet can support life. Seeds can grow in clay. Clay can be moulded, when it is wet, by the Potter's hands. Clay can absorb water. (Spiritually, the Bride absorbed the water of the Word). Metals cannot absorb water. The iron of the Roman Catholic church rejects the revealed Word.

The Bride absorbs the Word for her day.

DANIEL 2:43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with **miry clay**, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

The bits of iron represent the Roman Catholic church, that is the only denominational church that began in the first church age, and as the ancient enemy of truth has spread error through every church age.

Roman Catholicism and the Bride have fought an intense battle down through the seven church ages. The Bride by believing the written Word. The denominational church by following human leaders, and believing unscriptural doctrines that are not written in the Bible.

EPHESIANS 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

The Bride clay is only wet and miry when washed by obeying Scripture, which is pure spiritual water.

JOHN 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Water also speaks of the Holy Spirit that guides us into all truth. We have to serve God in Spirit and in Truth.

JOHN 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth:**

The **Life** of the Holy Spirit guiding the Bride through the verses of **Truth** in the Bible is the only **Way** to serve God in the seven church ages.

JOHN 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:

Miry clay has another meaning, as it is sticky and messy.

PSALM 40:2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

This reminds us that we are sinful people, just sinners saved by grace, and much in need of being washed clean by the Spirit and the truth of Scripture. Every wrong doctrine that we believe smears the darkness of unbelief in our souls. Darkness indicates the absence of light when we believe things that we cannot prove from Scripture.

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

The purpose of the Holy Ghost baptism is to "guide you into all truth".

If you have the Holy Spirit, and have listened to brother Branham's revelations, then you will be able to read the Bible with understanding, instead of endlessly saying, "I do not know" when asked basic questions -- like why Jesus wrote on the ground with His finger.

"For he shall not speak of himself". This is critical. Today the preachers and church-goers love to draw attention to themselves, and tell how clever they are or how important they are, or how good they are, or how gifted they are, or what a great work they have done. Yet nobody that is alive today is mentioned in the Bible, and thus nobody today can be important.

The seventh angel is the only person spoken of in the Bible at the end time. The rest of us were not important enough for God to mention. As soon as someone elevates themselves, then they have missed the reason that God sent them. The Bible tells us to be zealous to repent at the end. It does not tell us to boost ourselves.

To the last church age, God says:

REVELATION 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

The point we are all missing is that only Jesus is important. He alone walked in the midst of the seven church ages candlesticks. No man was with Him. Brother Branham and Paul were just stars in His right hand.

Where were you and I and everyone else?

So microscopically small and unimportant that John neither saw us, nor noticed us in the vision.

JOHN 16:14 He shall glorify me:

The Holy Ghost will give Jesus all the glory. Whatever we believe must get its authority from Scripture.

Our focus must be entirely on Jesus. Elevating a man is Nicolaitanism, which God hates.

REVELATION 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

No human being can compete in importance with Jesus.

JOHN 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The servant is not greater than his lord;** neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

ISAIAH 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and **my glory will I not give to another,**

Glorifying any man is just totally wrong.

The revelation of the six Seals in 1963 was such a powerful burst of Light that it destroyed the deepest darkness. Pope John 23 as the top religious leader in the world died in 1963 and the only Roman Catholic president of America, John

Kennedy, as the top political leader in the world was shot dead in 1963. These were the two top officials in the realm of darkness.

Rather like the beast and false prophet being destroyed in the lake of fire.

The next year, in 1964, Khrushchev was removed from power in Russia. Thus symbolizing Russia, the king of the North, being defeated at Armageddon.

The seven Trumpets in Revelation Chapter 8 and 9 refer to the feast of the Trumpets that is to call the Jews back to Israel in the great Tribulation. Those two Chapters are not fulfilled by the church.

But the period around the time of the first world war and the second world war gives us a **preview** of the fifth Trumpet so that we can get a rough idea what the Tribulation will be like.

The pit of hell opened to unleash the spirits of dictatorship.

Not all the demons came out. They are reserved for the Tribulation. Just some of them emerged so as to give us an idea what the Tribulation will be like.

These natural dictators like Hitler then unleashed the satanic hordes of hellish demonology that erupted out of the pit to destroy natural Israel in the Holocaust. This was during the second world war. But that was actually not their only purpose. Their other purpose was their crossing over, after the natural killing in the war stopped, to enter into the church which is spiritual Israel.

Now their purpose is the spiritual killing of Christians by getting them to not believe portions of the Bible. This flood of demonology would domineer the churches in the same way that the Nicene Council in 325 AD forced the churches to accept Trinity and the headship of the bishop of Rome. Under this demonic flood, the churches stopped basing their beliefs on Scripture as the evil spirits forced them to conform to accepting man-made unscriptural doctrines and dictatorship of human leaders based on the role-model of the Pope.

Please notice the demonic pictures in children's comics to see where artists are getting their inspiration from, as the pit opens up in a preview. Imagine the future horror when the pit actually opens up in reality in the Tribulation.

The Roman Catholic church with its unscriptural teachings is stopping the spiritual children at the end time from returning to the Bible beliefs of the apostolic church fathers of the New Testament.

Notice today how many Roman Catholic priests and leaders are being exposed for the natural abuse of children. This reflects their spiritual sin.

REVELATION 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

The key to heaven is to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Peter used this key to open the Door to Heaven. Jesus Christ is the Door.

Jesus said to Peter:

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

Peter bound the baptism of John the Baptist so that it was no longer valid.

Then Peter loosed repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ as the key to opening the Door to Heaven.

ACTS 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

So the key to Heaven is to glorify and exalt Jesus and make sure that you obey the Scriptures that the first apostles wrote, especially regarding the water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

Satan has the key to the pit of hell which is a bottomless pit. Once you forsake Scripture as the foundation of your faith then you enter a bottomless pit of new ideas that endlessly get dredged up by the human mind. The ideas keep changing.

When you dance with the Devil you can expect him to keep changing the tune.

REVELATION 9:2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

The sun is the light. This symbolizes the Word.

Church-goers no longer prove what they believe just using the Bible.

The air or atmosphere is also darkened. The atmosphere refers to the mood or feeling between people in a discussion. Disagree with a church-goer and refer to Scriptures that contradict their opinions and you encounter an undercurrent of indifference and lack of interest in what you say. They either get angry or they lose interest. They then shun or avoid you with a plastic smile that never touches their eyes. They have no interest in a deeper understanding of Scripture. All they want is their church opinions where their Bible-ignorance is never exposed.

Demonology is alive and well in terms of how human thinking is being corrupted away from Scripture. The Devil has to keep you away from the Bible because he knows that only the Bible can keep you away from the Devil.

REVELATION 9:3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Locusts are destructive. They come in a swarm and overwhelm an area. It is very difficult to oppose a demonic flood of unscriptural ideas. Demons get let loose to destroy Bible faith with their "clever" opinions and speculations. Then very few people have the courage to stand up against the majority. Group-think wins in the churches, not the written Scripture.

64-0719M THE FEAST OF THE TRUMPETS

The hour that we're living, the ecclesiasticals, of spirits uniting together now and bringing them all to this big one slaughter, to blot out. It's already in writing here, in this nation now, that these churches has to be closed unless you're with the organization. It's a union, it's a boycott, just like the mark of the beast.

And now you see what the beast is, don't you? It's a power. And a power, ecclesiastical power, Jesus said, "It'd be so close like the real thing, it'd deceive the very Elected if it was possible." But He promised to have something here for us in that day, that we wouldn't be deceived, and that's the Word, and Christ to make It manifest to us. **They're supernaturals, devils, unseen to the eye, but you can see what they're doing. See?**

REVELATION 9:4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

Locusts that do not eat green vegetation are not natural locusts.

John is describing demonology in terms of the destructive power of locusts. There is no way that we can describe demons because they are spirits so John has to compare them to something that we do know. He was horrified at the spiritual destruction that these demons achieved. The amount of Bible-faith that they destroyed in the people. Their destructive power reminded him of locusts. They just destroy everything that is not protected. The seal of God is the Holy Ghost baptism which is the only protection that we have against demonology.

EPHESIANS 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The evidence of the Holy Ghost baptism is our ability to understand the truth of the written Word.

JOHN 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:

The Holy Spirit enables us to understand Scripture.

Jesus always withstood the Devil by saying, "It is written....".

The Devil is determined to make us believe something plausible that is not written in Scripture.

But the demons who are represented by locusts have a king. A king wears a crown. In the western world the only crowned religious leader was the Pope. He wore a triple crown.

When Pope Paul 6 was crowned in 1963 with the triple crown, he decided to take it off and not wear it again. So the Popes wore a crown from Pope Nicholas 1 in about 860 AD to Pope Paul 6 in 1963. An interval of 1103 years. This represents the longest line of crowned leaders on planet earth.

REVELATION 9:11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

The Pope, as a dictator, no longer has a crown, but still has a king's power of supreme authority over the Roman Catholic church.

An angel is a messenger. The Pope is the messenger from the pit -- the messenger from darkness.

Our only safety is to take brother Branham's revelations **back to Scripture**. If we twist up his quotes to become something that is unscriptural, then those demonic spirits have enticed us and we are also in the Pope's camp.

62-0318 THE SPOKEN WORD IS THE ORIGINAL SEED 2

Now, all these things I've said, if they don't jive with the Bible, or dovetail with God's Word, they're wrong, they're wrong,

Abaddon means ruin and destruction. Satan's main thrust today is to ruin the Message of brother Branham by interpreting it in a way that is unscriptural. Then the Message is ruined' and the Message people head for destruction in the Tribulation.

Abaddon is the angel-king of the infernal regions -- the minister of death and the author of havoc on the earth. The numerous different types of Message-beliefs bears testimony to the havoc that Satan (also known as Abaddon) has wrought amongst the Message-followers.

The denominations are also firm in their opposition to the mysteries that brother Branham did reveal. They are also split up into thousands of different beliefs.

Satan and his demons are causing havoc in the church world. Bible ignorance is growing amongst church-goers.

64-0719M THE FEAST OF THE TRUMPETS

They're supernaturals, devils, unseen to the eye, but you can see what they're doing.

Notice, while **that group is a riding, making themselves ready to stomp out everything that won't agree with them,**

1965 was the year brother Branham left the scene. His preaching ministry from 1947-1965 was perhaps the most prosperous time ever for the American economy. The 1950s were the days of plenty. God blessed America, but that did not mean that the Americans wanted to turn to God's revealed truth.

But then, according to some historians, America tried to 'commit suicide' between 1965-1980. This was the price that America paid for rejecting brother Branham's revelations of the written Bible.

This whole sad saga started in 1965 when president Johnson foolishly decided to escalate the Vietnam war, which turned out to be a disaster. President Nixon skillfully got America out of the war, but then the American Press and Mass Media destroyed him over the Watergate scandal. The Democratically controlled Congress abandoned South Vietnam, which became a humiliating defeat for America. The American military was powerful and never lost a battle in Vietnam, but like Daniel's Gentile image, it also had feet of clay as it was defeated by the American Press and American politicians. For the people in Vietnam and Cambodia (now Kampuchea), the American departure in 1975 was a catastrophe. More than a million would subsequently be killed before things stabilized around 1980.

Meanwhile fierce student riots broke out in American universities, and race riots broke out in American cities, which incited violence and destruction.

Around the time that the Arabs lost the 1973 war against Israel, they increased the oil price to four times more than what it was. Countries headed for bankruptcy. Malnutrition killed tens of millions in Africa and Asia. This was the most destructive economic event since the second World War.

President Carter used a human rights campaign to undermine the Shah of Iran. As a result Iran got taken over by a far worse and violently anti-American terrorist regime, that took power in 1979 by executing many thousands of opponents. They took American hostages in Iran, and Carter's attempt to free them ended in a disaster as the rescue helicopters flew into two fierce dust storms. American prestige plummeted.

In 1965, Pope Paul VI and Greek Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras I simultaneously lifted mutual excommunications that had led to a split between the Catholics and the Greek Orthodox churches in 1054. This was a big ecumenical step towards uniting the different churches together. The ecumenical unity movement would be a major policy for many churches.

In the parable the wheat and the tares grow together. Then the tares must first be gathered together in the ecumenical movement of unity, where love unites and doctrine divides. Thus churches are basically free to believe what they like, just

as long as they reasonably unite and co-operate together by blurring their differences. This movement began in 1948, as Satan set out to oppose the end time prophet who began his teaching ministry in 1947.

MATTHEW 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, **Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them:** but gather the wheat into my barn.

After 1965 the church world would continue to be caught up into two major streams.

One was an ecumenical move that sought to loosely unite about 600 million of the 800 million Protestant Christians. The emphasis was on unity and getting on with each other and ignoring doctrinal differences.

The other stream was an endless splitting up and fragmentation into new denominations and non-denominational churches, until by 2018 there were more than 45,000 different types of churches.

Neither of those streams have any hope of preparing the people for the coming of the Lord.

Brother Branham as a person had gained a deep insight into Scripture, and most certainly knew what he was talking about when he left in 1965.

But that was not the issue. Brother Branham had not come just to get himself ready for the Lord's Coming. He had come to reveal the Bible mysteries so that the Bride could get herself ready for the Coming of the Lord.

REVELATION 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

The real issue is that the Bride has to be restored to the first church age doctrines, and get back to believing what the early church believed in the New Testament. Until that happens, brother Branham's ministry has not achieved its goal.

MATTHEW 17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

So our problem is how do we get gathered into God's barn? How do we learn to understand the Bible so that we can find the Scriptural path to the second Coming?

Brother Branham saw a vision of the end time.

60-1113 CONDEMNATION BY REPRESENTATION

Then when these women help elect the wrong person, then I seen a great woman rise up in the United States, well-dressed and beautiful, but cruel in heart. She will either guide or lead this nation to ruination. (I've got in parenthesis "perhaps Catholic church.")

Also, science will progress, especially in the mechanical world. Automobiles will continue to get like egg shape. Finally they will build one that won't need a steering wheel. (They've got it now.) It will be controlled by some other power. Then I seen the United States as one smoldering, burnt-over place. It will be near the end. (Then I've got in parenthesis: "I predict that this will take place." Now, remember, That's what the Lord showed, but "I predict this will take place before 1977.") Upon this prediction, I base, because of the onrushing onslaught that's coming now, how fast that it was moving, how long it'll take till this nation meets its place.

The Catholic church has attracted about 1.2 billion people as converts. A woman represents a church, as the true church is the Bride of Christ. Thus the Catholic church can be described as very attractive woman, because she has attracted so many people.

Thus it would be correct to describe Roman Catholicism as a beautiful woman.

This quote would play havoc in 2016, when Message preachers interpreted it to mean that Hillary Clinton would win the American presidential election. Brother Branham never made that statement. Message preachers interpreted his quote that way. But Hillary always wore a pants outfit, and brother Branham would not have described that as "well dressed". In addition, nobody would describe Hillary as beautiful.

This indicates a fatal mistake made by Message believers. They change the quote in some way, and get totally the wrong answer. They are so desperate to twist a quote into some very dramatic event. But they got it totally wrong because Trump won.

So we learn a very important lesson. These Message preachers who predicted that Hillary would win, have absolutely no clue as to what God is thinking or planning to do in these end times. They insist on leading because of their power over

the people which they love to exercise. Plus the pay is also good. So who cares if they do not preach the truth? They are not concerned.

Why did they mess up? Because they put all their faith into their interpretation of a quote, instead of putting their faith into the written Bible.

So why are so many Message churches going wrong? Because they build on quotes that have no Bible verses to back them up.

61-1119 PERFECT STRENGTH BY PERFECT WEAKNESS

Oh, my, talk about the lid off of the kettle: **demons going around, powers of the devil under the name of Christianity, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, theological seminary doctrines, leaving the Bible alone.**

A seminary is any group of people coming up with their own opinion.

Having no Scripture to backup a dramatic prediction was reckless and foolish. When we have no Scripture for our opinions then the Devil inspires us.

61-1217 CHRISTIANITY VS IDOLATRY

And you'd better be versed and know what you're doing, or you could take an evil spirit so easy and not know. If it's contrary to this Word, don't believe it. Stay with that Word.

Some of the Message preachers who insisted that Hillary would win in 2016, had also back in 1977 stressed the quote of America being destroyed by 1977. This quote was just wrong. So after forty years of emphasizing quotes, they are still getting it wrong. And their assemblies are so brain-washed and dumbed-down by their sloppy diet of interpreted quotes, that they do not seem to notice.

But 1977 was a strong warning issued by God. Do not just believe a quote because brother Branham said it. Some quotes are wrong. Take the ideas from his quotes and then check those ideas with the Bible. Only then will you know that you have found the truth.

64-0823 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 1

But those who can accept the Word in Its fullness, not me preaching It, because It's the Bible says so. Those who accept that is free, because they--the Word's already been judged.

Only believe the quotes if you can run them through the Scripture.

So another major mistake of Message preachers is their claim that "you cannot correct the prophet". This 1977 quote had no Bible verses to back it up. This reveals a very important point. If you have a quote that does not reflect in the written Word, then leave that quote alone.

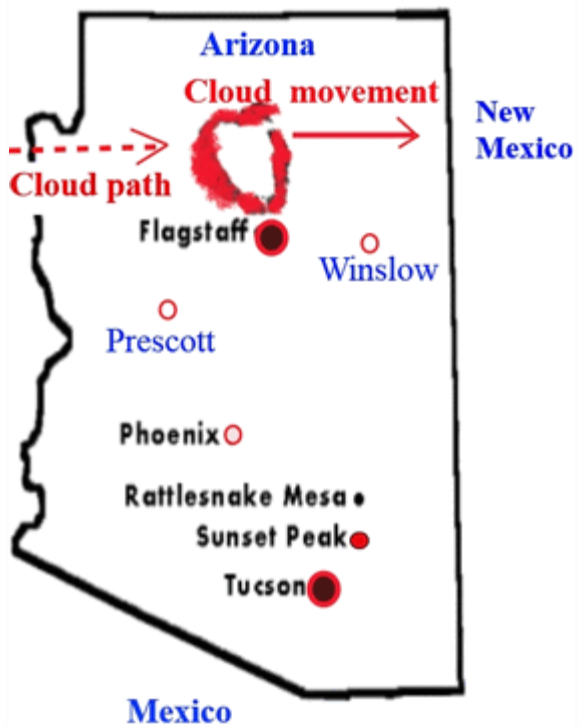
Much as we love and admire brother Branham we must also remember that he is human and can make a mistake. So we must check his quotes with Scripture, and only believe what the Scripture says.

His visions and his insight into Scripture was amazing. And brother Branham has taught me far, far more about the Bible than any other person.

But just as John the Baptist made a serious mistake when he thought that Jesus was not the Messiah, so brother Branham also made mistakes at times.

The mistake he made in 1963, concerning the great supernatural cloud over Flagstaff on 28 February 1963, had huge negative repercussions.

He knew nothing of the cloud at the time, as he only learned about it a few months later. Knowing that seven angels had come to him invisibly on 8 March at Sunset Peak, he *guessed* that they formed the cloud as they left him. Thus he was convinced that he stood underneath the 1963 cloud on Sunset Peak in southern Arizona as the seven angels left him. There, sadly, he just got his facts and figures totally wrong. The cloud was seen 8 days before the angels arrived to meet him at Sunset Peak. The cloud was seen 200 miles north of Sunset Peak over the city of Flagstaff.



In addition, there were **two clouds**.

This photograph was taken from Winslow.



A smaller smoke cloud from an exploded rocket moved west to east about 20 miles to the west behind the huge supernatural cloud that was briefly visible for 28 minutes after sunset over Flagstaff as it moved towards Winslow. Neither cloud went anywhere near Sunset Peak.

Brother Branham got to Sunset Peak to hunt javelina pigs on 6 March 1963 according to his daughter Becky in her book "Return to Sunset".

The hunting season had not yet opened on 28 February 1963. The javelina pig hunting season ran from 1 March to 10 March 1963. So brother Branham could not have been hunting on 28 February.

The cloud was the sign in the heaven of the Son of Man. It appeared before brother Branham got there, and was 200 miles to the north of where he was. He knew nothing about it at the time. So God was putting no emphasis on brother Branham as a man.

It was a sign to attract attention.

The angels came eight days later to tell him to go to Jeffersonville and reveal the six Seals in Revelation Chapter 6.

So God was drawing attention to the remarkable series of sermons that he would preach as he revealed the six Seals. These revealed the inner workings of the antichrist spirit during the seven church ages.

Those revelations enabled brother Branham to open up the mysteries of the written Bible, and restore us back to the beliefs of the early church.

Brother Branham as a man could not get us ready to meet Jesus. But the messages he taught and preached show us how to unfold the way through the verses of the Bible to establish the truth.

But numerous wrong doctrines would breed out of the cloud photograph.

From this we learn the essential step of checking all the facts and figures before we decide to believe a quote.

These mistakes should emphasize to us that brother Branham is not God. Since he made some mistakes he also cannot be called the Voice of God. God does not make mistakes. Brother Branham's quotes are not infallible.

62-1007 THE KEY TO THE DOOR

That, they claim in here that some brethren up there that said that I sent them up there, and they're preaching that men should leave their wives and hunt for their spiritual mate, and **that I am perfectly infallible**. That there's nothing... And, oh, **some of the awfulest things** you ever heard.

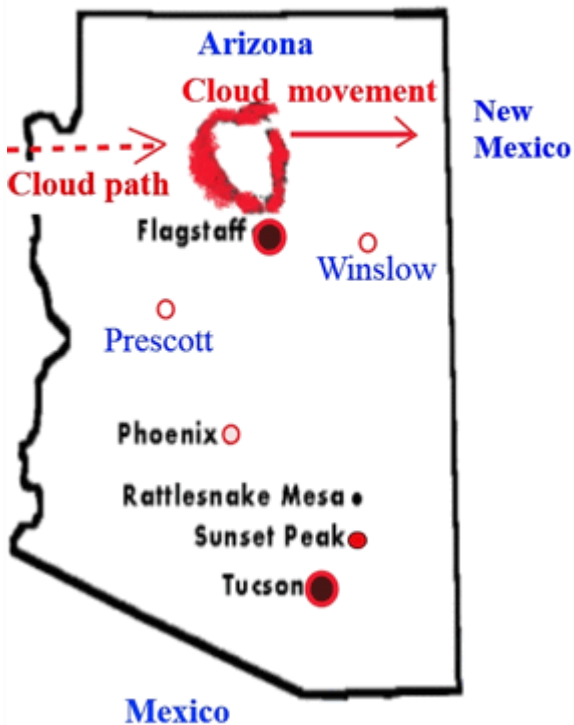
When people did say he was infallible, he regarded that as the awfulest thing he had heard. It was just as horrible as the idea of leaving one's wife and marrying another.

But brother Branham was sent to turn us back to the Bible beliefs of the early church.

Let us have a quick view of some of the wrong beliefs that have come out of the cloud photograph:

(The Cloud with a capital C is the supernatural Cloud so that you do not confuse it with the smoke cloud of the exploded rocket).

The Cloud of 28 February 1963, that was photographed in northern Arizona at sunset over the city of Flagstaff, was declared to be "the coming of the Lord" on Sunset Peak -- which is actually 200 miles south of Flagstaff.



The Cloud, formed by the wings of seven angels, was never anywhere near Sunset Peak on 28 February 1963. It was 200 miles north, at Flagstaff city.

The seven angels came invisibly to Sunset Peak at 8 o'clock in the morning of 8 March 1963 to meet brother Branham. They then left invisibly, forming no cloud.

The seven angels forming the Cloud and the same seven angels meeting brother Branham were two separate events, separated by 200 miles, and eight days apart. Yet many Message believers say that they are one and the same event.

They publish a picture of the Cloud and say it was "Christ on Sunset Peak". Absolutely untrue.

The invisible coming of the angels to brother Branham at Sunset Peak could not be the coming of the Lord either, because in 1965, the last year of his life, brother Branham was still waiting for the coming of the Lord.

65-0725E WHAT IS THE ATTRACTION ON THE MOUNTAIN

We send greetings up in the mountains, Prescott, Arizona, to Brother Leo Mercier and his group that's up there **waiting for the Coming of the Lord**. We send greetings to those in Tucson, that's gathered tonight, waiting for the Coming of the Lord. Down into Houston, Texas, to those who are **waiting for the Coming of the Lord**. Up in Chicago, to those who are **waiting for the Coming of the Lord**. Up on the East Coast, New York and Connecticut, and the great groups up there, that's **waiting for the Coming of the Lord**. We don't have room here to seat them, so we just have to send them the Word through the medium of the telephone. We send greetings to Brother Junior Jackson tonight, and his group down in Clarksville. Brother Ruddell, up on sixty-two, and his group, **waiting for the Coming of the Lord**. And we're gathered here tonight at the home church, the tabernacle, **waiting for the Coming of the Lord**.

But then other Message believers claim that when he opened the seventh Seal in March 24 1963, that would bring the Lord back to earth. But he never opened the seventh Seal. It remained a complete mystery.

63-1110 SOULS THAT ARE IN PRISON NOW

The Seventh Seal brings Him back to earth.

But the seventh Seal never opened.

Remember, He hid the Seventh Seal from us. He wouldn't do it.

64-0719M THE FEAST OF THE TRUMPETS

The Seventh Seal hasn't opened yet, you know. That's His Coming.

Others took a different approach to further confuse the coming of the Lord in a dense fog of speculation.

They claimed that the "coming" of the Lord was to be a "secret presence" (or parousia) at Sunset Peak in the Sonoran desert, near the city of Tucson.

The Greek word parousia can mean "presence", or "coming". The King James Bible scholars chose to translate parousia as "coming". They were in the age of the third beast around the throne, the man -- Symbolizing human wisdom. They had more wisdom for translating than what we have. We have more eagle insight than what they had.

So we are foolish if we change their translation. Then we have no Absolute Bible.

63-1124 THREE KINDS OF BELIEVERS

The antichrist don't deny the Word. Certainly not. He says he believes It, but **just not all of It the way It's wrote here**.

Change a word in the Bible and you move into the camp of the antichrist.

Then others claim that the coming of the Lord is also supposed to be when the Lord comes to each individual separately. That is basically the Holy Ghost baptism.

Yeet that happened many times in the first church age, and was never referred to as the coming of the Lord.

The angel said that Jesus would return in the same resurrected Body that He ascended to heaven in

ACTS 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come in like manner** as ye have seen him go into heaven.

But the Lord will not come before the dead have been raised, and the living have been changed into their new bodies.

So there is no coming of the Lord until you are changed into a new body.

I CORINTHIANS 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

I THESSALONIANS 4:16 ... and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:

By now you will have noticed an element of confusion in all their statements about the coming of the Lord. Then it gets worse as the Cloud suddenly becomes the Angel of Revelation 10 coming down.

So the Cloud, that briefly appeared for 28 minutes where it remained at a remarkable height of 42 kilometers, suddenly became the Angel of Revelation Chapter 10 coming down.

64-0119 SHALOM

But, remember, if it goes plumb into the shadows of death, "I am the resurrection and Life; I'll raise him up again." And when the great Director comes down and bears that stick down, then, "time shall be no more." **When** that Angel, of Revelation the 10th chapter, puts one foot on land and one on the sea, and a rainbow over His head, He swore, "time shall be no more." **When that time comes, you'll rise up from among the dead.** While the rest of them lay there, you'll go in.

But this is 1964, a year after the Cloud, and brother Branham is still waiting for the Angel to come down to raise the dead in the resurrection.

Others just say that the Angel came down (they do not know where or when), and they also do not know what the angel has done in the 55 odd years since then.

The original Cloud of 1963, that the Tucson Observatory photographed, has caused all these fantasies and unscriptural speculations that their church-goers mistake for doctrine. Then the Cloud was described by brother Branham, four months before he died, as the sign of the Son of man in the heaven. There is no water vapour above 20 kilometers that can cause a cloud.

65-0718M TRYING TO DO GOD A SERVICE WITHOUT IT BEING THE WILL OF GOD

And then in that great observatory, so that the world will be without, they're still wondering what happened. In Tucson, them big observatories took the picture of it up there; still wondering what happened. What is it? They still put in the paper, "Does anybody know anything about what, how it could have happen?" There is no fog up there, there's no air, there's no moisture; thirty miles high in the air. Oh, my! "There shall be **signs in the heaven above.** And when these things take place, earthquakes in divers places, **then shall appear the sign in the heaven, of the Son of man.**" "That day," in Luke, "the Son of man will reveal Himself again; being revealed, Himself." And the world will look like Sodom and Gomorrah. Oh, my!

MATTHEW 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:

All these different opinions merely create a swamp that dumbs down the thinking skills of those who refuse to be Scriptural.

The final irony is that there were two clouds. One supernatural formed by angels' wings, and another smoke cloud formed by an exploding rocket at a height of 42 kilometers. The Message Cloud-believers fail to mention or explain that fact.

Why is there this fog of unbelief and error concerning the Cloud?

In their rush to develop some dramatic doctrine around the Cloud, so that they can appear to be clever, Message people have drifted far away from Scripture. The Light of God's Word is not taken as a guide, thus the Cloud-doctrines become a journey into darkness.

Just disagree with a Cloud-believer and watch their attitude change, especially if you know some facts about the Cloud that contradict their belief. A Message pastor is forced to resign if he questions the current "Cloud-theory".

As you saw above, the Cloud doctrines are just smoke-and-mirrors. No Scriptural verses that run through the Bible. Just the treacherous quicksands of shifting human opinion. Proving a Cloud theory is like folding fog. You just have no Scriptures to work with in order to link them all up in a theme.

This study covers the Laodicean church age up for the period 1906-1965, and covered the years of brother Branham's life and ministry.

So this study can be entitled: "In the days of the seventh angel" -- because he was alive and preaching.

Then he left the scene having recorded most of his sermons. From 1966 onwards, we now had the responsibility of taking his quotes back to Scripture, so that we could learn how to read and understand the Bible for ourselves.

All we really have of brother Branham today is the sound of his voice on the tapes.

So from 1966 onwards, we can call the study on the next part of the Laodicean age, "In the days of the VOICE of the seventh angel".

Laodicea part 3, 1966 onwards - In the days of the VOICE of the seventh angel

The spirit of Laodicea was established by Lenin and the communists at the beginning of the age. Lenin was regarded as the "prophet of the Revolution" in 1917 when the Russian revolution began. After his death Stalin took over and led the communists away from Lenin's teachings. But the further the communists deviated away from Lenin's ideas, the more they began to glorify and deify Lenin as a "god".

The same would happen with William Branham who was the true prophet to the Laodicean or last church age.

He came to bring the church back to the New Testament beliefs by revealing the mysteries of the written Scripture. But the Message preachers moved the people away from being Scriptural in their beliefs by making quotes and the interpretations of quotes the basis of their faith.

Instead of saying, like Jesus, "It is written..." they preferred to say, "The prophet said..." or "The prophet meant...".

As Message believers moved further away from the Bible, they began to glorify and deify brother Branham. "The voice of the seventh angel" became the "Voice of God" -- quite a promotion. Even though the Voice of God was never promised in the New Testament.

The weakness of the church has always been to glorify human leaders.

John the Baptist set the proper example at the first coming of Jesus. Speaking of Jesus, he said:

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

The prophet and forerunner of His coming came as a bright light to reveal Jesus as a man, and **then** he had to fade off the scene. God does not share His glory with another.

Isaiah 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another,

Jeremiah 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

As we focus on a human leader, we take our eyes off the Lord Jesus.

Isaiah 2:22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

Our focus should never be on a man.

Job 4:18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

The best of men will make mistakes.

God used William Branham's quotes to reveal the mysteries of Scripture so that we could be restored back to the Bible beliefs of the original apostolic church. Then the focus shifts from the quotes of William Branham to proving his revelations by running the ideas through the Bible verses.

Then you must be able to prove what you believe, purely from the Scriptures.

Matthew 17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

Brother Branham's quotes should restore us to Scripture. He did not come to turn us away from Scripture. We do not have to follow people's interpretations of his quotes.

63-1110 He that is in you

Believe all the Message. Believe That. If it isn't written in the Bible, then don't you believe it.

63-0630M The third exodus

I know the Message is right, for It's in the Word.

57-0825 Hebrews chapter 2, part 1

One night, yonder, He come down, an Angel, and revealed It in the Scriptures, that He was. **And when I seen It in the Scriptures, then to blast across the world with It, the Message.**

62-0318 The Spoken Word is the original Seed, part 2

Now, all these things I've said, if they don't jive with the Bible, or dovetail with God's Word, they're wrong, they're wrong.

How can we attract God's attention? God notices people who are Scriptural.

65-0429 The choosing of a Bride

While, the true Bride attracts the attention of God, by keeping His Word.

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus the Man. William Branham pointed us to Jesus the Word, the written Scripture. The recorded sermons of brother Branham thus contain the information that we need to know in order to unlock the mysteries that are hidden in the Bible

Revelation 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God *should* be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

This Scripture was **not completely fulfilled** during the ministry of brother Branham because his voice, recorded on tapes, has continued for many decades after he, as a man, left the scene in 1965.

Here the emphasis is on his recorded voice, not on him as a man.

He had an outstanding ministry in the supernatural. He had his personal opinions as a man. He had a family with two sons. But none of these are referred to in this verse.

The emphasis is purely on his voice. The mysteries he revealed to restore us back to the early church.

But the verse has a slightly deeper meaning because it says "**the mystery** (singular) **of God should** (not would) **be finished**".

This does not speak of the many "mysteries" which he did reveal. There is no doubt about the fact that he unlocked written Bible mysteries.

The **mystery of God** is that His Body, the church, would be as a Seed planted in the first church age. It would be buried in the dirt of the Dark Ages. The Reformation of Martin Luther saw the leaves of 'salvation by faith' shoot up. The holiness movement of John Wesley carried the Gospel pollen across the world in the missionary age. Pentecostal power was the husk that looked good in the Spirit, but lacked the truth.

Brother Branham came to restore the last church to the truth of the first church. The mystery of God is that the seed that is harvested in our last church age must be identical to the seed that was planted by the apostles.

How close are you to being caught up to meet the Lord in the air? That depends on how close you are to the beliefs of the first church age. That must become your final aim.

Revelation 6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the **fourth beast** say, Come and see. Only the *voice* of the fourth beast is referred to. This is a flying eagle.

Is this linked to the voice of the seventh angel?

Revelation 4:2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Revelation 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

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



These four Spirit creatures have guided the church through the 2000 years of the seven church ages.

They represent how Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit, manifested Himself to the church in the changing conditions of world history. The lion age was the true Word of God that was brought to us by the apostles. That Word sustained the church for the first two church ages as the truth slowly began to get lost due to the church following human leadership rather than Scripture.

The next two church ages, 3 and 4, were the Dark Ages where the true believers labored on and got slaughtered like an ox, as the Roman Catholic church did their best to destroy all Bible truth and lead the world into darkness. Tens of millions were killed.

The man-beast with human wisdom saw Reformers like Martin Luther restore salvation by faith in the 5th age, and John Wesley restore holiness in the 6th age. Then the great missionary age opened up.

The seventh age saw Pentecost soar into the supernatural power on the wings of the eagle. Then the incredible eyesight of the eagle symbolized the insight of William Branham, as the seventh age messenger, that enabled him to reveal the mysteries of Scripture. His voice was recorded on tapes to guide us in unlocking the written Bible mysteries after he left the scene in 1965.

In 1947 he was the first preacher to begin recording his sermons on tapes. (Other preachers had snippets recorded on other media before then.) This lasted 18 years until 1965 when he passed away.

Since then his voice has circulated via tapes and the Internet for more than 50 years. This extra length of time, as well as the marvelous flow of his information through the Internet, has enabled his voice to spread world-wide and be available at all times of the day and night.

Revelation 10:7 But in the days of the *voice* of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God *should* be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Read this carefully. The mystery of God *should* be finished. This implies doubt.

If brother Branham restored *all* things, according to Jesus, then the doubt does not apply to him. He revealed what he had to. There is no doubt about his ability to fulfill his part of this prophecy.

So what does the doubt refer to?

There will be people who listen to his voice, but who will be fooled or deceived by their Message pastors, who will guide them away from Scripture by misinterpreting quotes.

1965-1127 I have heard but now I see

Dear God, in this solemn moment, it's going to be a time like **this when there really will be a clap of thunder someday**, and the Son of God **shall** descend from the heavens with **a shout, with the voice of the Archangel**, and the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise.

The **last month of his life** and he was still waiting for the **Archangel** to come down. He was still waiting for a **single Thunder** that must utter before the mighty Angel comes down. He was also still waiting for the **"shout"**.

Here we must think carefully.

He says, "There will be a clap of thunder... Son of God **shall** descend...**with a shout**".

Thus the "shout" was not him preaching his Message of the understanding of the Bible mysteries.

The shout will eventually come, **when the Bride finally understands the Bible mysteries** and is able to be restored back to the doctrines of the apostles.

The Lord cannot come before the Bride is restored.

When the Bride finally returns to the New Testament faith, then the **shout** will have been fulfilled.

But there is no need for brother Branham to be on earth when the Angel comes down. Especially since most of the believers who will be restored back to Scripture were not even born by 1965.

63-0421 Victory Day

We've all got a victory. We've fought through many victories. And a great victory is coming just soon, right around the corner. Our complete V-day will be soon, when the Son of God shall break the skies, **and scream with the Voice of the Archangel, and He shall come again. And the graves shall open**, and the dead shall walk out.

... And someday, with your eye single-looking, **He will come from the sky with a Shout**, the Voice of the Archangel. The dead in Christ shall rise.

The Shout is still in the future.

This was 1963, one month *after* the Seven Seals had been preached, and he was looking for the "shout" in the future.

But the "shout" refers to his message. How can this be in the future?

The "shout" is not brother Branham revealing the truth.

The "shout" is when we understand the truth well enough to be restored back to the early church.

The emphasis is not supposed to be on the signpost, the end-time prophet, who gave us direction by showing us the Way, which is Jesus the revealed Word. (He told us to get restored back to the teachings of the early apostles).

The emphasis is supposed to be on the Way or the Path. We are supposed to be on the Scriptural Way that we can walk in step with all the New Testament teachings.

Once the written mysteries have been revealed, how can the Devil get to deceive the "*Message believers*" (*unscriptural*) who claim to be "*in the Message*" (*unscriptural*)? Notice the unscriptural labels that they use to describe themselves while criticizing Baptists, Methodists, and others for taking on unscriptural labels.

60-0515M The rejected King

Then we find that the enemy set in, and he was going to come into a little bunch of God's people and was going to pluck out the right eye of every man. That's what the enemy always tries to do, is pluck out both eyes if he can, so that the people cannot see what they're doing. That's what Satan tries to do today to every Christian: pluck out his spiritual sight, that he can only follow the intellectual sense of things and not the sense of the Holy Spirit leading him.

So then when they did that, when the great defeat come, then Saul cut up two great ox and sent them to all the people.

And I wished you would notice here. When Saul sent the pieces of the ox to all Israel and said, **"Let every man that will not follow Samuel and Saul, let him, this ox be as this."**

Do you see how deceitful he tried to represent Himself with the man of God?

How *unchristian* it was.

The fear of the people was because of Samuel.

But Saul got them all to follow him, because that the people feared Samuel.

"Let them come after Samuel and Saul."

Saul should have just told the people to follow him as it was his idea. He had no right to include the reputation of Samuel the prophet in his personal decision. Saul had his own leading, his own idea. Then he claimed that the prophet Samuel agreed with his ideas. But Samuel had not actually said what Saul was claiming. But the people obeyed Saul out of their fear of Samuel, thinking that Saul had the backing of Samuel.

Message pastors use and interpret the quotes of William Branham to suit their own ideas in order to get the people to follow the pastors. The people fear and respect brother Branham as the end-time prophet, so the people are scared to argue with pastors who manipulate brother Branham's quotes.

To increase this induced fear, the Message-preachers claim that the prophet's quotes are infallible and cannot be corrected. Eventually the quotes replace Scripture on certain issues. Brother Branham becomes the 'Voice of God', and nobody can question anything he says.

This is not how it should be.

62-1104M Blasphemous names

Well, that's right, that would take the Roman Catholic church. But she is "full of blasphemous names," Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, all calling themselves, "churches of God." Blasphemous names! Saying that we are "*in the Message*" is just as unscriptural as calling ourselves "Baptists". Scripture never speaks of a *Message church*.

Why not?

Brother Branham came to restore us to the Bible truths of the early church. In the Bible they were only called disciples, believers, or Christians. That is all we are allowed to call ourselves if we want to be Bible Christians.

The early Christians mainly met in houses, which helped them to escape from the persecution of the Roman Empire when three million Christians were killed in the 250 years from Nero's persecution starting in 64 AD. Then finally the emperor Constantine stopped killing Christians in 313 AD with his Edict of Milan.

Colossians 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in *Laodicea*, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

A few people met in a house. No mention of a pastor as being the head of the church. Paul is speaking of a house-church in the city of Laodicea. We are in the age of Laodicea. Is there a connection?

Romans 16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

:5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

They had to combat real error in Rome, as that is where denominational Christianity would really take root under human leadership. Meeting in houses as small groups is thus a good antidote to being dominated by a human leader.

We start our Christian lives by repenting and establishing a personal relationship with Jesus. Then we join a church and end up in a church relationship. Our relationship with Jesus takes second place. We accept church beliefs *in place of* the Bible.

"Churchianity" slowly grows inside us *in place of* Christianity. "In place of" means a vicarious experience.

We become second-hand Christians, living up to other people's expectations of us. Trying to find a quote whereby we can impress others. Jesus and the Bible take second place in our lives as the church and pastor dominate our thinking. The church stands "in the place of Christ" in our lives. Christ is the Son of God.

Why do you believe something? Because my church says so.

This is heading towards the mark of the beast, which is denominational religion.

In place of the Son of God

V I C A R I V S F I L I I D E I in Latin, the language of the Romans.

5 1 100 1 5 1 50 1 1 500 1 These letters mean a number in Latin.

= 666 Adding them all up.

63-0319 The second seal

But when this awful deceiving spirit (Oh, man) incarnated--incarnate spirit, **this doctrine spirit became incarnated to take the place of Christ into a man**, it must be worshipped then--turned to be a worship like Christ.

A man who takes the place of Christ is a total deception.

61-0611 Revelation chapter 5, part 1

... And I stood still if people called me a prophet many times, 'cause a prophet in the English testament is just "a preacher, a prophesier, foreteller of the Word," and so forth. I'd stand for that 'cause you could just kind of push that down; **but when it comes to be calling "Anointed Christ," or something, that was too much for me. So I just couldn't stand that.**

... After leaving the meeting at Canada, I found out that way up in the Eskimos or the Indians up there, **it had got among them.**

... And I just couldn't stand it any longer, to think that thirty-one years of ministry went down the Devil's gutter pipe, into the... When I'm gone, what will they say? "There he is, that's exactly what it was"; and all the influence that I had upon the people, then you see where it'd be, **I'd be an antichrist.** And I just couldn't stand it!

... And I wondered; if it would have been some enemy of mine, it would been all right, but I would just have laughed at it and went on; **but when it come to being precious brothers,** precious sisters, then that's what hurt me.

... I had a visitation from the Lord. And I seen a precious one's... a babying...a serpent which was yellow and black, and telling me right along, and the thing struck me on the leg. But the blood was so rich it didn't take effect on me. And I looked down, and there's where I had been bit before. And I turned quickly with a gun and shot the thing, and it hit it right in the middle of the thing.

And a brother said... I turned with my gun to shoot its head off, and he said, "Don't do that, just pick up the stick laying there by you." And when I turned my back to pick up the stick, it **wiggled into some water, just a small puddle of water.**

Water is doctrine.

This bruised serpent is a symbol of the 'Deity doctrine' -- of calling brother Branham the Anointed Christ.

He tried to kill it but did not succeed. It still lurks in a puddle of unscriptural doctrine, not in the flowing River of Life, the Word.

Elevating brother Branham up to the level of Jesus is a doctrine of this bruised serpent.

This doctrine evolves out of the seven Thunders beliefs, because they are not written in Scripture, and are thus just a puddle of quotes. Beware of puddle pirates, calling themselves Message preachers.

People begin to think of brother Branham as being the Christ, but brother Branham came to point out Jesus in the Word of God. He did not come to replace Jesus Christ.

1964 03 24 The seventh seal

There's no great man among us.

We're not great men, not great women--we're all brothers and sisters, all the same in the same bracket.

We're no great. One don't make one greater than the other one--not a thing at all to do. No, sir. But we're just all human beings.

Don't try to interpret the things.

Don't try to do anything more than just live a close life, giving praise and honor to Jesus Christ.

... Don't say, "Thank you," to anybody at all. Don't say... **Thinking some minister or something, some mortal man, there's anything good about him, 'cause there's not; I don't care who he is. There's nothing good to any man.**

That's right. If there's a whole bunch of trumpets laying here and one of them had to sound out a certain music; it's the man; them trumpets are perfectly mute. It's the fellow that can sound the trumpet, that knows what he's going to do, that picks up a trumpet. **The trumpet has nothing to do with it.** The sound comes from the intelligence behind it (That's right), so all trumpets are the same;

All men are the same; all Christians are the same.

... **We don't want never put a man in it.**

You forget anything about me.

I am your brother, a sinner saved by grace, not fit to live; that's exactly the truth; and I ain't saying that to be humble; that's facts.

There's nothing in me, not one sound thing at all.

But the grace of God has let my poor dimming eyes look beyond the curtain of time and see those things yonder, and I come back...

A revelation of the opening of the Seals that he saw in the future by means of a vision.

Then he came back to tell us about this future event.

Brother Branham saw the opening of the Seals as a future event. He *revealed* them to us in broad outline but the actual detailed opening only happens once the Bride is in Heaven, in Revelation Chapter 6.

64-0315 Influence

Here is a good example. **Always be conscious of your littleness, not your bigness.**

Today, we Americans, so much, that we try to think that we're big somebody, "We belong to something big, some big organization, some great big something that's got..." Oh, great big, big, **big is all we see.**

And that when... One time, in the Bible, we have an example of that. There was a prophet went back in the cave and... Elijah. And God was trying to attract his attention, to come out. And there come the fire, and smoke, and blustering winds across the mountains, **and thunder, and earthquakes, and shakings, and everything else.**

The prophet never even moved.

God wasn't even in it. **But when that still, small Voice spoke, he covered his face and come forward.**

When the still, small Voice of God's Word speaks, not a racket,

Not our big denominations, not our big something, but that still, small Voice, of the Word, that's looked over. That should call a man to repentance. **God in His Word!**

Yet, He covered His feet; and become **conscious of... our littleness before God.**

... And oh, when this comes to pass, **it'll be great, big like this, and it'll be so humble you'll miss the whole thing and just go right on.**

It's an American spirit to look for something bigger and better. That is not God's Spirit.

The Pharisees used to want bigger and better.

Matthew 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments

God works in the little groups, the gleaners like Ruth.

Zechariah 4:10 For who hath despised the day of small things?

64-0629 The mighty God unveiled before us

It was God in Christ; God in a Man; the fullness of the Godhead, bodily in a Man. **God in a Man!**

Now it's God in men, the fullness of God in the Godhead, bodily in His entire Church, manifesting Himself, fulfilling His Word.

... He said, "And when the Son of man is being revealed." **The Son of man, back in the Church again, revealed in human beings;** not Son of God, but **the Son of man again, back in His Church again,** in the last days. We find that He promised that in God's promises.

... And now the **Glory of God is behind your skin.**

"God in men". God in people -- not in one man.

"The **Son of Man** again, back in **His Church**".

God wanting to be back again in His church like it was at the Day of Pentecost.

The emphasis is not on God indwelling one man, William Branham, as that would elevate him into the Godhead.

The emphasis is the fullness of God wanting to indwell the fullness of His entire church as He did on the Day of Pentecost.

... show this world what they need: not a world's fair, but a world revival that'll be filled and baptized with the Presence of the living God, enmorphed **inveiling Himself into human flesh.** Hallelujah! I believe it.

... And may we see that unveiled One, that One Who came down and rent the veil of the temple; and then went right out of that veil, **come right down into human veils again, on the Day of Pentecost;** has ever been the same, changing from Glory to Glory.

God was in 120 people on the Day of Pentecost. We have to get back to those days. Not God in one man, God in His church.

62-0601 Taking sides with Jesus

Now, do you know, when those early men went out, sometimes there were only about six or eight of them, together? And they shook the country. Well, you know, when Aquila and Priscilla, that great revival that Apollos was having over there, there was only about six or eight men and women in that bunch. **That whole church, meant six or eight.** You got five or six, seven times as many here tonight as they had then.

You know, Jesus only had twelve apostles. **We always thinking for something big. But God don't deal in them big numbers. It's in these little groups is where He gets it.** See? Look all down through the age, at any time He ever met with men. **It was in small groups**, see, and spoke with them, and **ordained them**. It's God's good pleasure to do that. That's the way He likes to do it. And now we just want to keep God in our midst, and go, doing these things.

God ordained men in the small groups.

The Catholic Church (the Beast) has a succession of man-appointed Popes.

The Protestants copy this. Today we have pastors succeeded by their sons as pastors. A Protestant succession from father-to-son. Empire building.

In the last age God is not looking for a church experience.

He wants each individual to have a personal experience with Him, because He knows that the church is blind and lukewarm, with bits of Scripture that is mixed with bits of quotes and lots of human opinions.

You are influenced and manipulated by others in your desire to belong to a group. Babylon thrives on forced submission to an exalted human leader. In this process you lose your personal experience with Jesus.

65-1128M God's Only Provided Place of Worship

Out there in Tucson, is listening in this morning, I once wondered... **I've always constraining people, "Go to church, no matter where you go."** And I seen the people kind of pulling back, and going this way. And I thought, "What's the matter?"

I went to some of them, **"The first day you're there, they'll approach you, 'Join our church.' If you don't do it, you're not welcome."** See? See? **It's a forced thing, it's forced upon you, see, and that's Babylon.** But in Christ, you come in by election; not by force, your heart pulls you in.

God did not put His name then in Babylon. Closely now. He cannot put His Name in **Babylon, the churches.** Oh, they, they put His Name in there, but He never. No.

In 1965 brother Branham was doubting his own advice which was when he had told people to go to church.

The churches simply force your conformity to their beliefs.

This includes the Message churches.

They are also pastor-dominated, and do not want you unless you agree with them. You are not allowed to think for yourself. You are not allowed to disagree.

65-1128M God's only provided Place of worship

Now, He said, "The place that I'm going to meet you and receive your sacrifice is where I choose to put My Name. You come in at this gate, this door where I choose to put My Name. There's where you come."

Well, they put, "This is the Church of Christ." If there's anything that's wrong in that declaration, it left out one word: "anti." Uh-huh, all that He taught, they disagree with It. Modern Pharisees.

When we take on any name other than Christian or disciple or believer, then we move into the anti-christ camp. Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecostal. In-the-Message.

All unscriptural in terms of the early church, whose example we should follow.

As soon as a Message or denominational church disagrees with Scripture, it becomes antichrist. The pastors become Pharisees.

The word Pharisee can be made to mean Phar- I - see or Far-I-see. Pastors are splicing and interpreting quotes to see far into a mystery that is not even written in the Bible, such as their versions of the seven Thunders. Trying to interpret what is not written is just foolish guesswork that can only impress the Bible-illiterate. The seven Thunders were never written so they cannot refer to seven things that are written in the Bible.

The Pope also believes mysteries that are not written in the Bible like Trinity, purgatory, Christmas, Lent, etc.

So believing in what is not written in the Bible cannot put you in God's will because you are behaving the same way as the Vatican, which is mystery Babylon.

Ephesian Church Age -- Church Age book, chapter 3

Oh, yes! In Revelation 12, that old whore had many daughters. These daughters are just like mother. They set the Word aside, deny the work of the Spirit of God, subjugate the laity, and make **it impossible for the laity to worship God unless they come through them** or through their pattern, which is nothing but a blueprint of unbelief from Satan himself.

64-0629 The Mighty God unveiled before us

...that God is calling **an exodus**, to come from behind the fleshly curtain **who tries to impersonate, who tries to join church;** not Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, altogether, but Pentecostal churches.

It is an individual affair. It's you and God. You have to go in, not your group, not your church, not your pastor, but it's you who has to go in.

This is the heart of the matter. The third exodus is not joining a church. You may fellowship in a church but you put the Bible first. You do not compromise any Bible truth in order to be accepted into some church.

An individual affair is not a church group-think experience. You think for yourself from Scripture. The pastor does not think for you.

Brother Branham revealed the truth and now each one of us has to receive a personal revelation of the revealed Scripture.

We have two options before us.

Either we are restored to the early New Testament church

or else

we return to the habits and example of the mother harlot Rome.

The Pope is the only dictator in Europe. His dictatorship style of leading the church has infiltrated the Protestant churches. Nowhere does the Bible call a pastor the head of the church. No Scripture says that the pastor is the shepherd of the sheep.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as **Christ is the head of the church:**

So our age has us being deceived into following the pattern of the Roman Catholic church

For example, the Roman Catholics accepted Christmas around the year 350 AD as a direct imitation of the Roman sun god's birthday, established on 25 December 274 AD by the Roman emperor Aurelian. Nowhere does the Bible ask us to celebrate the birth of the Lord. Yet today Christmas is the main festival for the Protestant churches and Message churches.

Take your eyes off the Bible and you end up copying Rome. Their thinkers are very clever. Very deceptive.

That is why Revelation 10: 7 said "**should be finished**".

We are too busy following Rome's example to finish the mystery of being restored back to the beliefs of the early church.

After all, Rome is "Mystery Babylon", with all her enticing attractions. There are 1200 million converts attracted to Roman Catholicism. So she is an attractive church, represented by an attractive woman in Revelation Chapter 17.

When questioned about a sign of His coming, Jesus first replied that **our biggest enemy would be deception.**

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and **what shall be the sign of thy coming**, and of the end of the world?

:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, *Take heed that no man deceive you.*

If the people are deceived by their leaders, they will not return to the beliefs of the first church age.

The first church of the New Testament never had a pastor in charge of the church. The early church never attempted to understand the unwritten mysteries of the seven Thunders, nor the silence of the seventh Seal, nor find out what the unwritten new name of Jesus is.

They only preached what was written in Scripture.

II Timothy 4:2 Preach the word;

Luke 4:8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for **it is written**,...

The early church checked everything with Scripture, even when it was spoken by their great messenger Saint Paul.

Like Jesus, they replied to the Devil with, "It is written ..."

Acts 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

:11 **These** were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

"**These**" -- Plural. They searched and checked. At Berea they had a fresh and honest approach. They questioned and examined the ideas to get a personal revelation.

They checked with the written Word. They had the freedom to think for themselves.

They did not conform to a pastor's opinions and become parrots.

Once brother Branham left us in 1965, the seventh church age fell prey to many problem areas.

In 1966 a whole different era started.

All we had was his *voice* to guide us back to the Bible, and many Message preachers who misinterpreted quotes to mislead us.

Addiction to cell phones has made people voracious consumers of what is often useless information.

This symbolizes the unscriptural ideas that we so easily consume and believe.

Building up a spider web of spliced and misinterpreted quotes caused the invention of false realities that are overstated by endless repetition and mostly not supported by Scripture.

The biggest cause of confusion and error amongst those who believed brother Branham was the end-time prophet, was the great Cloud of 1963.

We need to understand the truth about this Cloud in order to realize how ignorance and wrong statements launched so many mistakes.

It also sadly demonstrated that Message people are too lazy to check the facts. They are not like the people of Berea.

It all started on February 28, 1963. A thrust assisted Thor rocket was launched from pad 75-3-5 at Vandenburg Air Force Base in California carrying a Keyhole 4 military surveillance satellite. The rocket started to veer off course and was intentionally destroyed at an altitude of 44 kilometers (144,000 feet) at 1:52pm. The rocket had a solid state booster which also exploded with a huge amount of smoke. The rocket was still very low in its trajectory so the liquid fuel in its tanks was quite full. Thus the amount of smoke caused by the explosion was excessive. The prevailing winds blew the smoke cloud eastward towards the city of Flagstaff in northern Arizona.



But, at that height the air is so thin that the smoke particles were too spread out to be visible in daylight.

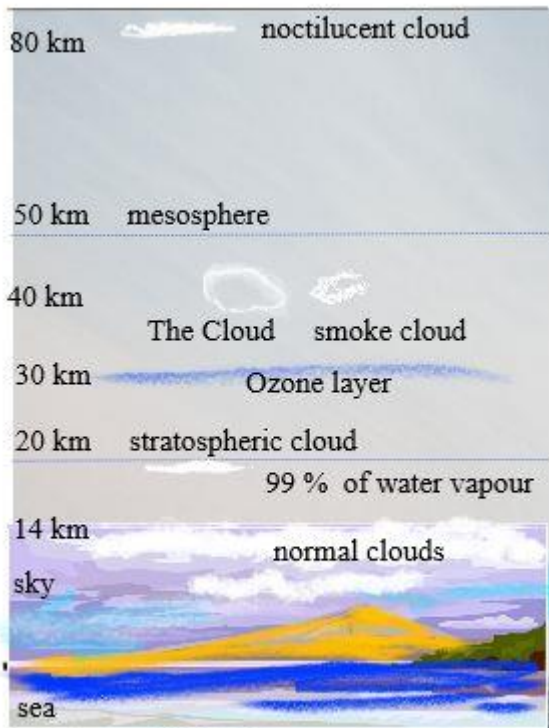
The dispersed smoke particles cannot be seen from the ground against the sun's glare from the blue sky.

The invisible smoke cloud drifted invisibly eastwards during the afternoon. A high altitude cloud, above 20 km height, is too spread out and cannot be seen against the glare of sunlight .

No visible natural cloud can form between 20 km and 80 km as there is not enough water vapour in the air to form a cloud.

Between 80 - 85 km, complex chemistry involving tiny fragments of water vapour and methane can form electric blue noctilucent -- shining at night -- clouds on microscopic meteorite dust particles if the temperature is below minus 123 degrees Celsius. But this does not happen at 40 km which is why the scientist James McDonald ignored noctilucent clouds.

Let us understand noctilucent smoke clouds.



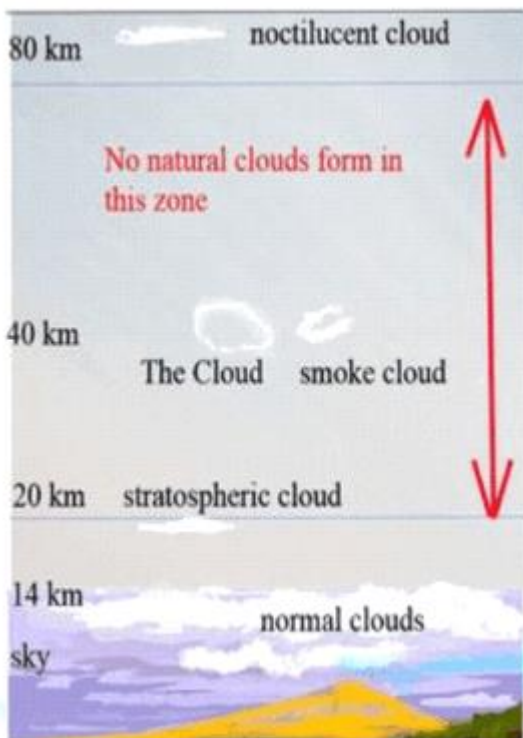
A few noctilucent clouds can form nearer to the north pole between 80 to 85 kilometers high.

All the rest of the natural clouds form below about the height of 20 km as 99% of the water vapour that forms clouds is below the 20 km height.

Thus there are no natural clouds between 20 km and 80 km in height. If you see a cloud between 20 and 80 km it has to be artificial or man-made.

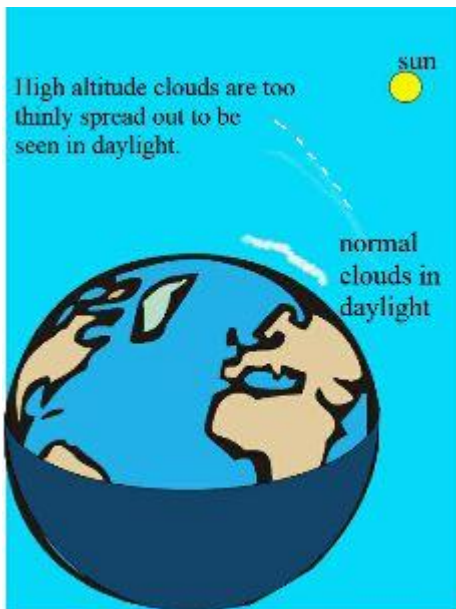
When a gallon of petrol burns it forms a gallon of water vapour. This water vapour from jet engines or rocket motors can form artificial clouds between 20 km and 80 km. But the scientist James McDonald found no evidence of jets or rockets over Flagstaff.

The smoke and debris from the Thor rocket explosion could also form an artificial smoke cloud in this region between 20 km and 80 km.

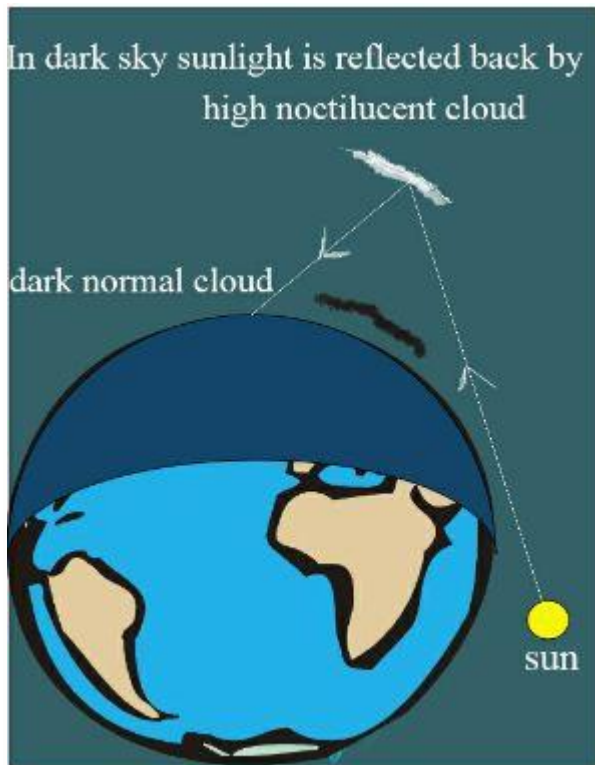


Artificial clouds that are between 20 km and 80 km high are usually only visible just after sunset and before sunrise. The only time we usually see the international space station is the ten minutes or so when it is overhead just after sunset or just before sunrise. Why is this?

Smoke is so thinly dispersed at 40 km height because the air is so thin that the smoke cannot be seen against the glare of the blue sky. Only below 20 km is the air thick enough for water vapour to get closely packed and dense enough to form clouds that are visible from the ground.



When the sun sinks below the horizon then for a brief while after sunset the sunlight reflects off the bottom of the cloud. When the sky above is black, this thin smoke cloud, if at an altitude of about 40 km becomes visible for about half an hour. Higher clouds can be visible for longer.



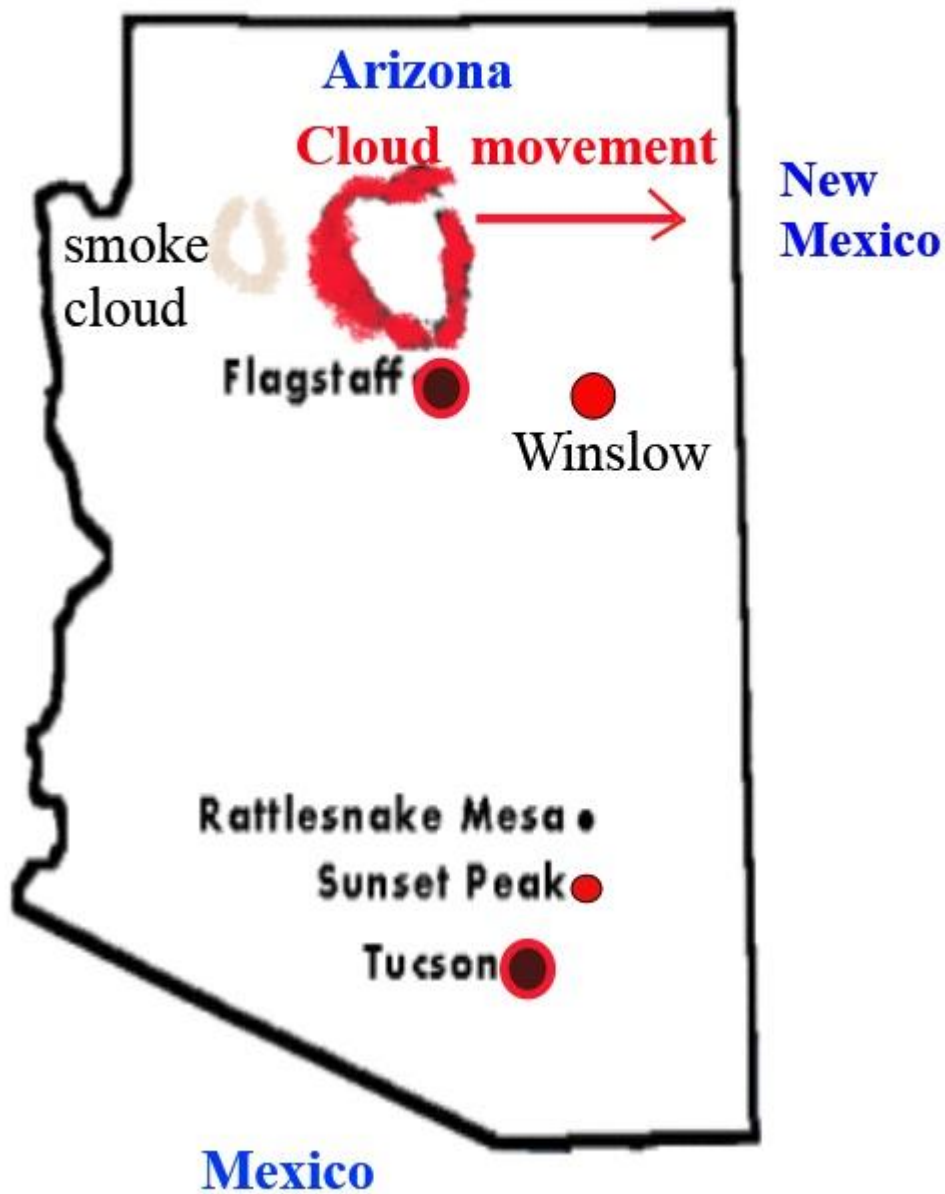
When the smoke cloud arrived near Flagstaff at 18.40 evening time just after sunset, the sky was dark enough for the smoke cloud to be seen. Then suddenly a much larger supernatural Cloud appeared about 20 miles in front of it, also at a height of about 42 kilometers (30 miles high). This bigger Cloud was briefly visible for 28 minutes.

Why this second cloud is supernatural, made from angel's wings, is that there is no other physical means to make a high altitude cloud artificially. Today we could do so by spraying chemicals up there. But that technique was not employed back in 1963.

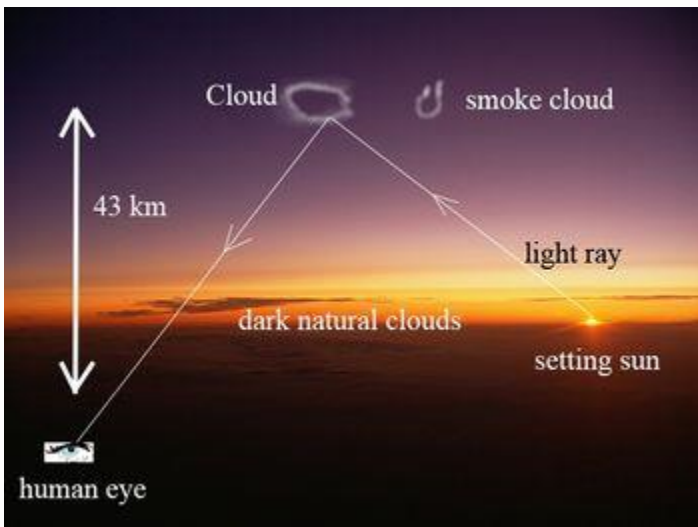
This photograph was taken from Winslow which was in the path of the moving clouds.



This is what baffled scientist James McDonald. There were **two clouds**. One was created by the exploding rocket. There was no explanation for the other cloud.

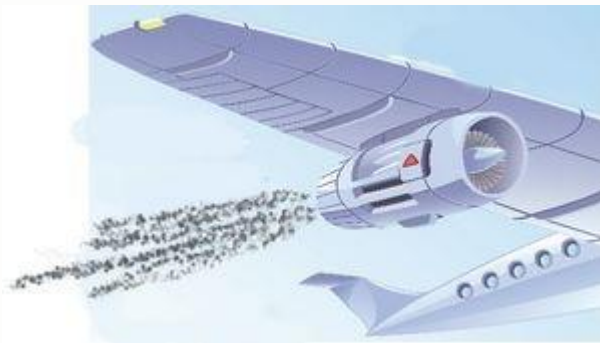


The following picture is **NOT** a photograph, but just a picture to show how the two clouds were visible.



The normal clouds were dark after sunset. The shiny white clouds that reflected the sunlight were proof of their great height. That is what attracted people's attention

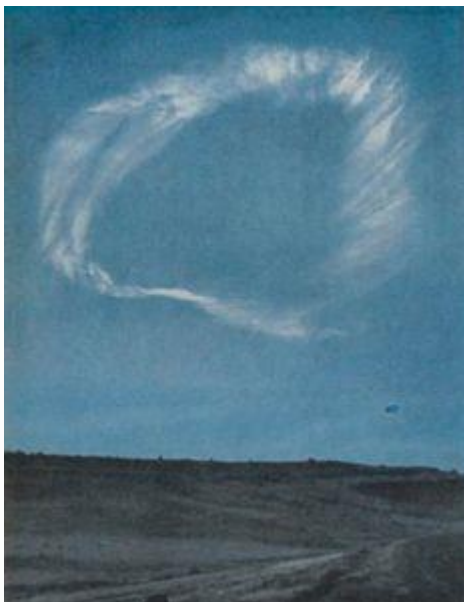
No natural clouds can form at this height. There were no jet aircraft or rockets around Flagstaff to provide exhaust gas fumes to form an artificial noctilucent cloud.



So the bigger Cloud could only be formed from angel wings. It was a sign in the heaven, which we call the atmosphere. No normal cloud can form at this height.

William Branham knew nothing about the Cloud. He was 200 miles south of it in Tucson. He only learned about the Cloud from an article on page 112 in the May copy of Life magazine.

This is the photograph taken on 28 February 1963 from the Tucson observatory. There was no face in the Cloud.



In 1965, the last year of his life, brother Branham described the Cloud as a sign in the heaven (or sky).

65-0718 Trying to do God a service, without being the will of God

And then in that great observatory, so that the world will be without, they're still wondering what happened. In Tucson, them big observatories took the picture of it up there; still wondering what happened. What is it? They still put in the paper, "Does anybody know anything about what, how it could have happen?" There is no fog up there, there's no air, there's no moisture; thirty miles high in the air. Oh, my!

"There shall be signs in the heaven above. And when these things take place, earthquakes in divers places, **then shall appear the sign in the heaven, of the Son of man.**" "That day," in Luke, "the Son of man will reveal Himself again; being revealed, Himself." And the world will look like Sodom and Gomorrah. Oh, my!

Matthew 24:29 and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Natural heaven is the sky or atmosphere. All the natural laws of atmospheric physics were broken when this "impossible" Cloud suddenly appeared at a great height. The Cloud had to be super-natural.

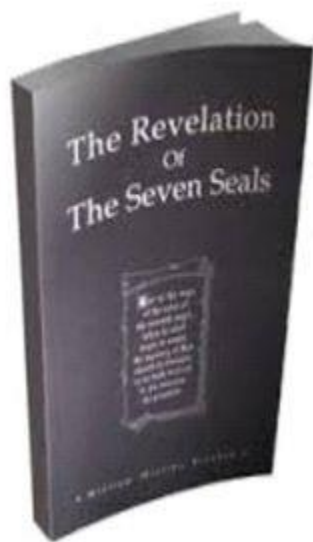
Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the **sign** of the Son of man in heaven:

This is the key point. The Cloud was not an event in itself.

The Cloud was a sign, high up in the sky, that an event was to take place.

Eight days later, two hundred miles south of Flagstaff, the seven angels that formed the Cloud would meet brother Branham near Sunset Peak (also called Sunset Mountain) and commission him to reveal the seven Seals of Revelation Chapter 6.

This is the cover of the book with those sermons.



It was not the actual opening of the Seals, which only happens when the Bride is in Heaven after the Rapture.

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

Before the event can happen in Heaven, it must first be revealed on earth by a prophet.

The Cloud had no face in it.

Brother Branham was not under it as he was 200 miles south in Tucson. Nobody spiritual was under the Cloud on 28 February 1963

The hunting season only opened the next day on 1 March 1963 at Sunset. On 4 March 1963 brother Branham preached a sermon "A Absolute" in Houston Texas. According to his daughter Becky, in her book 'Return to Sunset', he got to Sunset Peak on 6 March 1963.

Then 7 angels came to him invisibly on 8 March (8 days after the Cloud was seen) and told him to go back to Jeffersonville to reveal the Seals in Revelation Chapter 6. The angels then left invisibly.

Then brother Branham made a big mistake.

Prophets can make mistakes. But that does not stop them being prophets.

John the Baptist, fore runner of the first coming of Jesus, at the end doubted if Jesus was the Messiah.

Jesus never criticized John for that massive mistake. He just corrected the prophet John by referring to the Scriptures.

We must follow this example when brother Branham makes mistakes.

55-0607 The True Vine and a False Vine

But God, in His **prophets** and in His seers and so forth, absolutely knows that these things as God will reveal it.

There's many things He don't reveal to His servants. Look at old Jacob setting on a stone. Setting up there and brought his boy's coat back... And you knowed he was a prophet. Brought his coat back and said, "A beast killed your boy." That was wrong. He didn't know the difference for forty years.

Look at Isaac, setting up there total blind, and here come Jacob up and said, "I'm Esau." He blessed him, for Esau--and a prophet...

Look at this Elijah, setting there and here come the Shunammite women and fell down by him like that. Said, "God's troubled her heart and kept it from me." They don't know all things. **They just know as God will let them know.**

They're not infallible people.

The Bible said, "Elijah was man subject to like such passions as we are," his up and downs, and differences.

Brother Branham assumed that the seven angels formed the Cloud when they left him at Sunset Peak.

But the Cloud was eight days earlier and it was 200 miles north of him.

From that unfortunate mistake, many wrong doctrines would emerge.

After brother Branham died, this picture was published and sent around the world.



To the Message-believers, the Cloud was no longer a sign, it was Christ Himself.

Something was going very wrong in their thinking.

The Cloud was no longer over Flagstaff city -- the Message-believers had moved it to 200 miles south to Sunset Mountain (also called Sunset Peak or just Sunset).

Error breeds error.

Many Message believers, especially in South Africa, believed this Cloud was actually the coming of the Lord on 28 February 1963, the day before the hunting season opened. There was no way that brother Branham would have been hunting illegally on that day.

Notice this huge deviation.

Brother Branham never said that "the Cloud was the coming of the Lord", but his followers decided to interpret his quotes that way. They even painted "Jesus has come" on a mine dump in Johannesburg.

So a new age dawned after 1966 -- changing brother Branham's quotes to fit your interpretation of his quotes.

Fanaticism produced Fake News to replace Scripture.

Pearry Green had made a Photostat of the back cover of Life magazine which he showed to brother Branham. That is the first time brother Branham heard of the Cloud.

But the Photostat was not a true copy and had dark and light areas.



This photostat gave the appearance of a face which reminded brother Branham of Hoffman's head of Christ.



Once brother Branham had left the scene his followers then published this *modified* photograph.

Many believed that this was the actual photograph that was taken over Flagstaff on 28 February 1963.



But that was not good enough as it lacked a rainbow over the Head of Christ, Whose face suddenly appears in the Cloud. This is not reality. This is Photoshop.



Back to Photoshop. Now Hoffman's head of Christ is really in the Cloud.

Notice how much the Cloud photograph has been changed. This symbolizes how Message preachers have changed the sign that God showed in the heaven to fit in with their ideas that are based on a mistake that brother Branham made.

He never stood below the Cloud. He never saw the Cloud. The Cloud was never over Sunset Mountain (or Sunset Peak).

But changes never seem to stop, once they get going.

Notice the faint rainbow over the head.

How did the faint rainbow suddenly also appear?

The Cloud was on page 112 of Life magazine and on the back of that page was a Honolulu moon rainbow on page 113. But Revelation Chapter 10 had nothing to do with the moon.

God's covenant with the earth in Noah's day was a rainbow produced by the sun.

Let us pretend that the moon rainbow on the back of page 112 somehow was able to bleed its colours through the page as if you were looking through page 112. This is what you would see.

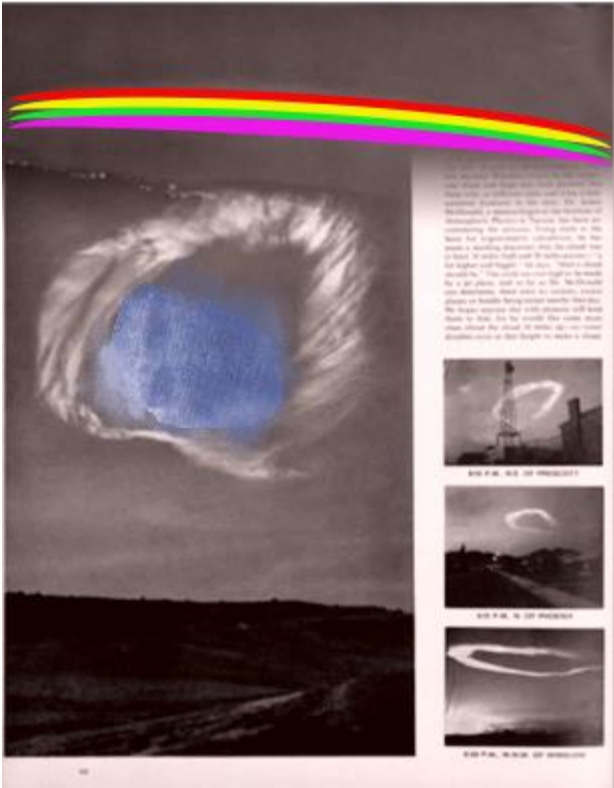


The rainbow looks very faint because you have to look through the page to see it.

Let us draw a brightly colored rainbow just for clarity.



Let us add the shadows from the Photostat to the Cloud in order to show the face.



But the rainbow is in the wrong place. It is not over the head. It runs parallel to the cheek.
 Let us put in the face using photoshop.



But His Head is lying sidewise. He is not standing vertically.
Then we have to turn the photograph through 90°.



But the rainbow is not over His head. The Cloud photograph was turned through 90 degrees to look like a man's head when he is standing upright.

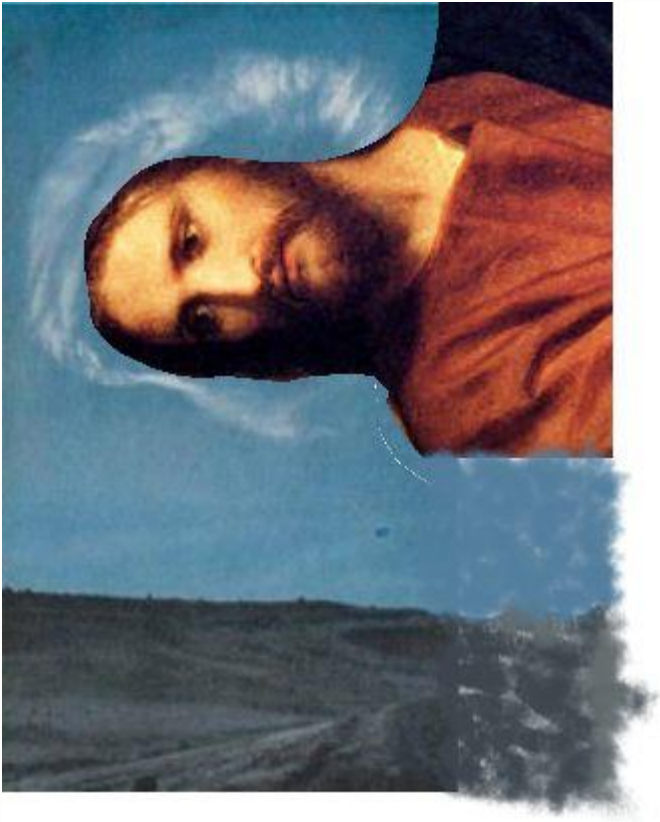
When the head is upright, the rainbow is not over His head.

This interpretation is totally wrong for Revelation Chapter 10!

Revelation 10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

And the Cloud does not represent the Head of a Person who is standing on earth. The Cloud never came down below 42 kilometers in height.

The Cloud would be the Head of a Person who is floating parallel to the ground.



Thus the Cloud does not represent Revelation Chapter 10 with the Angel coming down.

Look how flat the surface of the land is. There is no Sunset Mountain where the Cloud was photographed. Sunset Mountain is 200 miles south of Flagstaff city.

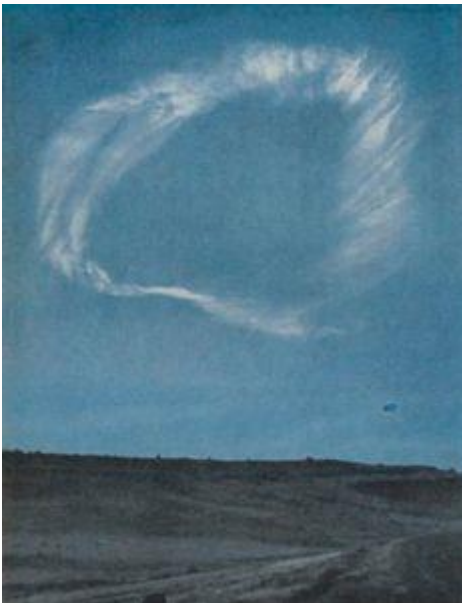
What does a picture of Revelation Chapter 10:1-3 look like?



Revelation 10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

: 2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

What did the original Cloud look like?



The Cloud is obviously not the fulfillment of Revelation 10: 1 - 2.

So what went wrong?

Message believers thought that brother Branham was **infallible** and that they could build up their faith just on his quotes.

They felt that there was no need to follow his quotes through the Bible.
This is sheer laziness. Reading and checking with the Bible is hard work.
It takes a lot of reading just to know what is written in the Bible.
And a lot more effort to find out where all the relevant verses are in order to understand a topic.

Message preachers say that **you cannot correct the prophet.**

So if he got his facts wrong, you must just repeat his mistakes. (How silly can people get).

The angels came to brother Branham 8 days after forming the Cloud. They formed no Cloud on that day.

Then came a big problem. Different quotes sometimes contradicted each other.

Some say the Cloud was the coming of the Lord. But then other say brother Branham preaching the revelation of the seventh Seal on 24 March 1963 brought the Lord back to earth.

So we have a different date for His coming as this is a month after the Cloud.

63-1110M Souls that are in Prison now

The Seventh Seal brings Him back to earth.

But then things get a bit more difficult because he says the seventh Seal never opened, it remains a top secret.

64-0719M The Feast of the Trumpets

The Seventh Seal hasn't opened yet, you know. That's His Coming.

And then in the last year of his life he claimed that he was still waiting for the coming of the Lord.

65-0725 What is the Attaction on the Mountain

We send greetings up in the mountains, Prescott, Arizona, to Brother Leo Mercier and his group that's up there **waiting for the Coming of the Lord.** We send greetings to those in Tucson, that's gathered tonight, **waiting for the Coming of the Lord.** Down into Houston, Texas, to those who are **waiting for the Coming of the Lord.** Up in Chicago, to those who are **waiting for the Coming of the Lord.** Up on the East Coast, New York and Connecticut, and the great groups up there, that's **waiting for the Coming of the Lord.** We don't have room here to seat them, so we just have to send them the Word through the--the medium of the telephone. We send greetings to Brother Junior Jackson tonight, and his group down in Clarksville. Brother Ruddell, up on sixty-two, and his group, **waiting for the Coming of the Lord.** And we're gathered here tonight at the home church, the tabernacle, **waiting for the Coming of the Lord.**

But error does not stand still. Error mutates like a virus.

"If the Cloud is not the coming of the Lord, then it must be the coming down of the mighty Angel of Revelation Chapter 10."

Message believers refused to believe that the supernatural Cloud, that was seen for 28 minutes just after sunset as it moved east of Flagstaff at a height of about 42 kilometers, was **just a sign in the heaven.**

This Cloud had to be something far more dramatic.

So the spectacularly high Cloud suddenly became the Angel of Revelation Chapter 10 coming down. Even though the Cloud never came down on 28 February 1963.

And when the seven angels came down on 8 March 1963, they never formed a Cloud -- either on their way down, or on their way up.

Some claimed that the Cloud was not the Angel. But that the Angel of Revelation 10 did come down. However they are unsure about such details as where or when the Angel came down.

But they all insist that the Angel came down during brother Branham's life time on earth.

This is essential to develop a major wrong doctrine.

If the Angel has come down, then the **seven Thunders have already uttered.**

And that is what Message preachers are desperate to claim, so that they can "reveal" the seven Thunders that are not even written in the Bible.

At this point the Message preachers deviate from Scripture, and most of the Message groups learned to place quotes and the manipulation of quotes above Scripture.

Quotes are manipulated just like they manipulated the original photograph of the Cloud of 1963.



So why two clouds?

63-0623 Standing in the Gap

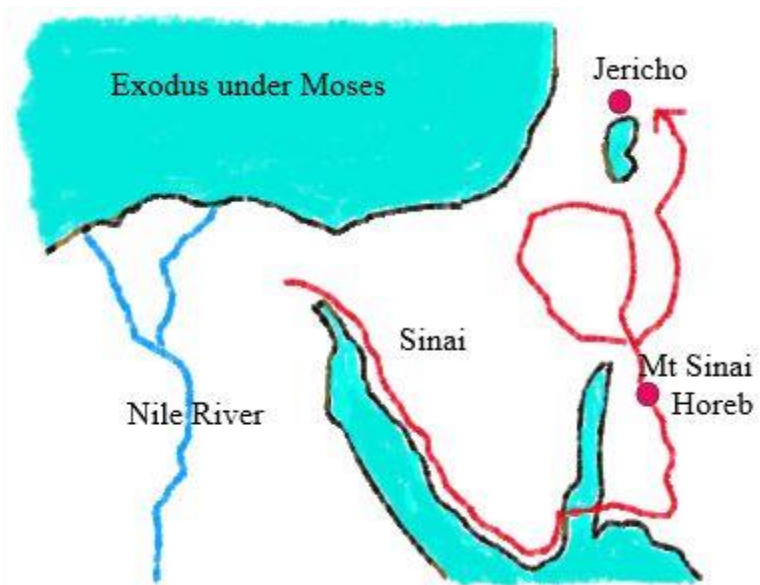
And he said that he went up the mountain. And when he did, I was standing there. And a Voice came from the Cloud, (Wasn't it, Brother Roy?) and said something on this order, "This is My servant. And I've called him to be a prophet to the age, **to lead the people just as Moses did**. And he's been given the authority, he could speak into existence." Or something like that, like Moses did, like speaking in the flies. And we know about the squirrels, and so forth, and things that's already took place. Little Hattie Wright back there, I suppose you know what taken place at the house. And He told him that I had done what Moses had done.

Malachi 4: 4 **Remember ye the law of Moses** my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

:5 **Behold, I will send you Elijah** the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Something about Moses is linked to the ministry of brother Branham.

Moses led the first exodus which brought the Jews out of Egypt. Children were killed by Pharaoh. The first exodus was in two parts. Moses brought them up to the border of the Promised Land. Then he died and Joshua took over to take them into the Promised Land. The red path shows the first part of the Exodus under Moses.



What was the significance of Joshua taking over when they got to the Jordan River?

Jordan symbolizes "death to self".

Jesus was baptized in Jordan.

Baptism is a symbol of death. Under water you cannot breathe.

61-0316 The Church choosing Law for Grace

"Jordan" means "death."

Got to die out to yourself before you cross over. That's right. Go over there; people live in a lukewarm condition. The Bible said so.

Them brethren out there on the mountain, they were blessed. They had--they prospered. Well, they had plenty to eat. Manna fell out of heaven. That was all right, but they were still out of the promise. **Just like the Laodicean church**, the Pentecostal church age. They've got blessings. But God didn't deal with them; He couldn't take them to the promised land, 'cause they wasn't conditioned to go until they got to a place that they realized they were dead in their theories. **Then God took them over.**

Brother Branham could only reveal the truth to us of Scripture.

We have to die to ourselves and allow God to enable us to cross over as individuals.

Joshua then represents the Holy Spirit.

60-0515E Adoption, part 1

Our Ephesians, our **Joshua, which is the Holy Spirit.**

"Joshua" means "Jesus, Saviour."

Joshua means the Holy Spirit representing it in the spiritual as that was in the natural, that He is our great Warrior. **He's our great Leader.** As God was with Joshua, so is God in the Holy Spirit, moving us about.

The second exodus was Jesus bringing the church out of the Jews. Herod killed the children. Jesus died and rose from the dead. That finished the first part of the second exodus. He then left the scene and the Holy Spirit came down into the church to produce the Book of Acts and guide the church through the seven church ages.

The third exodus is the Bride coming out of the church.

We are the spiritual children who must be turned back to the beliefs of our apostolic fathers in the first church age.

Those who twist up brother Branham's quotes into unscriptural beliefs simply take the spiritual children to their death in the Tribulation. Consider how many variations of "The Message" there are in the world today. They obviously cannot all be correct. Many people are being misled.

Brother Branham, by 1965, had taught us how to understand the written Scriptures. He then left the scene and the Holy Spirit, like Joshua, has to guide us into all truth so that we can return to the beliefs of the first church age.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: **for he shall not speak of himself;**

Today, too many Message preachers speak of themselves and uplift their own importance.

Daniel 11: 14 And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also **the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision;** but they shall fall.

Whatever this prophecy means, it shows that Satan gets human leaders to exalt themselves. Then the people take their eyes off Jesus, the Word, as they focus on their important leaders. Thus the preachers rob the people of their relationship with Jesus and His Truth. "Follow my leader" becomes the accepted theme as people cease to be strictly Scriptural.

If the Holy Spirit is our Joshua, then we should be following the Bible verses on *every* doctrine that we believe.

People cling to the Bible-ignorance of their chosen church with diminished expectations. They do not expect to understand the whole Bible because their leaders do not.

We bend reality to fit our perceptions. Eventually all ten virgins, wise and foolish, are fast asleep at the end.

65-0718 Trying to do God a service, without being the will of God

And then in that great observatory, so that the world will be without, they're still wondering what happened. **In Tucson, them big observatories took the picture of it up there;** still wondering what happened. What is it? They still put in the paper, "Does anybody know anything about what, how it could have happen?" There is no fog up there, there's no air, there's **no moisture; thirty miles high** in the air. Oh, my!

"There shall be signs in the heaven above. And when these things take place, earthquakes in divers places, then shall appear **the sign in the heaven, of the Son of man.**" "That day," in Luke, "the Son of man will reveal Himself again; being revealed, Himself."

In the last year of his life, brother Branham says that **the great Cloud was a sign.**

Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:

The sign of the Son of man in heaven.

This Cloud-sign was 42 kilometers high. It never came below that height.

On 28 February 1963 there were no angels that ascended or descended. Seven angels briefly used their wings to form the Cloud for 28 minutes after sunset near Flagstaff, 200 miles north of Tucson where brother Branham was.

He knew nothing of the Cloud.

The Cloud was not drawing attention to him as a man. It was drawing attention to the future revelation of the seven Seals.

John the Baptist was a forerunner of Jesus as he was on earth when Jesus came.

Brother Branham was not the forerunner as a person. His message of revealing Scripture is what will get the Bride ready to receive the coming of the Lord.

His voice, the voice of the seventh angel, will go forth to reveal the Bible mysteries.

59-1217 What was the Holy Ghost given for

"As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Christ, you'll have a Message that'll forerun the second coming of Christ."

63-0318 The first seal

Takes the Book and... of Seals and breaks them and shows the seventh angel, **for this alone, the mysteries of God, is the ministry of the seventh angel.**

Not the man William Branham, but the truth that he revealed.

Most of the living Bride were probably not yet born when the man William Branham died over 50 years ago. But they all hear his **voice** and read his sermons today.

But there was a second smaller cloud. A smoke cloud that was 20 miles behind the main Cloud.

The **smoke cloud** up at 42 kilometers height from the exploded rocket fulfilled the prophecy of Joel about signs in the heavens, **pillars of smoke**. Not a cloud made from water vapour, but a high altitude man-made smoke cloud.

Joel 2:30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and **pillars of smoke**.

The **sign in the heaven for the Laodicean age exodus from the church** was both a natural smoke cloud and a supernatural angelic Cloud. A combination of natural and supernatural.

The **first Exodus** of Moses and Joshua started with a sign. A bush (natural) on mount Sinai (also called mount Horeb, the mountain of God) that burned without being burnt up (supernatural).

A combination of natural and supernatural.

Moses then led the Jews out of Egypt and Joshua took them into the Promised Land.

Exodus 3:1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to **Horeb**.

3:2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, **the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed**.

The **second Exodus** began with a sign. A supernatural virgin-born Baby in a natural man-made manger. A combination of natural and supernatural.

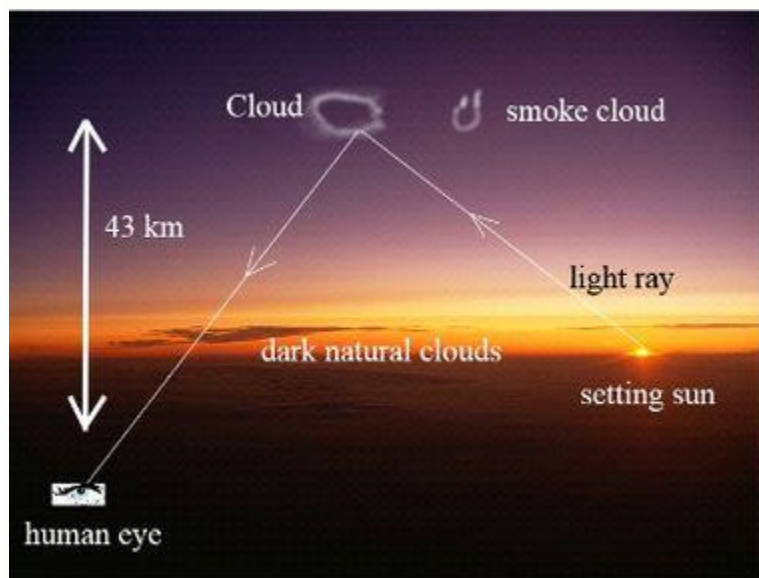
Jesus led the church out of Judaism. The Holy Spirit then led the church through the seven church ages.

Luke 2:12 And this shall be a **sign** unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

The **third Exodus** is for the message of brother Branham that revealed the mysteries of the Bible to lead us out of the churches. These revealed mystery-truths **should** take us back to the Bible beliefs of the apostolic fathers. To do this he had to reveal the seven Seals in order to explain the mysteries of Scripture. So his sign in the heaven was two impossibly high clouds. A supernatural Cloud, and a natural smoke cloud from the exploded rocket. Just like Moses had a supernatural fire in a burning bush as his sign.

But if we mess up and misinterpret his teachings, we will end up believing something that the early church never believed.

This picture is **NOT** a photograph but it shows how the rays of the setting sun could illuminate the two impossibly high clouds. It was their great height above the dark natural clouds that attracted people's attention.



The 7 angels who formed the supernatural Cloud came down to brother Branham eight days later to commission him to reveal the seven Seals. On that day the seven angels were invisible. No cloud formed.

But the revelation of the mysteries of Scripture is to give us a personal faith and experience with Jesus.

Malachi 4:4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

4:5 Behold, I will send you **Elijah** the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

4:6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Modern day Christians are the children who have to turn back to the Bible beliefs of the apostolic fathers, who wrote the New Testament.

Moses handed over to Joshua. Brother Branham, when he died, handed us over to the Holy Spirit as the only One who could individually make us understand the Scriptures, now that the mysteries had been revealed.

Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;

Notice -- It is not God's church any more. It is now the church of the Laodiceans. Each group makes up their own version of the Message. Some quotes, fewer Scriptures, and lots of man-made opinions. Each church has their own viewpoint that suits them.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Jesus, the Word, is outside every church.

He is not interested in the variations of "group-think" that happen in the church.

He appeals to to individuals who want to be Scriptural.

The final stage of the third exodus is when individuals have the courage and insight to be strictly Scriptural.

Another Scripture of the end time refers to the evil of the denominational church system, and the need of an inner personal experience with the Lord. Not a group church experience.

Revelation 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Babylon, the denominational church system where a church is subject to a human leader. Where the people are compelled to believe what is not written in Scripture.

An angel, a messenger, gives us a blunt warning of the evil of man-dominated churches who force people to believe human quotes and traditions instead of the Bible.

Revelation 18: 4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

This was not the angel telling us, "Come out of her, my people" (in this third and secret exodus). This is not a human voice from some man on earth. This voice comes from Heaven.

This was another voice. This was the inner conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Because in the church that has been invented by the Laodiceans, Jesus stands outside the church and appeals to an individual. This is only possible because Scripture has been replaced by human quotes and opinions. If that person wants to meet Jesus, he or she will have to move out of the unscriptural church beliefs.

In the last age God is not looking for a church-experience. He wants each individual to have a personal experience with Him, because He knows that the church is blind and lukewarm, with bits of Scripture that is mixed with bits of quotes and lots of human opinions.

You are influenced and manipulated by others in your desire to belong to a group. Babylon thrives on forced submission to an exalted human leader. In this process you lose your personal experience with Jesus.

The third exodus was not just brother Branham's ministry on earth.

The first exodus continued under Joshua after the death of Moses.

63-0318 The first seal

Takes the Book and... of Seals and breaks them and shows the seventh angel, **for this alone, the mysteries of God, is the ministry of the seventh angel.**

65-0725 The Anointed Ones at the End Time

Notice, the very day when this messenger... **Not when he starts on, but when he begins to declare his Message. See?**

The First Pull, healing; Second Pull, prophesying;

Third Pull, the opening of the Word, the mysteries revealed.

No more, there is no more higher order to reveal the Word, than prophets.

But the only way the prophet can be vindicated is by the Word.

And, remember, **the Third Pull was the opening of them Seven Seals, to reveal the hidden Truth that's been sealed in the Word.**

65-0725 What is the Attraction on the Mountain

So I've got my mind set on **this Message, that's that Third Pull,** and it's the one I must be loyal and reverent to.

So the third exodus is when the Holy Spirit guides us into the truths of the Bible.

That could only happen when brother Branham opened up the deeper mysteries as the Seals got revealed.

So the smoke cloud (natural) and the supernatural Cloud combined in the sky to vindicate that he was to reveal the Seals, and thus give the Bride the revelations that they would need so that they could understand the Bible for themselves.

You must believe the Bible out of a personal conviction. Not because others say those things.

Laodicea part 4 - Revelation 3:14-22, Not God's church

Revelation 3:14 **And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write**

The Laodiceans make up their own final church doctrines and traditions. "*the church of the Laodiceans*" is not the church **in** the city of Laodicea like the previous five church ages. This is a church age dominated by the unscriptural human thinking **of** the last age church leaders.

The "church **of** Ephesus" was the true example of Christianity that was meant to spread to the other church ages. This was the New Testament beliefs **of** the apostles.

Revelation 2: 1 **Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write;**

The final church age of Laodicea is supposed to be restored back to the first church **of** Ephesus. Thus God never intended there to be a church **of** Laodicea, the city representing the last church age.

But the peoples' reliance on human leadership **in** each of the in-between five church ages caused each age to go wrong **The churches left the example of the apostles** and each age went **in** its own different direction. Human leaders **in** each age invented their own specific errors due to their wrong reactions to their own different circumstances **in** history. Thus each age was partly Scriptural and partly unscriptural in different ways. Thus none of these next five church ages was the proper example for the last church age.

Revelation 2:8 **And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write;**

Revelation 2:12 **And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write;**

Thus it was recorded as the "church **in** Thyatira", the "church **in** Sardis".

Revelation 3:7 **And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;**

But the final church is **not** called the "church **in** Laodicea".

The final church is supposed to be restored back to the apostolic beliefs **of** the church in Ephesus, the first church age. The final church is supposed to be the restoration **of** the Ephesian church age.

1965 Church Age Book -- Laodicean Church Age

(God) is sending a vindicated prophet. He is sending a prophet after almost two thousand years. He is sending someone who is so far from organization, education, and the world of religion that as John the Baptist and Elijah of old, He will hear only from God and he will have "thus saith the Lord" and speak for God. He will be God's mouthpiece and HE, AS IT IS DECLARED IN MALACHI 4:6, WILL TURN THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN BACK TO THE FATHERS. **He will bring back the elect of the last day and they will hear a vindicated prophet give the exact truth as it was with Paul. He will restore the truth as they had it.** And those elect with him in that day will be the ones who truly manifest the Lord and be His Body and be His voice and perform His works.

But instead of following the seventh age's messenger, William Branham, back to New Testament Bible beliefs, the last church age lost direction. Rather like the legs of Daniel's vision of the Gentile image that split up into ten toes. This is the effect of Rome's denominational influence on the Message churches that have splintered up into numerous competing church groups.

We are either restored to the **scriptural** first church age beliefs **OR** we return to **unscriptural** beliefs and practices as Protestant daughter harlots of the unscriptural Roman Catholic mother harlot.

Take your choice.

Thus our **final church age has been made up by the ideas and opinions and traditions of the Laodiceans themselves**, not with the Bible.

The Laodiceans have made up their own church rules, doctrines, and beat-music worship. Drums and electric keyboards are in the church today, but drums are never mentioned in the Bible.

Man-made religion reaches its peak in our day. We think we are so clever.

But just consider how many different 'Message' churches there are, all different, yet each claiming to be correct. They obviously cannot all be correct.

To our shock and horror, we discover that in this final age God is **against** the Laodicean church which He describes as **apostate**.

But there is one spark of hope.

God is trying to help saved individuals to escape from the coming wrath of the Tribulation.

The Bible does not criticize the seventh angel (messenger) to the church.

But that is only one man in a world of nearly eight billion people.

This reminds us of Noah's day when, from all the world, only his family of eight were saved during the Flood.

Luke 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man

The family of Noah represent the foolish virgins who are saved before the Tribulation starts, but die in the Tribulation in their family or church-group experience. They are however saved from hell, and will eventually make heaven on Judgement day.

But even this number of eight is rather big.

Only one man, Enoch, escaped the Flood by being caught up to heaven.

Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

This is a warning to us.

Being caught up to meet the Lord in the air is a **personal experience** with Jesus and the Bible. It is not a family or church-group experience.

Enoch was not following some inspired human leader. Enoch's personal closeness to God did not get his wife, children, or friends taken up to heaven.

William Branham had the most spectacular ministry in the supernatural during this last church age. But when he began to reveal the mysteries of the written Bible, people in the churches either rejected him, or else his followers twisted up his quotes into unscriptural opinions.

But brother Branham is the only person from our Bible-forsaking age who is not criticized.

For the rest of us in Laodicea, God is scathing in His criticisms and rebukes. The Spirit does not say one kind thing to this age.

Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of **the church of the Laodiceans** write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

God's biggest objection to our last church age is that it is not His church any more. We have made up our own Laodicean church. Ours is the "church of the Laodiceans", the church belonging to the people of Laodicea, not the "church of God".

Laodicea means people's rights. And we stress our own rights about what we want to do and how we want to interpret quotes. We demand the right to dress and worship God in a way that suits us. We think we have the right to bend reality to fit our personal perceptions.

If we like Christmas on 25 December, then that is how it must be. Even if the Bible never asked us to celebrate the birth of the Lord. Even if "Christmas" is the Roman Catholic version of "Christ's mass". Even if 25 December is the Roman sun god's birthday, first established by the Christian-killing pagan Roman emperor Aurelian in 274 AD.

In Laodicea, who cares that all this is unscriptural? We demand it as our right to celebrate Christmas. Our children love it. And we demand the right to keep our children happy, even if it means being unscriptural.

That way we look very holy and religious despite the fact that we have deviated from Scripture.

We don't care if the wise men went into a house (not a stable) and saw a young child (not a baby). We want to believe that the presents of the wise men went to the Baby Jesus in the manger. We have no desire to be strictly Scriptural.

Matthew 2:11 And **when they were come into the house,** they saw the **young child** with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him:

We don't care if Jeremiah told us not to copy the pagan "christmas" tree.

Jeremiah 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, **Learn not the way of the heathen,**
:3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.
:4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

We think we impress God by sticking the name of Jesus onto a pagan custom. We actually make God sick.

Is God interested in a "birthday" for Jesus **every year** on the 25th **day** of the 12th **month**? The so-called Christmas **time**.

Galations 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

:10 Ye observe **days, and months, and times, and years.**

Galations 4:11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

An annual "Christian" celebration made Paul feel that he had actually wasted his time on so-called Christians who had this mentality. If Paul felt that people with the desire for annual celebrations had wasted his time, imagine how sick this kind of belief and behaviour makes God. And God has had to put up with the pagan sun god birthday since 274 AD, as well as the Roman church adopting it around 360 AD as the unscriptural **Christ's mass**.

Only two murderers, Pharaoh and Herod, ever celebrated a birthday in the Bible. Not a good example to follow.

Luke 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

December 25 is midwinter, which is freezing cold in Palestine. No shepherds could be out with their sheep at night.

So to claim that Jesus was born on 25 December is a complete contradiction of the Scripture.

That is how lukewarm we have become towards the Bible.

We love our Christmas church tradition so much that we happily contradict the Bible.

1965 Church Age Book - Laodicean Church Age

You have more Bibles than ever, but you are not doing anything about the Word except dividing and hacking it into pieces, taking what you want and leaving out what you don't want. You are not interested in LIVING it, but debating it. I would sooner you were cold or hot. **If you were cold and rejected it, I could stand that.** If you would get **white hot to know its truth and live it,** I would praise you for that. But when you simply take My Word and don't honor it, I in return must refuse to honor you. I will spue you out for you nauseate Me."

53-0403 The cruelty of sin, and the penalty that it cost to rid sin from our lives

And every man or woman that goes to church... Today I was thinking of the cathedrals a ringing out, and the bells a tolling, and so forth like that; and people going to the church, and making ready, and the women buying their Easter hats and so forth. What has this come to? My, how I can't understand where a rabbit (Easter bunny) has anything to do with the resurrection (See? No, sir.), or **how a Christmas tree has anything to do with the birth of Christ. It's pagan, friends. We've got off the path somewhere.** That's right. But now a real born again man or woman realizes, because there's life within you, tells you that that's wrong.

56-0311A The True Vine and False Vines

The world has got even Easter, **Christmas**, and every thing else, till it's a great day of commercial, nothing about God in it. What in the world's Easter got to do with a rabbit, or a chicken, or a yellow duck, or something? **We are just as pagan as the heathens are** and worse than they are in Africa. And yet, you put up with it. **God help us to shun those things.** As the sunlight of God begin to bathe down and expose those things, let's walk in the Light.

60-1207 The Pergamean Church Age

And now... and they made a big feast up there and invited the Nicolaitanes to come up. Oh! Isn't it perfect? "The teaching of Balaam you have in you." See, telling Pergamos what they had, the big races. There they thought that... These Nicolaitanes thought, "Well, now, that's fine. This **big feast is celebrated annually**? Yes." So then with the invitation to the so-called archbishop, or whatever he was then, and everything, they taken to make it a continual thing: to bring in fornications, bring in adultery, forming up the Catholic church; which is every Protestant denomination a member of it, organization. God has no organization, and hates the very name of it. The Bible said so.

And when they did that, what happened? They--they said now... They had to have a spiritual application, so they changed the (Lord Jesus) S-o-n of God's birthday from April (Which all good scholars know, and anybody with spiritual revelations, that He was born in nature time like when lambs and everything else is born: in April.) way back up to the 25th day of December. **And still worship Christmas**, now it's Santa Claus. And what... Oh, mercy. See? **Still more pagan festivals added to it. That's just all. There you are, invited, Balaam. "You have the doctrine of Balaam among you."** There it is. (O God, just reveal it, Father.) See? The birthday from April until...

Now, the historian says that "All evidence that Jesus was born in the month of April when all other life comes forth." But they've changed it back to the 25th day of December, five days after (see?) after the pagan god, **so they could put their ceremonies together: paganism and Christianity. And Catholicism is nothing in the world but a bunch of pagan superstitions and Christianity's off-casts put together. That's right. That is true. And the Protestants that knuck' to it is just exactly the daughter of the mother prostitute.** That's exactly.

Now, God help us to be real protestors against anything that's not godly.

61-1217 Christianity versus Idolatry

Celebration of Christmas, pagan, devil-worship.

64-0719 The Feast of the Trumpets

There is that Roman empire, bound there by what? The ecclesiastical powers. Which, Rome, pagan Rome become papal Rome, and was bound there in its traditions of Christian. What **part of Christian, and superstitions it had of Rome putting together all these;** worship of women, and all these other kind of stuff, **and Christmas days**, and holidays, and holy days, and things. It's been bound with that tradition that it cannot let loose, because it's against Christian principles. **Still the same ungodly, pagan spirit!** And that spirit caught into the nations of the world, according to the prophecies of Ezekiel and the rest of the them.

Christmas and Trinity are two powerful Roman Catholic ideas that help to unite all the different churches together.

Somehow Santa got associated with Christmas.

But just move the 'n' to the end of the word : Satan.

Look how easily the Devil has fooled us.

So today we have 45 000 different denominational and non-denominational churches. This is a real spiritual swamp of human rights. And God vomits every church out of His mouth, which is where His Word is.

"Amen" always comes at the end. "So be it". We are the last church age.

God's Word is faithful and true. That will never change. But if we forsake being strictly Scriptural then we cease to be faithful towards Scripture.

Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are **called, and chosen, and faithful.**

Looking ahead to Armageddon, the people who are with Jesus have to be called by Him but in addition, they have to stay faithful to this calling if they want to be chosen.

Being called by God to salvation will save us from hell.

But if we want to be saved from the Tribulation we must be *chosen* as the Bride of Jesus.

He is the Word. So we must be faithful to the Word.

We have to choose what the Bible says, rather than what the church says.

The final exodus is to come out of the church and follow the revealed Bible as *individuals*.

Matthew 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last:

There must be no difference between the first and the last church ages. Thus we must be restored back to the New Testament beliefs of the apostolic church.

Matthew 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: **for many be called, but few chosen.**

Many hear brother Branham's message that is to restore us to the beliefs of the first church age. But few will be faithful and prove their beliefs from Scripture.

Thus only those few will be chosen to be in the Bride of Christ.

Matthew 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few there be that find it.**

The way is narrow.

Any idea that you get from brother Branham's quotes **has** to be followed through the verses of the Bible before you can believe it.

Very few will find this pathway to truth.

Most will simply *interpret selected quotes* to suit their own opinions.

Adam was the first perfect man but he messed up as he deviated from God's Word. He listened to Eve.

A woman symbolizes a church. Today we listen to what the church says, not what the Bible says. So we are also messing up.

Thus Jesus was the first perfect Man, and Who stayed perfect. As He came out of the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit came down like a Dove and rested on Him. The secret of His success was His continual submission to the Spirit and Word of God.

John 1:32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and **it abode upon him.**

:33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and **remaining on him**, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit rested on Him as the anointing. The Spirit never went into Him as He was always full of the Holy Spirit.

He was the Lamb of God Who would always be obedient to the supernatural Dove. The human Man in complete submission to the supernatural God Who lived within His Body.

Colossians 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

This was the beginning of the creation of God.

The first perfect Man from Whom God would produce the rest of His final born-again creation. Jesus set the pattern for the rest of us.

We must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. We come up out of the water and then seek for the Holy Ghost baptism.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The Holy Ghost will guide us into the full truth of Scripture.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself;**

We must not be obsessed with our own rights and our own likes and dislikes. Self must die.

1 Corinthians 15:31 ... I die daily.

A person full of the Holy Spirit should not speak of himself or herself.

That person should just speak from the Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit can then guide us through the Bible as we learn to be Scriptural in our doctrines. With the written Bible as our Absolute, the Holy Spirit can guide us to understand the revealed Scriptures.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus** unto good works,

We become a new creation when we are created in union with Christ Jesus.

Revelation 3:15 **I know thy works**, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Our church age has an enthusiasm to serve God. We do many good works. We go to church. We praise God. We are keen on evangelism. Churches are involved with education and community service. There is much charitable outreach to help the poor and the suffering.

We do whatever the church requires of us. In our own eyes we are just fine.

Slowly, without realizing it, we have come to serve the church, rather than serving God in a Scriptural way. We learn the ways of the church, rather than the way of the Bible.

We refuse to believe that God is unhappy with us because we focus on being good church members. We are such fervent church members, so keen to help others, so involved with church activities that we cannot even begin to believe that God is not very pleased with us.

But today, men esteem their own words above Scripture.

Obsessed with our many good deeds, and our personal salvation from hell, we cannot see that our failure to understand the mysteries of Scripture is an important item that is missing. It simply means that our church leaders have made us ignorant of much of the Bible by hiding the revealed Word from us.

This has effectively stopped us thinking for ourselves which makes us ever more dependent on the church.

65-0218 The Seed is not Heir with the Shuck

Notice, see how close it looks. Matthew said, Saint Matthew 24:24, said, that, "The two spirits in the last days," **the church spirit of the church people, and the Bride Spirit of the Bride people**, "would be so close together till it would deceive the very Elected if it was possible." That's how close.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The Bride must know the truth of Scripture.

When asked why Jesus twice wrote in the ground with His finger when a woman was to be killed, church-goers shrug off the mystery. It is just a detail, it is not important, it does not affect my salvation etc. All these glib phrases to cover up the church-goers' ignorance of Scripture. Learning the Bible is hard work that takes dedication.

In our soft, lazy age we do not apply real dedication to understand Scripture. That is what makes God more than unhappy with us.

He told Daniel that the prophecies would be sealed until the time of the end.

Daniel 12: 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and **seal the book, even to the time of the end**: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Knowledge increases exponentially today thanks to the internet and computers.

People rush to and fro in cars, trains, and aeroplanes that were unknown in Daniel's day, but as a prophet he could see these at the end time, in visions.

So we are obviously approaching the end time.

President Trump has recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This is fulfillment of prophecy. God is turning back to the Jews. So we are close to the end of the Gentile age.

Thus we should have enough revelation of Scripture to understand the difficult Bible passages.

The Book of Daniel has to start unfolding or unsealing at the end.

But church-goers are ignorant of so many mysteries in the Bible.

Why did Matthew and Mark report one angel at the empty tomb. Luke and John wrote of two angels. What were they trying to tell us?

In John, Jesus told Mary not to touch Him.

John 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.
:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not;

But in Matthew, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary held Him by the feet.

Matthew 28:9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. **And they came and held him by the feet,** and worshipped him.

These events have a deeper spiritual significance. We need to know.

But we are not interested in knowing because our church does not know. So we live in the shadows of the ignorance of our church, too scared to think for ourselves. Church-goers are almost proud to claim that they do not know what many passages of Scripture mean.

Why must an individual stay in ignorance just because the church leader is ignorant? This attitude of the church makes God sick of the church. If we try to find out truth the church stops us, because church leaders do not want their ignorance exposed.

So the church becomes a barrier to prevent truth being revealed.

Church-goers live good lives, but they have no real love for the deeper mysteries of Scripture. They think that the Bible is a Book that has verses that can be ignored, changed, or contradicted when it suits them.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The churches focus on serving God in Spirit. But they have forgotten that God also wants them to know the truth of Scripture in order to worship Him in truth.

Trying to worship Jesus as part of the Trinity does not impress Him.

1 Corinthians 2:16 But we have the mind of Christ.

The church claims to have the mind of Christ but then cannot explain so many passages of Scripture. If you cannot explain many Bible passages, then you cannot have the mind of Christ. Because Jesus knows what the Bible is talking about.

It is a sad irony that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who came to reveal the mysteries of Scripture, we seem to know less and less about the Bible. And we are not really interested in learning about the Scriptures. We are more interested in parroting a quote. Quotes replace Scripture as the foundation of our beliefs.

The voice of the seventh angel has become the "Voice of God", even though the "Voice of God" was never promised in the New Testament. So we change Scripture to suit ourselves and promote William Branham to the Godhead.

But God will not give His glory to another.

Isaiah 48:11 ... and I will not give my glory unto another.

The churches take what they want from Scripture and leave out what they don't want.

The church is no longer hot, no longer God's voice to the world. No longer fervent to be Scriptural. God wants us to be completely Scriptural (hot). Or He wants us to have nothing to do with Scripture (cold).

That way we are not hypocritical because we would not pretend to believe the Bible. Then nobody who wants to be a Christian would follow us in any way, since we reject the Bible.

It is by believing bits of the Bible and also rejecting bits of the Bible as "trivial, or not important, or just a detail, or as wrongly translated" that we make God sick.

The "hot" of believing some Scripture added to the "cold" of contradicting or ignoring other Scripture, makes us lukewarm.

We must believe all the Bible or else just leave it alone.

Picking the bits and pieces out of the Bible that suit us, is a disaster. Eve left out one bit of God's Word and doomed mankind.

Daniel 11: 14 also the **robbers** of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

Human leaders love to exalt themselves, but that is the downfall of the believers. Following a man **robs** you of your personal relationship with Jesus.

Daniel 11:26 Yea, they that feed of the **portion** of his meat shall destroy him,

Meat is doctrine. Eating only a portion of the Bible-meat leads to destruction. It must be all or nothing.

When you believe something unscriptural then you have been robbed of the light that comes from God's Word.

Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

God is speaking to the church. Modern day Christians have such an elevated opinion about themselves that they cannot accept that God is rejecting their church.

Each one says that their church is fine, and that all the other churches are wrong. But God describes the whole age as a single church. And He vomits our whole church age out of His mouth.

His mouth is where His Word is.

So our church age simply refuses to be brought back to the original Scriptures of the New Testament.

Notice carefully.

He does not say He will spue out an individual.

The Bible says each individual must endure to the end.

Matthew 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but **he that endureth to the end shall be saved.**

"He" is an individual.

"Saved" from what? Not from hell. That happened when we repented and accepted Jesus as Saviour.

But if an individual endures to the end of the age that person will be saved from the Tribulation.

It is the **church that is spued out.**

1965 Church Age Book - The Laodicean Church Age

Then what is wrong with these people of the last day? **THEY HAVE GOTTEN AWAY FROM THE WORD. THEY ARE NO LONGER FERVENT ABOUT IT. THEY ARE LUKEWARM ABOUT IT...**

... For seven out of seven ages, I have seen nothing but men esteeming their own word above Mine. So at the end of this age I am spuing you out of My mouth. It is all over.

Every church has adopted man-made beliefs and organizational methods with a one-man human leader. Every church binds the people with certain unscriptural ideas. Every church gets people to follow and obey the human leader rather than Scripture.

God is not interested in the "group-think" ideas of the church.

1965 Church Age Book - The Laodicean Church Age

Have you ever noticed how the people who lead others astray bind them closely to themselves by fear? **They say that if the people don't do what they say, or if they leave, then destruction will follow.** They are false prophets, for a true prophet will always lead one to the Word and bind the people to Jesus Christ and he won't tell the people to fear him or what he says, but to fear what the Word says.

God's Word is in His mouth, and the church is no longer fervent about the Word.

Believing some of the Scripture and ignoring or rejecting other portions of Scripture has made the church lukewarm towards the Bible.

We are influenced and manipulated by others in our desire to belong to a church.

Babylon thrives on forced submission to an exalted leadership.

64-0629 The Mighty God unveiled before us

...that God is calling **an exodus**, to come from behind the fleshly curtain who tries to impersonate, **who tries to join church**; not Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, altogether, but Pentecostal churches.

It is an individual affair. It's you and God. You have to go in, not your group, not your church, not your pastor, but it's you who has to go in.

This is the heart of the matter.

Brother Branham revealed the truth that each one of us has to receive a personal revelation of the revealed Scripture.

The consequences of our choices produce reactions.

Then we are no longer free as we have to counteract all these unforeseen happenings. Thus our church-experience takes over and removes us from the personal experience that we initially had with Jesus when we first got saved. Demanding to be free, we easily become a slave of our habits and of our longing to be accepted in a church.

Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

The church is no longer the mouthpiece of God, it is its own mouthpiece.

In our materialistic age we become obsessed with the lust to make money.

We never have enough. Always chasing more in terms of wealth and material goods.

We take on better paying jobs even if we are more unhappy in the work. We consider our income and possessions to be the sign of God's blessing.

We feel complacent in our church. We have arrived. All is well. We need nothing, certainly no correction.

"**And knowest not**". Yet we are totally ignorant of our true state.

The mental mechanism for uncomfortable facts is denial, distraction, tantrums, and what-aboutism. Anything but facing painful truths about ourselves.

If we are unable to admit that we are wrong, we will never be put right.

The people really believe that they are safe and on fire for the Lord in their church. Yet God is totally unhappy with the church.

This is the saddest miss-match.

The people are just totally unaware that God is rejecting the very church that they are desperately hanging onto for their own safety.

"**Wretched**". This is when endurance becomes a trial instead of a blessing. We are scared of hard times. Sales of anti-depressants soar. Mental illness. Sedatives. Unknown fears. Alcohol consumption rises. People are more unsure of themselves. Lured by the lust for more wealth, we keep aiming higher and working harder, but never quite getting there. When we pause to reflect, we realize that something is missing. So we strive harder to fill the emptiness. But it is always there, wretchedly nibbling at the edges of our mind.

"**Miserable**". This makes people objects of pity. They seek safety in church attendance, but do not know the curse of church organization. Brother Branham's quotes are no longer proven by running his ideas through the written Scripture verses. To make it worse, 'message' preachers now claim to interpret the seven Thunders and the seventh Seal which are not even written at all in the Bible. **So faith is no longer built on what is written.** Somehow we know that we should be like the early church.

But we do not resemble it in our actions or our beliefs.

Between our modern day reality of competitive "churchianity" and the ideal of the New Testament church, there lies a sad gap. At times it just feels like we are striving to put on a show to impress others that we are the best.

Trying to be the best makes anyone miserable.

"Poor". In knowledge of Scripture. We are a poor copy of the early church as our beliefs diverge from theirs. The spiritual power that they had makes our modern church look poor in comparison.

"Blind". This is the really stinging rebuke. Knowing the mysteries of the written Word should enable us to unravel the Bible truths. But people have gone for the unwritten Word of the seven Thunders and the seventh Seal. Not only have they got that wrong, but those wrong beliefs stop them from understanding the mysteries that are written.

To him that hath not, even that little shall be taken away. The more they chase error, the less truth remains in them.

Matthew 13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

But those who took brother Branham's quotes back to Scripture have uncovered spiritual patterns that enable them to understand more and more passages of Scripture.

"Naked". Like Adam and Eve trying to hide behind a fig-leaf religion of human opinions and excuses as a covering.

53-0403 The cruelty of sin, and the penalty that it cost to rid sin from our lives

And then when I see there, then, when they come out, and God knew that they could not stand before Him. And He knew. And they were hiding, hiding back in some bushes, yet covered up, but they knowed their covering wasn't sufficient. Adam and Eve could not cover their sin and error.

Too many 'Message-believers' are wrapped in the robes of their self-righteous doctrinal errors that are based on unwritten Thunders. They turn the Cloud, which was the sign of the Son of man in the heaven, into the descent of the Angel of Revelation Chapter 10. Yet the Cloud stayed at an amazingly high altitude of about 42 kilometers.

65-0718 Trying to do God a service, without it being the will of God

And then in that great observatory, so that the world will be without, they're still wondering what happened. In Tucson, them big observatories took the picture of it up there; still wondering what happened. What is it? They still put in the paper, "Does anybody know anything about what, how it could have happen?" **There is no fog up there, there's no air, there's no moisture; thirty miles high in the air.** Oh, my!

"There shall be signs in the heaven above. And when these things take place, earthquakes in divers places, then shall appear the sign in the heaven, of the Son of man."

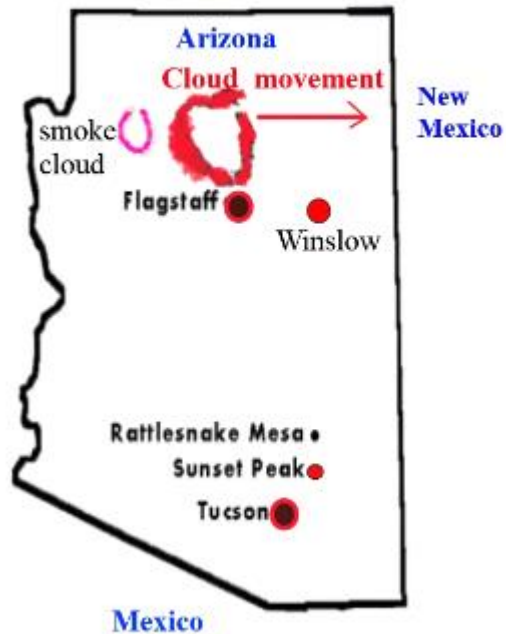
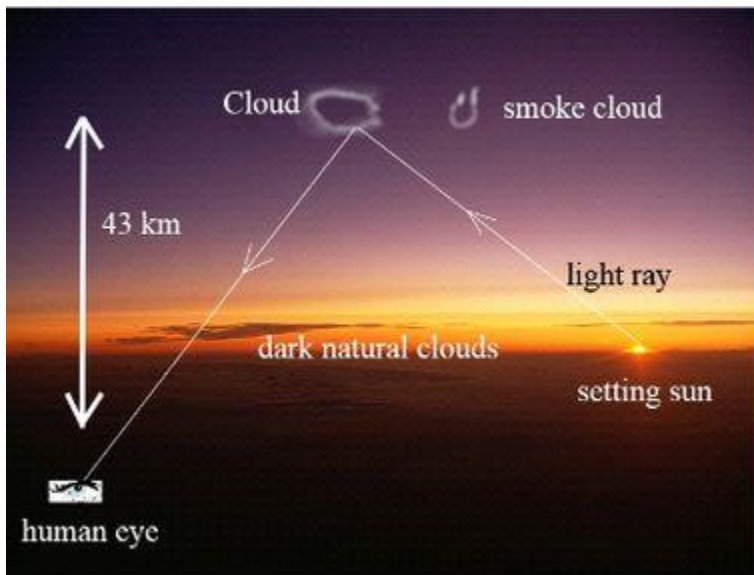
Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:

They also cannot explain why there were two clouds.



The above photograph was taken from near the city of Winslow which was in the path of the clouds on 28 February 1963.

Below is a picture, **NOT** a photograph, that shows how the two high clouds were briefly visible for 28 minutes at sunset over Flagstaff which is 200 mile north of Sunset Mountain (or Sunset Peak).



Brother Branham got to Sunset Peak six days later and knew nothing about the clouds.

The seven angels that visited him on 8 March formed no cloud as they descended and then ascended invisibly.

Message-followers (an unscriptural label just like "in the Message" is also unscriptural) insist that the Angel of Revelation Chapter 10 came down while brother Branham was on earth.

1964-0119 Shalom

But, remember, if it goes plumb into the shadows of death, "I am the resurrection and Life; I'll raise him up again." And when the great Director comes down and bears that stick down, then, "time shall be no more." When that Angel, of Revelation the 10th chapter, puts one foot on land and one on the sea, and a rainbow over His head, He swore, "time shall be no more." **When that time comes, you will rise up from among the dead.** While the rest of them lay there, you'll go in.

A year after the Cloud and brother Branham was still waiting for the Angel of Revelation 10 to come down. The Angel is going to perform the resurrection. Thus this mighty Angel is the Archangel.

65-1127 I have heard but now I see

Dear God, in this solemn moment, it's going to be a time like this when there really **will be** a clap of thunder someday, and the Son of God shall descend from the heavens with a shout, **with the voice of the Archangel**, and the trump of God, **the dead in Christ shall rise.**

In the last month of his life he was still waiting for the Archangel to come down. So the Archangel, the mighty Angel of Revelation 10, never came down when brother Branham was on earth.

In the last month of his life, he even put the "shout" into the future. But the "shout" was his message of revealing the mysteries.

1965-11-27 I have heard but now I see

Dear God, in this solemn moment, it's going to be a time like this when there really **will be** a clap of thunder someday, and the Son of God **shall descend from the heavens with a shout**, with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God, **the dead in Christ shall rise.**

So after his death, the Bride will be listening to his recorded voice, and slowly getting the revelation of the Bible mysteries for themselves.

The "shout" was thus not when brother Branham preached. The "shout" will be when the Bride takes his revelations to Scripture, and is able to prove the Truth from Scripture.

Thus Message-preachers create a false reality that the Angel had to come down while brother Branham was alive. They interpret a quote in a way that makes Scripture fade from the minds of the people. Because you cannot prove that the Angel of Revelation 10 came down, 50-odd years ago, from the Bible. But only the Word can cover us.

This is the quote used to "prove" that the Angel came down when brother Branham was on earth. (Even though it contradicts the quote from the last month of his life on 1965-11-27 where he was still waiting for the single Thunder, the shout, and the Angel to come down).

63-0317 The Breach between the Seven Church Ages and the Seven Seals

And when the Seals are broke and the mystery is revealed, **down comes the Angel**, the Messenger, Christ, setting His foot upon the land and upon the sea with a rainbow over His head. Now remember, **this seventh angel is on earth at the time of this coming.**

But read carefully.

The Angel only comes down "when the Seals are broke and the mystery is revealed". He completed the revelation of the mystery of God in December 1965 which is the same month that he died.

So the Angel could only come down after that.

Now read the full quote:

63-0317 The Breach between the Seven Church Ages and the Seven Seals

...but at the end, when the seventh angel begins to sound his mystery, he winds up all of the loose ends that these fellows probed at, **and the mysteries comes down from God as the Word of God and reveals the entire revelation of God.** Then the Godhead and everything else is settled. All the mysteries: serpent's seed and whatevermore is to be revealed.

Now, you see, I'm just not making that up. That's what... It's **THUS SAITH THE LORD**. I'll read it to you out of the Book: the sounding of the seventh angel's message, the mystery of God should be finished that's been declared by His holy prophets. That's the prophets who has wrote the Word. At the sounding of the seventh church age, the last church age, all the loose ends that through these church ages have been probed at, will be wound up together. **And when the Seals are broke and the mystery is revealed, down comes the Angel, the Messenger, Christ, setting His foot upon the land and upon the sea with a rainbow over His head.** Now remember, **this seventh angel is on earth at the time of this coming.**

There are two comings.

The mysteries come down to reveal the entire revelation of the Bible. This ended in December 1965 when he was killed.

Then **after** the mystery of Scripture is revealed, down comes the Angel.

So for which coming must the seventh angel be on earth?

Obviously the coming down of the mysteries of God.

Let us confirm that by reading three more paragraphs later.

63-0317 The Breach between the Seven Church Ages and the Seven Seals

And here He returns back in the 10th chapter **after** the coming time, that all the mysteries is to be finished, and the Seals are to be broke, and proclaiming that its time is no more. And he said, "When the seventh angel has begin to sound, then the mysteries should be finished and **time for the Angel to appear.** We're close, somewhere. That's right.

The Angel comes **after** all the mysteries are finished.

This was 17 days after the Cloud was photographed, and he is still waiting for the Angel to appear. So the Cloud was not the coming down of the Angel.

Covering yourself with an interpretation of a quote is futile when there is another quote that contradicts your opinion. Your quote-covering disappears to display your Biblical nakedness, as there are no Bible verses to prove your point.

As the church loses its spiritual covering of truth, so the natural women of this age expose their body parts. The modern women simply symbolize the modern church.

Revelation 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Faith in the written Word comes at a price.

Truth is rejected. Isolation and condemnation are the travelling companions of those who try to be Scriptural. The fiery furnace of affliction puts people off from being Scriptural. Ours is a soft, lazy age that is complacently compromised. Nobody wants to be unpopular in their church.

Remember the three Jews who refused to bow down to the image of the prophet Daniel in Babylon.

If you want to make the Bride you have to refuse to bow down to the Message-image of brother Branham as the "Voice of God". Only the King James Version of the Bible is the Voice of God, that tells us what to do and what to believe.

You have to refuse to place brother Branham's quotes above Scripture. He came to *reveal* Scripture, not to *replace* Scripture.

You must refuse to believe that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily. Nebuchadnezzar thought that about Daniel. That wrong spirit has never died.

But there will be some **individuals** who will dare to build their faith on the written Scripture.

The churches will not help them much in that regard. The churches prefer to condemn people for being Scriptural.

But God says that if you want to, He can anoint your eyes with the salve or ointment of the Holy Spirit that will enable you to trace your beliefs through the verses of the Bible.

Then you will be able to see the truth of the "difficult" Bible verses.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

This is what makes our age so difficult. Not only does the church not help us to find Bible truth, but when as individuals we seek that revelation from God, then God rebukes and chastens us.

So we get hammered by the church and by God.

But this is evidence of His love. That simply means that the church has taught us so much wrong that we have a large amount of errors to put right. We have many wrong doctrines and habits that we have to correct.

It is not enough for us just to repent. We must be zealous about repenting.

We must be keen to learn what our mistakes are. If we must be zealous to repent, then it means we have a lot of repenting to do. That means we are doing and believing a lot of things wrong. It is the end result of listening to Message-preachers and their manipulation of quotes. Unless we do a lot of repenting, we will only be fit for the Tribulation.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

This is the church door.

This is the church of the Laodiceans.

We have made up our own clever beliefs. Who cares what the Bible says?

Why do we not care? Because we have pushed the Bible truths out of the church. We no longer want to know what the Bible says on certain issues.

This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible. Jesus outside His church.

The knocks are the knocks of life. Through the hardships of life, God is trying to speak to individuals. Warning them that the church is a deception, a "group-think" trap that combines truth-and-error which is designed to take them into the Tribulation.

"If any man hear My *voice*". The Word of God, *the Bible, is the Voice of God*.

People may be saved from hell by their initial repentance, but belonging to a church is not going to save them from the Tribulation.

Jesus is appealing to individuals.

The church is too wrapped up in its cozy and complacent religious traditions and man-made beliefs.

Are there any individuals who want to live by the Bible?

Individuals who regard the Bible as their Absolute, and who *want* to know what all the Bible verses mean. Only these individuals will be part of the Bride.

So our major problem is to overcome the wave of unbelief that makes Christians deviate from the Scripture.

This is the separating time for the wise virgins who say, "*We must know* all that is in the Bible". After all, the Word is our Husband.

The foolish virgins just yawn and lazily say, "*Must we know* all that is in the Bible?" "We are not really interested in all the Bible. A bit here and a bit there is fine".

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

You have to overcome the wave of unbelief and lack of interest in Scripture that is sweeping through the world.

You have to line up brother Branham's quotes with Scripture so that you can prove your revelation just from Scripture.

The seven Thunders are *not written* in the Bible. Thus *we cannot know what the seven Thunders say*.

62-1230 Is this the Sign of the End Sir?

Now, look, when it is time for the seven voices. Then it's time for the **seven voices, when the Book is completed, of Revelations 10 to be revealed.**

The seven voices of the Thunders can only be revealed after the written mysteries of the Bible have been completely revealed.

64-0830 Questions and Answers, part 4

Have the seven thunders which equals seven mysteries already been revealed? ...

No, they were **revealed** in the seven Seals; **that's what the thunders was about.**

This is the key point that is missed.

When preaching on the seven Seals, brother Branham revealed what the seven Thunders are about, what their *purpose or function* is. He did not reveal *what* the Thunders say.

The function or purpose of the seven Thunders is to get the Bride into their new bodies so that the Bride can be given rapturing faith. We cannot be raptured in these old bodies of ours.

63-0318 The first seal

And then there's coming forth seven mysterious thunders that's not even written at all. That's right. And I believe that through those seven thunders will be revealed in the last days in order to get the Bride together for rapturing faith; because what we got right now, we wouldn't be able to do it.

The seven Thunders will also utter to the two prophets to give them their supernatural power over nature.

63-0321 The fourth seal

Wait till them seven thunders utter their voices to that group who really can take the Word of God and hand it there. It'll slice and cut. And **they can close the heavens**; they can shut this or do that, whatever they want to.

Revelation 11:6 **These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy:**

Church Age Book -- Laodicean Church Age

He will reveal the mysteries of the seven thunders in Revelation 10 which are the **revelations contained in the seven seals.**

So **the function of the Thunders was revealed in the seven Seals** but *not their content*. At the end of the seventh Seal he declared the *content of what the seven Thunders say to be a total secret*.

63-0324 The seventh seal

What happens is that those seven thunders that he heard thunder and was forbidden to write, that's what the mystery is laying behind those seven consecutive thunders rolling out.

... **It is the secret that no one knows about.** John was forbidding to write about it, even, even write a symbol about it. Why? This is why there was no active in--activity in heaven; it might give away the secret.

... Seven thunders in a row, uttered not... making just--just one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, straight. Then heavens couldn't write that. Heavens can't know about it, nothing else, because there's nothing to go on. It's a relaxing time. It was so great till **it's kept secret from the Angels.** Now, why?

If Satan should get a hold of it, he might do great damage. There's one thing he don't know. Now, he can interpret anything he wants to, and impersonate any kind of a gift (I hope you're learning.), but he can't know this. **It's not even written in the Word. It's a total secret.**

... it was seven thunders that **uttered their voices,** and there it is perfectly, because *nothing knows anything about it*; wasn't even written.

If you say that you know what the seven Thunders uttered, then you are just fooling yourself and others.

Revelation 10:4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and *write them not.*

The seven Thunders are not written in the Bible, so you cannot know what they uttered.

We only serve God when we can follow our beliefs through the written verses of the Bible.

62-1230 Is this the Sign of the End Sir?

But it is the **seventh angel that had this type of Message.** What was it? Notice his type of Message, **"Finishing all the mysteries of God, that are written in the Book."** The seventh angel is winding up all the mysteries that's laying loose-ended, all out through these organizations and denominations. The seventh angel gathers them up, and finishes the entire mystery. That's what the Bible said, **"Finishes the mystery of the written Book."**

Brother Branham never came to reveal the mysteries of what the seven Thunders uttered, because these mysteries are not written in the Book.

Let us consider two disciples of John the Baptist. These disciples when they heard John speak, followed Jesus.

John 1:35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

:37 And the two disciples **heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.**

If you get a revelation from brother Branham's preaching, then you must follow that idea through the verses of the Bible.

But certain followers of John stayed with John's quotes and never followed Jesus. So when John made a serious mistake by doubting whether Jesus was the Messiah, these disciples just repeated his wrong quote.

Matthew 11:2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

:3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Jesus never criticized John for his mistake. But the Bible never mentions those two disciples of John again. So being a disciple of John and clinging onto John's wrong quotes did not help those two at all.

From this we learn that following a great man is not a great idea.

When they repeated John's quote like a parrot, they did not impress Jesus at all. He expected them to be Scriptural. He corrected them by quoting Scripture. Thus the disciples of John should have corrected John by telling John what the Scriptures said on the topic. But they were too scared of John's reputation.

They believed that, "You cannot correct the prophet".

And the Bible never refers to them again.

So history repeats itself today. If we have heard William Branham speak then we will be able to follow his ideas through the written Scriptures.

62-0318 The Spoken Word is the Original Seed, part 2

Now, **all these things I've said, if they don't jive with the Bible, or dovetail with God's Word, they're wrong, they're wrong,**

We cannot just believe a quote. Remember brother Branham predicted that America would be destroyed by 1977. That never happened.

But many Message-preachers now conveniently forget that they enthusiastically preached that Jesus was coming in 1977. Some quotes were then interpreted as Hillary Clinton winning the 2016 Presidential election in America. That also never happened.

Brother Branham seriously believed that he stood under the Cloud when it formed. But the Cloud was over the city of Flagstaff, eight days before the angels came to him at Sunset Peak, which is 200 miles away from Flagstaff. So brother Branham did make mistakes. He was human.

As was the case with John the Baptist, making mistakes did not mean that he was not the end time prophet.

These mistakes by brother Branham simply mean that we must check what he says.

But those disciples of William Branham who just parrot his mistakes will simply walk away from Scripture like John the Baptist's two disciples did.

But you have to overcome. It is a struggle.

Most Message-believers have been fooled into replacing Scripture with quotes. People have been fooled into interpreting quotes in a way that contradicts Scripture.

There is no easy path to understanding the written Bible.

Let us look at the first Gentile kingdom of Babylon where the worship of the image of a holy man was enforced.

In Babylon, Daniel was given the name of Belteshazzar.

Daniel 1:7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar.

Daniel 4:8 But at the last **Daniel** came in before me, **whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god**, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods:

Nebuchadnezzar believed that the spirit of the holy gods was in Daniel. So he built a golden image of Daniel to be worshipped. That is why Daniel was not required to worship his own image.

Daniel 3:5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and **worship the golden image** that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

Nebuchadnezzar called Daniel by the name of his god, Belteshazzar. So the image of his god was actually an image of Daniel, which is why Daniel was not there. They could not make Daniel bow down to an image of himself.

The first Gentile kingdom of Babylon thus came in with the forced worship of a holy prophet.

The last Gentile kingdoms of today will go out with the forced worship of the Gentile prophet by the Message-believers.

William Branham is claimed by Message-followers to be the "Voice of God". This error on their part makes him infallible and promotes him to the Godhead. His quotes are now believed to be more important than Scripture.

1965 Church Age Book - Laodicean Church Age

I want to make one more comparison between the Laodicean prophet-messenger and John, the prophet-messenger who preceded Jesus' first coming. **The people in John's day mistook him for the Messiah.**

John 1:19-20,

"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, **I am not the Christ.**"

Now this last day prophet-messenger will have such power before the Lord that there will be those who mistake him for the Lord Jesus.

(There will be a spirit in the world at the end time that will seduce some and make them believe this.

Matthew 24:23-26,

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, **He is in the desert; go not forth**; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not.")

The seven angels came to brother Branham at Sunset Peak, which is in the Sonoran desert. So that was not the coming of the Lord.

But don't you believe it. He is not Jesus Christ. He is not the Son of God. **HE IS ONE OF THE BRETHREN, A PROPHET, A MESSENGER, A SERVANT OF GOD.** He needs no greater honor bestowed upon him than that which John received when he was the voice that cried, "I am not He, **BUT HE IS COMING AFTER ME.**"

Notice, Jesus as the mighty Angel of Revelation Chapter 10 comes down after brother Branham's ministry.

Near the start of the seventh church age, during the 1920s, the communists promoted Lenin from being the prophet of the revolution to being god of Rodina, the Russian Motherland. This was done soon after Lenin's death in 1924. It compensated for the fact that under Stalin the communists were moving away from the teachings of Lenin. The more they deviated from Lenin's teachings, the more they glorified Lenin.

We humans are not very bright. We keep repeating the serious mistakes that others have made before us.

64-0823 Questions and Answers, part 2

Some say Brother Branham is the Son of man. I thought the Pillar of Fire was the Son of man. Am I mistaken?

Well, that's a good question, very good. **But I am not the Son of man, but a son of man. There's quite a difference.**

Jesus Christ was the Son of man, the Son of God, the Son of man, the Son of David.

65-0725 The Anointed Ones at the End Time

"In the very day that the Son of man is revealed." Revelations 10:1 to 7, read it when you get home, "the seventh angel's Message, opening up the Seals." What is it?

**Not the angel is the Son of man;
but the messenger is revealing the Son of man.**

Can you get it separated now?

That's where it seems to be so hard for you, you see.

**Not the Son of man, Himself;
but the seventh angel, the seventh messenger, is revealing to the public the Son of man,** because It's left the shuck.

In the days of Babylon, only three individuals stood up against that mass "group-think", religious error of worshiping a man, the prophet Daniel. These three were thrown into a fiery furnace.

Russians who dared to disagree with their prophet Lenin were shot or imprisoned.

Will you be one of the few today who refuse to place brother Branham's quotes above Scripture, and thus you will end up in the fiery furnace of rejection, condemnation, and dislike by the Message-believers?

Revelation 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Remember, the Spirit does not say one kind thing to this age.

The Spirit is speaking to the "church of the Laodiceans" from outside the church. Thus there is no safety inside the church.

We all have a lot of repenting to do.

The Holy Spirit alone can guide us into all truth. Can you hear Him speaking to you from the pages of the revealed Bible?

What Will Be – The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord (Revelation 4-19)

‘meta tauta’ – What happens next, after these things

In this lesson we turn to future events, what the prophets refer to as “the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Here we witness the cataclysmic events that the prophets foretell and that Peter foresees in 2 Peter 3: 10—“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.”

PLAGUE	EGYPT	TRIBULATION
#1 Water becomes blood	Exodus 7:19-21, Psalm 105:29	Revelation 8:8-9, 11:6, 16:3-7
#2 Frogs	Exodus 8:5-6, Psalm 105:30	Revelation 16:12-14 Though not an infestation of frogs, this is undoubtedly a plague like the frogs in Egypt.
#3 Lice	Exodus 8:16-17, Psalm 105:31	Revelation 11:3-6 Though lice are not mentioned specifically, they could be among the plagues brought by the two witnesses.
#4 Flies	Exodus 8:20-24	Revelation 11:3-6 As with the lice, flies are not specifically mentioned, but it’s believed that they may be among the plagues as well.
#5 Food source (livestock) destroyed	Exodus 9:2-6	Revelation 8:9 Though not a direct correlation, there is a similarity in that the food source of God’s enemies is destroyed.
#6 Boils	Exodus 9:8-10	Revelation 16:1-2
#7 Hail	Exodus 9:22-26, Psalm 105:32	Revelation 8:7, 16:21
#8 Locusts	Exodus 10:12-15, Psalm 105:34-35	Revelation 9:1-6
#9 Darkness	Exodus 10:21-23, Psalm 105:32	Revelation 8:12, 9:1-3, 16:10-11

Exodus	Revelation
Plague #1 – Water becomes blood	
<p>Ex 7:19 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.’ ” 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.</p>	<p>Rev 8:8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.</p> <p>Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.</p> <p>Rev 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”</p>
Plague #2 – Frogs	
<p>Ex 8:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.’ ” 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:30 Their land abounded with frogs, Even in the chambers of their kings.</p>	<p>Rev 16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.</p> <p>(Though not an infestation of frogs, this is undoubtedly a plague like the frogs in Egypt)</p>
Plague #3 – Lice	
<p>Ex 8:16 So the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.’ ” 17 And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.</p>	<p>Rev 11:3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no</p>

<p>Ps 105:31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, And lice in all their territory.</p>	<p>rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.</p> <p>(Though lice are not mentioned specifically, they could be among the plagues brought by the two witnesses.)</p>
<p align="center">Plague #4 – Flies</p>	
<p>Ex 8:20 And the Lord said to Moses, “Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 21 Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. 22 And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land. 23 I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.” ’ ” 24 And the Lord did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies.</p> <p>Ps 105:31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, And lice in all their territory.</p>	<p>Rev 11:3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.</p> <p>(As with the lice, flies are not specifically mentioned, but it’s believed that they may be among the plagues as well.)</p>
<p align="center">Plague #5 – Food source (livestock) destroyed</p>	
<p>Ex 9:2 For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them, 3 behold, the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe pestilence. 4 And the Lord will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel.” ’ ” 5 Then the Lord appointed a set time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.” 6 So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died.</p>	<p>Rev 8:9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.</p> <p>(Though not a direct correlation, there is a similarity in that the food source of God’s enemies is destroyed.)</p>
<p align="center">Plague #6 – Boils</p>	
<p>Ex 9:8 So the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” 10 Then</p>	<p>Rev 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.” 2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.</p>

<p>they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast.</p>	
<p align="center">Plague #7 – Hail</p>	
<p>Ex 9:22 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.” 23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.</p> <p>Ps 105:32 He gave them hail for rain, And flaming fire in their land.</p>	<p>Rev 8:7 The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.</p> <p>Rev 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.</p>
<p align="center">Plague #8 – Locusts</p>	
<p>Ex 10:12 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left.” 13 So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. 15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:34 He spoke, and locusts came, Young locusts without number, 35 And ate up all the vegetation in their land, And devoured the fruit of their ground.</p>	<p>Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.</p>
<p align="center">Plague #9 – Darkness</p>	

Ex 10:21 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

Ps 105:28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His word.

Rev 8:12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth.

Rev 16:10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.



7 Seals → Forces on the earth that affect the physical lives of people

- The actions of the four horsemen mirror the actions triggered by sinful men:
 - 1) enforced peace
 - 2) all-out war
 - 3) famine
 - 4) death

7 Trumpets → Forces on the earth that affect the spiritual lives of people

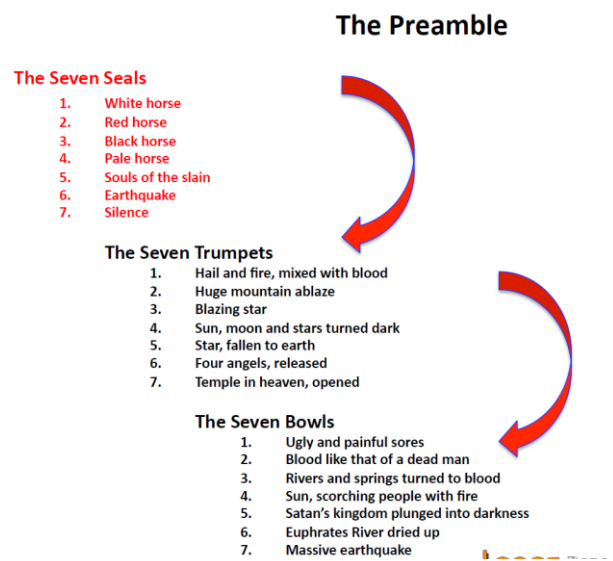
- The first four trumpets mirror the cataclysmic actions of nature:
 - 1) hail and fire, mixed with blood
 - 2) a large, burning mountain is hurled into the sea
 - 3) a star like a flaming torch falls to earth
 - 4) the sun, moon and stars go dark

7 Bowls/Vials/Plagues → Consequences of disobedience to God

The events that accompany these judgements—as terrible as they appear—are but a preamble to the main event:

- the catastrophic war revealed to Daniel (Daniel 10:1)
- the triumphant return of Christ
- the millennial kingdom
- the last judgment
- and the birth of the New Jerusalem that we witness in Revelation 19–22, the conclusion to our story of redemption

As the lamb opens the first of the seven seals, and the 3 x 7 sequence of the seals, trumpets and bowls begins, the “great tribulation” **θλίψις μεγάλη** [th-leep’-sis ma-ga’-la] that Jesus notes in the Olivet Discourse thunders upon us, crashing like a massive wave, a time of catastrophe “such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be” (Matthew 24:21). When the seventh bowl is finally poured out a massive earthquake strikes the land, “such a violent earthquake that there has never been one like it since the human race began on earth” (16:18). With this, Jerusalem collapses and “every island fled, and mountains disappeared” (16:20), and the great war that Daniel foresaw erupts!



The Throne in Heaven (Rev 4-5)

Upon completing the letter to the church in Laodicea, John looks up and he sees an “open door to heaven.” John is suddenly snatched up, and he instantly finds himself standing before the throne of God. It is a glorious vision, and he gives us all the details!

As we move from John’s transcribing the seven letters to his vision of the throne of God, we move from John’s present time on Patmos to an entirely different dimension – to a time and place that inaugurates John’s vision of the future.

As we enter Revelation 4, we witness the ἀποκάλυψις [ah-po-kah’-lip-ses], the dramatic “unveiling” of what is soon to come.

The term ekklesia means ‘a group called out’ (of the world) – the scene now shifts to heaven itself

Revelation 4 – The Throne in Heaven

The Throne Room of Heaven

4 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne. **3** And He who sat there *was* like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. **4** Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. **5** And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 Before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, *were* four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. **7** The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. **8** *The* four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

“Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!”

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, **10** the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 “You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.”



John is raptured to heaven

- John is suddenly snatched (raptured) from an earthly, material dimension to a spiritual, timeless and heavenly one.
- Rapture
 - Greek word harpazo (Ancient Greek: ἁρπάζω), meaning "to snatch away" or "to seize"
- Heaven
 - Notice the vivid language John uses as he stretches to capture what is far beyond his ability to describe.

- He sees clearly and he strains for words to bridge the gap, relying on dazzling imagery and simile as a rhetorical tools
 - Uses simile (direct comparison) and metaphor (indirect comparison) to create a sense of what is was like.
 - He hears a voice “like a trumpet”
 - The one sitting on the throne in heaven sparkles “like jasper and carnelian”
 - The halo surrounding the throne is “as brilliant as an emerald”
 - In front of the throne is “something that resembled a sea of glass like crystal”

4 Creatures

- Same creatures from Isaiah and Ezekiel
- Is 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”
- Ez 1:5 Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. 6 Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. 7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves’ feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. 8 The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. 9 Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward. 10 Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. 11 Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upward; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side, and two wings covering its body.
- Rev 4:6 In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. 8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."



Lion – Most noble
Ox – Ability to serve
Man – Wisest
Eagle – Swiftest

24 Elders

- Who are these guys?
 - The twenty-four elders may represent all the people of God, twelve from the Hebrew Scriptures and twelve from the New Testament, suggesting completion.
 - Revelation refers to the twenty-four elders precisely twelve times—a nice touch!
 - One might go even farther and suggest that the twenty-four elders are Jacob’s twelve sons, the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve Apostles.
- We learn in Revelation 20, after Christ’s triumphant return, that Satan and his crew are thrown “into the abyss,” which is locked and sealed over them for a thousand years (20:2-3).

- Rev 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.
- During that time—the “Millennial Kingdom”—the twenty-four elders will reign with Christ, entrusted with judgment (20:4a), and with them are the martyrs of the apocalypse who “came to life and . . . reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (20: 4b). After the thousand years are over and the last judgment occurs, the New Jerusalem descends out of heaven from God. The city has twelve gates, each inscribed with a name from the twelve tribes of Israel, and a foundation, inscribed with the names of the twelve Apostles.

Revelation 5 – The Scroll and the Lamb

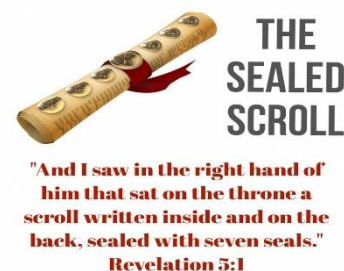
As John stands before the throne of God the figure sitting on the throne morphs into “a Lamb that seemed to have been slain” (5:6), and the Lamb is holding a scroll, sealed tightly with seven seals. As in a dream, John weeps and weeps, for he understands that no one is worthy to open the scroll. Then, one of the twenty-four elders seated around the throne of God comforts John, telling him that the Lamb – “the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David” (5:5)—has triumphed, and he will open the scroll.

The Lamb Takes the Scroll

5 And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.



Worthy Is the Lamb

⁸ Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

The Lamb

- “A Lamb that seemed to have been slain.”
 - When we studied Leviticus we learned about the five great sacrifices, four of which are animal sacrifices:
 - Sweet Savor Offerings (Lev 1–3) – The Person of Christ (voluntary)
 - Burnt offering (Lev 1) – pictures Christ offering himself wholly and without blemish to God
 - The burnt offering is both atoning and substitutionary: Christ dies in our place.
 - We are now to offer our lives to God wholly
 - Grain offering (Lev 2) – pictures the perfection of Christ’s humanity
 - This represents the personality of Christ, in His perfect, unblemished full humanity
 - Peace (Fellowship/Communion) offering (Lev 3) – pictures Christ as our peace
 - As the penitent sinner at the Tabernacle is invited to share a meal with God in the Communion Offering, so are we invited to share in the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist
 - Non-Sweet Savor Offerings (Lev 4–5) – The Work of Christ (mandatory)
 - **Sin offering (Lev 4:1-5:13) - pictures Christ atoning for our sin**
 - Christ became our sin offering – He went the cross on our behalf – He shed His blood in our place
 - Guilt (Reparation) offering (Lev 5:14-26) - pictures Christ atoning for the damage caused by our sin
 - It focuses not on the sin itself, but on its consequences.
 - Restitution – Making restitution for what one has done
- Christ became our sin offering
 - Paul writes: “For what the law, weakened by the flesh, was powerless to do, this God has done: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for the sake of sin, he condemned sin in the flesh” (Ro 8:3)
 - John the Baptist, when in seeing Jesus, said: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).
- The Lamb in John’s vision has 7 horns and 7 eyes, “the [seven] spirits of God sent out into the whole world” (5:6)
 - As we have seen, represents the Holy Spirit infused into Jesus at his baptism.
 - “John testified further, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him.’” (John 1:32)
 - It is the spirit-filled, risen and glorified Christ—Jesus—“the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,” who takes the scroll from God’s right hand and who is worthy to open it.
- A legion of angels and the twenty-four elders erupt into a cosmic song of praise, and the twenty-four elders hit the deck . . . again! And they sang a new song

- It's a new song because it just happened
- Jesus is our kinsman redeemer

The Scroll

- “I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who sat on the throne. It had writing on both sides and was sealed with seven seals.”
 - The fact that John sees in God's right hand a scroll with writing on both sides is unusual on two counts:
 - By the end of the 1st century the codex had replaced the scroll as the medium on which a book was written, suggesting that the scroll in God's hand is very old;
 - A scroll normally has writing on only one side, since when rolled up the writing on the back would be exposed and would be damaged easily. Writing on both sides suggests an abundance of content.
 - Normally, a scroll would be sealed with one seal, not seven.
 - Seven suggests the importance of what is inside, as well as completion.
- The beginning of the opening of the scrolls starts at the Festival of Firstfruits
 - Rev 5:2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" 3 But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.
 - in heaven or on earth or under the earth – only leaves above the earth
 - The scrolls began to be opened when Jesus ascended in Acts 1:9
 - Festival of Firstfruits
 - The Feast of Firstfruits actually took place during the week-long Passover celebration (Lev. 23:4–8), on the first day after the Sabbath that occurred in the midst of the week (vv. 9–11). Pentecost occurred fifty days after that Sabbath (vv. 15–16) and marked the culmination of what started at the Feast of Firstfruits.
 - As its name indicates, the Feast of Firstfruits marked thanksgiving to God for the firstfruits of the harvest. Somewhere around AD 30, the firstfruits of an even greater harvest issued forth, for it was on the first day after the Sabbath that occurred in the midst of the Passover celebration that Jesus rose from the dead (Matt. 28:1–10). Lest there be any doubt that His resurrection fulfilled the Feast of Firstfruits, Paul tells us explicitly that Christ is the firstfruits of those who will be raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20–23). Just as the firstfruits offered to God under the old covenant anticipated the fuller harvest to come, the resurrection of Jesus anticipates the bodily resurrection of His people first promised under the old covenant (Job 19:25–27).
 - Fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits was the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (from the Greek term *pentekostos*, or fiftieth), which was the grand celebration at the end of the grain harvest. On this occasion, the offerings of food and animals to the Lord were more lavish (Lev. 23:15–22), an appropriate way to thank Him for the tremendous bounty He had provided.
- The scroll originates with the prophet Daniel.
 - “In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel, who had been named Belteshazzar. The revelation was certain: a great war; he understood this from the vision. In those days, I, Daniel, mourned three full weeks. I ate no savory food, took no meat or wine, and did not anoint myself at all until the end of the three weeks.” (Daniel 10: 1-3)
 - Like John, Daniel is given a vision, a “revelation” or “unveiling” of future events, of a catastrophic war so terrible that it sickens him for three weeks. Daniel is so stunned at the horror that he cannot eat, sleep or function.
 - A man dressed in linen with a belt of fine gold around his waist—the preincarnate Christ whom we met before, and who also appears to John in Revelation as the risen and glorified Christ—displays the vision for Daniel, as it is written on a scroll. When the vision ends, the Lord tells Daniel to “keep secret the message and seal the book until the end time” (12:4). And that's what Daniel does.
 - But Daniel then asks the obvious question: “How long shall it be to the end of these appalling things” (12:6)? The Lord replies: “[It] should be for a time, two times, and half a time; and that, when the power of the destroyer of the holy people was brought to an end, all these things should end.” (12:7) But Daniel still does

not understand: “I heard, but I did not understand; so I asked, ‘My lord, what follows this?’” And the Lord replies: “Go, Daniel, because the works are to be kept secret and sealed until the end time.” (12:9)

- So, the scroll that the Lamb of God takes from God’s right hand in Revelation 5:7 is the very scroll that the Lord commanded Daniel to seal “until the end time.”
 - In Revelation we have reached the “end time,” and the “unveiling” is about to begin.
 - In the next chapter—Revelation 6—the slain and bloodied Lamb will open the scroll’s first seal and the “end-time” events will leap off the page, flashing before our eyes in Imax® 3-D and Dolby® sound!

Praise

The twenty-four elders cry then out as one in praise: “Worthy are you to receive the scroll and to break open the seals” (5:9). Then the Lamb opens the scroll . . . and we witness the results in graphic detail!

The Seven Seals (6–8)



- Recall that the scroll in God’s hand is sealed with seven seals, and all seven must be opened in order to see what is inside – to reveal the vision that Daniel saw in Daniel 10-12.



- 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse
 - We've already seen these guys in Zechariah
 - Things are quiet in Zechariah 1, but later God sends out four teams of differently-colored horses hauling chariots to bring judgment on Babylon, the nation that has oppressed his people
 - The four horsemen of the Apocalypse, like those in Zechariah, have been patrolling the earth. And now God calls them forth to bring judgement upon the earth and its inhabitants, just as they brought judgement on Babylon
 - 1/4 of the earth's population is killed in the wake of the first four horsemen of the Apocalypse!

Zec 1 – Vision of the Horses

⁷ On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius [Feb 15, 519 BC], the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet: ⁸ I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him *were* horses: red, sorrel, and white. ⁹ Then I said, "My lord, what *are* these?" So the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what they *are*."

¹⁰ And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are the ones whom the Lord has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth."

¹¹ So they answered the Angel of the LORD, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly."

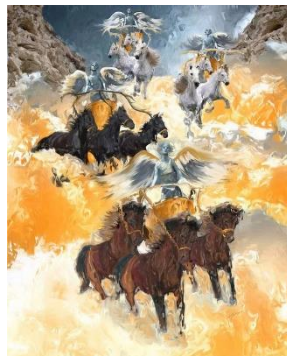
Zec 6 – Vision of the Four Chariots

6 ¹ Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots *were* coming from between two mountains, and the mountains *were* mountains of bronze. ² With the first chariot *were* red horses, with the second chariot black horses, ³ with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong *steeds*. ⁴ Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these, my lord?"

⁵ And the angel answered and said to me, "These *are* four spirits of heaven, who go out from *their* station before the Lord of all the earth. ⁶ The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country." ⁷ Then the strong *steeds* went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth." So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. ⁸ And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country."



Zec 1



Zec 6



Revelation

- Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24) lays the foundation for the tribulation!

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:4-14	Revelation 6-7
False Christs (4-5)	Rider on the white horse (6:1-2)
Wars and rumors of wars (6-7)	Rider on the red horse (6:3-4)
Famines and earthquakes (7b)	Rider on the black horse (6:5-6)
Famines and plagues (7)	Rider on the pale horse (6:7-8)
Persecution and martyrs (9-12)	Martyrs (6:9-11)
Terror and great cosmic signs (Luke 21:11)	Terror (6:12-17)
Worldwide preaching of the Gospel (14)	144,000 and their ministry (7:1-8)

First Four Seals Rev 6	Four Curses Lev 26	The Four Sore Judgements Eze 14:21	The Sorrows of Matthew Mt 24
1st Seal – Conqueror on a White Horse	Wild Beasts	Beasts	False Christs and Prophets
2nd Seal – Warring Rider with Sword on a Red Horse	Sword	Sword	Wars
3rd Seal – Rider who Brings Famine on a Black Horse	Broken Staff of Bread	Famine	Famine
4th Seal – Death and Hades on a Pale Horse	Plague	Plague	Death

Eze 14:21 "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments—**sword** and **famine** and **wild beasts** and **plague**—to kill its men and their animals!

Mt 24:4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For **many will come in my name**, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of **wars and rumors of wars**, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be **famines** and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹ "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to **death**, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

Lev 26:21 " 'If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. ²² I will send **wild animals** against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted. ... ²⁵ And I will bring the **sword** upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a **plague** among you, and you will be given into enemy hands. ²⁶ When I **cut off your supply of bread**, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied.

1. White Horse – Antichrist revealed (6:1-2)

First Seal: The Conqueror

¹ Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.



- Symbolism
 - White horse – Victory
 - Bow (no arrow) – Enforced peace
 - Crown – Royal authority
- The white horse speaks of victory, but the rider on the white horse in Revelation carries an arrowless bow τόξον [takh'- son], a weapon of war; thus, the image suggests “enforced peace,” or order “by the barrel of a gun.” The rider wears a crown, indicating that he has royal authority, much as Titus entered Jerusalem to enforce peace in A.D. 70, resulting in the destruction of the Temple, the city and the deaths of 1.2 million Jews.
- Roman generals entered Rome in a triumphal procession after a victory in battle, riding in a chariot drawn by white horses up the Capitoline Hill to the Temple of Jupiter.
- Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:4-14	Revelation 6-7
False Christs (4-5)	Rider on the white horse (6:1-2)

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

Antichrist

- See notes on [Antichrist](#)
- Dan 9²⁷ Then he [antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
 - This confirmation of the covenant starts the 7-year tribulation
 - Confirms – not creates. Something is already in place – Abrahamic Accords with ‘many’
 - The Hebrew word for ‘confirms’ means ‘to make greater’ – maybe the 3rd Temple?
- Not revealed until the church is raptured – Removal of the restrainer (Holy Spirit)
 - 2Th 2³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [speaking of the tribulation] shall not come, except there come a **departing** first, and that that man of sin be disclosed, even the son of perdition. (1599 Geneva Bible translation)
 - 2Th 2⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

Tribulation – Time of God’s Wrath

- See notes on [Tribulation \(Day of the Lord, Time of Jacob’s Trouble, Great Tribulation\)](#)

- We Are not appointed to God's wrath – The Tribulation is a time when GOD's wrath will be poured out on the unrighteous. The wrath that should have been hurled at you and poured out on me was absorbed by our hero, our Lord, our savior on the cross of Calvary.
- Ep 5:5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.**
- Col 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 **Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.** 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.
- 1Th 5:1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.** 3 For **when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them,** as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. **And they shall not escape.** 4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, **but let us watch and be sober.** 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 **Therefore comfort each other** and edify one another, just as you also are doing.
- Rev 3:10 Because you [Church of Philadelphia] have kept My command to persevere, **I also will keep you from the hour of trial** which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
- 1Th 1:9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even **Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**
- Ro 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from wrath** through Him.
- 2Pe 2 ⁴For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— ⁹*then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,
 - The word translated temptations is the same word translated tribulation
- Ps 37 ³⁹But the salvation of the righteous *is* from the LORD; *He is* their strength in the time of trouble. ⁴⁰And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.

Biblical Proof of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture

- See [Pre-Tribulation Rapture](#) for complete notes
- The Great Apostasy (Physical departure) (2Th 2)

2Th 2 – The Great Apostasy

³Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first*, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

- See [2Th 2 The Great Apostasy \(Physical departure\)](#) for complete notes
- The English expression “apostasy” or “falling away” comes from the Greek noun apostasia.
 - There are two major views on what is meant through the noun apostasia.
 - Spiritual departure – Deception – False Gospel – Paul writes about deception in every letter
 - Physical or spatial departure. If this latter view is accurate, Paul’s simple point to the Thessalonian believers is that they could not possibly be in the Tribulation period because their physical departure, or the pretribulation rapture that he had already taught you about, has not yet transpired.
- 1599 Geneva Bible translation of 2Th 2:3

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [speaking of the tribulation] shall not come, except there come a departing first, and that that man of sin be disclosed, even the son of perdition.

 - The shift from a physical to a spiritual understanding of apostasia in Second Thessalonians 2:3a in the [Roman Catholic Rheims Bible English translation](#) appears to have been theologically rather than exegetically motivated.
- What difference does it really make if Second Thessalonians 2:3a is speaking of a spiritual departure or a physical departure?
 - If verse 3a, is talking about a physical departure and not a spiritual departure, then the debate concerning when the rapture will transpire is all but over.
 - Paul says, “...that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first” (2 Thess. 2:3a).
 - The word translated “first” is the Greek adjective prōton, which means “first of all.”
 - If a physical departure must first transpire before the Day of the Lord can even begin, then it **becomes a decisive victory for pretribulationism**. Thus, how one interprets Second Thessalonians 2:3a is of grave consequence to the longstanding debate concerning the timing of the rapture.
- See [Purpose of the Tribulation \(Jacob’s Trouble\)](#)
- See [Biblical typology – Reasons why the rapture HAS to be before the 7 year tribulation](#)
 - DEFINITELY look at the notes on all of these!
 - Sacrifice of Isaac
 - Joseph took a Gentile bride before the 7-year famine
 - As in the days of Noah (flooding, DNA tampering, earth was corrupt and full of violence)
 - Enoch was raptured before the flood (at Pentecost)
 - As in the days of Lot (Rampant homosexuality and sexual immorality)
 - Lot was taken out of Sodom and Gomorrah before it was destroyed
 - Elijah was raptured before the destruction of Israel & Judah (850ish BC)
 - Daniel was absent during the 7x hotter fiery furnace
 - Jewish Wedding (Marriage covenant)

2. Red Horse – War (6:3-4)

Second Seal: Conflict on Earth

³ When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁴ Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

- The rider on the fiery red horse follows the rider on the white horse, breaking the enforced peace and triggering all-out war.
- Symbolism
 - Red – The “fiery” red horse is πυρρός [pur-ros’], “flame-colored” or “fiery”
 - It signals bloodshed on a massive scale
 - Sword – Reinforcing the bloodshed image, the red horse’s rider wields “a huge sword” held high (6:4), an emblem of aggression
- The great Jewish war of A.D. 66-73 reverberates beneath the surface as the horse gallops across John’s vision, a very recent memory for John’s audience.
- Olivet Discourse



Matthew 24:4-14	Revelation 6-7
Wars and rumors of wars (6-7)	Rider on the red horse (6:3-4)

⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Albert Pike Letter

Albert Pike seems to have been heavy in the occult, and he wrote a book called *Morals and Dogma*. But the main point here is that there is a letter which is believed he wrote to Mazzini dated August 15, 1871. And some think the letter might be a hoax but it is interesting that what was written in the letter came to pass. You see, in freemasonry there is what is said “Ordo Ab Chao” meaning Order out of Chaos, they cause chaos upon the earth to create order. So what this letter all about? The 3 world planned wars which were to happen before the desired new order. Two happened, one left.

[a] The First World War

This war was to be battled out so as to enable the Illuminati to overthrow the powers of the Czars in Russia, and turn Russia into a strong fortress of Atheistic-Communism. The differences stirred by the Agentur [agents] of the Illuminati between German and British Empires were to be used to forment this first world war. Then when the war has ended, Communism was to be built up and used to destroy other governments and to weaken religions. And if so, this happened, it was world war 1. Ooooh! So the war was really planned?

" The First World War must be brought about in order to permit the Illuminati to overthrow the power of the Czars in Russia and making that country a fortress of atheistic Communism. The divergences caused by the "agentur" [agents] of the Illuminati between the British and Germanic Empires will be used to foment this war. At

the end of the war, Communism will be built and used to destroy the other governments and in order to weaken religions."

[b] The Second World War-- World War 2

"The Second World War must be fomented by taking advantage of the differences between the Fascists and the political Zionists. This war must be brought about so that Nazism is destroyed and that the political Zionism be strong enough to institute a sovereign state of Israel in Palestine. During the Second World War, International Communism must become strong enough in order to balance Christendom, which would be then restrained and held in check until the time when we would need it for the final social cataclysm."

Mmmm...So World War Two was also planned? Maybe Conspiracy Theorists may be right on this.

[c] The Third World War--- it said to be the last.

"The Third World War must be fomented by taking advantage of the differences caused by " Agentur [agents]" of the "Illuminati" between the political Zionists and the leaders of Islamic World. **The war must be conducted in such a way that Islam (the Muslim Arabic World) and political Zionism (the State of Israel) mutually destroy each other.**

Meanwhile the other nations, once more divided on this issue will be constrained to fight to the point of complete physical, moral, spiritual and economical exhaustion...We shall unleash the Nihilists and the atheists, and we shall provoke a formidable social cataclysm which in all its horror will show clearly to the nations the effect of absolute atheism, origin of savagery and of the most bloody turmoil.

Then everywhere, the citizens, obliged to defend themselves against the world minority of revolutionaries, will exterminate those destroyers of civilization, and the multitude, disillusioned with Christianity, whose deistic spirits will from that moment be without compass or direction, anxious for an ideal, but without knowing where to render adoration, will receive the true light through the universal manifestation of the pure doctrine of Lucifer, brought finally out in public view.

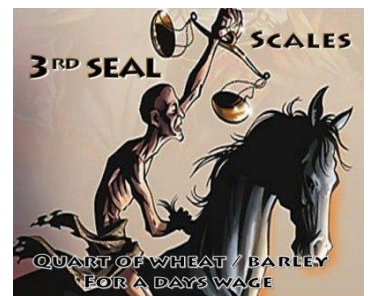
This manifestation will result from the general reactionary movement which will follow the **destruction of Christianity and atheism, both conquered and exterminated at the same time.**"

This is what is believed to be the letter of Albert Pike, the 33rd degree Freemason, to Giuseppe Mazzini, and the Letter is said to have been in the British Museum Library in London until 1977.

3. Black Horse – Famine (6:5-6)

Third Seal: Scarcity on Earth

⁵ When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."



- With all-out war comes famine
 - The black horse's rider carries a scale, ζυγὸν [zygon, zu-gahs'], a balance used to ration out grain.
 - "A ration of wheat costs a "day's pay"
 - Three rations of barley, a "day's pay,"
 - a "day's pay" is literally a δηνάριον [dēnariou, da-na'-re-on].
 - With famine comes hyper-inflation, and at these prices the poor—or anyone else—could not afford to eat.

- “Do not damage the olive oil or the wine,” suggests that the olive oil and wine are even more scarce and expensive than the grain, so be very careful not to spill a drop!
- When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked and laid siege to Jerusalem in 701 B.C., he demanded surrender.
 - Hezekiah, king of Jerusalem refused, saying that the Lord would rescue Jerusalem, to which Sennacherib’s envoy replied: “Was it to our lord and to you that my lord sent me to speak these words? Was it not rather to those sitting on the wall, who, with you, will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine?” (2 Kings 18: 27)
 - Thus was the fate of a city under siege, a walled city at war.
- Babylonian siege and conquest of Jerusalem:
 - Lamentations is the prophet Jeremiah’s eyewitness account of Babylon’s 2-year siege on Jerusalem and Jerusalem’s fall on August 14, 586 B.C. The famine was dreadful! People were eating their own children! Lam 2:19 “Arise, cry out in the night, At the beginning of the watches; Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him For the life of your young children, Who faint from hunger at the head of every street.” 20 “See, O LORD, and consider! To whom have You done this? Should the women eat their offspring, The children they have cuddled? Should the priest and prophet be slain In the sanctuary of the Lord?”
- Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:4-14	Revelation 6-7
Famines and earthquakes (7b)	Rider on the black horse (6:5-6)

⁷ ... And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

4. Pale Horse – Death by sword, famine, plague and wild beasts (6:7-8)

Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth

⁷ When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁸ So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.



- Babylonian siege and conquest of Jerusalem:

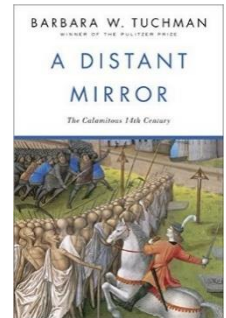
Ez 14:21 For thus says the Lord God: “How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it? 22 Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. 23 And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it,” says the Lord God.

Jer 14:11 Then the Lord said to me, “Do not pray for this people, for their good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.”

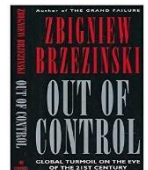
13 Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say to them, ‘You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.’ ”

14 And the Lord said to me, “The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. 15 Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, and who say, ‘Sword and famine shall not be in this land’—‘By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed! 16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; they will have no one to bury them—they nor their wives, their sons nor their daughters—for I will pour their wickedness on them.’

- After famine, the pale horse brings death and decay
 - The result is in direct proportion to humanity’s deliberate, sinful behavior.
 - And it only gets worse with each passing generation.
- A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century
 - Catastrophic 14th Century (1300s)
 - Theocracy – The church was the head of everything
 - Papal schism – 3 Popes were all simultaneously claiming to be the ‘true’ pope
 - Driven by politics rather than any theological disagreement
 - The conflicts quickly escalated from a church problem to a diplomatic crisis that divided Europe
 - Turned into war between Avignon and Rome
 - Bubonic plague spread throughout Europe
 - Started in 1348
 - Within 3 years, 1/3 of the European population died and no one knew why
 - Carried by fleas on rats – spread very easily
 - Catastrophic 20th Century (1900s)
 - World War I
 - World War II



- Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the Twenty-first Century, The Century of Megadeath
 - Written during the 20th century by Zbigniew Brzezinski
 - Former advisor to president Lyndon Johnson
 - National Security Advisor to president Jimmy Carter
 - “Deaths due to “politically motivated carnage” during the 20th century number 167-175 million
 - 33.5 million military casualties
 - 54 million civilian casualties
 - 80 million deaths due to political oppression



- We should remember that as Christians we are not exempt from the suffering that sin brings upon the world.
 - Sinful behavior incurs collateral damage, as history—and our own experience—so vividly testifies.
 - Jesus himself shared in our suffering, undergoing crucifixion—a brutal form of death—on our behalf, and he tells us that if we wish to follow him, we must also be willing to “take up our cross” (Luke 9: 23), participating fully in the human condition.
- Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:4-14	Revelation 6-7
Famines and plagues (7)	Rider on the pale horse (6:7-8)

⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

5. Souls of the Slain (6:9-11)

Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed.



- The opening of the fifth seal offers a summary of the Church’s martyrs throughout history.
- Although there were not many by the end of the first century, the number would increase until the Emperor Constantine signed the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313.
- “Those who had been slaughtered,” ἐσφαγμένων [esphagmenon], is the same word used to describe the Lamb in 5:6
 - The reason they were slaughtered is because they “bore witness to the word of God” (6:9).
 - The word “witness” is μαρτυρίαν [martyrian, mar-tu-re’-a], “martyr.”
- The “Age of Martyrdom,” the 1st through the 4th centuries, traditionally includes:
 - James, son of Zebadee (John’s brother)
 - St. Stephen
 - James the Just
 - Sts. Peter and Paul
 - Mark the Evangelist
 - Philip the Apostle
 - Andrew the Apostle;
 - Jude the Apostle;
 - Nathaniel (Bartholomew) the Apostle;
 - Thomas the Apostle
 - Simon the Zealot
 - Polycarp of Smyrna
 - Justin Martyr
 - the Scilitan Martyrs
 - Perpetua and Felicity
 - Ptolemaeus and Lucius
 - the Martyrs of Lyon
 - Pope Fabian
 - St. Sebastian
 - St. Agnes
 - Felix and Aductus
 - Marcellinus and Peter
 - Origen
 - Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
 - Euphemia
 - St. Alban
 - Ignatius of Antioch
 - Gelasinus
 - St. Pancras
 - St. Afra
 - St. George
 - Januarius
 - Vincent of Saragossa
 - St. Behnam
 - St. Lucy
 - Lawrence of Rome
 - St Cecilia
 - Catherine of Alexandria
 - St. Vitus
- Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:4-14	Revelation 6-7
Persecution and martyrs (9-12)	Martyrs (6:9-11)

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

6. Earthquake (6:12-17)

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

¹²I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”



- Day of the Lord

Opening the sixth seal propels John’s vision to the very edge of history, a time referred to as “the Day of the Lord”:

Joel 2 – God’s Spirit Poured Out

28 “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.
29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
30 “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

Jesus himself echoes Joel’s words in the Olivet Discourse:

Mt 24 – The Coming of the Son of Man

29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

- Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:4-14	Revelation 6-7
Terror and great cosmic signs (Luke 21:11)	Terror (6:12-17)

¹¹And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

¹²I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake... ¹⁵And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

- Isaiah 2 ¹⁷ The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The LORD alone will be exalted in that day, ¹⁸ But the idols He shall utterly abolish.
¹⁹ They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth,
 From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.
²⁰ In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver And his idols of gold,
 Which they made, *each* for himself to worship, To the moles and bats,
²¹ To go into the clefts of the rocks, And into the crags of the rugged rocks,
 From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

- Isaiah 34 ¹ Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people!
 Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it.
² For the indignation of the LORD *is* against all nations, And *His* fury against all their armies;
 He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.
³ Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses,
 And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
⁴ All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;
 All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as *fruit* falling from a fig tree.

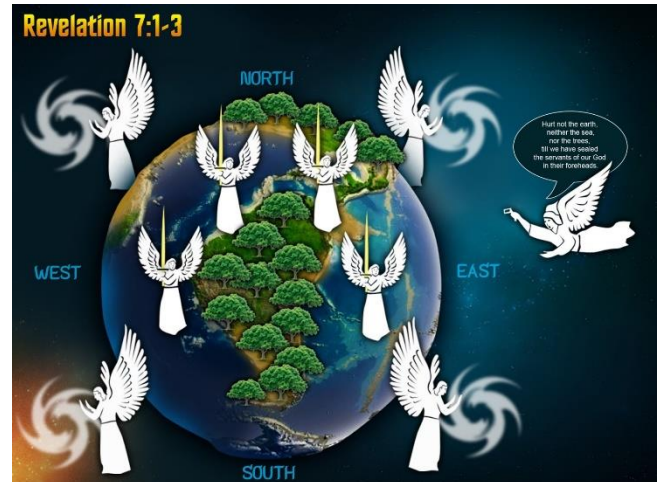
Interlude (7) – Worldwide preaching of the Gospel

144,000 Sealed (7:1-8)

The Sealed of Israel

7 After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. **2** Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, **3** saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” **4** And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:

5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed;
6 of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed;
7 of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed;
8 of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.



- An interlude of two visions interrupt the opening of the seventh seal, just as an interlude of two visions will interrupt the blowing of the seventh trumpet in Revelation 10.
- In the first interlude, a vision flashes before John’s eyes: the air becomes mysteriously still and an angel rises from the east, holding God’s “seal” σφραγῖδα [sphragida, sfra-geese’, a “stamp” or “seal of ownership”] in his hand with which to mark 144,000 people, protecting them from the destruction about to follow.
- This recalls Ezekiel’s vision of 592 B.C., prelude to the slaughter when Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
 - Ez 9:3 Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer’s inkhorn at his side; 4 and the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” 5 To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. 6 Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the temple.
- 144,000
 - 144,000 is 12 squared, multiplied by 1,000.
 - It is 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, a symbolic number representing all those of Israel who have been faithful.
 - Many offer a different interpretation of the 144,000, suggesting that they are the complete number of faithful Christians (both Jews and Gentiles) who will be spared during the great tribulation, those who are the “new Israel.”
 - This is certainly a possibility, especially given the Johannine antagonism toward “the Jews.”
 - Nevertheless, we must recall God’s statement to Israel
 - Exodus 4:22— “Israel is my son, my firstborn,”

- Joshua 1:5– “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
- God’s covenant with Israel is irrevocable; hence, Paul’s concluding statement in his formal argument regarding redemption: “I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers, so that you will not become wise [in] your own estimation: a hardening has come upon Israel in part, until the full number of the Gentiles comes in, and thus all Israel will be saved, as it is written.” (Romans 11:25-26)
- Regarding redemption, the Roman Catholic Church addresses the Jews, in alignment with Paul: “Finally, those who have not yet received the Gospel are related in various ways to the people of God. In the first place we must recall the people to whom the testament and the promises were given and from whom Christ was born according to the flesh [that is, the Jews]. On account of their fathers this people remains most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls he issues.” Lumen Gentium 2.16.
- So, the 144,000 is best seen as a symbolic number representing all the faithful of Israel.
 - That makes sense, since John’s vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 has 12 gates, bearing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel and 12 foundations, bearing the names of the 12 Apostles
- Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:4-14	Revelation 6-7
Worldwide preaching of the Gospel (14)	144,000 and their ministry (7:1-8)

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Great Multitude Saved (7:9-17)

A Multitude from the Great Tribulation

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” ¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying:

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen.”

¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

¹⁴ And I said to him, “Sir, you know.”

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

- Now we have a vast number of people dressed in white “from every nation, race, people, and tongue.”
- These people are distinct from the 144,000 in the previous interlude.

- One of the twenty-four elders confirms to John that as we had the 144,000 of Israel sealed and protected, so do we have a countless multitude of people from “every nation, race, people, and tongue” who make it safely through the great tribulation and stand before the throne of God, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

144,000	Great Multitude
Rev 7:1-8	Rev 7:9-17
Jews	Jews and Gentiles from all nations
Numbered	Cannot be counted
Listed by tribe of Israel	From every nation, tribe, people and language
“seal of God on their foreheads” (7:3-4)	“washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white” (7:14)
On earth	Standing in heaven

- 3 Distinct groups of people in Revelation
 - Martyrs
 - Rev 6:9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.
 - 144,000 Sealed
 - Rev 7:2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed
 - Great multitude
 - Rev 7:14 "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
- The great multitude join together with the angelic host, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders in a cosmic hymn of praise to God and to the Lamb.

7. Silence (8:1-5)

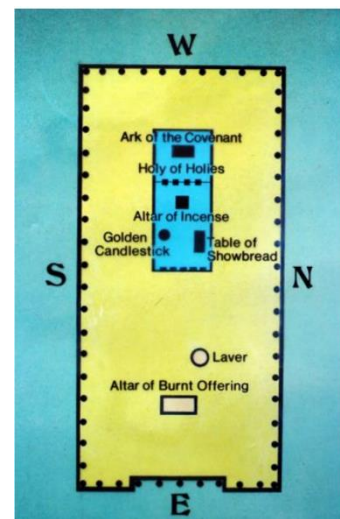
Seventh Seal: Prelude to the Seven Trumpets

8 When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ³ Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

- The silence is deafening! With the kaleidoscope of visions, the flashes of lightening, rumbling of thunder, great angelic choruses praising God, and all of creation joining in thunderous song, the sudden silence is stunning! And it continues for a half hour, while seven angels receive seven trumpets. Something BIG is about to happen!
- An introductory scene, or “overture,” precedes the movement from dead silence to the blast of the first trumpet:

- As the “Altar of Incense” stood in the Holy Place of Israel’s tabernacle, flanked by the Menorah (the “golden candlestick,” with its seven branches and seven flames) to the left, and the Table of Showbread (with its bread and wine) to the right, all directly before the Ark of the Covenant and the presence of God in the Holy of Holies, so does a golden “Altar of Incense” sit before God in the genuine tabernacle, which is in heaven (Hebrews 8: 1-5).
- At the genuine “Altar of Incense” an angel approaches with a golden censer, filled with incense and the prayers of the faithful, and he offers it before God, much as Zechariah offered incense before the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem at the opening of Luke’s gospel (1:8-10). Here, though, in a totally unexpected move, the angel hurls the censer filled with burning coals down upon the earth: lightning flashes, thunder booms . . . and a tremendous earthquake strikes the land!
- What an overture, operatic in its drama! I can’t help but think that the prayers are from the martyrs beneath the altar in the 5th seal.



- It also calls to mind a similar scene in Ezekiel 10 – The Glory Departs from the Temple
 - 1 And I looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne. 2 Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, “Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” And he went in as I watched.

The Seven Trumpets (8-11)

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS						
1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
Green grass and 1/3 of the trees are burned up. Rev. 8:7	1/3 of sea becomes blood; 1/3 of ships and sea life destroyed. Rev. 8:8-9	1/3 of waters turn bitter. Rev. 8:1-11	1/3 of sun, moon, and stars do not shine. Rev. 8:12	“Locusts” wield the Beast’s military power. Rev. 9:1-12	200-million-man army; a third of mankind killed. Rev. 9:13-21	The Kingdom of God is declared. Rev. 11:15-19

If we thought things were bad when the seven seals were opened and unleashed the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, blowing the seven trumpets escalates the drama exponentially, raising it to a cosmic plain, with the very heavens raining down fire upon the earth! We leave Lesson #7 with dead silence for half an hour, the tension rising palpably as seven angels stand poised to sound seven shining trumpets.

The sequence of seven trumpets follows the same pattern as the sequence of seven seals:

- The first four trumpets form a unified whole, as the four horsemen formed a unified whole;
- The fifth and sixth trumpets are different in kind, as the fifth and sixth seals were different in kind; and
- A two-part interlude separates the 6th from the 7th trumpet, as a two-part interlude separated the 6th from the 7th seal.

Seals (Human-caused events) → Trumpets (Divine-caused events)

Moving from the seven seals to the seven trumpets escalates the catastrophes from human-caused events on the earth's surface to divine-caused events pummeling the earth from above.

- The actions of the four horsemen mirror the actions triggered by sinful men:
 - enforced peace
 - all-out war
 - famine
 - death
- In contrast, the first four trumpets mirror the cataclysmic actions of nature:
 - hail and fire, mixed with blood
 - a large, burning mountain is hurled into the sea
 - a star like a flaming torch falls to earth
 - the sun, moon and stars go dark

Trumpets in the Bible:

- In the great theophany at Mt. Sinai, God calls Israel to the mountain with a loud trumpet blast, which increases in intensity and volume as the Israelites gather, terrifying them (Exodus 19: 16-19).
- God instructs Moses to make two silver trumpets for “summoning the community and in breaking camp” (Numbers 10: 2), as well as for signaling in battle (Numbers 31: 6).
- And Joshua will bring down the walls of Jericho, accompanied by trumpet blasts (Joshua 6: 4-20).
- Jesus says that at the end time, God “will send his angels with a trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other” (Matthew 24: 31).
- In Revelation, the trumpets sounding now herald judgments on the “inhabitants of the earth” (8: 13).

1. Vegetation Struck (8:7)

First Trumpet: Vegetation Struck (Hail and fire, mixed with blood)

⁷ The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.



- Joel 1 – Mourning for the Land

¹³ Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; Wail, you who minister before the altar;
Come, lie all night in sackcloth, You who minister to my God;
For the grain offering and the drink offering Are withheld from the house of your God.
¹⁴ Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders *And* all the inhabitants of the land
Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD.
¹⁵ Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD *is* at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.
¹⁶ Is not the food cut off before our eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of our God?
¹⁷ The seed shrivels under the clods, Storehouses are in shambles;
Barns are broken down, For the grain has withered.
¹⁸ How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless,
Because they have no pasture; Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.
¹⁹ O LORD, to You I cry out; For fire has devoured the open pastures, And a flame has burned all the trees of the field.
²⁰ The beasts of the field also cry out to You,
For the water brooks are dried up, And fire has devoured the open pastures.
- Illusions to Exodus
 - “hail and fire mixed with blood” (8:7) is an obvious allusion to the 1st and 7th plagues brought on Egypt
 - Only this time it affects not just Egypt, but one third of the earth!

Plague #1 – Water becomes blood

<u>Exodus</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
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<p>Ex 7:19 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.’ ” 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.</p>	<p>Rev 8:8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.</p> <p>Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.</p> <p>Rev 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”</p>
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Plague 7 – Hail

<u>Exodus</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
<p>Ex 9:22 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.” 23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.</p> <p>Ps 105:32 He gave them hail for rain, And flaming fire in their land.</p>	<p>Rev 8:7 The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.</p> <p>Rev 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.</p>

- In Scripture “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11)
 - The reverse, “the blood of a dead man” is a horror, one which Revelation invokes when an angel pours out the second bowl, and the sea “turned to blood like that of a corpse” (16:3).
 - With the blast of the first trumpet, “hail and fire mixed with blood” is hurled upon the earth.

2. Seas Struck (8:8-9)

Second Trumpet: The Seas Struck (Huge mountain, all ablaze)

⁸ Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹ And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.



- With the second trumpet blast, “something like a large burning mountain was hurled into the sea” (8:8).
 - As a result, 1/3 of the sea turned to blood, another overt allusion to the first plague of Exodus (the waters of the Nile River turned to blood and all the fish in the river died)
 - In addition, with the second trumpet a third of all the ships in the Mediterranean are wrecked.
- The only natural event that could parallel this disaster would be a huge meteorite smashing into the sea.
 - Although small meteorite strikes are relatively common on earth, the largest impact is the Vredefort crater in South Africa, which measures 190 miles across, caused by an object measuring 9-12 miles in diameter, an asteroid, not a meteor! It happened some 2 billion years ago.

Plague #1 – Water becomes blood

Exodus	Revelation
<p>Ex 7:19 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.’ ” 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.</p>	<p>Rev 8:8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.</p> <p>Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.</p> <p>Rev 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”</p>

3. Freshwaters Struck (Wormwood) (8:10-11)

Third Trumpet: The Waters Struck (Blazing star, Wormwood)

¹⁰ Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.



- With the third trumpet blast, “a large star burning like a torch” shot through the heavens and struck the earth, affecting the rivers and springs. As the second trumpet blast turned a third of the sea to blood, so the third trumpet blast poisons a third of the drinking water, turning it to “wormwood,” bitter.
- Similar to the second, the third natural disaster seems to be a meteorite, flaming through the sky.
- Some commentators take the falling star to be Babylon, drawing on Isaiah 14:12 (“How you have fallen from the heavens, O Morning Star”), and others on Satan and the fallen angels of Revelation 12:9 (“The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil or Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it”).

4. Heavens Struck (8:12-13)

Fourth Trumpet: The Heavens Struck (Sun, moon and stars turned dark)

¹² Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

¹³ And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”



- Recalls:
 - 9th plague on Egypt, the plague of darkness “so thick it could be felt” (Exodus 10: 21-29),
 - Jesus saying in the Olivet Discourse: “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” (Matthew 24: 29)

Plague #9 – Darkness	
Ex 10:21 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.	Rev 8:12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.
Ps 105:28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His word.	Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of

	<p>the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth.</p> <p>Rev 16:10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.</p>
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- What could cause such a phenomenon?
 - Recall our introduction to Revelation, when we examined its historical and cultural context: Mt. Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79, blanketing a large portion of the Mediterranean with volcanic ash, doubtless blotting out the sky and turning the day into night.
 - In fact, Pliny the Younger, an eyewitness to the eruption from across the Bay of Naples, notes:

“Though it was now morning, the light was exceedingly faint and doubtful; the buildings all around us tottered . . . we therefore resolved to quit the town. A panic-stricken crowd followed us . . . Being at a convenient distance from the houses, we stood still, in the midst of a most dangerous and dreadful scene . . . On the other side [of the bay], a black and dreadful cloud, broken with rapid zigzag flashes, behind it variously shaped masses of flame; these were like sheet-lightning, but much larger . . . Soon afterwards, the cloud began to descend, and cover the sea . . . a dense dark mist seemed to be following us, spreading itself over the country like a cloud.” (“Letter 66,” to Cornelius Tacitus)
 - This would have been a very recent event for John’s audience.
- Vulture/Eagle
 - This is a haunting, nightmarish vision, a bird of prey circling and crying out in a loud voice:

“οὐαί, οὐαί, οὐαί” [oo-eye, oo-eye, ooeye’]; “Woe! Woe! Woe!”
 - Remember, the seals and the trumpets are preludes to judgment, not judgments themselves
 - They function more as dire warnings, warnings that are completely ignored by humanity, who continues down the same worn, twisted path to perdition.
 - By the time the seven seals are opened and the seven trumpets blown, klaxons are blaring, sirens wailing, yet humanity remains deaf and defiant.
 - When the seven bowls are poured out, total destruction will follow.
 - We now face the final three trumpets—the three “Woes!”—uttered by the screeching bird of prey.
 - The bird is an **ἄετός** [eye-ee-toss’].
 - Most translations render the word “eagle,” but it might also be a “vulture.”
 - Since eagles do not eat carrion, this is probably what it is.
 - When the dust settles after the climactic battle of Armageddon, with slaughtered corpses stacked high, we read that “all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh” (19: 21).

5. (Woe 1) Locusts from the Bottomless Pit (9:1-12)

Fifth Trumpet: The Locusts from the Bottomless Pit (Star, fallen to the earth)

9 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. **2** And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. **3** Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. **4** They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. **5** And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for five months*. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. **6** In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.



7 The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces *were* like the faces of men. **8** They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' *teeth*. **9** And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. **10** They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months. **11** And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.



12 One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

- Blowing the fifth trumpet—the first οὐαί — launches the most terrifying imagery in all of Scripture, a nightmarish collage of grotesque, hideous monsters with wings whirring, teeth snapping, tails stinging.
 - In the dark of night we feel the whisper of hot, rancid breath at the back of our necks. John's vision snaps from Technicolor to Imax® 3d; from stereo to Dolby® Surroundsound; from fascination in the grotesque to all-out, heart-stopping terror. We struggle to breathe.
- A star falls from the sky (the image recalls Jesus saying, “I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky” in Luke 10:18), and with a set of keys Satan opens the shaft to the ἄβυσσος [ah’- boo-sauce], the “abyss.” Rusty hinges screech and groan, and as the heavy lid opens, smoke, heat and a horrible stench belches forth, and locusts and scorpions by the millions swarm out.
- The “Deathstalker” scorpion, only 2 inches long and nearly transparent, is one of the most deadly scorpions in the world. It's sting inflicts excruciating pain, leading to tachycardia, skyrocketing blood pressure, convulsions, coma . . . and often death. Deathstalkers (Leiurus quinquestriatus) are common throughout Israel and the Middle East. If you're stung by one and survive, you will never forget the experience!



Plague #8 – Locusts

Ex 10:12 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the

Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. **2** And he opened the bottomless pit,

<p>land—all that the hail has left.” 13 So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. 15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.</p> <p>Ps 105:34 He spoke, and locusts came, Young locusts without number, 35 And ate up all the vegetation in their land, And devoured the fruit of their ground.</p>	<p>and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.</p>
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- A vast army of locusts swarms the land, stripping trees bare and devouring every blade of grass in Joel 1
Joel 1 – The Locust Plague in Judah
 - 1 The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.
 - 2 Hear this, you elders, And give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!
Has anything like this happened in your days, Or even in the days of your fathers?
 - 3 Tell your children about it, Let your children tell their children, And their children another generation.
 - 4 What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten;
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.
- But the locusts in Revelation are like locusts on steroids
 - Massive creatures, genetically-engineered monsters, as large as horses, with human faces, women’s hair, lions’ teeth and iron breastplates
 - Their tails have massive stingers and their wings whirl with thunderous sound.
 - At the coming of these creatures, John’s audience might react as we might to a fully-armed battalion of M1A2 Abrams Battle Tanks rumbling down the front street; a squadron of F-22 Raptors screeching overhead; or the sky blackened with AH-65 Apache Attack Helicopters, bristling with hellfire missiles and M230 automatic canons.
- These creatures—the demonic scorpions and locusts, swarming like vermin out of the abyss—are commanded by “the angel of the abyss, whose name in Hebrew [actually, Aramaic] is Abaddon [Ἀβαδδών, “Destruction”] and in Greek Apollyon [Ἀπολλύων, “Destroyer”]. The commander is Satan himself!

6. (Woe 2) Four Angels from the Euphrates (9:13-21)

Sixth Trumpet: The Angels from the Euphrates (Four angels, released)

¹³ Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. ¹⁷ And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. ¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. ¹⁹ For ^[e]their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.



²⁰ But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. ²¹ And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

- The voice from the horns of the golden altar belongs to the angel who presented the prayers of the “holy ones” in 8:3-5, and who then hurled the censer’s burning coals down upon the earth, accompanied by “peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake” (8:5).
- The sixth trumpet unshackles four angels at the banks of the Euphrates River, who receive orders to “kill a third of the human race” (9:15).
 - Perhaps the four are fallen angels, since they were “bound at the banks of the [river]” (9:14).
 - To John’s audience, nothing good comes from the Euphrates River: Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian invaders all came from that direction, wreaking havoc, and the Euphrates is the far eastern boundary of the Roman Empire, beyond which lived the feared Parthians.
- The sixth trumpet marks the final warning in a series of escalating disasters:
 - the seven seals embody human actions, with each action escalating in severity;
 - the seven trumpets embody natural or supernatural actions, each escalating in severity.
 - Now, four fallen angels (REALLY bad guys!), accompanied by 200 million cavalry [^{ἵππικός}, hippi-kos’], the shock troops of the ancient world, set out to kill one third of humanity!
- 200 million troops is a huge number, hyperbole suggesting an enormous slaughter.
 - The Greek word is ^{δισμυριάς} [dis-mu-ree-ahs’];
 - It is the largest number in the Greek language, ^{μυρίος} = 10,000, multiplied by itself, and then doubled!
 - It looks like God is unleashing overwhelming force in a last ditch effort to bring sinful humanity to its senses. This is “severe mercy,” indeed!
- These are indeed demonic creatures, breathing fire, smoke and sulfur, images forever associated with hell.

- These fire-breathing monsters with heads like lions and tails like snakes resemble the mythological Chimaera, first described by Homer in his Iliad. In the story, Proetus' wife Anteia lusts after the young and handsome Bellerophon, and when Proetus finds out he sends Bellerophon to Lycia, with a "secret message" for the king of Lycia, sure to get him killed. After dining together, the king sends Bellerophon on a suicide mission to kill the Chimaera, a "grim monster sprung of the gods, nothing human, all lion in front, all snake behind, all goat between, terrible, blasting lethal fire at every breath!" (Iliad 6, 209-215). Thankfully, Bellerophon succeeds, killing the beast . . . but they're back in Revelation!



- With a third of humanity killed, the survivors become even more intransigent. Like Pharaoh in Egypt, with each disaster, they harden their hearts even more. And that's a very sad commentary on the human condition, resulting in consequences that are inevitable, as we'll see in the next lesson.

Interlude (10:1-11:14)

As we end this lesson only six trumpets have sounded. There is still one more to go!

John is stunned by his vision of the catastrophic disasters that befall humanity and the earth itself; it sickens him. But the visions continue. Two witnesses appear in (what is left of) Jerusalem, prophesying for 1,260 days, hated by all who hear them. A great beast rises from the abyss, wages war against them and kills them, their torn corpses lying in the street for three and a half days, while the whole world rejoices.

And then, to the horror of all, they begin to draw breath, they sand on their feet and they ascend into heaven. With that, a great earthquake strikes Jerusalem and a tenth of the city collapses, killing thousands.

Little scroll (10:1-11)

The Mighty Angel with the Little Book

10 I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow *was* on his head, his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. ² He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left *foot* on the land, ³ and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. ⁴ Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

⁵ The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven ⁶ and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, ⁷ but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

John Eats the Little Book

⁸ Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.”

⁹ So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.”

And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”

¹⁰ Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. ¹¹ And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

- In the first vision a mighty angel descends from heaven and in a voice like a roaring lion thunders: “There shall be no more delay” (10:6)! He then presents John with a “little scroll” and commands him to eat it!
- Angel
 - This is the very same angel who:
 - Speaks to John on behalf of the risen and glorified Christ in 1:1
 - Introduced the scroll with seven seals in 5:2
 - Will close Revelation when he takes John on a guided tour of the New Jerusalem in 22:1
 - This mighty angel is “wrapped in a cloud” [νεφέλη, ne-fee’-lay, as in the “pillar of cloud & fire” in Exodus]
 - He has a “halo” [ἵρις, ee’ris, more commonly translated, a “rainbow”] around his head

- His “face was like the sun and his feet were like pillars of fire,” and he stands with one foot on land and the other on the sea (10:1-2), indicating his “might” [ἰξυρός, ee-skhu-ros’].

- Scroll

- Notice that the scroll he held “had been opened” [ἡνεωγμένον, a perfect, passive verb]
 - Referring to the scroll with seven seals, opened by the Lamb in chapter 6:1-8:1
- Some commentators claim that because it is called a “small scroll” it must be a second scroll, not the one opened by the Lamb
 - The word “small scroll” is indeed the diminutive form, [βιβλαρίδιον ἢ βιβλίον], but it seems to be used interchangeably
 - For example, in 10:8, where John uses βιβλίον for the “small scroll.”
 - Richard Bauckham, in *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), p. 244, points out that other Greek works of Christian prophecy, such as the Shepherd of Hermas, also uses the words interchangeably. I thank Peter S. Williamson in his *Revelation, (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture)* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015, for this observation and reference.

- Seven thunders

- When the angel cries out like a lion, the “seven thunders” cry out, too.
- It is a deft allusion to the voice of God in Psalm 29, agreeing with what the angel has to say.

“The voice of the Lord is over the waters:	1
the glory of the Lord thunders,	
the lord over the mighty waters . . .	
The voice of the Lord is splendor.	2
The voice of the Lord cracks the cedars . . .	3
The voice of the Lord strikes with fiery flame,	4
the voice of the Lord shakes the desert . . .	5
The voice of the Lord makes the deer dance	6
and strips the forests bare. (Psalm 29: 3-9)	7

- John, pen in hand, gets ready to write down what the angel says, as he has written the seven letters to the seven churches and the series of visions he has experienced. But the angel says, No! “Seal up what the seven thunders have spoken, but do not write it down” (10:4), suggesting that there are elements of God’s “revelation” that are private, that are not to be shared with humanity.

- Angel

- Then the mighty angel raises his right hand to heaven and swears by him “who created heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, ‘There shall be no more delay[!]’.”
- This is precisely what the angel in Daniel does when Daniel asks the angel how long it will be before the visions revealed to him will occur.
 - In Daniel, the angel “swears by him who lives forever that it should be for a time, two times and half a time [3½ years] . . .” (Daniel 12:7).
 - John’s “revelation” draws intimately on its antecedents in Daniel, tightening the fabric of John’s vision
- Here, the angel tells John that when “the seventh angel blows his trumpet, the mysterious plan of God shall be fulfilled, as promised to his servants the prophets” (10:7).

- John ate the scroll

- The mighty angel holds an open scroll in his hand, and he commands John to take it. When John approaches, the angel then tells him to take the scroll and eat it!
 - Of course, this is a symbolic gesture.
- Jeremiah

- The prophet Jeremiah complains to God that from his youth he loved God's word, and that now he has no choice but to hear it and obey it:
- "When I found your words, I devoured them; your words were my joy, and the happiness of my heart." (Jeremiah 15:16)
- When Jeremiah first encountered God's words they meant everything to him; he devoured them—that is, he took them deeply into his heart and internalized them, making them a part of himself.
- Ezekiel
 - Shortly after God calls Ezekiel to be a prophet, Ezekiel looks, and . . .
 - "[I]t was then I saw a hand stretched out to me; in it was a written scroll. [God] unrolled it before me; it was covered with writing front and back. Written on it was: Lamentation, wailing, woe! He said to me: 'Son of man, eat what you find here; eat this scroll, then go, speak to the house of Israel.' So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. 'Son of man', he said to me, 'feed your stomach and fill your belly with this scroll I am giving you'. I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth." (Ez 2:9–3:3)
- Responses
 - Ezekiel is a hard man. God had said to him: "Look! I make your face as hard as theirs, and your brow as stubborn as theirs [the Israelites]. Like diamond, harder than flint, I make your brow. Do not be afraid of them . . ." (3:8-9) And God did make him hard.
 - John is a tender-hearted man, and what is on the scroll at first tastes like honey (for it's the word of God, after all), but then it turns his stomach sour [*πικραίνω*, pee-kri'-no, "bitter"]; it makes him sick, much like Daniel.
 - Us – The word of God is sweet, indeed, but it's not saccharine, and it is brutally honest.
 - After studying God's word and internalizing it, we are called to put it into action.
 - As St. James said (in the old 1611 King James translation): "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (James 1:22)
 - With knowledge and understanding of Scripture comes responsibility.
 - Looking honestly and deeply into our own souls can be disconcerting at best, a terror at worst. For there are times when we gaze into our souls . . . and we see a picture of Dorian Gray staring back at us. It makes us sick.

Two witnesses (11:1-14)

The Two Witnesses

11 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. ² But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for* forty-two months. ³ And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. ⁶ These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

The Witnesses Killed

⁷ When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. ⁸ And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. ⁹ Then *those* from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. ¹⁰ And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

The Witnesses Resurrected

¹¹ Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. ¹³ In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴ The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

- Tribulation Temple
 - John is told to measure the temple, but to exclude the outer court for it “has been handed over to the Gentiles” who will trample the “holy city” for forty-two months.
 - On the face of it, this is a puzzling scene, for the temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed in A.D. 70: it no longer exists in the “holy city” of Jerusalem at the time John is writing Revelation!
 - This refers to a future third temple to be built in Jerusalem
 - 1st Temple was built by Solomon, 959-586 B.C.
 - 2nd Temple was built after the return from Babylon, 516 B.C.–A.D. 70
 - 3rd Temple – Tribulation Temple – ready to be built as soon as permission is granted
 - 42 months
 - The forty-two months recurs variously throughout Revelation as the period of “great tribulation”:
 - forty-two months (11:2; 13:5);
 - 1,260 days (42 months x 30 days = 1,260) (11:3; 12:6);
 - a year, two years and a half-year (12:14).
 - The time period recalls Daniel’s period of “great tribulation”
 - “The man clothed in lined, who was upstream, lifted his hands to heaven; and I heard him swear by him who lives forever that it should be for a time, two times, and half a time; and that, when the power of the destroyer of the holy people was brought to an end, all these things should end.” (12:7)
 - Significantly, 3½ years is ½ of 7, the number of completion
- 2 Witnesses
 - Zechariah – The two olive trees and the two lamp stands recall a similar scene in Zechariah:
 - “Then the angel who spoke with me returned and aroused me, like one awakened from sleep. He said to me, ‘What do you see?’ I replied, ‘I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on top of it. There are seven lamps that are on top of it, with seven spouts on each of the lamps that are on top of it. And beside it are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and one to its left.’” (4:1-5)
 - The angel then explains to Zechariah that:
 - the lamp stand is the Temple being constructed under the supervision of Zerubbabel, governor (and heir to David’s throne) of those who returned from Babylon (520-516 B.C.)
 - the two olive trees are Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest.
 - Revelation – The lamp stand in Revelation is a fitting symbol of the Church, for as the lamp stand brings light into the world, so does the Church bring the light of Christ into the world.
 - The two lamp stands may represent, as many of the early Church Fathers suggested, the Old and New Testaments
 - or perhaps they represent both Jews and Gentiles who comprise the Church in John’s day
 - Valid testimony
 - Throughout Scripture, two witnesses are required for a valid testimony (Deuteronomy 17:6)
 - Just as Zerubbabel and Joshua are God’s witnesses in building the second Temple, so are there two witnesses in building God’s Church
 - This is one reason why Jesus sends out his disciples two-by-two (Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1)
- Who are the 2 witnesses?

- Moses
 - Represents the Jewish Law
 - Turns the water of the Nile River into blood in the first plague on Egypt and who brings the additional nine plagues (Exodus 7:14–11:10),
 - Present at the at Transfiguration in Caesarea Philippi, where God the Father validates Peter's confession of faith before two credible witnesses: Moses and Elijah.
- Elijah
 - Represents the Jewish prophets
 - Shuts up the heavens so that it doesn't rain for three and a half years during his battle with King Ahab and his miserable wife, Jezebel (1Kings 17:1).
 - Was raptured – did not die
 - Present at the at Transfiguration in Caesarea Philippi, where God the Father validates Peter's confession of faith before two credible witnesses: Moses and Elijah.
- Enoch
 - Represents the Gentiles
 - Was raptured – did not die
- Death and resurrection of the 2 witnesses
 - Satan rises from the abyss, slays the two witnesses, and all the people rejoice!
 - As on New Year's Eve, parties erupt throughout the land as people celebrate the slaughter of the prophets who had been telling them what they didn't want to hear!
 - As Jesus had said: "They will hand you over to persecution, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name" (Matthew 24: 9).
 - But then, after three and one half days of rotting in the sun, the two witnesses draw breath, stand on their feet, and as the world watches, they ascend into heaven!
 - Technology has to be advanced enough that the whole world CAN watch as this happens

7. The Kingdom Proclaimed (11:15-19)

Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed (Temple in heaven, opened)

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying:

“We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One who is and who was and who is to come,
Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.
¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

- The twenty-four elders’ song recalls Psalm 2 which begins, “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot what is vain?” and it ends with God’s Anointed smashing the kings of the earth “with an iron rod,” shattering them “like a potter’s jar.”
- After the second woe passes (Revelation 11:14), there comes a clear division in the book with the announcement from heaven, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” (Revelation 11:15). In other words, this final stage of judgment will be the end, and righteousness will be restored to the earth.

The Woman and the Dragon (12)

The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

12 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ²Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Satan Thrown Out of Heaven

⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. ¹²Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

The Woman Persecuted

¹³ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. ¹⁴But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Flashback theory

Lesson #10 introduces a flashback to a time before Genesis 1:1, giving us context for the story that we are reading. Chapter 12 opens with a great sign appearing in the sky: “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth” (12:1). And then a huge red dragon appeared in the sky, seeking to devour the child!

- War breaks out in heaven, the dragon leading his minions and the archangel Michael leading God’s army of angels. Michael and his army thunderously defeat the dragon and his minions, casting them down to earth where the dragon vows revenge. He hunts the woman who had fled with her child to devour him and those who follow him.
- For John Milton this is epic material, grist for the greatest epic poem in the English language, *Paradise Lost*.
- John makes an abrupt turn here, observing two signs in the sky, which leads John through a series of visions, visions that give us the “backstory” of Revelation, of how all this came about to begin with.

Woman clothed with the sun – Virgin Mary

- The “woman clothed with the sun” is Israel from whom will come the Messiah; Mary, the literal mother of the Messiah; and the Church, the mother of us all.
- Most Roman Catholics immediately identify the woman “clothed with the sun” as Jesus’ mother, Mary, crowned with twelve stars, with the moon under her feet. In the Roman Catholic world the iconography is unmistakable.
- Our Lady at Fatima
 - 100th anniversary of the apparitions of “the woman clothed in the sun,” in 1917
- In Scripture the symbolism of the “woman clothed with the sun” runs much deeper. Israel is clothed with the sun, the moon is under her feet, and she wears a crown of twelve stars, symbolizing her universality.
 - Personifies Israel, God’s covenant people, often portrayed in Scripture as
 - the “daughter of Zion” (Psalm 9:14; Isaiah 10:32; Jeremiah 4:31 . . .);
 - a mother (Psalm 87; Isaiah 66:8-11 . . .);
 - the bride of the Lord (Isaiah 49:18, 54:5; Jeremiah 2:2 . . .).
 - through Israel that the Messiah will come
 - through Israel that God’s plan of redemption will extend to all humanity
- On a second level, the woman clothed with the sun is, indeed, Mary, Jesus’ mother, who gives birth to him, raises him, stands at the foot of the cross as he suffers and dies, buries him, and who, after his resurrection and ascension, is his most ardent disciple, joining the Apostles in the upper room (Acts 1:13-14).
- On the third level, Mary not only gives birth to the Messiah, literally bringing him into the world, but through her son, Jesus, she is mother of the Church, as well, for as Jesus was born through her, so are we born anew through him, and collectively, we are the Church.
 - On the cross Jesus said his mother: “Woman, behold, your son.” And then he said to John, his cousin and beloved disciple: “Behold, your mother” (19:26-27).
 - It was St. Ambrose of Milan (mentor to St. Augustine) who first called Mary “Mother of the Church,” and since the fourth century, Christians have understood her in this way, as we see in the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe
 - On December 9, 1531, the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to Juan Diego, a Mexican peasant of Aztec descent, who requested that a church be built on the hill of Tepeyac outside of Mexico City. Juan Diego obediently passed on her request to the skeptical archbishop of Mexico city, who demanded proof that Mary spoke to him. Later, embarrassed and wanting to avoid Mary, Juan Diego skirted around Tepeyac, but Mary intercepted him, saying, “Am I not here, I who am your mother?” Mary then instructed him to gather flowers from Tepeyac and present them to the archbishop on her behalf. Juan Diego did, and when he opened his *tilma* (or cloak) in the presence of the archbishop, Castillian roses dropped out, and Mary’s image was imprinted on the *tilma*. The image is on display in what is now the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. It is the most visited Catholic pilgrimage site in the world, and the world’s third most visited sacred site.

Crown of twelve stars

- Symbolizing Israel’s universality
- The imagery comes directly from the story of Joseph’s dream in Genesis 37:
 - “‘I had a dream,’ he said, ‘this time the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.’ When he told it to his father and his brothers, his father reproved him and asked, ‘What is the meaning of this dream of yours? Can it be that I and your mother and your brothers are to come and bow to the ground before you?’” (37:9-10)
 - In the dream, the sun is Jacob; the moon is Rachel, Joseph’s mother; and the stars are Joseph’s brothers, the founders of the tribes of Israel.

Dragon

- We read that the dragon's "tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to earth" (12:4).
- Five verses later, we identify the dragon with certainty: "The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it." (12:9)
- Jesus refers to this event in Luke 10:18 when he says, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky," a scene that occurs prior to Genesis 1, the "backstory" of Revelation.
- Ezekiel also alludes to it:
 - "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty . . . With the cherub I placed you; I put you on the holy mountain of God, where you walked among the fiery stones. Blameless were you in your ways from the day you were created, until evil was found in you . . . Therefore I banished you from the mountain of God . . . I cast you to the ground . . . I brought fire out of you; it devoured you . . . You have become a horror . . ." (Ez 27:12b-19)

Archangel Michael

- We meet the archangel Michael in Daniel 12:1, where we are told: "At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since the nation began until that time."
- In the Revelation flashback it is this Michael who leads the war in heaven, defeating Satan and his crew.
- The "huge dragon" is called:
 - ὄφις ἀρχαῖος, "ancient serpent"
 - διάβολος, the "Devil"
 - Σατανᾶς, "Satan."
- Satan is called a πλάνος, "deceiver" here, as are false teachers in 2 John 7.
 - To John, they're all cut from the same cloth.

War in Heaven

- A war in which Lucifer, the most glorious of the angels, rebelled against God, wanting to take God's place on the throne of heaven.
- One third of the angels joined him, and he and his crew were thunderously defeated, hurled to the ground, left writhing in pain on a lake of fire.
- Satan then vows revenge, and we next meet him in Scripture in the Garden of Eden, where we're told that the serpent "was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3:1). Satan vows to destroy God's new creation, to devour humanity. And he starts with Eve.
- This is the epic subject of John Milton's Paradise Lost.

John Milton's Paradise Lost

- Now, we take a closer look at the war in heaven through the imagination and prodigious poetic skills of John Milton in *Paradise Lost* (1667; 1674)—the greatest epic poem ever written in the English language!
- At the start of *Paradise Lost*, John Milton invokes Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, to inspire him as he tells his tale:

“Of Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater
Man Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse . . .
Instruct me, for thou know’st; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat’st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad’st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the height of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.”

(Book 1, 1-26)

“Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy State,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
Who first seduced them to that fowl revolt?

Th’ infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
If he opposed, and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt.”

(Book 1, 27-44)



Simon Voulet. *The Muses Urania and Calliope* (oil on panel), c. 1634.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Guido Reni. *Archangel Michael and Satan*
(oil on canvas), c. 1636.
Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome.

“Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from th’ ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th’ Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.

(Book 1, 44-58)



Hieronymus Bosch. “Fall of the Rebel Angels”
[right-hand panel of *The Haywain Triptych*]
(oil on panel), c. 1510-1516.
Prado Museum, Madrid.

With huge effort, Satan and his crew raise their huge bodies up from the fiery gulf, take to the air in search of land, where they build Pandemonium, their war counsel chambers.
How best to take revenge on God?

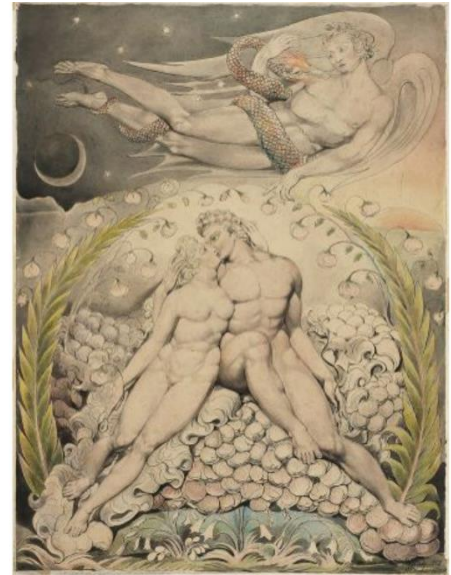
Some counsel another all-out war;

Some accept their fate, reasoning that it is “better reign in Hell than serve in Heaven” (Book 1, 263)

But Beelzebub, Satan’s lieutenant, has a better idea.

“There is a place (if ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
Err not)—another World, the happy seat
Of some new race, called Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favoured more
Of him who rules above . . .
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
Or substance, how endued, and what their power
And where their weakness: how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,
And Heaven’s high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed . . .
[Perhaps] some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset—either with Hell-fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party . . .”

(Book 2, 345-368)



William Blake. *Satan Watching Caresses of Adam and Eve*.
(pen, ink and watercolor on paper), 1808.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

And that’s what they do.

We next meet Satan in Scripture in the Garden of Eden where he begins his seduction of Eve.

Genesis 3 warns us:

“Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He asked the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden?’ ‘The woman answered the serpent, ‘We may eat of the trees of the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.’” (Ge 3:1-3)

Kingdom Come

- Here, the voice of an angel speaks as if the kingdom of God were already established on earth, but 12:12b says otherwise:

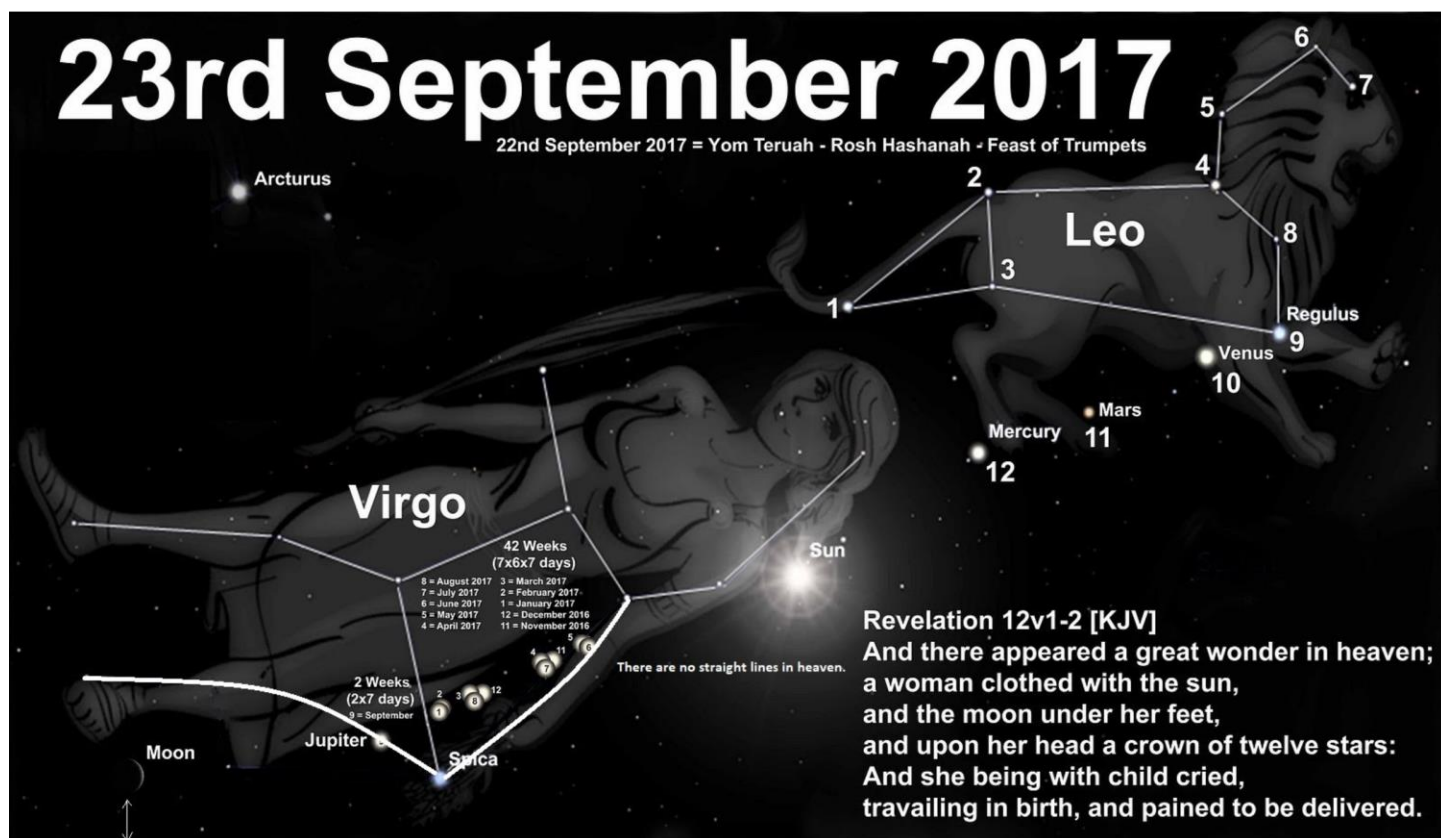
“But woe to you, earth and sea, for the Devil has come down to you in great fury, for he knows he has but a short time.”
- Once Satan challenges God, it is a foregone conclusion that God will prevail, conquering Satan, sin and death through the shed blood of his Son on the cross.
- Although a fierce battle remains to be fought, here Revelation assures us that it is already won.
- Notice that “the accuser of our brothers is cast out [βάλλω, “to throw”] is the very same verb used of Satan and his crew when they are “thrown down” or “cast out” [βάλλω, “to throw”] out of heaven in 12:9.

Woman Escapes

- The dragon now pursues the woman who had given birth to the male child.
- Our text operates on three levels, the woman as:
 - 1. Israel (Pharaoh pursues the Israelites after the Exodus);
 - Egypt was about to devour Israel, when Israel escaped to the wilderness during the Exodus, where God sustained her with manna and water from the rock
 - 2. Mary (Herod pursues the infant Jesus after his birth in Bethlehem); and
 - Herod was about to devour Jesus, when Mary escaped to Egypt with Jesus and Joseph, where God sustained them through gold, frankincense and myrrh, gifts of the three kings
 - 3. The Church (Jew and Gentile alike persecute the early Church).
 - The world was about to devour the Church, when the Church escaped on its earthly pilgrimage, where God sustained it by his Word, the Eucharist and the fellowship of believers.
- Giving the woman “two wings of the great eagle” recalls God’s promise in Isaiah that those who hope in the Lord will “soar as with eagle’s wings” (Is 40:31).
- And the woman saved from the “spewing water” recalls
 - Israel being saved from the waters of the Red Sea
 - Mary from the lies of Herod
 - Church from the words of the “deceivers” and “antichrists” who persecute it
- Fiercely angry with the woman, the dragon storms off to wage war against the woman’s offspring: us.
 - But it’s a desperate act, one doomed to failure, although it will bring a great deal of suffering as a result.
 - No matter what Satan throws at the Church, God will come to her rescue and save her.
 - When Jesus said of the Church, “The gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18), he meant it.
- The 1,260 days, of course, are the same 3½ years we have seen before in both Daniel and Revelation, an incomplete period, half of 7 years, the number of completion.

The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

12 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. ... ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.



Revelation 12 alignment

- Gen 1 ¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and **let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years**, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.
- On September 23, 2017:
 - The sun will be in the zodiac constellation Virgo—“a woman clothed with the sun”.
 - The moon will be at the feet of Virgo—“with the moon under her feet”.
 - The ‘nine’ stars of the zodiac constellation Leo, plus three planets (Mercury, Venus, and Mars), will be at the head of Virgo—“on her head a crown of twelve stars”.
 - Jupiter has been in retrograde motion ‘in the womb’ of the Virgin for 9 months
 - Jupiter was known by the Jews as the planet of the Messiah. Jupiter enters the sign of Virgo on August 27, 2016, which coincides with a close conjunction of Venus.

- On November 20, 2016, Jupiter (the King planet) enters into the body (womb) of the constellation Virgo (the virgin). Jupiter, due its retrograde motion, will spend the next 9 ½ months within the womb of Virgo. This length of time corresponds with gestation period of a normal late-term baby.
 - November 20, 2016 is the Feast of Christ the King. It is also the very day that Pope Francis' declared "Year of Mercy", comes to an end.
- On September 23, 2017, Jupiter will exit Virgo to the east, past her feet, so to speak—"She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth". Jupiter is the largest of the planets, the "king" of the planets, so to speak—"She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod".

Supporting evidence of significance

Star of Bethlehem

Same star alignment as the Star of Bethlehem in 2 BC - the stars Jupiter (king planet) and Venus (mother planet) came together so close that they could not be separated by the naked eye. What John saw in his visions in Revelation, is exactly what happened at 2 BC at the conception of Jesus

- In 3/2 B.C., there occurred a rare triple conjunction of Jupiter (the king planet, through its retrograde motion) and Regulus (the king star). The Magi likely interpreted this rare triple conjunction as a giant neon sign in the heavens blinking KING-KING-KING. This all began at the Jewish New year and all within the constellation of Leo (the lion, a symbol of the tribe of Judah). So it heavily symbolized Jewish King from the tribe of Judah, a clear indication for those familiar with the Messiah. Further, rising right behind Leo was the constellation Virgo, with the sun behind and the moon at her feet.
- After this incredible triple conjunction, Jupiter began moving westward in the sky, eventually coming into conjunction with Venus, a planet long symbolically associated with motherhood. The conjunction of the king planet and the motherhood planet was so close, that no man alive had ever seen anything like it and together it formed the brightest object in the sky.
- All this symbolism of a Jewish king from Judah and a Virgin was enough to get the well-versed Magi moving to Jerusalem, but you can understand why the average citizen of Jerusalem missed it. Jupiter continued its western movement in the sky until it finally stopped. When it stopped (as seen from Jerusalem), it stopped directly south, directly over the small village of Bethlehem, on December 25 of 2 B.C. This may be easily seen with modern star programs that can show you the night sky on any date in history from any perspective. It is the advent of such computer programs that now allows us to not only look at the past, but to look at the skies of the future.

Festival of Trumpets (Rosh Hashana, Jewish New Year)

- Sept 21-22, 2017
- Year of Mercy (jubilee) ends and new year begins

Jubilee Year (Year of Mercy)

- Revelation 12 Sign Begins on the Very Day Year of Mercy Ends
- Lev 25:8-13 Jubilee, Year of Mercy – Forgive all debts
- 2017 Year of Mercy Ends
- To understand the theory, we must know what a Jubilee was.
 - The Year of Jubilee Lev 25 ⁸“Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years. ⁹Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. ¹⁰Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. ¹¹The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. ¹²For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.
 - A year of Jubilee was to be observed after seven cycles of seven years (49 years total).

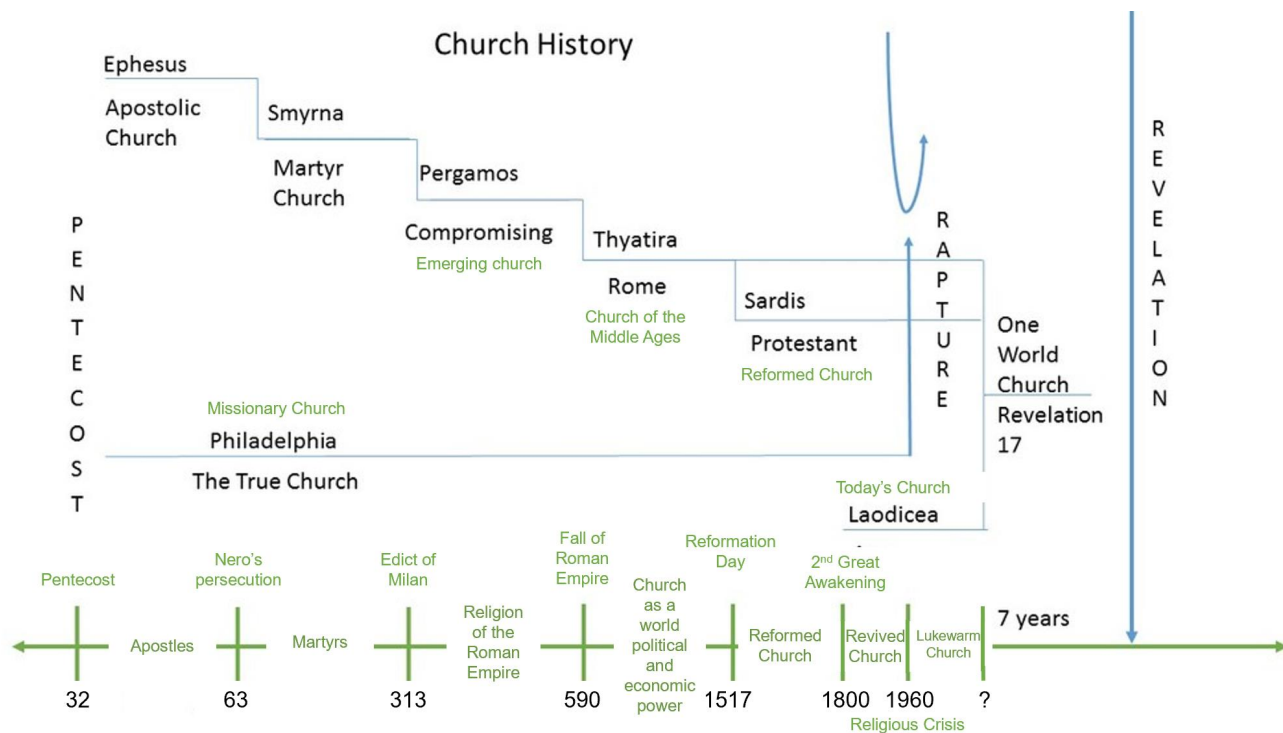
- This fiftieth year was a time of celebration and rejoicing for the Israelites.
 - The ram's horn was blown on the tenth day of the seventh month to start a year of **universal redemption**.
 - The year of the Jubilee involved a release from indebtedness (Leviticus 25:23–38) and all types of bondage (verses 39–55). Every captive was set free, slaves were released, debts were forgiven, and lands and properties were returned to the families of the original owners.
 - In addition, all labor was to cease for that year, and those bound by labor contracts were released from their obligations. The year of Jubilee was similar to a sabbatical year (or shemittah) in that the fields and vineyards were left fallow (verses 4–7). During the Jubilee both the land and the people had rest.
- The idea that Jesus will return during a year of Jubilee comes from some calculations made by Rabbi Judah ben Samuel in AD 1217. According to the rabbi, there would be a certain number of Jubilees from ben Samuel's time until the Messianic kingdom would begin. The year 2017 is said to be the end of that predicted period; thus, some people look for Jesus' return during Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles) in 2017 (October 4—11). The Messiah will return to give His people rest and cause great jubilation among His redeemed.

500 years since...Prophecy of 10 Jubilees started

- See [Prophecy of 10 Jubilees – Rabbi Judah Ben Samuel \(1217 AD\)](#)

500 years since...1517 Protestant Revolution

- Seven ages of the church
 - The Seven Ages simply refer to that space of time wherein God gives the Gentiles (apart from the Jews) an opportunity to hear the Gospel - the Good News of Salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. This "space of time" is divided into "Seven" phases or Ages which is simply called "Church" Ages - each with it's own Messenger and Message from the Word of God, showing what our Lord Jesus is doing in Grace and/or Judgement in a particular Age. In every Age, the predestinated Sons and Daughters of God always recognized their day, their Messenger and the Message.



- The Bible also refers to these Seven Ages as "The Fullness of the Gentiles" - it is one and the same. Running parallel with the Seven Ages (or the Fulness of the Gentiles) is a period referred to in Scripture as ""The Times of the Gentiles"

- The prophet Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser predicted seven ages of the church.
 - Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser was a holy priest of the seventeenth century, founder of an Institute for the formation of priests approved by Pope Innocent XI in 1680. Holzhauser accurately predicted the execution of Charles I of England and the persecution of the Catholic Church in England for 120 years.
- The fifth age began in 1517 with the Protestant Revolution.
- This period of tribulation comes to its five hundredth anniversary also in the year 2017.
- This fifth age would culminate in terrible persecution of the church.
- After that he predicted an era of peace and consolation. Our Lady at Fatima also predicted a period of peace after the difficulties to come.

100 years since...1917 Our Lady of Fatima (Miracle of the Sun)

Pope Leo XIII had a vision in which Satan would be given one hundred years to attempt to destroy the church. In 1884, after saying Mass on the morning of, according to at least one source, October 13th, as he was leaving the Altar, the 74 year old and frail Pope Leo XIII fell to the ground as if dead. He related that he had experienced a sort of vision, in which he heard two voices, one of which he took to be that of Christ, gentle and kind, and the other that of Satan, guttural and harsh. Satan said, "I could destroy Your Church if I had the time, and more power over those who give themselves over to my service." **And then Pope Leo heard Christ to answer, "You have the power, you have the time: 100 years.** The events of 1917 opened up an unprecedented century of evil in the world.

- Another sign in the sun, moon and stars – Our Lady of Fatima (also known as the Miracle of the Sun) – 1917
- 2017 is 100 years since the first apparitions at Fatima. The miraculous nature of the events at Fatima have been affirmed by the church and most of the popes of the last century have had a strong personal and seemingly apocalyptic association with the prophecies given to the three children.
- These extraordinary events in 1917 can be seen as ushering in the catastrophic twentieth century.
 - By 1917 the first World War was grinding on with horrors never before imagined by the human race.
 - The lady of Fatima predicted another war if mankind did not repent. This war would be presaged by a heavenly sign. This took place with an amazing display in the night sky across Europe on January 25, 1938—just before Europe was plunged into another war.
 - The rest of the century would witness untold misery and bloodshed in genocide, atomic warfare, terrorism, famine, natural disaster and the rise of technologies that would poison nature, destroy the family and set humanity on a course of self destruction.
- The co-incidence of the dates of May 13 (when the apparitions began) and October 13 (when the apparitions ended with the miracle of the sun) are interesting.
 - Pope Pius XII was consecrated bishop on May 13, 1917 – the day of the first apparition and became known as the Fatima Pope. He consecrated the world to Our Lady of Fatima and made repeated references to the prophecies.
 - Paul VI met the visionary Sister Lucia and prayed with her on May 13, 1967—on the fiftieth anniversary of the visions.
 - John Paul II was almost killed by an assassin's bullet on May 13, 1981, and six years later on the seventieth anniversary of the visions went to Fatima to give thanks to the Virgin for saving his life.
 - Benedict XVI affirmed his belief in the supernatural origin of the visions, visited Sr Lucia, went to Fatima and said "the prophecies of Fatima are by no means completed."
 - Pope Francis had his papacy dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima on May 13, 2013 and consecrated the world in a public ceremony on October 13, 2013. He has the image of Fatima in Rome today to be venerated and plans to visit Fatima in 2017 for the centenary of the events.

Red Dragon

The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

Rev 12 ³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the

dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ... And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

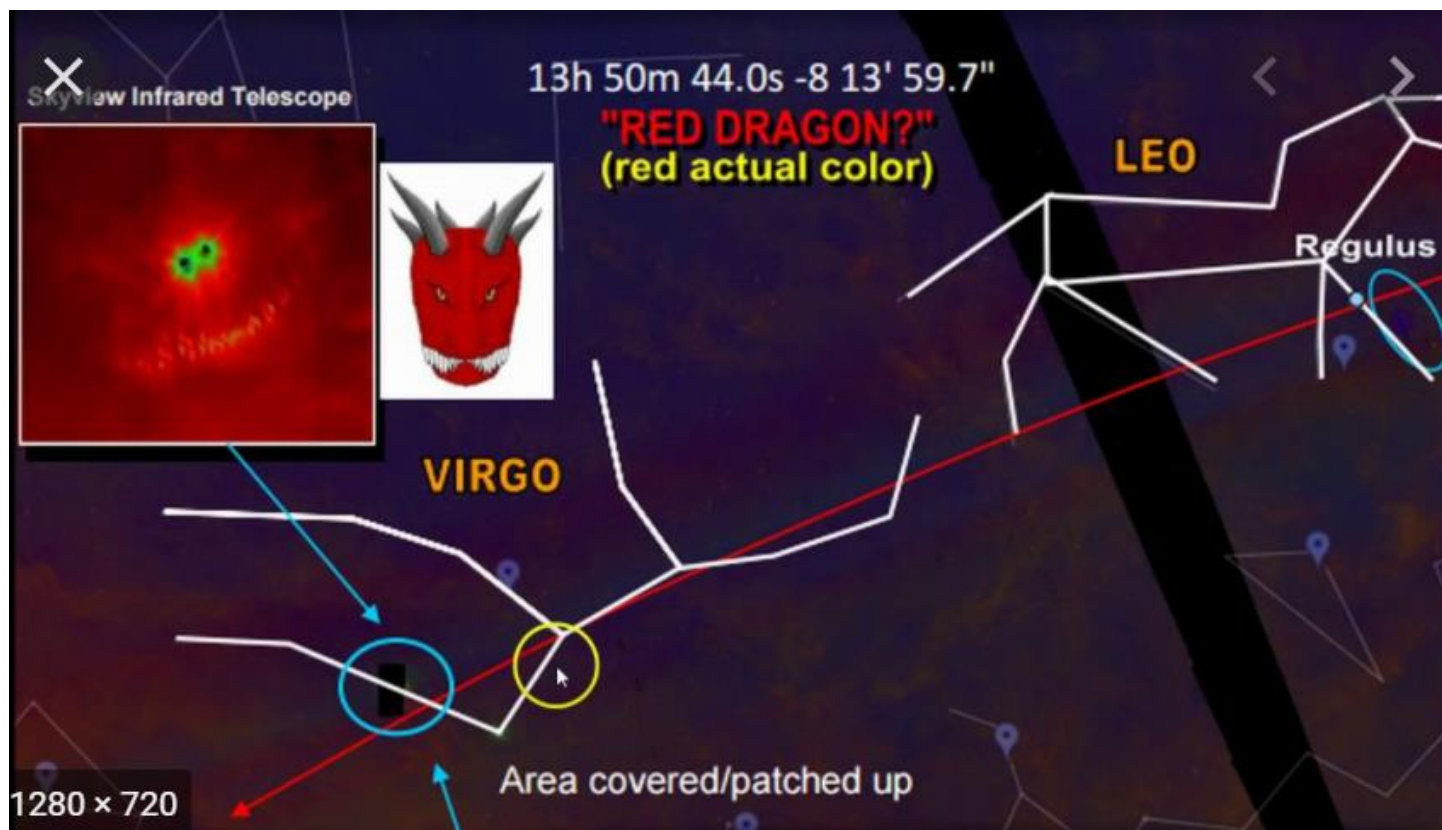
Satan Thrown Out of Heaven

⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

The Woman Persecuted

¹³ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. ¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.



Last Days

Acts 2:17 " In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Joel 2:28 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Setting the Stage for Armageddon (13-14)

As we ended Lesson #10, the dragon stood, feet planted firmly “on the sand of the sea” (12:18), breathing out murderous threats against the woman clothed with the sun and against her offspring, the followers of Christ, the Church. As we had a flashback to the war in heaven in Lesson #10, so now we set the stage for the battle of Armageddon in Lesson #11, first meeting two of God’s enemies. Here, the dragon calls forth two beasts, one from out of the sea and one from out of the earth: the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

The Enemy – The Two Beasts (13)

In Lesson #11 we meet the two beasts, one who comes “out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads; on its heads were ten diadems, and on its heads blasphemous names” (13:1). In contrast to the many “antichrists” we hear John speak of in his correspondence, this is the Antichrist, the arch-deceiver and the minion of Satan. Accompanying him is a second beast, the “false prophet” who “had two horns like a lamb’s but spoke like a dragon. It wielded all the authority of the first beast in its sight and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast” (13:12); this is the false prophet.

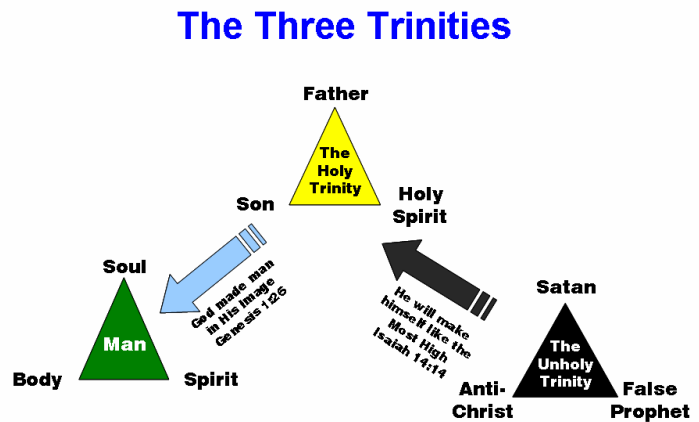
The first beast, the Antichrist that arises from the sea, wields political power, while the second beast, the False Prophet that emerges from the land, wields religious power. Combined, Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet comprise a grotesque parody of the Trinity, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. And they prepare to do battle for the very soul of humanity.

Some points to remember as we examine the two beasts:

- We’ve already identified the dragon as “*the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world*” (12:9).
- We also learned that the dragon, or Satan, was “*the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made*” (Genesis 3:1): Satan is—like all angels and humans—a created being, unlike God who had no beginning and who has no end.
- We learned, as well, that out of pathological hubris, Satan wanted to *be* God; he wanted to sit upon God’s throne and reign over all. Rallying a third of heaven’s angels to his cause, he waged war against God; he was defeated; and he and his crew were “hurled headlong flaming from th’ ethereal sky” (Paradise Lost, Book 1, 45).
- “Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate” (Paradise Lost, Book 1, 58), Satan vowed revenge, resolving to seduce the “puny habitants” of God’s new creation, cajoling them to his side, reigning over them and ultimately destroying them: sweet vengeance against God.
- Here’s what the Roman Catholic Church teaches about the Antichrist:
“Before Christ’s second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the ‘mystery of iniquity’ in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh. The Antichrist’s deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgment.” Catechism of the Catholic Church, 575-576

Unholy Trinity

Make no mistake, Satan knew God, and he knew the triune nature of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So, in his attempt to be God and to rule over God's new creation, like a mad, psychotic wizard, Satan crags a grotesque, distorted parody of the Trinity—a self-image—with himself as father; the antichrist as son and the false prophet as holy spirit. Although defeated in heaven, Satan launches a new offensive against God on earth, and he vows to win this new war, with the souls of all humanity as the prize, transforming God's creation into a living hell, with himself as king.



- Satan's grotesque parody of the Trinity (13:1-18)

Dragon / Satan	God the Father	(13:1a)
Beast 1 / Antichrist	God the Son	(13:1b-10)
Beast 2 / False Prophet	God the Holy Spirit	(13:11-18)

A common tactic of Satan is to imitate or counterfeit the things of God in order to make himself appear to be like God. What is commonly referred to as the “unholy trinity,” described vividly in [Revelation 12](#) and [13](#), is no exception. The Holy Trinity consists of God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Their counterparts in the unholy trinity are [Satan](#), the [Antichrist](#), and the [False Prophet](#). While the Holy Trinity is characterized by infinite truth, love, and goodness, the unholy trinity portrays the diametrically opposite traits of deception, hatred, and unadulterated evil.

[Revelation 12](#) and [13](#) contain prophetic passages that describe some of the main events and the figures involved during the second half of the seven-year Tribulation period. Although many Bible passages allude to Satan in various forms, such as a serpent or an angel of light, he is described in [Revelation 12:3](#) as a “great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.” The color red indicates his vicious and homicidal personality. The seven heads symbolize seven evil kingdoms that Satan has empowered and used throughout history to attempt to prevent God's ultimate plan from coming to fruition. Five of the kingdoms had already come and gone—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece.

All these kingdoms severely oppressed and persecuted the Hebrews, killing many of them. Satan's intent was to prevent the birth of Christ ([Revelation 12:4](#)). The sixth kingdom, Rome, was still in existence during the writing of this prophecy. Under Roman rule, King Herod murdered Hebrew babies around the time of Christ's birth and Pontius Pilate ultimately authorized the crucifixion of Jesus. The seventh kingdom, which is more fierce and cruel than the others, will be the final world kingdom that the Antichrist forms during the end times. These kingdoms were also prophesied in Daniel, chapters 2 and 7. The seven crowns represent universal rule, and ten horns represent complete world power or authority.

[Revelation 12](#) indicates many important facts about Satan. Satan and one-third of the angels were cast out of heaven during a rebellion before the world began ([Revelation 12:4](#)). The Archangel Michael and the other angels will make war with Satan and his demons, and Satan will be excluded from heaven forever ([Revelation 12:7-9](#)). In his attempt to prevent God's fulfillment of His earthly kingdom, Satan will attempt to annihilate the Jews, but God will supernaturally protect a remnant of the Jews in a location outside of Israel for the last 42 months of the Tribulation ([Revelation 12:6](#), [13-17](#); [Matthew 24:15-21](#)).

The second member of the unholy trinity is the [Beast](#) or [Antichrist](#) described in [Revelation 13](#) and [Daniel 7](#). The beast comes out of the sea, which typically in the Bible refers to the Gentile nations. He also has seven heads and ten horns, indicating his connection to and indwelling by Satan. The ten horns indicate ten seats of world government that will provide power to the Antichrist, three of which will be totally yielded to or taken over by the Antichrist ([Daniel 7:8](#)). The number ten also indicates completion or totality, in other words, a one-world government. The one-world government will be blasphemous, denying the true God. The final kingdom will possess traits in common with the former “beast kingdoms” of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and particularly Rome ([Revelation 13:2](#); [Daniel 7:7, 23](#)). [Revelation 13:3](#) seems to indicate that the Antichrist will be mortally wounded about halfway through the Tribulation, but Satan will

miraculously heal his wound ([Revelation 13:3; 17:8–14](#)). After this wondrous event, the world will be totally enthralled by the Antichrist. They will worship Satan and the Antichrist himself ([Revelation 13:4–5](#)). The Antichrist becomes emboldened, and, dispensing with all pretenses of being a peaceful ruler, he openly blasphemes God, breaks his peace treaty with the Jews, attacks believers and the Jews, and desecrates the rebuilt Jewish temple, setting himself up as the one to be worshiped ([Revelation 13:4–7; Matthew 24:15](#).) This particular event has been called the Abomination of Desolation.

The final personage of the unholy trinity is the False Prophet, described in [Revelation 13:11–18](#). This second beast comes out of the earth, not the sea, possibly indicating that he will be an apostate Jew coming from Israel. Although he presents himself as a meek, mild, and benevolent person, the horns indicate that he will have power. Jesus expressly warned believers to watch out for false prophets that may look innocent but actually can be very destructive ([Matthew 7:15](#)). The False Prophet speaks like a dragon, meaning that he will speak persuasively and deceptively to turn humans away from God and promote the worship of the Antichrist and Satan ([Revelation 13:11–12](#)). The False Prophet is capable of producing great signs and wonders, including bringing down fire from heaven ([Revelation 13:13](#)). He sets up an image of the Antichrist for worship, gives life to the image, demands the worship of the image from all people, and executes those who refuse to worship the image ([Revelation 13:14–15](#)). [Revelation 20:4](#) indicates that the method of execution will be beheading.

The False Prophet will also compel each person to receive a [permanent mark](#) of some kind, just as slaves did in John's day, to show total devotion to the Antichrist and renunciation of God. Only those who receive the mark will be permitted to engage in commerce. Acceptance of the mark means eternal death ([Revelation 14:10](#)). The Bible makes clear that humans will fully understand that, by accepting the mark, they are not only accepting an economic system but also a worship system that rejects Jesus Christ. [Revelation 13:18](#) reveals the number of the Beast—666. No one knows precisely what this means. Some believe that the Antichrist's first, middle, and last names will have six letters each. Some believe that the designation refers to a computer chip, since some computer programs start with 666.

Satan is the anti-God, the Beast is the anti-Christ, and the False Prophet is the anti-Spirit. This unholy trinity will persecute believers and deceive many others, resulting in their eternal death. But God's kingdom will prevail. [Daniel 7:21–22](#) states, "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom."

[Antichrist – Beast 1 \(from the sea\)](#)

[The Beast from the Sea](#)

13 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

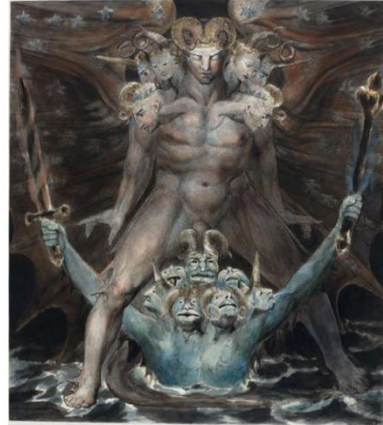
⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

- In the apocalyptic genre, the beast represents the end-time adversary of God and his people, all the forces of evil and demonic power, rolled up and personified in one character.
- In Christian writing this character became known as the “Antichrist” [ἄντιχριστος, “antee’-khre-stos”].
- John used the general term “antichrist”, in 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 7, where he groups the “antichrists” with the “deceivers” [πλάνοσ, “plah’-nos”], those who, like Diotrephese, lead people astray by their false teaching.
- Here we meet *the* Antichrist, 2nd person of Satan’s infernal trinity.
 - No doubt, John’s readers would view this person as the embodiment of the Roman Empire, perhaps even of the Emperor himself.

The antichrist is summoned

- Satan summons a terrifying beast to attack God's people – one made in his image.
- The sea – In ancient Near Eastern literature “the sea” represents chaos, the primal soup, the habitation of Leviathan, the “coiled serpent,” the “dragon in the sea” (Isaiah 27:1).
 - It is a fearful place, and here the beast with ten horns and seven heads (closely resembling its master, Satan, in appearance), comes out of the sea.

- The word “beast” is θηρίον [thay-ree'-on]
 - It is a neuter noun, properly referred to as an “it, not a “he” or “she.”
 - The Greek word is ἀναβαίνω [a-na-bye'-no], and it pictures “rising up,” “climbing,” or “emerging”
 - In your mind's eye imagine a huge, grotesque hydra-headed monster, rising from the roiling sea, fangs barred and snapping, drool and slime oozing from its gaping maw, spewing blasphemies.



William Blake. *The Great Red Dragon and the Beast from the Sea* (watercolor, ink and graphite on paper), c. 1805. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C..

- ¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a **beast** rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a **leopard**, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a **lion**.
 - This recalls another of Daniel's visions:

Dan 7:2 Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first *was* like a **lion**, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5 “And suddenly another beast, a second, like a **bear**. It was raised up on one side, and *had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’

6 “After this I looked, and there was another, like a **leopard**, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7 “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a **fourth beast**, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was* different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.
 - Although John's beast draws heavily upon the imagery in Daniel's vision, it is not an exact parallel; rather, John's beast is meant to be a composite that embodies all of history's demonic and human opposition against God, all rolled up into one horrendous, frightening and terrifying image.

The antichrist is given authority

- The dragon, Satan, delegates his own power and authority to the first beast, the Antichrist, the 2nd person of his infernal trinity, just as God delegated his authority to Christ, 2nd person of the authentic Trinity.
 - ² ...The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.
 - Recall that in Daniel the “Ancient of Days” gives “power” and “authority” to the “Son of Man,”

Dan 7:13 “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.
- Jesus identifies himself as this very figure from Daniel, calling himself “Son of Man” throughout the synoptic gospels
 - John’s gospel reaffirms this delegation to Jesus of God’s power and authority:
 - Jn 3:35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.
 - Jn 5:21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.
 - And the 1st-century Church understood this delegation of God’s power and authority to Jesus, as is evidenced by Paul in his epistle to the church at Philippi
 - Php 2:9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The antichrist is resurrected

- As Christ was slain on the cross and then raised from the dead, so it appears that the beast had received a mortal wound [“had been slain,” the past perfect tense], but had been raised, as well.
 - The parallels between the two are explicit . . . and chilling
- One of the heads of the beast appeared to have been mortally wounded.
 - The Greek word is σφάζω [sfah’-zo], “to butcher” or “to slay violently,”
 - The same word was used of the Lamb in Rev 5:6 who “seemed to have been slain [σφάζω].”

The antichrist is worshipped

- The crowds are fascinated by the beast.
- The Greek word is θαυμάζω [thaumah’-zoh], “marveled” or were “filled with wonder,”
 - The word was often used of the crowd’s reaction to Jesus in the synoptic gospels.
- And that “marveling” led people to worship both the dragon—who had delegated his power and authority to the beast—and the beast himself.
 - Watching Satan’s grotesque parody of the Trinity take shape is, indeed, fascinating . . . much like watching in slow motion a violent train crash!
- The fact that the beast utters blasphemies suggests that he makes overt claims to being divine, to being the object of worship
 - According to the historian Suetonius, the Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96) believed that the Empire should be a divine monarchy, not a Republic, proclaiming himself dominus et deus, (“Lord and God”), moving the

center of government to the imperial court, rendering the Roman Senate impotent and expelling those senators whom he deemed troublesome. (E.P. Janzen offers numismatic evidence for Domitian's claims of divinity, citing coins struck during Domitian's reign that refer to him as "divine Caesar." "The Jesus of the Apocalypse Wears the Emperor's Clothes." In SBL 1994 Seminar Papers, ed. by E.H. Lovering Jr., 637-661. Atlanta: Scholar's Press.)

- The Temple of Trajan attests to the strength of the Roman imperial cult in the city.
 - Trajan (A.D. 98-117) followed Domitian, and as we learned in Lesson #4, Pergamum, the third of the seven churches of Revelation, became an Asian center of the Imperial Roman cult, boasting the beautiful Temple of Trajan on its acropolis.

The Beast from the Earth

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. ¹⁵ He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

- Rising from the earth
 - A man, like Adam, made from the earth
- Having two horns, the False Prophet has the faux appearance of a lamb, but its words reveal its true character: it spoke like a dragon, like Satan himself. The False Prophet is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Recall Jesus' warning:

Matthew 7 – You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Matthew 24 – The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.... ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

The false prophet is given authority

- The False Prophet wielded all the authority of Antichrist, and it made the earth and its inhabitants worship Antichrist.
 - The Greek word “made” is ποιέω [poi-eh'-o], a word widely used, but here in the sense of “influenced” or “convinced.”
 - The False Prophet in Revelation goes so far as to make a physical image of the Antichrist, an image to be worshiped.

The False Prophet performed great miracles

- Makes fire come down from heaven, as Elijah did on Mt. Carmel in his duel with the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18.
- Erects a talking statue of the antichrist
 - We are told in 1 Maccabees that “On the fifteenth day of the month of Kislev in the year one hundred and forty-five [December 6, 176 B.C.] the king erected the desolating abomination upon the altar of burnt offerings” (1:54).
 - Daniel makes reference to the same event, in Daniel 12:11. At that time Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the Temple by setting up a statue of Zeus at the altar of burnt offering, in part triggering the Maccabean Revolt of 167-160 B.C.
 - It was common in ancient times for divine statues to “speak,” either through rather cryptic “signs,” such as patterns of birds in flight, or through the mouth of a prophet or oracle.
 - The Pythia (or “oracle”) at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi is one such example. It was the most famous oracle of the ancient world, consulted by thousands since the 8th century B.C. through the 4th century A.D. A supplicant would journey to Delphi, make preparation by purifying himself and making offerings to Apollo, visit the oracle, receive an answer given by the Pythia (the priestess of Apollo, who spoke from behind a veil), and then return home.
 - Cicero notes that no expedition was undertaken, no colony sent out, and no affair of any distinguished individual was undertaken without first consulting the oracle at Delphi.
 - The Oracle of Delphi was the most well-known, prestigious oracular site in the ancient world, mentioned by such luminaries as: Aeschylus, Aristotle, Clement of Alexandria, Diodorus, Diogenes, Euripides, Herodotus, Livy, Ovid, Pindar, Plato, Plutarch, Sophocles, Strabo, Thucydides and Xenophon.
 - The early Church Fathers, unable to explain the efficacy of the Oracle, attributed its function to Satanic forces, demons who spoke through the mouth of the pagan Pythian priestess.
 - The image of the Antichrist crafted and placed in the Temple by the False Prophet—an image that speaks—reflects this line of thinking.

We should remember Jesus’ warnings in the Olivet Discourse:

- Mt 24:3 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.
- Mt 24:15 “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.
 - For when this happens, Jesus says, all hell is about to break loose; it is the beginning of the “great tribulation,” the three and one half years portrayed in Revelation 6-19.

Mark of the Beast (666)

¹⁶He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

- The number of the beast has caused more speculation than any other topic in Revelation, and perhaps more than any other topic in all of Scripture!
- We are told that “wisdom is needed here” (14:18), and indeed it is, if we’re to avoid much of the silliness that accompanies the number.

- When President Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy, left the White House in 1989, they moved to 666 St. Cloud Road in Los Angeles' ritzy Bel Air neighborhood. Notoriously superstitious, Nancy Reagan had the address changed to 668 St. Cloud Road before they actually moved in.
- At the most basic level of biblical symbolism, 7 is the number of completion and perfection
 - Thus, 6 is the number of incompleteness and imperfection, a number that falls haltingly short of perfection.
 - If we understand that Satan has constructed a grotesque parody of the Trinity, with himself, the Antichrist and the False Prophet, then we can understand the number 666 as representing this incomplete, flawed attempt: a set of three sixs.
- But didn't the text say that 666 "is a number that stands for a person" (14:18)? I understand the 666 symbolism, but who is the person?
 - In both Hebrew and Greek, each letter of the alphabet has a corresponding numerical value; thus, summing the numerical values gives a number to a word or a name. So, whose name might total the number 666?
 - When the Greek word for "beast" [**θηρίον**, thay-ree'-on] is transliterated into Hebrew, the numerical value of the letters is 666.
 - When the Greek version of the Emperor Nero's name is transliterated into Hebrew [**Nron Qsr**] the numerical value of the letters is also 666.
 - In the eyes of the early Church, the Emperor Nero, who reigned from A.D. 54-68 and initiated the first state-sponsored persecution against the Church, A.D. 64-68, was the very embodiment of the "beast."
 - Although written in the 90s during the persecution under Domitian, Nero's reputation cast a long shadow, and his name became a code word for the Antichrist, himself.
- One-world economy
 - Combined with the one-world government and one-world religion – gives Satan power over everything

The Heroes – The Lamb and His Companions (14)

In Lesson #11 we met two beasts, one who came “out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads; on its heads were ten diadems, and on its heads blasphemous names” (13:1). In contrast to the many “antichrists” we hear John speak of in his correspondence, this was the Antichrist, the archdeceiver and the minion of Satan. Accompanying him was a second beast, the “false prophet” who “had two horns like a lamb’s but spoke like a dragon. It wielded all the authority of the first beast in its sight and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast” (13:12); this was the false prophet. Combined, Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet comprised a grotesque parody of the Trinity, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. And they prepared to do battle for the very soul of humanity.

In direct contrast to the grotesque parody of the Trinity that we met in Lesson #11, Lesson #12 introduces the Lamb, three angels and 144,000 who have “his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads” (14:1). This is God’s army who will cleanse the earth and engage the final, climactic battle with Satan and his minions on the plains of Megiddo, Armageddon (16:16).

As we met God’s enemies in Lesson #11—the Dragon [Satan], the Antichrist and the False Prophet— so here we meet his heroes—the Lamb, three angels and the 144,000 who bear the name of Christ. In Lesson #12 we continue preparing for the final showdown, the climactic battle between good and evil, Satan and God, with the future of humanity hanging in the balance.

- The Heroes (14:1-20)
 - The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1-5)
 - The Three Angels (14:6-13)
 - The Son of Man (14:14-20)

The Lamb and the 144,000

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³ They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁴ These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

- In sharp contrast to the agitation and turbulence of the infernal trinity we witnessed in the previous chapter, the Lamb stands serene and confident on Mount Zion, the hill on which Jerusalem sits, surveying the battlefield, his victory assured.
 - As we read in Psalm 2:4-6,

God: “. . . sits in the heavens [and] laughs;
the Lord, he laughs them to scorn.
Then he will speak in his anger;
in his wrath he will strike them with terror:
‘Indeed, it is I who installed my king
upon Zion, my holy hill.’”
- The 144,000 are the very same whom we met in Revelation 7 when they were sealed with God’s name on their foreheads, those who were set apart to God.
 - Now we learn that they are the Lord’s elite shock troops, the tip of the spear, those who will accompany him in the final, climactic battle.

- These 144,000 contrast sharply with the “inhabitants of the earth” (13:14-17), the vast motley crew who bear the mark of the beast on their foreheads.
- Notice how John’s vision sharpens and intensifies as he:
 - hears a sound from heaven like the sound of “rushing water”
 - a sound like “that of harpists playing”
 - a “new hymn” that only the 144,000 and those “who had been ransomed” from the earth could hear
 - The vision and the song emerge, like an old Polaroid photo developing before our very eyes, accompanied by music like that of an approaching parade.
- “Ransomed” is ἀγοράζω [ah-go-rah’-zo], better translated “redeemed”
 - that is, those who had been “bought back” or “purchased” by the shed blood of Christ on the cross.
- Virgins
 - The early Church held celibacy in high regard, viewing Mary, Jesus and Paul as exemplars, but nowhere in Scripture is celibacy among married couples required for a believer.
 - Marriage is a sacrament
 - The first commandment in Scripture is “be fruitful and multiply” (Ge 1:28)
 - Paul says: “The husband should fulfill his duty toward his wife, and likewise the wife toward her husband . . . Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by mutual consent for a time, to be free for prayer, but then return to one another . . .” (1 Corinthians 3, 5)
 - Here, those who have not been “defiled”, those “virgins” are better viewed metaphorically as those who are faithful to the Lord, those who have not “whored” with worldly “idols.”
 - “defiled” [μολύνω, mol-oo’-no, “polluted” or “soiled”]
 - “virgins” [παρθένος, par-the’- nos, “one who has never had intercourse”]
 - Again, we turn to Paul for support, who encourages the Corinthians by saying: “I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God, since I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:2)
 - Conversely, sexual unfaithfulness or “whoring” is a common metaphor for idolatry throughout the Prophets.
 - Ex – Hosea
 - So, the 144,000 “virgins” are those who have remained faithful to the Lord.
- As we’ve moved deeper into Revelation, two radically different possibilities emerge for humanity:
 - Either to love God and keep his commandments, placing our faith in Christ, and living a life “worthy of the calling we have received” (Ephesians 4:1)
 - Or to worship the beast, rejecting God’s teaching, rejecting his Son, and living life apart from God, one of egoism and self-interest.

The Proclamations of Three Angels

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— ⁷ saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

⁸ And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

⁹ Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

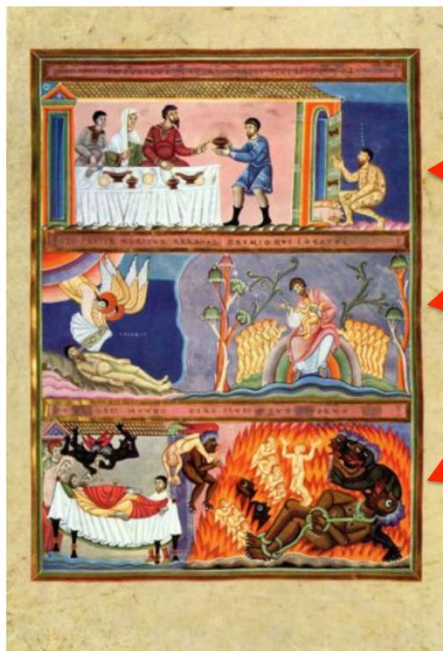
¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ”

“Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

- The angels proclaim:
 - Angel 1: “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”
 - Angel 2: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”
 - Angel 3: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”
- Angel 1: Fear God and give Him glory
 - The “other” angel is distinct from those who blew the seven trumpets.
This sounds very much like a final chance, an ultimatum.
 - The sharp dichotomy between loving and serving God or loving and serving the “beast” leaves no middle ground, no room for compromise, so typical of the Johannine world view.
 - There is still time to repent and turn back to the Lord.
 - That is the message John gave to five of the seven churches in Asia Minor: “Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:7,17,29; 3:13,22)
- Angel 2: Babylon is fallen because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.
 - As the Babylonian Empire attacked and destroyed the 1st Temple and Jerusalem in 586 B.C., so has the Roman Empire attacked and destroyed the 2nd Temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 - “Babylon” is a code word for Rome.
 - Peter, writing from Rome, closes his first epistle by saying:

“The chosen one [συνεκλεκτός, sun-ek-lek-tos’, from “church,” a feminine noun] at Babylon sends you greeting, as does Mark, my son” (1Peter 5:13).

- Angel 3: If anyone worships the beast and receives *his* mark, he shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone. And the smoke of their torment will ascend forever – they will have no rest day or night.
 - The third angel cries out in a loud voice, threatening fire and brimstone for those who accept the mark of the beast--those in cahoots with the infernal trinity.
 - The vivid imagery draws on:
 - the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis
 - metaphors heaped upon the cursed in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the prophets:
“They shall go out and see the corpses of the people who rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be extinguished; and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (Isaiah 66: 24)
 - For the modern reader who hears only about God’s love and mercy, this is troubling imagery at best, intolerable at worst.
 - Yet, Jesus uses the very same imagery, even quoting Isaiah 66:24
“Better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’” (Mark 9:47)
 - And in Jesus’ parable of Lazarus, the rich man, and the poor man [traditionally named “Dives”] in Luke 16:19-31, one of the pleasures of Dives as he rests in “Abraham’s bosom” seems to be watching Lazarus roasting in the fires of hell!



Top Register: Lazarus at the rich man’s door, begging for scraps.

Middle Register: Lazarus’ soul carried to Paradise, where he rests in Abraham’s bosom.

Bottom Register: Dives’ soul carried to Hell, where he roasts in the flames!

“Parable of Lazarus and the Poor Man,” *Codex Aureus Epternacensis* (Illumination, fol. 78r), c. 1035-1040.
German National Museum, Nuremberg.

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- The concept of reward and punishment after death has a long & complex history. What happens when we die?
 - Early in the Hebrew Scriptures God tells Abraham: “You . . . will go to your ancestors in peace; you will be buried at a ripe old age” (Genesis 15:15). There is nothing about reward or punishment here; Abraham will simply go in peace to his ancestors. Where that will be, or what it will be like, is never addressed.
 - In David’s world, 1,000 years later (c. 1010-970 B.C.), the realm of the dead becomes much darker.
 - David writes:

“Do not reprove me in your anger, Lord, nor punish me in your wrath.
Have pity on me, Lord, for I am weak; heal me, Lord, for my bones are shuddering.
My soul too is shuddering greatly— and you, Lord, how long . . . ?
Turn back, Lord, rescue my soul; save me because of your mercy.
For in death there is no remembrance of you, who praises you in Sheol?” (Psalm 6:1-6)
 - For David, reproof and punishment happen in this life; after death, one’s corpse simply lies forgotten in the grave, a place of no remembrance or praise.
 - David’s Sheol is a place of darkness to which all souls go, righteous and unrighteous alike.
 - Sheol’s inhabitants are “shades,” entities without personalities or strength, who drift about, chirping and gibbering, with little, if any, self awareness.
 - In Book 11 of Homer’s *Odyssey* [written shortly after the time of David], Odysseus visits the land of the dead in search of Tiresias, the blind seer from Thebes.
 - In Homer’s world, the dead become sentient only by drinking blood [Recall Leviticus 17:11—“The life of the flesh is in the blood.”].
 - Having sailed past the outer limits, the Ocean River’s bounds, Odysseus enters the land of the dead and prepares a blood-feast to awaken the shades:

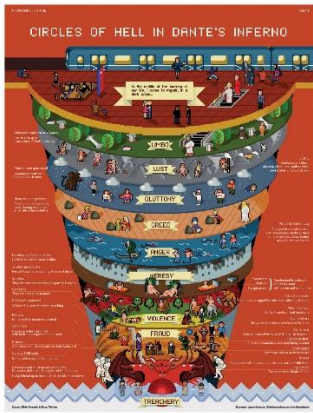


Alessandro Allori. “Odysseus Questions the Seer Tiresias,” *The Story of Odysseus* (fresco), c. 1580. Palazzo Salviati, Florence.

“And once my vows and prayers had invoked the nations of the dead, I took the victims, over the trench I cut their throats and the dark blood flowed in—and up out of Erebus they came, flocking toward me now, the ghosts of the dead and gone . . . brides and unwed youths and old men who had suffered much and girls with their tender hearts freshly scarred by sorrow and great armies of battle dead, stabbed by bronze spears, men of war still wrapped in bloody armor—thousands swarming around the trench from every side—unearthly cries—blanching terror gripped me!” (Odyssey 11:38-48)

- That’s no place I’d want to go, for sure! Even though there is no reward or punishment in this concept of the afterlife, the bleak emptiness, the dark and dreary atmosphere, and the loss of memory and self identity is frightening—like descending into eternal dementia!
- By the 2nd Temple period (516 B.C. - A.D. 70), a more diverse set of ideas develops.
 - The Hebrew “Sheol” becomes the Greek ᾍδης, “Hades” that we find in Luke’s parable of Lazarus and Dives, a place where sentient beings exist in eternal bliss or eternal pain, based upon how they have lived their earthly lives. And there is no movement from one place to the other.
 - Recall in Luke’s parable, Abraham says to Dives: “My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.” (Luke 16:25-26)

- Dante's Divine Comedy



- This concept of Hades—or what is later called Hell—reaches its fullest development in the 14th century with Dante's Divine Comedy, and his 33-Canto portrayal of the Inferno, a descent by Dante and Virgil through the nine circles of Hell, each circle reserved for particular categories of sinners.
- Although there is fire in Dante's Hell, it's landscape is primarily cold, dark and windy, a place of bitter isolation where punishment consists both of physical pain (*poena sensus*) and spiritual pain, a terrible sense of eternal loss (*poena damni*).
 - (See "The Shining Landscape of Hell," Comitatus: a Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Vol. 11 (1980), 40-65. This was Dr. Creasy's first published, peer-reviewed scholarly article as a young Ph.D. student!)

- Today the Church's teaching on eternal punishment focuses primarily on this sense of loss (*poena damni*), of spending eternity apart from God, and it is not so much a punishment from God, as it is God respecting our choice to spend eternity without him:

"We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves . . . To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called 'hell.'" Catechism of the Catholic Church, 3033.

- The 3 angels' proclamations in Rev 14 have set the stage for God's final judgment and the end of human history.

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

¹⁷ Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." ¹⁹ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

- The 3 angels' proclamations in Rev 14 have set the stage for God's final judgment and the end of human history.
 - Here, Revelation portrays the final judgment in "harvesting" imagery, drawn directly from Jesus' teaching.
 - Jesus' disciples asked him: "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He said in reply, "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Just as weeds are collected and burned [up] with fire, so will it be at the end of the age." (Matthew 13: 36-40)
 - Jesus' parable is about to become reality.
- 1st reaping — Reaping the Earth's Harvest — speaks of gathering the righteous
- 2nd reaping — Reaping the Grapes of Wrath — speaks of gathering the wicked
 - Joel provides the antecedent for the vineyard harvest, the gathering of the wicked:
"Let the nations rouse themselves and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit in judgment upon all the neighboring nations. Wield the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come and tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their crimes are numerous; crowds upon crowds in the Valley of Decision; For near is the day of the Lord in the Valley of Decision." (Joel 4:12-14)
 - Isaiah intensifies the imagery!
"Who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments, from Bozrah? Who is this, glorious in his apparel, striding in the greatness of his strength? 'It is I, I who announce vindication, mighty to save.' Why is your apparel red, and your garments like one who treads the wine press? 'The wine press I have trodden alone, and from the peoples no one was with me. Their blood spurted on my garments, all my apparel I stained. For a day of vindication was in my heart, my year for redeeming had come.'" (Isaiah 63:1-4)
 - Our translation reads that "the winepress was trodden outside the city and blood poured out of the wine press to the height of a horse's bridle for two hundred miles" (Rev 14:20).
 - The winepress is outside of the city.
 - Earlier, we noted that in Revelation the Temple refers to the Church and the outer courtyard refers to the world in opposition to the Church. Thus, those slain in the winepress of God's


wrath are those outside the Church, the “deceivers” and “antichrists” in the world who bear the mark of the beast, not those in the Church, who are “sealed” with the blood of the Lamb.

- The “two hundred miles” is literally **σταδίων χιλίων ἑξακοσίων**, “1,600 stadia,”
 - A symbolic number that represents 40 (40x40)
 - That is, God’s judgment is complete and worldwide in scope.
- In very vivid imagery, God’s “harvesting” the wicked, slicing them from the vine and throwing them into the winepress of his fury, accompanied by splattering blood and chunks of gore certainly makes a point!
 - It is difficult to overstate the consequences of rejecting God’s grace and offer of redemption.
 - But we should remember that in this scene God judges those living on the earth, not those who have died. The FINAL judgment of all humanity will come later, in Revelation 20, after the dust settles from the battle of Armageddon.

(Woe 3) The Seven Bowls (15-16)

In direct contrast to the grotesque parody of the Trinity that we met in Lesson #11, Lesson #12 introduced the Lamb's companions: three angels and the 144,000 who have "his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads" (14:1). This is God's army who will cleanse the earth and engage the final, climactic battle with Satan and his minions on the plains of Megiddo: Armageddon.

Before the final battle we unleash yet another set of plagues. This time seven angels pour out seven bowls, "the seven bowls of God's fury upon the earth" (16:1):












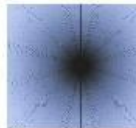


THE SEVEN BOWLS						
1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
						
Sores afflict those who accepted the mark of the Beast. <i>Rev. 16:2</i>	Sea turns to blood; all sea creatures die. <i>Rev. 16:3</i>	Rivers turn to blood. <i>Rev. 16:4-7</i>	Mankind scorched by the sun, blasphemes God. <i>Rev. 16:8-9</i>	The Beast's seat of government is afflicted. <i>Rev. 16:10-11</i>	The Euphrates is dried up; world armies gather to Armageddon. <i>Rev. 16:12-16</i>	The earth is utterly shaken. <i>Rev. 16:17-21</i>

The Seven Bowls

- 1—Ugly and painful sores (16:2)
- 2—Blood, like that of a dead man (16:3)
- 3—Rivers and springs of water turned to blood (16:4-7)
- 4—Sun, scorching people with fire (16:8-9)
- 5—Satan's kingdom plunged into darkness (16:10-11)
- 6—Euphrates River dried up (16:12-16)
- 7—Massive earthquake—"It is done!" (16:17-21)

7 Bowls of Wrath

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
						
						
<i>Rev. 16:2</i>	<i>Rev. 16:3</i>	<i>Rev. 16:4-7</i>	<i>Rev. 16:8-9</i>	<i>Rev. 16:10-11</i>	<i>Rev. 16:12-16</i>	<i>Rev. 16:17-21</i>
Malignant ulcers appear on those with the mark of the Beast.	Sea turns to blood, all living creatures in the sea die.	Drinking water turns to blood, men given blood to drink.	The sun becomes extremely hot, and scorches men.	Antichrist's kingdom struck with darkness.	Euphrates river dried up, armies gathered for Armageddon.	Worldwide earthquake, cities collapse, 120lb. hailstones fall from the sky

Abomination of Desolation

Second Coming of Jesus Christ

After the seventh bowl, the earth is little more than a smoking cinder, wobbling in space!

3rd Woe (7 Bowls)

- The third woe is revealed after the seventh trumpet judgment.
- Incorporated within this third and final woe are the seven “bowls” of God’s wrath, described in Revelation 16:1-21.
 - This series of judgments is the greatest horror the citizens of earth have ever seen. Jesus said, “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive” (Matthew 24:22).
- This third woe marks the finishing of God’s judgment on sin; it occupies the book of Revelation through the 19th chapter, when Christ’s Kingdom is established on earth.
- This woe is parallel to the trumpet that sounds in Joel 2 and signals the consummation of God’s plan for the entire world.

Joel 2 – The Day of the Lord

2 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming,
For it is at hand: ² A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains.
A people *come*, great and strong, The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any *such* after them, Even for many successive generations.
³ A fire devours before them, And behind them a flame burns;
The land *is* like the Garden of Eden before them, And behind them a desolate wilderness;
Surely nothing shall escape them.
⁴ Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like swift steeds, so they run.
⁵ With a noise like chariots Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, Like a strong people set in battle array.
⁶ Before them the people writhe in pain; All faces are drained of color.
⁷ They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like men of war;
Every one marches in formation, And they do not break ranks.
⁸ They do not push one another; Every one marches in his own column.
Though they lunge between the weapons, They are not cut down.
⁹ They run to and fro in the city, They run on the wall;
They climb into the houses, They enter at the windows like a thief.
¹⁰ The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble;
The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness.
¹¹ The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great;
For strong *is the One* who executes His word.
For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; Who can endure it?

Prologue (15:1-16:1)

Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

15 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

² And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

“Great and marvelous *are* Your works, Lord God Almighty!
Just and true *are* Your ways, O King of the saints!

⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For *You* alone *are* holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested.”

⁵ After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶ And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

- John sees another extraordinary “sign” in heaven [σημεῖον, “say-may’-on”],
 - “great and awe-inspiring” [μέγα καὶ θαυμαστόν],
 - The exact same phrase used in the opening of the “Song of Moses and the Lamb” in 15:3b.
- The “sign” is 7 angels with the 7 last plagues (bowls)
 - The word “plague” [πληγή, “play-gay’] is interesting because they are the seven last plagues.
 - There are only 3 plagues mentioned previously in Revelation, those accompanying the 6th trumpet:
“By these three plagues of fire, smoke, and sulfur that came out of their mouths [the four angels] a third of the human race was killed” (9:18).
 - If we have a total of ten plagues in Revelation, then we have a very nice parallel to the ten plagues in Exodus that God brings upon the Egyptians!
- With these last plagues, God’s “fury” or “wrath” is “accomplished.”
 - The word “fury” is θυμός, “thu-mo’s,” a graphic word that suggests “boiling over” or “panting while enraged.”
 - “Accomplished” is τελέω, “te-leh’-o,” in the sense of “reaching the end” or “finished.”
 - It is the exact same word John uses in his gospel at 19:30 when Jesus expires on the cross: “It is finished,” τετέω (19:30).
- The “wrath” or “fury” of God runs throughout Scripture, calling to mind Jonathan Edward’s famous 1741 sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” But how do we reconcile this “wrath” of God with a God of infinite love, especially as we understand God today?
 - The Old Testament mention the “wrath” of God (or its synonyms) nearly 500 times, almost always the direct result of breaking God’s law
 - The New Testament mentions the “wrath” of God (or its synonyms) 42 times.
 - In the New Testament, for example, St. Paul observes that: “The wrath of God is indeed being revealed from heaven against every impiety and wickedness of those who suppress the truth by their wickedness.” (Romans 1:18)
 - To address God’s “wrath” we need to recognize that both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament often anthropomorphize God; that is, they attribute to him human characteristics, both physically and emotionally.
 - This helps us to understand God, but if we fail to recognize this as a literary device and we make the anthropomorphic literal, we can very easily misunderstand the intended message.
 - So, what exactly do we mean by the “wrath” of God?
 - Pope Benedict XVI addressed this very question in God in the World: Believing and Living in Our Time (2000), p. 103-104: “The wrath of God is a way of saying that I have been living in a way that is contrary to the love that is God. Anyone who begins to live and grow away from God, who lives away from what is good, is turning his life toward wrath. Whoever falls away from love is moving into negativity. So that is not something that some dictator with a lust for power inflicts on you, but is simply a way of expressing the inner logic of a certain action. If I move outside the area of what is compatible with the ideal model by which I am created, if I move beyond the love that sustains me, well then, I just fall into the void, into

darkness. I am then no longer in the realm of love, so to speak, but in a realm that can be seen as the realm of wrath.”

- So, as we engage Revelation in its own historical and cultural context as a literary work of the Apocalyptic genre, recognizing its use of symbol, metaphor, simile and so on, so should we also engage the rest of Scripture, recognizing its various genres, its use of anthropomorphism and other literary techniques.

- Sea of glass mingled with fire

- Recall that in John’s first vision of heaven, when he was “snatched up” in Revelation 4:1-2, he saw “in front of the throne . . . something that resembled a sea of glass like crystal” (4:6). This is the “floor” of heaven.
- In Genesis 1:6-8, on the second day of creation, God said “Let there be a dome [a “firmament”] in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other” (1:6).
 - Looking up from earth, the firmament is the “sky”;
 - Looking down from heaven it is the “sea of glass like crystal.”
- In this scene the sea of glass like crystal is “mingled with fire,” a sign of imminent judgment.
- Standing on the sea of glass [ἐπὶ “on,” not παρὰ “beside,” as in many translations] “were those who had won victory over the beast,” – those who had not been marked with its name or number.

- God’s harps

- The harp [*kinnor* in Hebrew] was the national instrument of the Hebrews
- Invented, according to Scripture, by Jubal (Genesis 4: 21) in antediluvian times.
- King David was the most famous of Jewish harpists.
 - We read that “whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take the harp and play, and Saul would be relieved and feel better . . .” (1 Samuel 16:23).
- This Jewish coin from the Bar Kokhba revolt (A.D. 132-135) has two trumpets on the obverse with the inscription, “to the freedom of Jerusalem,” and on the reverse a harp with the inscription, “year two of the freedom of Jerusalem,” the City of David



- Song of Moses

- “great and awe-inspiring” [μέγα καὶ θαυμαστόν, is the exact same phrase used in 15:1
- “Lord God Almighty” is κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ.
 - “Almighty” is παντοκράτωρ, [“pan-tah-krah’-tor”]
 - God’s most solemn title, “ruler of all.”
 - John uses it nine times in Revelation (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7,14; 19:6,15; and 21:22.
 - In the Byzantine Church it is Jesus’ most exalted title: “Christ Pantokrator.”
 - Jeremiah refers to God as “king of the nations” (Jer 10:7) in contrast to the idols of the Gentiles who, “like a scarecrow in a cucumber field . . . they cannot speak; they must be carried about” (Jer 10:5).
- “you alone are holy”
 - The word “holy” is ὅσιος [hos’- ee-os], not the normal ἅγιος [hah’-geeos]
 - A very deliberate & deft verbal allusion to the two “Songs of Moses,” the namesakes for this “song.”
 - Exodus 15:1-18
 - Deuteronomy 32:1-43
 - And we should also note that the phrase, “you alone are holy” is taken up and recited in the Gloria of the Mass: “For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.”

- Tabernacle

- When God gave Moses the blueprints for the Tabernacle in the second half of Exodus, Moses was told to build it to exact specifications, for the earthly Tabernacle was an exact “copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary” (Hebrews 8: 5).
- We saw this heavenly Tabernacle—the real deal—opened after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, revealing the genuine ark of the covenant, followed by thunder, lightning, earthquake, and so on.

- Now, we resume the narrative from 11:16, the events that follow the 7th trumpet and the opening of the ark.
 - When we ended Revelation 11:16 we could see the ark of the covenant in the heavenly Tabernacle's Holy of Holies.
 - Now we witness a dazzling liturgy, in which the four living creatures encircling God's throne lead the heavenly worship.
 - The scene's drama builds as one of the four living creatures gives seven bowls to the seven angels, the bowls of God's "fury" or "wrath" [θυμός, "thu-mo's"].
 - When the living creature presents the last of the seven bowls, the Tabernacle suddenly fills with smoke, smoke so thick "that no one could enter it" (15:8). This happened twice before:
 - First, when the "glory" of God filled the Tabernacle in Exodus 40:35
 - Again when the "glory" of God filled Solomon's newly-built Temple in 1 Kings 8:11
 - Those were both momentous events. Duplicating them here emphasizes the significance of what is about to happen
- 7 Bowls / Plagues
 - Opening the 7 seals and blowing the 7 trumpets were increasingly dire warnings to sinful humanity to repent and turn to God.
 - The events that accompanied the seals and trumpets were typical of the human condition: conquest, violence and natural disasters.
 - As Jesus warned in the Olivet Discourse, such disasters will occur, but they seem to worsen as history trends toward its conclusion.
 - Now the warnings stop—and judgment begins.
 - The seven bowls – like the previous fire, smoke and sulfur – are "plagues" [πληγή, "play-gay"]
 - They bear a resemblance to the ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt prior to the Exodus, but they are much more severe
 - Like the first 4 seals and the first 4 trumpets, the first 4 bowls form a set.
 - Unlike the seals and trumpets that affect only a portion of the earth, the bowls are global and all-encompassing – affecting all earth, air, fire [light] and water (the four physical elements of the universe recognized by virtually every culture in the ancient world.)
 - These are supernatural disasters on a cosmic scale!

1. Ugly and painful sores (16:2)

The Seven Bowls

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

First Bowl: Loathsome Sores

² So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

- The "festering and ugly sores" are similar to the plague of boils that struck the Egyptians (Exodus 9:8-12).
 - And as the plague of boils struck only the Egyptians and not the Israelites, so do the "festering and ugly sores" affect only those "who had the mark of the beast or worshiped its image" (16:2).

Ex 9:8 So the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of	Rev 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth." 2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the
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Egypt.” 10 Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast.	men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.
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2. Sea Turns to Blood (16:3)

Second Bowl: The Sea Turns to Blood, Blood, like that of a dead man

³ Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead *man*; and every living creature in the sea died.

3. Freshwaters Turn to Blood (16:4-7)

Third Bowl: The Waters Turn to Blood, Rivers and springs of water turned to blood

⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying:

“You are righteous, O Lord,
The One who is and who was and who is to be,
Because You have judged these things.
⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
And You have given them blood to drink.
For it is their just due.”

⁷ And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* Your judgments.”

- In Leviticus 17:11 we learned that “the life of the flesh is in the blood”; thus, turning water into blood that brings death is a stunning irony, and in the case of Revelation, the blood is like that “from a corpse” (16:3), a chilling image.
- The second and third plagues turn the sea, rivers and springs into blood, just as the first plague on Egypt turned the Nile River into blood. And as all the fish in the Nile died (Exodus 7:14-24), so does every living creature in the waters die.

Ex 7:19 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.’ ” 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.	Rev 8:8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire. Rev 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, The
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Ps 105:29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.	One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”
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- A pronouncement of praise follows the third plague
 - A pronouncement by the angel who poured out the third bowl, stressing God’s justice.
 - As those on the earth who refused to repent shed the blood of the holy ones and the prophets, so is it infinitely just that they have only the blood (of a corpse) to drink!

4. Sun Scorching People with Fire (16:8-9)

Fourth Bowl: Men Are Scorched, Sun, scorching people with fire

⁸ Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. ⁹ And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

- The fourth plague strikes with fire and heat, scorching and burning the people of the earth, who respond not with repentance, but with blasphemous words
- Recalls Pharaoh “hardening his heart” with each increasingly severe plague on Egypt.

5. Darkness and Pain (16:10-11)

Fifth Bowl: Darkness and Pain, Satan’s kingdom plunged into darkness

¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

- Each bowl offers increasingly sever and all-encompassing judgment.
 - The fifth bowl brings supernatural darkness on “the throne of the beast” (16:10).
 - Like the ninth plague on Egypt — “darkness so thick it could be felt” (Exodus 10:21-29)
- The 5th plague overwhelms with terror: people bite their tongues in pain, and they blaspheme God.
 - The book of Wisdom aptly describes such a scene:

“For they, who supposed their secret sins were hid under the dark veil of oblivion, were scattered in fearful trembling, terrified by apparitions. For not even their inner chambers kept them unafraid, for crashing sounds on all sides terrified them, and mute phantoms with somber looks appeared. No fire had force enough to give light, nor did the flaming brilliance of the stars succeed in lighting up that gloomy night.” (17:3-5)

Ex 10:21 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.	Rev 8:12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the
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Ps 105:28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His word.	<p>smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth.</p> <p>Rev 16:10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.</p>
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- Forces people to stop everything and think - introspection

6. Euphrates River dried up (16:12-16)

Sixth Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up

¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵ “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.



- Notice the close parallels between the 6th trumpet and the 6th bowl, a structural feature throughout Revelation
 - Those repetitive structural features are really interesting in Revelation. Clearly they are very carefully planned. With each repetition, the intensity or severity of an action ratchets upward, in a crescendo of demonic activity as we approach the end.

6 th Trumpet	6 th Bowl/Plague
4 fallen angels standing on the bank of the Euphrates River assemble a demonic army of 200 million cavalry (9:15-16)	With the 6 th bowl poured on the Euphrates River, “the kings of the whole world” gather with their armies for the climactic battle of Armageddon.
Evils spew forth from the mouths of demonic creatures: fire, smoke and sulfur	The dragon, the beast and the false prophet spew forth from their mouths demonic “unclean spirits” that look like frogs.
1/3 of humanity is killed	All of the dragon’s followers will be killed

- China’s \$900 billion New Silk Road
 - <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/china-new-silk-road-explainer/>

- Pass thru 68 countries
- Includes high-speed rail
- the way of the kings from the east might be prepared



7. Massive earthquake—“It is done!” (16:17-21)

Seventh Bowl: The Earth Utterly Shaken

¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. ¹⁹ Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. ²⁰ Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹ And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

- •“It is done” [γίνωμαι, “ghin’-om-ahee”].
 - Here in the active voice of the perfect tense, grammatically this verb indicates “the present state resulting from a finished action.”
 - This is, indeed, the final judgment, powerfully expressed in a single word. Wow!
- There are five earthquakes in Revelation
 - Each one functioning like an exclamation point, each one escalating in intensity and severity, culminating in “such a violent earthquake that there has never been one like it since the human race began on earth” (16:18).
 - The “great city” that splits into three parts is Rome.
 - As Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon’s temple in 586 B.C., so did Rome lay siege to Jerusalem and destroy the second temple in A.D. 70. Babylon is a code word for Rome.
 - 5 Earthquakes
 - 6:12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.
 - 8:5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.
 - 11:13 In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.
 - 11:19 Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.
 - 16:18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.
- Reaching the apex of his crescendo, John brilliantly incorporates cosmic and apocalyptic imagery into this climactic scene:
 - A massive earthquake splits Rome into three parts;
 - The cities of the world collapse, those belonging to “the kings of the whole world” who have assembled at Armageddon;

- Islands and mountains disappear as the very foundations of the earth split and crumble
 - Massive hail stones pummel the people, as if the very dome of the firmament itself fractures into a thousand shards.
- The seventh bowl brings God's final judgment on those who refuse to repent, those who have pledged their allegiance to the infernal trinity: Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet.
 - The next three chapters (17-19) take us inside the seventh bowl for a close-up, ground-level view of the destruction.

Babylon (17-18)

With the seals opened and the trumpets blown, God's warnings to humanity end . . . and judgment begins. In Lesson #13, seven angels were handed seven bowls, "the seven bowls of God's fury upon the earth" (16:1) After the seventh bowl, the earth is little more than a smoking cinder, wobbling in space!

Now, chapters 17-19 form a recapitulation – taking us to "ground zero," the epicenter of the seventh bowl's impact. In Lesson #14 we meet the great "Whore of Babylon" riding upon a beast with seven heads: Babylon the great, "the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth" (17:5), and "the great city that has sovereignty over the kings of the earth" [Rome] (18:18). The "Whore of Babylon" has seduced the kings of the earth who have "had intercourse with her," as well as the people of the earth who have drunk the "wine of her harlotry" (17:2).

The Whore of Babylon (17) – Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ²with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

³ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which* was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. ⁵ And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.



Martin Luther, trans. *Luther Bible* (with 117 woodcuts by Lucas Cranach, this one colored). Wittenberg: Hans Lufft Press, 1534.

⁶ I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

⁷ But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

⁹ "Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

¹² "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful."

¹⁵ Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. ¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked,

eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

Babylon = Vatican City (Roman Catholicism)

<https://www.theberealcall.org/content/city-seven-hills>

- In Bible prophecy, a woman is a symbol of a church
 - The woman in white in Revelation 12 represents God's true church
 - The harlot woman in Revelation 17 and 18 represents an apostate fallen church

Ancient Western Roman Empire became Vatican City

- The Roman Empire was never defeated. The Western Roman Empire continues today as Holy Roman Empire (Vatican City).
 - The Western Roman Empire officially ended 4 September 476 CE, when Emperor Romulus Augustulus was deposed by the Germanic King Odoacer.
 - The Eastern Roman Empire continued on as the Byzantine Empire until 1453 CE. Though known early on as simply 'the Roman Empire', it did not much resemble that entity at all.
 - The Western Roman Empire would become re-invented later as The Holy Roman Empire (962-1806 CE).
 - That construct was also far removed from the Roman Empire of antiquity and was an 'empire' in name only.
 - The Holy Roman Empire was also known as the Papal States – officially the State of the Church
 - These were a series of territories in the Italian Peninsula under the direct sovereign rule of the pope, from the 8th century until 1870.
 - They were among the major states of Italy from roughly the 8th century until the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia successfully unified the Italian Peninsula by conquest in a campaign virtually concluded in 1861 and definitively in 1870.
 - At their zenith, the Papal States covered most of the modern Italian regions of Lazio (which includes Rome), Marche, Umbria and Romagna, and portions of Emilia. These holdings were considered to be a manifestation of the temporal power of the pope, as opposed to his ecclesiastical primacy.
 - By 1861, much of the Papal States' territory had been conquered by the Kingdom of Italy.
 - Only Lazio, including Rome, remained under the pope's temporal control.
 - In 1870, the pope lost Lazio and Rome and had no physical territory at all, except the Basilica of St Peter and the papal residence and related buildings around the Vatican quarter of Rome, which the new Italian state did not occupy militarily.
 - In 1929 the head of the Italian government, at the time the Italian Fascist leader Benito Mussolini, ended the crisis between unified Italy and the Holy See by negotiating the Lateran Treaty, signed by the two parties. This recognized the sovereignty of the Holy See over a newly created international territorial entity, the Vatican City State, limited to a token territory.
 - The Holy See, also called the See of Rome, is the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, known as the pope, which includes the apostolic episcopal see of the Diocese of Rome with universal ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the worldwide Catholic Church, as well as a sovereign entity of international law.

Whore of Babylon

Rev 17 ¹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

- The woman is called a "whore" (v 1), with whom earthly kings "have committed fornication" (v 2).
 - Rev 2 [to the church of Thyatira] ²⁰ Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹ And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not

repent. ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

- Against only two cities could such a charge be made:
 - Jerusalem – Jerusalem was indicted for spiritual fornication by numerous prophets, but does not meet the other criteria.
 - Is 1 ²¹ How the faithful city has become a harlot!
It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.
²² Your silver has become dross, Your wine mixed with water.
²³ Your princes *are* rebellious, And companions of thieves;
Everyone loves bribes, And follows after rewards.
They do not defend the fatherless, Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.
 - Vatican City – Claims to have been the worldwide headquarters of Christianity since its beginning
 - Her pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ
 - His Church is the only true Church and bride of Christ.
 - Christ said His kingdom was not of this world, otherwise His servants would fight. The popes have fought with armies and navies in the name of Christ to build a worldwide empire.
 - Vatican II states that even today the Roman Catholic Church ceaselessly seeks to bring under its control *all mankind* and *all their goods*. And in furtherance of these goals it has engaged, exactly as John foresaw, in fornication (unholy alliances) with the kings of the earth.

Description of Catholic Leadership

⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

- She is clothed in "purple and scarlet" (v 4), the colors of the Catholic clergy. The Catholic *Encyclopedia* states:
 - Cappa Magna – A cloak with a long train and a hooded shoulder cape...[it] was purple wool for bishops; for cardinals, it was scarlet watered silk....
 - Cassock – The close-fitting, ankle-length robe worn by the Catholic clergy as their official garb....The color for bishops and other prelates is *purple*, for cardinals *scarlet*.... (Emphasis added)
- Her incredible wealth next caught John's eye.
 - She was "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls..." (v 4)
 - Even Christ's blood-stained cross has been turned to gold, reflecting her riches.
 - *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "The pectoral cross [suspended by a chain around the neck of abbots, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and the pope] should be made of *gold* and...decorated with *gems*...."
- She had "a golden cup [chalice] in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (v 4).
 - *The Catholic Encyclopedia* calls the gold chalice "the most important of the sacred vessels...."
 - The Roman Catholic Church is known for its *many thousands* of gold chalices around the world.
 - A recent newspaper article reported,
The fabulous treasure of Lourdes [France], whose existence was kept secret by the Catholic Church for 120 years, has been unveiled....Rumors have been circulating for decades about a priceless collection of *gold chalices*, diamond-studded crucifixes, silver and *precious stones*....

After an indiscreet remark by their press spokesman this week, church authorities agreed to reveal *part* of the collection... [some] floor-to-ceiling cases were opened to reveal 59 *solid gold chalices* alongside rings, crucifixes, statues and heavy gold brooches, many encrusted with *precious stones*.

Almost hidden by the other treasures is the "Crown" of Notre Dame de Lourdes, made by a Paris goldsmith in 1876 and studded with diamonds.

Church authorities say they cannot put a value on the collection. "I have no idea," says Father Pierre-Marie Charriez. ..."It is of inestimable value."

Across the road is a building housing hundreds of [antique] ecclesiastical garments, robes, mitres and sashes—many in heavy gold thread....

"The Church itself is poor," insists Father Charriez. "The Vatican itself is poor." (Emphasis added) [And the treasure described here is only *part* of that which is kept in *one* location, the small town of Lourdes, France!]

- She has practiced evil to gather her wealth, for the "golden cup" is filled with "abominations and filthiness."
 - Much of the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church was acquired by confiscating property of the Inquisitions' pitiful victims. Even the dead were exhumed to face trial and property was taken from their heirs by the Church. That practice, one historian writes, offered "unlimited opportunities for loot."
 - Most of Rome's wealth has been acquired through the sale of salvation.
 - Untold billions of dollars have been paid to her by those who thought they were purchasing heaven on the installment plan for themselves or loved ones. The practice continues to this day—blatantly where Catholicism is in control, less obviously here in the United States where (for example) one pays the Church to have a Mass card placed on the altar in the name of the deceased during Mass to reduce time in purgatory.
 - The wealthy often leave a fortune for masses to be said for their salvation after their death.
- In addition to such perversions of the gospel, there are the further abominations (fully documented in police and court records) of corrupt banking practices, laundering of drug money, trading in counterfeit securities and dealings with the Mafia, which the Vatican and her representatives around the world have long employed.
 - Former Business Week correspondent in Rome, Nino LoBello, who because of its incredible wealth calls Rome "the tycoon on the Tiber," says the Vatican is so closely allied with the Mafia in Italy that "many people...believe that Sicily...is nothing more than a Vatican holding."

Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth

⁵ And on her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

- Sadly enough, the Roman Catholic Church fits that description as precisely as she fits the others.
- Much of the cause is due to the unbiblical doctrine of priestly celibacy.
 - The great Apostle Paul was a celibate and recommended that life to others who wanted to devote themselves fully to serving Christ. He did not, however, make it a condition for church leadership as the Catholic Church has done, thereby imposing an unnatural burden upon her clergy that very few could bear. On the contrary, he wrote that a bishop should be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim:3:2) and set the same requirement for elders (Titus:1:5-6).
 - The doctrine of celibacy has been broken repeatedly by millions of priests and nuns, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and many popes such as Sergius III, John X, John XII, Benedict V, Innocent VIII, Urban VIII, Innocent X, et al. Celibacy has made sinners of the clergy and harlots out of those with whom they secretly cohabit. The Catholic Church has paid about \$1 billion in out-of-court settlements in the last few years for sexual sins of its clergy in the USA alone. Rome is indeed "the mother of harlots"!
 - History is replete with sayings that mocked Romanism's false claim to celibacy: "The holiest hermit has his whore" and "Rome has more prostitutes than any other city because she has the most celibates" are examples. Pope Pius II called Rome "the only city run by bastards," the sons and grandsons of popes and cardinals.
 - Even Catholic historians admit that among the popes were some of the most degenerate and unconscionable ogres in all history. More than one pope was slain by a husband who found him in bed with his wife. To call such a man "His Holiness, Vicar of Christ" makes a mockery of holiness and of Christ. Yet the name of each of these mass murderers, fornicators, robbers, warmongers—some guilty of the massacre of thousands—is emblazoned in honor on the Church's official list of Peter's alleged successors, the popes.
- John next notices that the woman is drunk—and not with alcohol but with "the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus..."(v 6).
 - One thinks immediately of the Inquisitions (Roman, Medieval and Spanish) which for centuries held Europe in their terrible grip. Canon Llorente, who was the Secretary to the Inquisition in Madrid from 1790-92 and

had access to the archives of all the tribunals, estimated that in Spain alone the number of condemned exceeded 3 million, with about 300,000 burned at the stake. A Catholic historian writes,

When Napoleon conquered Spain in 1808, a Polish officer in his army, Colonel Lemanouski, reported that the Dominicans blockaded themselves in their monastery in Madrid. When Lemanouski's troops forced an entry, the inquisitors denied the existence of any torture chambers. The soldiers searched the monastery and discovered them under the floors. The chambers were full of prisoners, all naked, many insane. The French troops, used to cruelty and blood, could not stomach the sight. They emptied the torture-chambers, laid gunpowder to the monastery and blew the place up.

The remnants of some of the chambers of horror remain in Europe and may be visited today. They stand as memorials to the zealous outworking of Roman Catholic dogmas *which remain in force*, and to a Church which claims to be infallible and to this day justifies such barbarism. They are also memorials to the astonishing accuracy of John's vision in Revelation 17. Do not forget, that Church has not yet officially admitted that these practices were evil, nor apologized to the world or to any of the victims or their descendants. Nor could John Paul II fully apologize today because "the doctrines responsible for those terrible things still underpin his position."

- "Christian" Rome has slaughtered many times the number of both Christians and Jews that pagan Rome did. Beside those victims of the Inquisitions, there were Huguenots, Albigenses, Waldenses and other Christians, massacred, tortured and burned at the stake by the hundreds of thousands simply because they refused to align themselves with the Roman Catholic Church. Listen to the leading nineteenth-century Catholic professor of church history:

The view of the Church had been...[that] every departure from the teaching of the Church...*must be punished with death, and the most cruel of deaths, by fire....*

Both the initiation and carrying out of this...*must be ascribed to the Popes alone...who compelled bishops and priests to condemn heretics to torture, confiscation of their goods, imprisonment, and death, and to enforce the execution of this sentence on the civil authorities, under pain of excommunication.* (Emphasis added)

- Pope Martin V commanded the King of Poland in 1429 to *exterminate* the Hussites (sympathizers with the martyred Jan Hus). This excerpt from the Pope's letter to the King explains why popes hated independent Christians and wanted them destroyed:

Know that the interests of the Holy See, and those of your crown, make it a duty *to exterminate the Hussites*. Remember that these impious persons dare proclaim principles of *equality*; they maintain that *all Christians are brethren*, and that God has not given to privileged men the right of ruling the nations; they hold that Christ came on earth to *abolish slavery*; they call the people to *liberty*, that is to the annihilation of kings and priests.... [T]urn your forces against Bohemia; *burn, massacre, make deserts everywhere, for nothing could be more agreeable to God, or more useful to the cause of kings, than the extermination of the Hussites.* (Emphasis added)

- Note this excerpt from Pope Nicholas I's (858-67) instructions to the King of Bulgaria, a new convert to what he thought was "Christianity," to force Rome's religion upon his subjects:

I glorify you for having maintained your authority by putting to death those wandering sheep who refuse to enter the fold; and...congratulate you upon having opened the kingdom of heaven to the people submitted to your rule.

A king need not fear to command massacres, when these will retain his subjects in obedience, or cause them to submit to the faith of Christ; and God will reward him in this world, and in eternal life, for these murders.

Why should Rome apologize for or even admit this holocaust? No one calls her to account today. Protestants have forgotten and evangelical leaders join Rome to evangelize together. They don't want to hear any "negative" reminders of the millions tortured and slain by the Church to which they now pay homage, or the fact that Rome has a false gospel of sacramental works.

- The Nazi holocaust was thoroughly known to Pius XII in spite of his complete silence throughout the war on the slaughter of Jews. Had the Pope protested, as representatives of Jewish organizations and the Allied Powers begged him to do, he would have condemned his own Church. The facts are inescapable:

In 1936, Bishop Berning of Osnabruch had talked with the Fuhrer for over an hour. Hitler assured his lordship there was no fundamental difference between National Socialism and the Catholic Church. Had not the church, he argued, looked on Jews as parasites...? ... "I am only doing," he boasted, "what the Church has done for fifteen hundred years, only more effectively." Being a Catholic himself, he told Berning, he "admired and wanted to promote Christianity [Catholicism]."

- Finally, the angel reveals to John that the woman "is that great city, which *reigneth over the kings of the earth*" (v 18).
 - Is there such a city? Yes, and again only one: Vatican City.
 - One eighteenth-century historian counted 95 popes who claimed to have divine power to depose kings and emperors.
 - Historian Walter James wrote that Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) "held all Europe in his net."
 - Gregory IX (1227-41) thundered that the pope was Lord and Master of everyone and everything. Popes crowned and deposed kings and emperors, exacting obedience by threatening excommunication.
 - Pope Nicholas I boasted, "Fear, then, our wrath and the thunders of our vengeance; for Jesus Christ has appointed us [the popes]...absolute judges of all men; and kings...are submitted to our authority."
 - In commanding one king to destroy another, Nicholas wrote, "We order you, in the name of religion, to invade his states, burn his cities, and massacre his people...."
 - Eminent Catholic historian Ignaz von Dollinger writes, "Pope Clement IV, in 1265, after selling millions of South Italians to Charles of Anjou for a yearly tribute of eight hundred ounces of gold, declared that he would be excommunicated if the first payment was deferred...."
 - Catholic Professor Carrerio boasted that the popes had "put down from their thrones great kings and yet mightier emperors, and set others in their place, to whom the greatest kingdoms have long paid tribute, as they do to no other, and who dispense such riches...that no king or emperor has ever had...."

The qualifying data which John gives us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for identifying this woman/*city*, is specific, conclusive and irrefutable. There is no *city* upon earth, past or present, which meets all of these criteria except Catholic Rome and Vatican City. Pray for the 980 million Catholics who are deceived into trusting their Church instead of Christ for *salvation*. May Christ's love move you to bring the gospel to them!

8 Kings (Popes)

¹⁰ There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

THE 8 KINGS OF REVELATION THE LAST POPE							
							
PIUS XI	PIUS XII	JOHN XXIII	PAUL VI	JOHN PAUL I	JOHN PAUL II	BENEDICT XVI	FRANCIS I
1922-1939	1939-1958	1958-1963	1963-1978	1978	1978-2005	APRIL 19, 2005 FEB. 28, 2013	MARCH 13, 2013 UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD
LATERAN TREATY 1929 1 ST KING	2 ND KING	3 RD KING	4 TH KING	REIGNED ONLY 33 DAYS 5 TH KING	SERIOUSLY WOUNDED IN 1981 6 TH KING	7 TH KING	DEVIL FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT (CONTROLLED BY SATAN) 8 TH KING
FIVE ARE FALLEN... REVELATION 17:10					ONE IS...	RULES ONLY A SHORT TIME.	EVEN HE IS THE EIGHTH, AND IS OF THE SEVEN, AND GOETH INTO PERDITION. -REV 17:11

- In 1929 the Lateran Treaty was signed creating the nation state of Vatican City. Since then, including the current one, there have been 8 popes.
 - **Five have fallen,**
 - Pius XI (1922-1939) ... First king ... 17 years
 - Pius XII (1939-1958) ... Second king ... 19 years
 - John XXIII (1958-1963) ... Third king ... 5 years
 - Paul VI (1963-1978) ... Fourth king ... 15 years
 - John Paul I (1978) ... Fifth king reigned only 33 days
 - **one is,**
 - John Paul II (1978-2005) ... Sixth king was seriously wounded in 1981 ... 27 years
 - **and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.**
 - Benedict XVI (2005-2013) ... Seventh king resigned February 28, 2013 ... 8 years
 - Unlike almost all the six monarchs before him, Pope Benedict XVI abdicated his throne.
 - **¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.**
 - Francis I (March 13, 2013) ... Eighth king until the end of the world.
 - Francis “was elected by a mafia of cardinals,”
- **¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.**
 - In verse 10 the seven kings of this scarlet coloured beast kingdom are mentioned, but then in the next verse there is a subtle yet fundamental difference when describing the next king in line, the eighth king is called a beast. Why? Who is this beast? What will he do?
- The book of Revelation describes the last days dominated by a one world government (Dan.7:7-8,23-24, Rev.13:7) with two branches – political and religious.
 - Political wing is lead by the Antichrist – described in Revelation 13:1-10
 - Religious wing is lead by the False Prophet – described in Revelation 13:11-18

- Antichrist – This man whom will rule the world for 42 months, (Dan.7:25, 12:7, Rev.11:2-3, 12:6,14, 13:5) will be worshipped by the world as it's messiah after his deadly head wound is healed/mock resurrection (Rev.13:3) with the second beast, the false prophet (Rev.19:20) leading his worldwide cult.
- False Prophet – The second beast leads the world in worship of the first beast, which would make him the universal pontiff of this one world religion. Therefore the second beast is the eighth king of the scarlet coloured beast kingdom (Vatican/eventual NWO) which the harlot (Catholic Church which amalgamates the religions of the world through the ecumenical movement, creating the one world religion –Islam/Chrislam) rides the beast (Antichrist kingdom) and sits on many waters (rules over the people of the world).
 - The beast described in Revelation 13:1 is the very same beast in Revelation 17:11 – they both have 7 heads and 10 horns. This is the last kingdom on earth before the second coming, which the harlot Mystery Babylon (Catholic Church/one world religion) will ride as the religious arm of the beast global government, headed by the first beast and enforced by the eighth king (The second beast, the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-18.)
 - “even he is the eighth, and is of the seven”
 - The prophetic identities are:
 - the second beast (Revelation 13:11-18)
 - the eighth king (Revelation 17:9-13)
 - the false prophet (Revelation 19:20)
 - "Peter the Roman, who will nourish the sheep in many tribulations; when they are finished, the city of seven hills will be destroyed, and the dreadful judge will judge his people. The end."
- St. Malachy (1094-1148)
 - The Prophecy of the Popes is a series of 112 short, cryptic phrases in Latin which purport to predict the Roman Catholic popes (along with a few antipopes), beginning with Pope Celestine II. The alleged prophecies were first published by Benedictine monk Arnold Wion in 1595. Wion attributes the prophecies to Saint Malachy, a 12th century Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland.

Given the very accurate description of popes up to 1590 and lack of accuracy after that year, historians generally conclude that the alleged prophecies are a fabrication written shortly before they were published. The Roman Catholic Church also dismisses them as forgery. The prophecies may have been created in an attempt to suggest that Cardinal Girolamo Simoncelli's bid for the papacy in thesecond conclave of 1590 was divinely ordained.

The prophecies conclude with a pope identified as "Peter the Roman", whose pontificate will allegedly bring the destruction of the city of Rome.

Revelation 17 Commentary/Interpretation

“(v.1) “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore”

The angel promises to show John the punishment of the great prostitute with whom the kings of the earth committed adultery. When the Bible speaks of harlotry, it is on a spiritual level. In the Old Testament the Lord refers to the worshipping of foreign gods as harlotry and adultery, when addressing Israel through His prophets for their infidelity to the Lord.

“that sitteth upon many waters:”

Verse 15 tells us that the many waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

(v.2) “With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,”

Harlotry: spiritual adultery, worship of strange gods, immorality. The language the angel used, focusing on the whore's punishment, confirms the notion that the vision extends beyond chapter 17 through 19:10. Her punishment is not specified until 17:16, and it then goes on to occupy chapter 18 and the beginning of chapter 19. The angel begins by carrying John in the Spirit to a desert, where he is shown a scene, of the woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

“and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

This is the usurping institution of the Catholic Church which is responsible for the suppression of the Bible for more than a millennia, countless anti-Biblical practices, leading believers into paganism, idolatry and outright heresy, as well as the murder of an estimated 80 million Christians and Jews during the Inquisition

which lasted for hundreds of years. For centuries the pope ruled as the king of Europe, determining political control over the kings of much of the world, Napoleon put an end to that in 1798.

(v.3) "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman"

The whore represents the Catholic Church because to this day the ancient Babylonian cult of the sun is alive in this institution which has tried to usurp the place of the bride of Christ by claiming the throne of St. Peter. "There sit upon a scarlet coloured beast,"

The beast described is the same one in Revelation 13:1 which represents the kingdom that will swallow the earth as described in Daniel 7:7-8,23-24. This beast is the kingdom of the Vatican that was established with the signing of the Lateran Treaty in 1929, this beast is connected to the second best of Revelation 13, which represents the pontiff of the one world religion and the kingdom from which proceeds the false prophet, whom is the second beast of Revelation 13.

"full of names of blasphemy,"

This is the blasphemous title of "Vicar of Christ" which the Pope wrongly is attributed, plus the end times claim that the first beast is God, which will be the central belief of the one world religion.

"having seven heads and ten horns."

The 7 heads represent the 7 kingdoms that have in their time ruled the known world- Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Ottoman Caliphate, New World Order/Caliphate – the ten horns represent the 10 kings that will rule with the beast for one hour in the global government of the Antichrist. The UN has already divided the world into 10 super-states and is ready to implement global government on command. In the US, On January 11, 2010 the president Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13528 and thus created a "shadow government". The United States "Shadow Government" is in place for continuity of government once martial law is imposed.

The "Super Congress" and the "Council of Governors" will replace America's present federal and state governments.

The "Super Congress" consists of 12 members: Six senators, six house members, while the president rules by martial law.

This government of 13 members will create, enforce, and oversee federal agencies and law.

The "Council of Governors" consists of 10 governors that will administer the 10 FEMA regions, reporting to the President and the "Super Congress".

Executive Order: EO 13528 - Establishing Council of Governors | The White

House <http://www.whitehouse.gov/.../president-obama-signs-executive...>

In the same manner that the UN has divided the world into 10 super-states, which serve as a template for a future world government, so too has Obama carved the US into 10 FEMA regions, each with a presidentially appointed governor.

(v.4) "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:"

This is a physical description that allows us to clearly identify the woman, purple and scarlet are all over the Catholic Church, as well as its extravagant wealth accumulated over the centuries, the cup represents the spiritual filth that has been committed by the papacy, which is an extension of the Mystery Babylon religion.

(v.5) "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

This name, the angel tells us, is a mystery. He has used the name "Babylon" before (14:8; 16:19), but now he explains that it is a figurative or symbolic name, like "Sodom and Egypt" applied earlier to the city where the two witnesses died (11:8). Mystery Babylon is the original religion that rebelled against God, Its founder Semiramis was the wife of Nimrod (builder of the tower of Babel) and mother of Tammuz, Nimrod's so called reincarnation. This is the unholy trinity that will be manifest again in the last days by the beast, false prophet and Satan the dragon. (16:13). This is the mother of all religions.

After God confused their tongues and scattered the Mesopotamians across the earth, they took their religion with them all over the world. This religion is the mother of all pagan and eastern religions and where the concepts of reincarnation, ancestry worship and husband worship originated.

This religion spread from Chaldea to Egypt, then Babylon, to Persia, then to Greece, and then Rome, and is alive today in Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

This is the one world religion that will dominate the world. Allah is Satan. And all the world will worship the dragon, that old serpent who is the devil and Satan. Allah...

The Antichrist is the Muslim saviour, the Pope is the false prophet and the Muslim version of Jesus, Isa Al Masih and their god is Satan aka Allah.

The Hebrew word translated "Lucifer" is helel (or heylel), from the root, hâlâl, meaning "to shine" or "to bear light. Muslim food is Halal. Halal is Lucifer in Hebrew Allah is synonymous with Baal, in the Bible Baal is called Satan. Allah, halal, Baal, Lucifer and Satan are all the same devil.

Mystery Babylon is the common root of all religions and the reason why they will be united in the last days. The Catholic Church is leading this effort with its ecumenical movement which is now stretching its tentacles to encompass the religions of the world.

The angel points out the woman's obvious corruption which is seen when the angel first mentioned her (v.1-2) and by John's observation as well (v.4-6). She is the great whore (v. 1) and the mother of harlots The Roman church has spawned thousands of denominations that are currently reconciling with Rome in these last days through the efforts of the Vatican to encompass not only Christendom, but also the other religions of the world. (v. 5).

Her adulteries are compared to wine, with which the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated (v.2). Her fall is mentioned in Revelation 14:8. John sees in her hand a golden cup filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries (v. 4). He sees too that she herself is drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus (v. 6). She is responsible for the "shed the blood of your saints and prophets and have been given blood to drink." Revelation 16:6 is an indictment of her offences. The fierce rhetoric of John's vision is directed at the woman's deception of the earth (v. 2), and above all her violence against the people of God (v. 6). In this sense her crimes match those of the dragon (12:9, 17) and the beast (13:7-9). (v.6) "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

This is a reference to the millions of people that have been murdered throughout the ages by the Catholic Church and its vilest offspring, Islam. This cult was created by Rome out of the Arian heresy to take out the pope's rival, the Bishop of Alexandria. Unfortunately even for them, they created a monster that turned on them which had led to centuries of warfare between Europe and invading Muslim armies, but is now being coerced into unity with the papacy in these last days.

(v.7) "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns."

The angel wakes John with the question "Why are you astonished?", and the promise of the interpretation of the woman sitting on the beast. The interpretation focuses more on the beast than the woman.

(v.8) "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

The angel continues the explanation with a challenge: This calls for a mind with wisdom (compare 13:18).

The beast's seven heads, the angel claims, are seven hills on which the woman sits (v. 9), and at the same time seven kings (v. 10). In the symbolism of this book, two different symbols can represent the same reality (for example, both the seven lamps before the throne and the seven eyes of the Lamb represented "the seven spirits of God," 4:5; 5:6). Here one symbol represents two distinct realities.

The seven hills are the first clue that "Babylon" is actually Rome, for the notion that Rome was built on seven hills was already current among Latin poets (Swete 1908:220, citing Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Martial, Cicero and others). More important is the second part of the interpretation: the seven heads are also seven kings, of whom five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction (vv. 10-11). This appears to be a restatement, tilted in a rather political direction, of once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction (v. 8). This passage refers to the beast kingdom that will take over the world and the beast that represents the son of perdition described in Revelation 13 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, we know that the beast is a man because Revelation 13, verses 16 to 18 tell us of a man and the number of his name, in Thessalonians Paul wrote that he would claim to be God, theologians are unanimous in the belief that this will be a man that will not only claim to be God, but convince the world of it through the miraculous healing of a deadly head wound, which causes the people of the world to believe his claims and worship this man, another key element of this beast "that was, and is not, and yet is" is the spirit of antichrist which John in his epistles warns us is already in the world, which has waged relentless war against the saints throughout the history of the church.

The angel almost makes fun of the beast. The beast, says the angel, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. This of course parodies the designation of God as the one "who was, and is, and is to come"; Revelation 1:4,8 ,4:8, in such a way as to make the beast sound ridiculous. The "Lord God Almighty" is from eternity to eternity, while the beast moves from being to nonbeing to being again, and finally to destruction. God is the one who deserves astonishment, admiration and worship. But foolish people will be astonished when they see the beast not although, but because he once was, now is not, and yet will come. Compare verse 8 with Revelation 13:3.

(v.9) "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."

There are several cities that sit on seven hills, but only one city fits the description of its content the way Rome does, it is obvious this is the city being referred to, for this is the seat of the woman whom we have proven to be the Roman Catholic Church.

(v.10) "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

(v.11) "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

Keeping the text in context, the eight kings mentioned are the 8 monarchs of the scarlet coloured beast kingdom, and the eighth king is the second beast of Revelation 13, the false prophet. Because this is the only other beast described as a personality, Revelation 13 also displays the religious beast institution of the one world religion the false prophet will lead in worship of the first beast, the political leader of the world, the Antichrist. This one detail, revealed by the colour of the beast in Revelation 17, which the whore rides, distinguishes this beast from the beast that comes out of the sea in Revelation 13:1. There is an obvious connection between these two beasts, but this distinguishing trait (the colour scarlet of the beast in Rev.17) represents the qualities of the beast kingdom from which the false prophet/second beast emerges. So just like the first beast represents a man, it also represents his global empire, from which he emerges rooted in the end time nation of Babylon from which the Antichrist is to emerge (Isaiah 14:4). So also is the second beast connected with the beast which the harlot rides, which also represents the kingdom from which he emerges, Vatican City, which in fact is a monarchy.

In 1929 the Lateran Treaty was signed creating the nation state of Vatican City Since then, including the current one, there have been 8 popes. Pius XI was this monarchy's first king.

Pius XI 1922-1939... First king

Pius XII 1939-1958... Second king

John XXIII 1958-1963... Third king

Paul VI 1963-1978... Fourth king

John Paul I 1978... Fifth king reigned only 33 days

John Paul II 1978-2005... Sixth king was seriously wounded in 1981

Benedict XVI 2005-2013... Seventh king resigned February 28, 2013

Francis I March 13, 2013... Eighth king until the end of the world.

"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

In verse 10 the seven kings of this scarlet coloured beast kingdom are mentioned, but then in the next verse there is a subtle yet fundamental difference when describing the next king in line, the eighth king is called a beast. Why? Who is this beast? What will he do? The book of Revelation describes the last days dominated by a one world government (Dan.7:7-8,23-24, Rev.13:7). Mentioned are the two branches of this global kingdom, political and religious. The political wing is described in Revelation 13:1-10 in the personality of the first beast, the son of perdition, (2 Thes. 2:1-12), otherwise known by his theological title, the Antichrist. This man whom will rule the world for 42 months, (Dan.7:25, 12:7, Rev.11:2-3, 12:6,14, 13:5) will be worshipped by the world as it's messiah after his deadly head wound is healed/mock resurrection (Rev.13:3) with the second beast, the false prophet (Rev.19:20) leading his worldwide cult. We know that the beast is a man because Revelation 13:16-18 tell us that the mark of the beast is the mark of a man, and his number 666. So the second beast leads the world in worship of the first beast, which would make him the universal pontiff of this one world religion. Therefore the second beast, also known as the false prophet is the eighth king of the scarlet coloured beast kingdom (Vatican/eventual NWO) which the harlot (Catholic Church which amalgamates the religions of the world through the ecumenical order, creating the one world religion – Islam/Chrislam) rides the beast (Antichrist kingdom) and sits on many waters (rules over the people of the world). The beasts described in Revelation 13:1 is the very same beast in Revelation 17:11 because this is the

last kingdom on earth before the second coming which the harlot Mystery Babylon (Catholic Church/one world religion) will ride as the religious arm of the beast global government, headed by the first beast and enforced by the eighth king.

This is the second beast, the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-18.

“even he is the eighth, and is of the seven”

Unlike almost all the six monarchs before him, Pope Benedict XVI abdicated his throne, and in his place Francis assumed the blasphemous title of “Vicar of Christ”, making him the eighth king.

Pope Francis is the second beast, the false prophet of the Antichrist.

(v.12) “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.”

This is the structure of the future one world government, 10 super states led by 10 kings under the authority of a global dictator.

(v.13) “These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

Revelation 13 describes two beasts which represent the Antichrist/political leader- and the false prophet/religious leader- we can distinguish when each beast is referred to by the content of the reference made. In this verse, the political side of the last kingdom is described because the governmental structure of the NWO is described with the 10 kings that “receive power as kings one hour with the beast” The meaning of the expression “they have one mind” when referring to the 10 kings in verse 13 is now explained, so that we now learn the true source of their authority. The angel tells John that it was God who put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled (v. 17). Behind the unified purpose of the kings is nothing less than the sovereign purpose of God Almighty! With this, the angel anticipates the end of the vision when he says, "These are the true words of God" (19:9)--the final verdict from above on all that John has seen and heard.

(v.14) “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

Daniel 7:21,25,8:24, Revelation 6:9,12:17,12:13-17,13:7 tell us of the persecution of the saints in all the world by this last kingdom that will rule the whole world.

(v.15) “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”

Simply put, the church of Babylon, is ever present throughout the world. Both in its present Roman Catholicism and it's future one world religion.

(v.16) “And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.”

Eventually the leaders of the world will hate the religion of the Antichrist. While giving a detailed account of “Babylon” the whore as Rome in verses 15 and 18, the angel goes on to explain the relationship between the 10 kings, the beast and the whore as described in verses 16 & 17. The beast and the 10 horns will hate the whore. They will destroy her and leave her naked, they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire at the time of the reign of the beast and the 10 kings. Chapter 18 is all about the end of the whore “Babylon”.

(v.17) “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”

Islam was created by Rome out of the Arian heresy to take out the pope's rival, the Bishop of Alexandria, since Islam is the religion of the Antichrist, the Muslims will eventually kill all the non-believers, as instructed in the Koran and written in Islamic eschatology. It is no wonder that the 10 kings will hate this most antichrist of religions.

(v.18) “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

This is Rome, because the woman is the Catholic Church, conceived in adultery and brought forth in iniquity, damned for her harlotry.

Revelation 17:1-18

Babylon = Rome

- 1Pe 5:12 By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. 13 She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.
 - Peter was writing this from Rome
 - Even Catholic apologist Karl Keating confirms that Rome was known as Babylon and cites 1 Peter 5:13
 - *The Catholic Encyclopedia* states, "It is within the city of Rome, called the city of seven hills, that the entire area of Vatican State proper is now confined."
- Parallels between Babylon and Rome:
 - If we were living in the 2nd half of the 1st century (Paul's audience), we would certainly see the parallels between Babylon and Rome. We would see the same story being reenacted in our time
 - Both oppressed God's people
 - Both destroyed the Temple
 - God redeemed his people from both through a Messiah

Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon – Babylonian Captivity

The Jews were enslaved several times:

- 1st – to the Egyptians for 400 years, ending with the Exodus of 1446 B.C.
- 2nd – to the Assyrians, from 722-539 B.C. (the Northern Kingdom of Israel)
- 3rd – to the Babylonians, from 586-539 B.C. (the Southern Kingdom of Judah)

During the first 2,000 years of Hebrew history — from the time of Abraham (c. 2000 B.C.) until the birth of Christ — the greatest catastrophe to befall the Jews was the Babylonian captivity.

- 1st Stage of exile – 605 B.C.
 - After defeating the Assyrian Empire in 609 B.C. at the Battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon, attacked Judah and Jerusalem in 605 B.C., demanding surrender and tribute.
 - Jehoiakim, king of Judah, paid up, and Judah became a vassal state of Babylon.
 - To ensure that tribute continued to be paid, Nebuchadnezzar took captive to Babylon some of the royal family, including the prophet Daniel.
- 2nd Stage of exile – 597 B.C.
 - In 601 B.C. Jehoiakim refused to continue paying tribute to Babylon, so Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem again in 597 B.C., laying siege to the city, which quickly fell.
 - Jehoiakim died and his successor Jeconiah, along with much of the royal court (including the prophet Ezekiel), was taken captive to Babylon.
 - Nebuchadnezzar appointed Jeconiah's uncle, Zedekiah, as vassal king, and once again Judah paid tribute to Babylon.
- Final siege – 588-586 B.C.
 - In 588 B.C., however, chaffing under Babylonian rule, Zedekiah stupidly refused payment and Nebuchadnezzar attacked again, this time laying siege to Jerusalem for two full years.
 - The prophet Jeremiah was in the city during the siege, and he writes his eyewitness account of the city's suffering in Lamentations.
 - On August 14, 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. Here is what we read in Scripture:
"In the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and his whole army advanced against Jerusalem, encamped around it, and built siege walls on every side. The siege of the city continued until the eleventh year of Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the month, when famine had gripped the city, and the people of the land had no more food, the city walls were breached . . . Nebuchadnezzar . . . burned the house of the Lord [Solomon's Temple], the

house of the king, and all the houses of Jerusalem . . . tore down the walls that surrounded Jerusalem. . . and led into exile the last of [those] remaining in the city.” (2Kings 25:1-11)

- “Why did this happen?”
 - 2Ki 24:20 It was because of the LORD ’s anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.
 - 1Chronicles 9:1 Now Judah had been exiled to Babylon because of its treachery.
 - 2Chronicles 36:15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. 18 He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD ’s temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. 19 They set fire to God’s temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. 20 He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.
 - To this day Jews remember and mourn the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon’s Temple on the minor fast day of *Asara B’Tevet*, the tenth day of the Hebrew month Tevet (December/ January).
- Redemption – 539 B.C.
 - Judaism views the Exodus as God’s great archetypical act of redemption, freeing Israel from 400 years of Egyptian slavery. Thus, as God used Moses to redeem his people in 1446 B.C., so did he use Cyrus to redeem his people in 539 B.C.
 - How did Cyrus get the idea to invite captives to go home and rebuild?
 - It was certainly atypical of the time. Most conquering nations would attack and then burn, pillage, rape, loot and leave, collecting on-going tribute from the subjugated people.
 - Isaiah 44:24 “This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, 25 who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, 26 who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’ of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be built,’ and of their ruins, ‘I will restore them,’ 27 who says to the watery deep, ‘Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,’ 28 who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”’
 - Isaiah 45:1 Thus says the Lord to his anointed [messiah], Cyrus, whose right hand I grasp, subduing nations before him, stripping kings of their strength, opening doors before him, leaving the gates unbarred: 2 I will go before you and level the mountains; bronze doors I will shatter, iron bars I will snap. 3 I will give you treasures of darkness, riches hidden away, that you may know I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by name. 4 For the sake of Jacob, my servant, of Israel my chosen one, I have called you by name, giving you a title, though you do not know me.
 - The contemporary historian, Josephus (A.D. 37-100)
 - These things Cyrus knew from reading the book of the prophecy of Isaiah 210 years earlier, 140 years before the Temple had even been destroyed. Cyrus wondered at the divine power and was seized with a strong desire and ambition to do what was written.
 - “In the first year of Cyrus’s reign . . . God took pity on the captive state and misfortune of those unhappy men . . . for he stirred up the spirit of Cyrus and caused him to write throughout all Asia, ‘Thus says King Cyrus. Since the Most High God has appointed me king of the habitable world, I am persuaded that he is the god whom the Israelite nation worships, for he foretold my name through the prophets [Isaiah] and that I should build his temple in Jerusalem in the land of Judaea.’ These things Cyrus knew from reading the book of

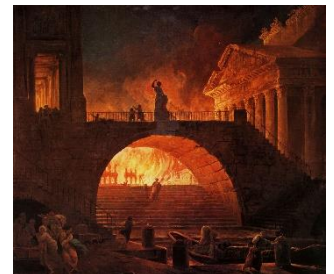
prophecy which Isaiah had left behind two hundred and ten years earlier.” (Antiquities XI, i-ii, pp. 315-216.)

- 2Chronicles 36:22 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah [70 year captivity], the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing
- Ezra 1:1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah [70 year captivity], the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: 2 “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. 3 Anyone of his people among you—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.’”

Destruction of Jerusalem by Rome – Jewish Revolt

The Prelude

- Nero – Notoriously evil – especially toward Christians
 - Julia Agrippina (A.D. 15-59)
 - Great granddaughter of Caesar Augustus; adoptive granddaughter of the Emperor Tiberius; sister of the Emperor Caligula; wife of the Emperor Claudius; and mother of the Emperor Nero.
 - Through incestuous marriages, imperial intrigue and duplicitous assassinations, Agrippina engineered her son’s rise to power. After poisoning Claudius (her uncle and 3rd husband), her seventeen year-old son Nero became Emperor in A.D. 54, with Agrippina controlling the reins of power.
 - Quickly, however, Nero’s relations with his mother deteriorated, ending by Nero having her murdered in A.D. 59.
- Fire of Rome – 64 AD
 - On July 18, 64 the Great Fire of Rome erupted, destroying a large portion of the city.
 - According to the historian Tacitus, the fire raged for five days, destroying three of fourteen districts and severely damaging seven others.
 - Both Suetonius and Cassius Dio point to Nero as the arsonist, who wanted to clear a large part of Rome so he could build a new palace complex.
 - Christian persecution
 - To deflect blame, Tacitus writes that Nero blamed the fire on Rome’s Christians:
Therefore, to put an end to the rumor Nero created a diversion and subjected to the most extraordinary tortures those called Christians, hated for their abominations by the common people. The originator of this name [was] Christ, who, during the reign of Tiberius had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate. Repressed for the time being, the deadly superstition broke out again not only in Judea, the original source of the evil, but also in the city [Rome], where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and become popular. So an arrest was made of all who confessed; then on the basis of their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of arson as for hatred of the human race.
 - Both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome during this time.
 - The persecution ended with Nero’s death. The Roman Senate had declared him a public enemy of the Roman people and announced their intention to have him executed. With that, Nero turned to suicide, but too cowardly to carry it out, he enlisted his private secretary, Epaphroditos, to do the deed. Nero died on 9 June A.D. 68, the 6th anniversary of his murdering his stepsister and first wife, Octavia.



Great Jewish Revolt (66-73 AD)

- At a time of enormous political chaos—in A.D. 66—the great Jewish revolt broke out in Palestine.
- Nero chose the brilliant general (and future Emperor) Vespasian to suppress it.

- Fielding more than 50,000 combat troops, Vespasian began operations in Galilee;
- By A.D. 68 he had crushed opposition in the north, moved his headquarters to Caesarea Maritima, the deep-water port on the Mediterranean, and methodically began clearing the coast
- The defeated Jewish leaders in Galilee escaped to Jerusalem, where a bitter civil war among the Jews erupted, pitting the fanatical Zealots and Sicarii against the more moderate Sadducees and Pharisees.
 - By A.D. 68 the entire Jerusalem leadership and their followers were dead, having been killed by their fellow Jews, and the Zealots held the temple complex, using it as a staging area for their war against Rome.
- With Nero's death in Rome, Vespasian's troops proclaimed him Emperor.
 - Support spread quickly, and in A.D. 69 Vespasian left Jerusalem for Rome to claim the throne, leaving his son Titus to conclude the war in Jerusalem.
- By the summer of A.D. 70, Titus had breached the city walls and captured the Temple.
 - During the fierce fighting, the temple complex caught fire, and on Tisha B'Av (29/30 July A.D. 70) the Temple fell – 1,000 years of Jewish temple worship ended in a single day.
 - The fire spread quickly to the city itself, destroying most of it.
- Tacitus writes that no fewer than 600,000 Jews fought the Romans in Jerusalem; those captured were crucified, up to 500 per day; and historians estimate that 1.2 million Jews died during the span of the Jewish revolt, A.D. 66-73. It was the greatest catastrophe in Jewish history until the Nazi holocaust of 1939-1944.



Harlot

- ¹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”
 - Harlot – The Hebrew Scriptures repeatedly use the image of a harlot [πόρνη, “por’-nae”] (“prostitute” or “whore”) for a nation that sells itself for gain.
 - Tyre, for example, was an enormously wealthy port city off the coast of modern-day Lebanon, famous for its merchants and trade. Here’s what Scripture says about it:
 “On that day, Tyre shall be forgotten for seventy years. At the end of seventy years, the song about the prostitute will be Tyre’s song:
 Take a harp, go about the city, forgotten prostitute; pluck the strings skillfully, sing many songs, that you may be remembered.
 At the end of seventy years the Lord shall visit Tyre. She shall return to her hire and serve as prostitute with all the world’s kingdoms on the face of the earth.” (Isaiah 23: 15-17)
 - Many waters – The many waters suggests parallels between:
 - “Babylon,” which sat alongside the Euphrates River with its vast network of irrigation canals and
 - “Rome,” which is the entire landmass surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.
 - fornication – The kings of the earth have had intercourse with her [πορνεύω, “por-nyu’-o”]
 - Graphically illustrating the behavior of Rome’s client kings, such as the 1st-century Herods in Israel, who knelt at the feet of their Roman overlords while collecting and delivering ever-greater taxes to Rome.
 - Wine of her harlotry – Both the kings & the inhabitants of the earth became drunk on the wine of her harlotry
 - That is, they became addicted to the pleasures and luxuries provided by the woman clothed in “purple and scarlet.”

- ³ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*
 - The woman represents the “inhabitants of the earth,” those who do not belong to God
 - The scarlet beast represents 1st-century Roman Empire and, more specifically, the city of Rome, its capital, the city built on seven hills.
 - This grotesque creature calls to mind the first beast that rose from the sea, the Antichrist, who also had seven heads, ten horns and was covered in blasphemous names (13:1-10).
 - As the city of Rome is the nerve center of the Roman Empire and the emperor is its head, so is the beast the political nerve center of the world, and the dragon, Satan, is its head.
 - the scarlet beast is the 1st-century Roman Empire and, more specifically, the city of Rome, its capital.

Beast

- ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.
 - Antichrist
 - We identified the beast that the dragon called out of the water in 13:1-10 as the Antichrist, the second person of Satan’s infernal trinity, and the one who exercises political and economic power on behalf of the dragon.
 - Nero
 - We also identified the “666” number of the beast as a genatria [jean-a-tree’-a] for Nero’s name in Hebrew, *Nron Qsr* [“Neron Kaisar”].
 - Nero reigned as Emperor, A.D. 54-68
 - It was Nero who first systematically persecuted the Church in Rome
 - Nero martyred Peter and Paul
 - Nero was Emperor at the start of the great Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-73, in which over 1 million Jews were killed and the Temple destroyed.
 - To a Jew, Nero was Satan incarnate.
 - Like the beast who had received a mortal wound, but who had been healed, many believed that in the end times Nero would return in the person of the Antichrist.
- ⁹ “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.
 - Clearly, this is the city of Rome.



8 kings

- ¹⁰ There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

Roman Emperors

- Could be Roman Emperors. At the time John is writing this
 - **Five have fallen,**
 - Galba (68-69, 8 months—assassinated)
 - Otho (69, 2 months—suicide)
 - Vitellius (69, 8 months—suicide)
 - Vespasian (69-79, 10 years—natural death)
 - Titus (79-81, 2 years—poisoned?)

- one is,
 - Domitian (81-96, 15 years—assassinated)
 - Emperor at the time John is writing Revelation
- and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.
 - ??
- ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.
 - Nero (54-68, 14 years—suicide) – Will return as antichrist
 - Believed by preterists to be The Antichrist, already fulfilled

Ancient Empires

- The 7 kings could represent ancient empires
 - Five have fallen,
 - Egypt
 - Assyria
 - Babylonia
 - Medo-Persia
 - Greece
 - one is,
 - Rome
 - and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.
 - A revival of the Roman Empire
 - ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.
 - One-world government under the antichrist

Roman Catholic Popes

- Could represent the Papacy
 - Five have fallen,
 - Pius XI (1922-1939) ... First king ... 17 years
 - Pius XII (1939-1958) ... Second king ... 19 years
 - John XXIII (1958-1963) ... Third king ... 5 years
 - Paul VI (1963-1978) ... Fourth king ... 15 years
 - John Paul I (1978) ... Fifth king reigned only 33 days
 - one is,
 - John Paul II (1978-2005) ... Sixth king was seriously wounded in 1981 ... 27 years
 - and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.
 - Benedict XVI (2005-2013) ... Seventh king resigned February 28, 2013 ... 8 years
 - Unlike almost all the six monarchs before him, Pope Benedict XVI abdicated his throne, and in his place Francis assumed the blasphemous title of “Vicar of Christ”. Making him the eighth king.
 - ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.
 - Francis I (March 13, 2013) ... Eighth king until the end of the world.

10 Horns

- ¹² “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful.”
 - The “ten horns” represent “ten kings” who have “not yet been crowned.”

- For that reason, we cannot identify who they are. They are either:
 - “client kings” (much as Herod the Great was in Judea, 30-4 B.C.)
 - Influential political leaders of major Roman provinces
 - In A.D. 68 the Roman Empire consisted of 36 provinces
 - 11 were public and were governed by a proconsul
 - 25 were imperial and governed by a senator of consular or praetorian rank.
 - These “ten horns” will pledge their allegiance to the beast and will fight for him for “one hour” [μία ὥραν]; that is, for a short time.
 - The Roman Empire reached its greatest extent under emperor Trajan.
- ¹⁵ Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. ¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”
 - The “waters” represent where the harlot lives –land mass surrounding the Mediterranean Sea (Roman Empire)
 - The “harlot” or “whore of Babylon” who rides the beast is the “world,”
 - Represents the people who have allied themselves with the infernal trinity—Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet—those who bear the mark of the beast
 - People living in arrogance, self-indulgence, luxury, decadence and delusion – a lifestyle enabled by the enormous wealth and corruption of the Empire itself.
 - Here we have a startling turn of events.
 - As history careens toward the cliff, the beast & his allies suddenly turn on the people & devour them
 - Outwardly, the political leaders had pandered to the population, cynically serving them
 - Inwardly, however, the political leaders despised the people, using them to forward their own agenda, building their own massive wealth and inflating their own egos.
 - Satan and his crew hold humanity in utter contempt. Though they may flatter us as they seduce us, we must never forget their true intention.
 - Recall Beelzebub’s words to the fallen angels at Pandemonium, the Satanic war council in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*:

“There is a place (if ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven Err not)—another World, the happy seat Of some new race, called Man, about this time To be created like to us, though less In power and excellence, but favoured more Of him who rules above . . . Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn What creatures there inhabit . . . this place may lie exposed . . . [Perhaps] some advantageous act may be achieved By sudden onset—either with Hell-fire To waste his whole creation, or possess All as our own, and drive, as we were driven, The puny habitants; or, if not drive, Seduce them to our party ...” (Book 2, 345-368)
 - In C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape, a demonic bureaucrat in the lower regions of hell, gives advice to his nephew Wormwood, concerning humanity. He says:

“Of course I know that the Enemy [God] also wants to detach men from themselves, but in a different way. Remember always, that He really likes the little vermin, and sets an absurd value on the distinctness of every one of them” (p. 64).

The Fall of Babylon the Great

18 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! ³ For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶ Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. ⁷ In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit *as* queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ ⁸ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong *is* the Lord God who judges her.

The World Mourns Babylon’s Fall

⁹ “The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰ standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

¹¹ “And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: ¹² merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; ¹³ and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. ¹⁴ The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. ¹⁵ The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, ¹⁶ and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! ¹⁷ For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’ Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance ¹⁸ and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What *is* like this great city?’

¹⁹ “They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.’

²⁰ “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you* holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”

Finality of Babylon’s Fall

²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. ²² The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. ²³ The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. ²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

- 1-3 – A luminous angel steps center stage and announces a solemn, 3-part requiem on the fall of Babylon
- 4-8 – A 2nd angel urges God’s people to depart from the fallen city
- 9-20 – The kings, merchants and seafarers lament their loss, as Babylon collapses around them
- 21-24 – A 3rd angel hurls a huge stone, like a millstone, into the sea

- Placing Revelation in its proper historical and cultural context, we are correct to identify the Roman Empire in the 2nd half of the first century as the scarlet beast with seven heads and the whore who rides it as the people of the world, those marked with the number of the beast, 666.

- Christ—the Lamb of God—and those washed in his blood (the Church), stand in sharp contrast to this world, which is “under the power of the evil one” (1John 5:19). They are polar opposites.

- But we should also remember that “Babylon” still permeates our world today. We participate in today’s “Babylon” and become little more than whores riding the back of the beast when:
 - Political, social and economic systems promote rampant materialism, rabid self-interest, and the illicit (but highly profitable) trade in drugs, pornography and human trafficking
 - Corporations use 3rd-world sweatshops to produce products for an insatiable consumer market
 - Greed trumps goodness

The Battle of Armageddon (19)

As we saw in our previous lesson, Revelation 17-19 form a recapitulation, taking us to “ground zero,” the epicenter of the seventh bowl’s impact. We met the great “Whore of Babylon” riding upon a beast with seven heads: Babylon the great, “the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (17:5), and “the great city that has sovereignty over the kings of the earth” (18:18). We learned that, in general, the scarlet beast is the 1st-century Roman Empire and, more specifically, the city of Rome, its capital. The “Whore of Babylon” who rides the beast is the “world,” the people who have allied themselves with the infernal trinity—Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet—those who bear the mark of the beast: 666.

After a chorus of praise from the twenty-four elders and a vast multitude in heaven, Lesson #15 presents the climactic “Battle of Armageddon” as Christ returns, riding a white horse and leading his army of saints. They quickly crush Satan’s forces, led by the Antichrist and the False Prophet, who are captured and “thrown alive into the fiery pool with burning sulfur” (19:20). All the rest of Satan’s minions become carrion, food for the birds of the air, who gorge themselves on their rotting corpses.

Heaven Exults over Babylon

19 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God! ² For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her.” ³ Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” ⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!” ⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!”

⁶ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

⁹ Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

- As the seven seals and seven trumpets brought increasingly severe warnings to repent and turn to God, so the seven bowls brought judgment upon the earth. With the seventh bowl pouring out the seven last plagues, God’s judgment on “Babylon” is complete, and the path is cleared for Christ’s triumphal return. Before he returns, however, we witness a great victory celebration in heaven.
- “great multitude” – John hears what sounded like “the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven” (19:1) praising God in the presence of those surrounding God’s throne (the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders)
 - This “great multitude” first appeared in 7:9-14, the countless numbers “from every nation, race, people, and tongue,” the white-robed victors who came out of the great tribulation.
 - This same “great multitude” sang the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb, praising God’s justice in 15:2-3.
 - This is their third appearance.
 - The 4 living creatures and the 24 elders concur, shouting in a loud voice, “Amen. Alleluia” (19:4).

Marriage Supper of the Lamb

- Announcement came from the throne
 - The Whore of Babylon, the great harlot, has been defeated; God's justice prevails, and the path is cleared for Christ's return. But first we hear a startling announcement!
 - The voice coming from the throne is presumably that of the living creature, the one who leads the liturgy in the Holy of Holies and who handed the seven bowls to the seven angels in 15:7.
 - He invites all of God's people to join in the praise. So, together with the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders and the "great multitude," all God's people, small and great alike, shout in a voice like the sound of a "great multitude" or the sound "rushing water," accompanied by peals of thunder:
"Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, [our] God, the almighty. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready. She was allowed to wear a bright, clean linen garment." (19:6-8)
 - Just as we had the infernal trinity of Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet committing "fornication" with the Whore of Babylon, so is the genuine Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit about to be wed to the virtuous bride of the Lamb!
- The Hebrew Scriptures commonly refer to Israel as God's "bride":
 - "For your husband is your maker; the Lord of hosts is his name, Your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, called God of all the earth." (Isaiah 54:5)
 - God tells the prophet Hosea to "go, get for yourself a woman of prostitution and children of prostitution, for the land prostitutes itself, turning away from the Lord" (1:2).
 - Israel – God's bride – has betrayed God over and over again, and he wants Hosea to know how that feels, all the while longing for the day when Israel will once again call God "my husband" (2:18).
 - That day will most certainly come, and when it does God will renew all creation, put an end to war and "betroth you [Israel] to me forever" (Hosea 2:21).
 - Isaiah envisions Israel at that moment: "I [Israel] will rejoice heartily in the Lord, my being exalts in my God; For he has clothed me with garments of salvation, and wrapped me in a robe of justice, Like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." (61:10)
- Jesus, too, uses bridegroom imagery of himself:
 - "Then the disciples of John approached him and said, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast [much], but your disciples do not fast?' Jesus answered them, 'Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.'" (Matthew 9:14-15)
- And John the Baptist picks up this bridegroom imagery when he denies being the Messiah:
 - "You yourselves can testify that I said [that] I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens to him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease." (John 3:28-30)
- ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!"
 - This is quite extraordinary! The angel is presumably one of the four living creatures, those who surround the very throne of God. John—understandably—is about to fall on his knees before him in worship, but the angel says: "Don't! I am a fellow servant of you and of your brothers . . ." (19:10).
 - Even the mightiest angel falls infinitely short of the worship due only to God. What's more, the mightiest angel claims to be simply a "fellow servant of you and of your brothers." In heaven, all of us—from the greatest to the least—are fellow servants and brothers in the family of God.
 - As Paul says: "For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3: 26-28)

- This passage in Revelation 19:6-8 fulfills both the prophecies concerning Israel as God's bride in the Hebrew Scriptures, and the bridegroom allusions to Jesus in the gospels! In Revelation, the bride of the Lamb, of course, is the Church
 - those who belong to Christ, those who bear the Lamb's name on their foreheads
 - Rev 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.
 - Rev 22:4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.
 - those who have not soiled their clothes
 - Rev 3:4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.
 - those who are dressed in "bright, clean linen garments"
 - Rev 19:8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.
 - The victorious bride of the Lamb, in her virtue and purity, stands in stark contrast to the fornicating Whore of Babylon, dressed in scarlet and drinking drunkenly from the cup of her abominations.
- Occurs at (or just before) the beginning of the Millennium
 - ... for I say to you, I shall never again eat it [Passover] until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God [i.e., the Millennial Kingdom]." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." — Luke 22:16–18
 - The groom snatches His bride (rapture) and consummates the marriage for 7 days (7 year Tribulation) and the wedding feast happens after the end of the 7 days (years)
- Takes place on Earth
 - The Lord of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet (lit.: feast of fat things) for all peoples on this mountain [Mount Zion]; a banquet of aged wine (lit.: wine on the lees), choice pieces (lit.: fat pieces) with marrow, and refined, aged wine (lit.: wine refined on the lees). — Isaiah 25:6
- Attended by all believers
 - I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline (or dine) at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven — Matthew 8:11

Jewish wedding customs in the 1st century Galilee

- To understand the wedding feast of the Lamb and his bride, we need to know something about Jewish wedding customs in the 1st century Galilee
- In describing a first-century Jewish wedding, D.A. Carson in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* describes the setting this way: "Normally the bridegroom with some close friends left his home to go to the bride's home, where there were various ceremonies, followed by a procession through the streets – after nightfall – to his home. The ten virgins may be bridesmaids who have been assisting the bride; and they expect to meet the groom as he comes from the bride's house...Everyone in the procession was expected to carry his or her own torch. Those without a torch would be assumed to be party crashers or even brigands. The festivities, which might last several days, would formally get under way at the groom's house."

Jewish	Christian	Scripture
The groom's father makes the match (Shiddukhin) and chooses the bride and the groom approves the choice.	The Father chooses us the bride, and Jesus approved the choice.	John 10:28, 15:16
A Ketubah (Hebrew: כְּתוּבָה) is a Jewish marriage contract. It is considered an integral part of a traditional Jewish marriage,	A new covenant is made in the written Word of God, for us the bride. The Old Covenant Promise is fulfilled.	2 Corinthians 3:5-6

and outlines the rights and responsibilities of the groom, in relation to the bride.		
They would then break bread and drink from the cup to seal the betrothal (Kiddushin) and new covenant.	He breaks bread and drinks from the cup at the last supper sealing His covenant.	Luke 22:14-20 Matthew 26:27-29
The groom pays a price (Mohar) showing the bride his love for her.	Jesus paid the price for us on the cross. This shows us the bride how much He loves us.	1 Corinthians 6:20
The groom makes a speech of promise to his bride that he would come for her soon.	Jesus' speech is recorded as a promise to us His bride, that He will come again for us soon.	John 14:1
The groom prepares a place for His bride and builds a room addition on his father's house.	Jesus says He goes to prepare a place for us in His Father's house where there are many rooms.	John 14:1-3
The Father is the only one who knows the day or hour of the grooms return for his bride.	Jesus said that no one but the Father knows the day or hour of His return for us His bride.	Mark 13:32-33
The groom gives the bride love gifts (Mattan).	Jesus our groom gives us His bride gifts of love, eternal life, peace, etc.	John 10:22-28 John 14:13-14, 27
The Father gives the bride gifts (Shiluhim) to equip her for her new life, as an inheritance.	We are given gift of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts for our new life in Him	John 14:16-17 2 Cor 1:21-22 Galatians 5:22
The bride's unmarried friends (bridesmaids) attend to the bride and provide light for the groom who comes at night.	We prepare the bride by letting our light shine (oil) so the bride is ready for the groom who will come as a thief in the night.	Matthew 25:1-13
The bridegroom comes, the grooms' men run ahead and shout that he is coming.	When our bridegroom comes, it will be with a shout of the trumpet that Jesus is coming.	Rev. 4:1 1 Thes. 4:16-17 1 Cor. 15:51-52
The groom snatches away and abducts his bride.	Jesus our groom will rapture us away as He abducts us His bride.	1 Thess. 4:16-17 Luke 17:34-36
The groom takes his bride to the chamber: they consummate (Nissuin), and celebrate for seven (Shavuah) days.	Jesus will take us to His bridal chamber where we will consummate and celebrate for seven (Shavuah) years/days.	Joel 2:16 Daniel 9:27
The party waits outside until the groom tells the best man that it is consummated. Then the guests rejoice for 7 days.	During the 7 day/year celebration the world goes through the 7 year tribulation.	Revelation 19:7-8
There is a big feast (the wedding feast) after the wedding celebration.	We too, will go to the Father's house for the Marriage Feast of The Lamb.	Revelation 19:9
There were three groups present at the wedding: the groom, the bride, and the invited guests.	There will also be three groups of people involved in the marriage of the Lamb: The Groom – Jesus, The Bride–Church and the Guests – those saved after the Rapture.	2 Corinthians. 11:2, Ephesians 5:23-27 Revelation 21:9-10 Matthew 25:1-10
The new home of the bride was Jerusalem and it was the bridegroom who came to the bride to dwell with her.	It is from the new Jerusalem that the believers in the Messiah during the Messianic age, or Millennium, will reign with the Messiah.	Rev. 21:1-3 Ezekiel 43:1-2,7 Isaiah 2:2-4 Micah 4:1-5

○ Step #1 – The Betrothal

- According to Jewish law and the customs of the time, “betrothal” refers to a negotiated, contractual agreement to enter into marriage, usually made by the families of the bride and groom when they are quite young.
 - It outlines the rights and responsibilities of the groom, in relation to the bride
 - There is a New Covenant in Christ with His church (bride)
- They would then break bread and drink from the cup to seal the betrothal and new covenant.
 - Christ breaks bread and drinks from the cup at the last supper sealing His covenant.
 - Unique to Galilee – at this point, a cup is passed to the bride and she has the option to take it or reject it – it is in the full power of the bride to say yes or no – just as we have the ability to say yes or no to Christ.

- If she accepts and drinks from the cup, the answer is yes – I want to spend my life with you
- The groom then pays a price (Mohar) showing the bride his love for her.
 - This money is used to prepare for her wedding day
 - Jesus paid the price for us on the cross. This shows us the bride how much He loves us.
- Once the betrothal/new covenant is finalized, the couple is considered man and wife in all legal and religious aspects, except that of actual cohabitation.
 - In the relationship between Christ and the Church (or Christ and individual believers), the “betrothal” encompasses conversion and baptism.
- Step #2 – The Preparation
 - Once the betrothal is finalized, the groom leaves for an undetermined amount of time (usually about a year) to prepare a place for His bride
 - He builds an addition on his father’s house
 - Jesus says He goes to prepare a place for us in His Father’s house where there are many rooms.
- Step #3 – The Wedding
 - The Father is the only one who knows the day or hour of the grooms return for his bride.
 - In Galilee, after the preparations were finished, the father alone would decide when the wedding would take place
 - Jesus said that no one but the Father knows the day or hour of His return for us His bride.
 - The wedding took place in the middle of the night
 - Everyone is dressed in wedding clothes and at the ready at all time
 - The father would wake his son at the appointed time and tell him to go get his bride
 - Those who were prepared were welcome to join at the marriage supper
 - Parable of the 10 virgins
 - When the bridegroom comes, the grooms' men run ahead and shout that he is coming.
 - When our bridegroom comes, it will be with a shout of the trumpet that Jesus is coming.
 - The bride is also always at the ready – adorned in a beautiful dress, jewels and flowers:
 - “For the wedding day of the Lamb has come, his bride has made herself ready. She was allowed to wear a bright, clean linen garment” (19:7-8).
 - The bride and her friends process to the house of the bridegroom, who comes out with his friends to formally greet her, and she enters his home to applause, song and celebration.
 - In Revelation, the New Jerusalem comes “down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband” (21:2).
 - Wedding celebration
 - The groom snatches away and abducts his bride.
 - Jesus our groom will rapture us away as He abducts us His bride.
 - The groom takes his bride to the chamber: they consummate (Nissuin), and celebrate for seven (Shavuah) days.
 - Jesus will take us to His bridal chamber where we will consummate and celebrate for seven (Shavuah) years/days.
 - The marriage is consummated on the first night of the feast, and the couple lives together in their home from then on.
 - Friends, family and the entire town or village participate in the festivities.
 - In Revelation, we view consummation and life together, as we tour the new Jerusalem—our eternal home—in 21-22.
 - There is a big feast (the wedding feast) after the wedding celebration.
 - We too, will go to the Father's house for the Marriage Feast of The Lamb.
 - The new home of the bride was Jerusalem and it was the bridegroom who came to the bride to dwell with her.
 - It is from the new Jerusalem that the believers in the Messiah during the Messianic age, or Millennium, will reign with the Messiah.

The Battle of Armageddon – Vision 1

- With the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, we end the first section of Revelation's conclusion, which began when we met the Whore of Babylon in chapter 17.
- Now, we begin a series of four visions (19:11–21:8) which show how God draws human history to a close.
 - 1 – The climactic “Battle of Armageddon” on the plains of Megiddo.

Armageddon

- Rev 16¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ¹⁵ “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, [Har-Magedon] Armageddon.
- The Greek word Ἀρμαγεδών (Harmagedōn) comes from the Hebrew הַר מְגִדּוֹ
○ Har Mēgiddown, "Hill/Mount of Megiddo"
- Many OT battles took place near Megiddo:
 - “The kings came and fought; then fought the kings of Canaan at Taanach near the waters of Megiddo; they took no plunder in silver. — Judges 5:19
 - However, Josiah would not turn away (lit.: his face) from him, but disguised himself in order to make war with him; nor did he listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to make war on the plain of Megiddo. — 2 Chronicles 35:22
- Zechariah alludes to Hadadrimmon, the place in the valley of Megiddo where a national lamentation was held for the death of King Josiah
 - And in that day I will set about to (lit.: seek to) destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit (or a spirit) of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. — Zechariah 12:9–11

Christ and His Armies Arrive

Christ on a White Horse

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

- “heavens opened” (Vision 1) – Seeing the “heavens opened” signals a new vision, a depiction of Christ’s return
 - This was an event that virtually every Christian in the 2nd half of the 1st century expected would occur imminently, in their lifetime.
- White horse
 - A victorious emperor entered Rome in triumphal procession riding a white horse.
 - The white horse signals victory.
 - Jesus entered this world as a helpless infant lying in a manger in Bethlehem, and he left this world on a cross, the Lamb of God who died that we may live
 - When Jesus returns, he rides astride a white horse, a victorious warrior, waging war and bringing judgment.
- fiery flame
 - His eyes were like a “fiery flame” suggests an intense, penetrating knowledge, a razor-sharp clarity between right and wrong, virtue and sin, righteousness and judgment.
- many diadems
 - The “many diadems” are the crowns of a king who rules many nations.
 - Recall that the dragon wore seven diadems and the beast wore ten (12:3; 13:1).
- that no one knows except himself
 - He had a name “that no one knows except himself” suggests not only that he is beyond understanding, but that he has a clear, comprehensive knowledge of who he is.
 - In the Johannine world, Jesus’ self-knowledge is complete from start to finish, unlike in the synoptic gospels where Jesus’ identity and mission gradually emerge.
- dipped in blood
 - He wore a cloak “that had been dipped in blood.”
 - On first thought, the blood seems to be that of a conquering warrior returning from battle. But here the battle has not yet begun
 - Rather, the cloak “dipped in blood” recalls Jesus’ bloody death on the cross, the blood by which he conquered sin and death, the blood by which we are saved.
- name was called the “Word of God”
 - And his name was called the “Word of God” recalls the opening of John’s gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).
- armies of heaven
 - The “armies of heaven” are those who bear his name
 - Paul portrayed them in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. They are riding “white horses” and are dressed in “clean white linen.”
- sharp sword to strike down the nations
 - Out of his mouth came a “sharp sword to strike down the nations” whom he will “rule with an iron rod,” an overt allusion to Psalm 2.
 - Rev 1:16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword
 - Ps 2:7 “I will declare the decree:
The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.
8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.
9 You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ ”
- tread out in the wine press



- Acting on behalf of God, the returning Christ—as “King of kings and Lord of Lords”—will tread out in the wine press “the wine of the fury and wrath of God, the almighty.”
- Treading grapes in the wine press alludes to the conquering divine warrior of Isaiah 63: 1-4

Isaiah 63 – The Lord in Judgment and Salvation

63 Who *is* this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah,
This *One who is* glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—

“I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

² Why *is* Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

³ “I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one *was* with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury;
Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes.

⁴ For the day of vengeance *is* in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, ¹⁸ that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great.”

¹⁹ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

- Having met the returning Christ with his army of saints, we now turn to the enemy: Satan and his crew and the kings of the earth whom he had gathered on the plains of Megiddo for this final battle of Armageddon.
- The beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into the fiery pool burning with sulfur
 - ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.
 - The “fiery pool burning with sulfur” is Hell itself
 - Revelation 20:14 refers to it as the “second death,” a place of eternal punishment and suffering.
 - The beast and the false prophet are “thrown alive into the fiery pool burning with sulfur,”
 - Satan’s other forces are simply killed, their corpses devoured by the ravenous birds.
 - The fact that the Antichrist and the False Prophet are tossed in immediately, while their followers are simply killed and eaten, suggests their supernatural natures, demonic creatures from start to finish.
- The battle is over no sooner than it begins!
 - ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.
 - Antichrist's army slain by the 'sword' of the Word of God
 - Satan and his minions are no match for the returning Christ and his army of saints.
 - As with the war in heaven, Satan again suffers a stunning, humiliating defeat, his second.

- “How can I square the Jesus of the gospels, a Jesus of love and compassion, with the returning Christ of Revelation, riding a white horse and wielding “a sharp sword to strike the nations?”
 - Consider that Scripture portrays Christ in many ways:
 - through typologically in the Hebrew Scriptures, (5 great sacrifices in Leviticus)
 - through 3 different human perspectives for 3 different audiences in the synoptic gospels
 - through the later Johannine world view in John’s gospel
 - through the apocalyptic genre in Revelation.
 - Each illuminates different aspects of who Christ is and of what he did: none is comprehensive.
 - Consider, too, Christ’s role at different times in Scripture.
 - As God said in Malachi, “I, the Lord, do not change” (3:6); nor does Christ change: he simply fulfills different roles at different times in the story of redemption.
 - God— Father, Son and Holy Spirit—are present throughout Scripture, from Genesis through Revelation, but each person of the Trinity plays a different role at various times:
 - God the Father takes center stage in the Hebrew Scriptures
 - God the Son takes center stage in the gospels
 - In the gospels Jesus takes center stage as our redeemer, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” through his suffering and death on the cross. He is our teacher and our savior.
 - God the Holy Spirit takes center stage from Acts onward
 - In Revelation, Jesus returns bringing judgment on those who have adamantly and steadfastly refused God’s gift of redemption, those who have allied themselves with the infernal trinity—Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet – those who have allied themselves with the values of this world.

The Millennial Kingdom (20)

With Christ's return and his decisive victory over Satan and his minions, Christ and his saints reign for 1,000 years. He imprisons Satan during this time, but then at the end of the 1,000 years, Satan is set free to deceive the earth once more! His third defeat is final, and his punishment is swift and severe: Satan is "thrown into the pool of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were. There they [are] tormented day and night forever and ever" (20:10).

Lesson #16 presents the "millennial kingdom," Christ's 1,000 year reign. Of all the topics in Revelation, this is perhaps the most difficult to fit neatly into Revelation's overall pattern and structure. In this lesson we examine the difficulties, and we propose a solution.

Satan Bound 1,000 Years

- It would seem at this point that history has finally reached its conclusion
 - The fall of Babylon
 - Christ's triumphal return
 - Victory at Armageddon
 - Destruction of the Antichrist and the False Prophet in the lake of fire
- But Satan, though defeated, is still on the loose!
 - After the catastrophic defeat at Armageddon and the destruction of the beast and the false prophet, we can only imagine Satan on the run, a fugitive in a hidey-hole, quickly discovered, pried from beneath a slimy rock and taken into custody by an angel from heaven.
 - Here, in Revelation 20, we capture Satan, throw him into the abyss and lock and seal it over him.

Satan Bound 1,000 Years

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

...

Satanic Rebellion Crushed

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

- the ancient serpent, which is the Devil or Satan
 - "He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, which is the Devil or Satan"
 - This is the very "serpent" we first met in the Garden of Eden during his seduction of Adam and Eve, at the opening of our story
- abyss
 - The angel casts him "into the abyss," locking and sealing it over him.
 - In New Testament times, the ἄβυσσος [ah'-bus-sos]—the "abyss"—is the land of the dead, a land crawling with demonic spirits (Luke 8:31).

- Notice that Satan is locked in the abyss so that he could no longer “lead the nations astray,” [πλανᾶω, plah-nah'-o].
 - lead the nations astray
 - In 12:9, the back story of the war in heaven, that is exactly what Satan did, he “deceived [πλανᾶω] the whole world.”
 - In the prologue to the book of Job, Satan enters the court of heaven and the Lord asks, “Where have you been?” to which Satan replies, “Roaming the earth . . .” (Job 1:7).
 - And John tells us that “the whole world is under the power of the evil one” (1Jn 5:19).
 - Now, locked in the abyss, Satan’s power is limited.
 - Importantly, he is not destroyed; rather, he is imprisoned and is no longer able to exercise his power over the nations. But his presence can still be felt.
- While Satan is confined, the 1,000-year reign of Christ and his saints begins, only to end with Satan being released.
 - Once under lock and key, why in the world would God parole Satan after 1,000 years?
 - True to character, he leads his third and final assault on God, and once more he suffers defeat.
 - This time he, too, is cast into the fiery pool, never to rise again.
- Why is Satan released?
 - Satan fought God in the war in heaven, and he lost; he fought God at Armageddon, and he lost; now, he is released from prison, he will fight God again, and he will lose. God knows this, so why does he parole Satan?
 - Satan had three chances, three times to repent, three times to ask God for forgiveness.
 - After his release from the Abyss Satan can never say, “I didn’t have a chance. I’ve been treated unfairly.” He had every chance, and he blew them all.
 - Many see the release of Satan as one last chance to show humanity that they have no real excuse for rejecting the truth of God.
 - The excuse that is often used is as follows: if people only knew that God existed, then they would believe in Him. During this last rebellion of Satan, there will be no one denying God’s existence.
 - Even though people know that God exists, and that He is a loving and caring God, some will still refuse to follow Him.
 - By allowing this scenario, God will once-and-for-all show humanity that rejecting Him is not based upon the fact that we cannot see Him. Even when people know that God exists, they will still reject Him.
 - Sin is found in the human heart.
 - This shows that sin remains in the human heart apart from any influence of the Devil. Not now, and not in the future, can all evil be blamed upon Satan and his evil forces. Sin is found in the human heart.
 - Jer 17 ⁹ “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”
- 2nd War of Gog and Magog
 - Locked in his prison for 1,000 years, Satan’s power has only been diminished, not ended.
 - He has had 1,000 years to brood and to plot his revenge. It’s an obsession.
 - Satan launches another futile attack on God, again assembling the kings of the earth—who foolishly follow him. They are defeated in the blink of an eye.
 - Unbelievers still exist in the Millennial Kingdom, whom Satan gathers for a final rebellion
 - Armies surround Jerusalem, and are devoured by fire from heaven
 - He gathers the nations “for battle.”
 - The Greek is εἰς τὸν πόλεμον, “for the battle,” the definite article emphasizing its finality.
 - Once again John invokes Ezekiel, alluding to Ezekiel 38-39, where Gog, king of Magog, attacks Israel and God hurls fire down upon them, destroying Gog’s army in a flash, feeding their corpses to the birds of the air.
- Satan thrown into Gehenna
 - He got what he deserves, roasting in the fires of Hell for all eternity. Good riddance!
 - Perhaps. But here’s an intriguing thought. If God is love, how could he condemn anyone— even Satan—to eternal punishment, with no possibility of redemption?

- Origen (c. 184-253) is the first one to plant this seed of “universal salvation,” including that of Satan: “The destruction of the last enemy . . . is to be understood, not as if its substance, which was formed by God, is to perish, but because its mind and hostile will, which came not from God, but from itself, are to be destroyed. Its destruction, therefore, will not be its non-existence, but its ceasing to be an enemy . . .”
- That’s an interesting argument . . . but it’s one that got Origen condemned at the 2nd Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553 and that earned the scorn of both Jerome and Augustine.
- Yet, the argument persisted, reaching full bloom with the Cambridge Platonists of the 17th century who argued that if God’s power “is nothing but his goodness strongly reaching all things, from height to depth, from the highest heaven to the lowest hell,” if God is to become “all in all,” as the Cambridge Platonists believed, then Satan must be included.
- This line of thinking influenced many 17th and 18th-century philosophers and theologians, including Barrow and Boyle, Tillotson and Locke, Ray and Shaftesbury, Leibniz and Newton, Berkeley and Kant.
- But the opposite view won the day. John Donne (1572-1631), poet, theologian and Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, stated emphatically that “when the Angels were made, and when they fell, we dispute; but when they shall return, falls not into question” (Sermons, 5, 86).
- Today, the Roman Catholic Church affirms John Donne’s position: “It is the irrevocable character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels’ sin unforgivable. There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death.” Catechism of the Catholic Church, 393.

Millennial Kingdom

The Saints Reign with Christ 1,000 Years

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

- While Satan is confined, the 1,000-year reign of Christ and his saints takes place
- What is the 1000 years all about?
 - Literal
 - Some readers understand the 1,000 years to be a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth in a future physical “Millennial Kingdom”
 - 7 – Number of completion
 - There has been 6000 years of the earth thus far – 1000 years brings us to completion/perfection
 - Figurative
 - The 1,000 years could be understood as a figurative number for “a long time”
 - “a thousand years in your eyes are merely a day gone by” (Psalm 90:4).
 - We have seen this symbolic or figurative use of numbers throughout Scripture, with its numerous sets of 3s, 7s, 12s and 40s.
 - See discussion in [Millennial Kingdom](#)
- In heaven John sees thrones, perhaps those of the twenty-four elders who are seated around the throne of God.
 - With them are the martyrs and all those who had not gone over to the beast.
 - We met the martyrs when the fifth seal was opened, “the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the witness they bore to the word of God” (6:9),
 - We met the 144,000 “who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads” (14:1),

- The martyrs and those who had not gone over to the beast are resurrected and they reign with Christ for 1,000 years. They are entrusted with judgment.
 - The scene recalls many others from ancient literature where the son of a king, with his loyal band of followers, engages the enemy in battle, defeats the evil king and his forces, and returns home triumphant, where he reigns, surrounded by his father's loyal inner circle of advisors, with his wartime "band of brothers" as his friends and companions.
- "1st resurrection"
 - Those with him in the first resurrection need not fear the "second death" the pool of fire. Their position in heaven is secure.
- "2nd resurrection"
 - Those who are not his "friends" will be resurrected after the 1,000 years are over for the Great Throne Judgement

Guillotine - EXECUTION BY GUILLOTINE LEGAL UNDER OBAMACARE

CODE ICD 9 E 978 MAKES EXECUTION BY GUILLOTINE LEGAL UNDER OBAMACARE

Revelation 20:4 Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

30,000 guillotines, 800 fema camps, Obamacare Code ICD9E978 Execution by Guillotine

ICD 9 E 978 "Legal Execution"

All executions performed at the behest of the judiciary or ruling authority [whether permanent or temporary] as: asphyxiation by gas beheading, decapitation (by guillotine) capital punishment electrocution hanging poisoning shooting other specified means

HB 1274 – Authorizes the state of Georgia to execute citizens by guillotine:

Georgia House of Representatives

1995/1996 Sessions

HB 1274 — Death penalty; guillotine provisions Code Sections

17-10-38/ 17-10-44 A Bill To Be Entitled An Act

1- 1 To amend Article 2 of Chapter 10 of Title 17 of the Official
 1- 2 Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the death penalty
 1- 3 generally, so as to provide a statement of legislative
 1- 4 policy; to provide for death by guillotine; to provide for
 1- 5 applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
 1- 6 purposes.

SECTION 1.

1- 8 The General Assembly finds that while prisoners condemned to
 1- 9 death may wish to donate one or more of their organs for
 1-10 transplant, any such desire is thwarted by the fact that
 1-11 electrocution makes all such organs unsuitable for
 1-12 transplant. The intent of the General Assembly in enacting
 1-13 this legislation is to provide for a method of execution
 1-14 which is compatible with the donation of organs by a
 1-15 condemned prisoner.

SECTION 2.

1-16 Article 2 of Chapter 10 of Title 17 of the Official Code of
 1-17 Georgia Annotated, relating to the death penalty generally,
 1-18 is amended by striking in its entirety Code Section

1-19 17-10-38, relating to death sentences generally, and

1-20 inserting in lieu thereof the following:

1-21 “17-10-38. (Index)

1-22 (a) All persons who have been convicted of a capital

1-23 offense and have had imposed upon them a sentence of death

1-24 shall, at the election of the condemned, suffer such

1-25 punishment either by electrocution or by guillotine. If

1-26 the condemned fails to make an election by the thirtieth

1-27 day preceding the date scheduled for execution, punishment

1-28 shall be by electrocution.

1-29 (b) In all cases in which the defendant is sentenced to be

1-30 electrocuted executed, it shall be the duty of the trial

1-31 judge in passing sentence to direct that the defendant be

-1- (Index)

LC 21 3643

2- 1 delivered to the Department of Corrections for

2- 2 electrocution execution at a state correctional

2- 3 institution designated by the department.”

SECTION 3.

2- 4 Said article is further amended by striking in its entirety

2- 5 Code Section 17-10-44, relating to death chamber apparatus

2- 6 and related matters, and inserting in lieu thereof the

2- 7 following:

2- 8 “17-10-44. (Index)

2- 9 The Department of Corrections shall provide a death

2-10 chamber and all necessary apparatus, machinery, and

2-11 appliances for inflicting the penalty of death by

2-12 electrocution or by guillotine.”

Great White Throne Judgment – Vision 2

See much larger discussion: [Great White Throne Judgement - Final judgment for unbelievers](#)

The Great White Throne Judgment

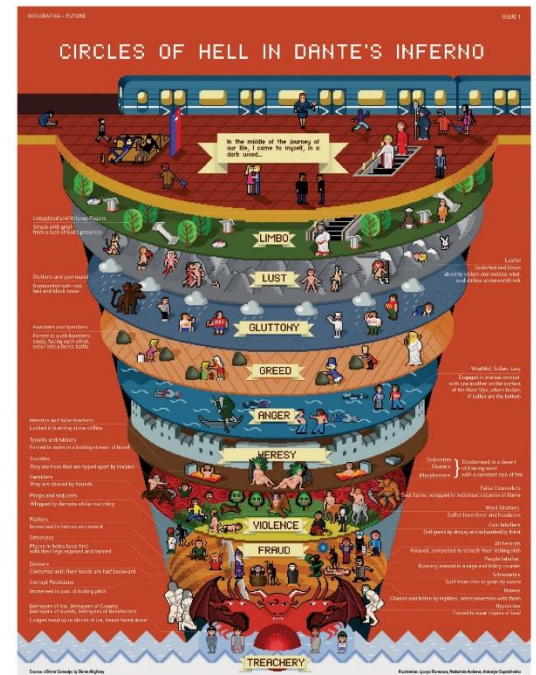
¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

- “a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it.”
 - Describing it as μέγας [me’-gahs, “large” or “great”] and λευκός [lyi-kos’, “white”] distinguishes this throne from the ones belonging to the twenty-four elders.
 - We are not told who is sitting on the throne, which appears to be God’s throne, but we might rightly infer that it is Jesus:

- Jn 5 ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. ²² For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.
- The Book of Life and other books are opened.
 - Notice that now ALL the dead are raised:
 - 1) the martyrs and those who bore the names of God and the Lamb who were raised in 20:4 and have reigned with Christ as his companions during the 1,000-year “Millennial Kingdom”
 - Their names written in βιβλίον [“book” singular], the “book of life.”]
 - 2) those who are raised now, those allied with Satan and his crew who bore the number 666.
 - Their names written in βιβλία [bee-blee’-a, “books” plural]
 - This suggests there are far more names written the “books” than there are in the singular “book of life,” recalling Jesus saying:
Mt 7 ¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.
 - Right now all of your names, all who are hearing my voice right now – your names are written in The Book of Life. But not all of you have your name written in The Lambs Book of Life
 - The issue is this - having been born into this world, into this life that God has given you, makes it your responsibility to call upon His son for the forgiveness of sins so that you may be born again.
 - The moment you are born again, born a second time God takes your name that is in The Book of Life and he copies it over to The Lambs Book of Life. All those whose names appear in The Lambs Book of Life are those who have been born again by the power of God, their names are secured in The Book of Life. These two books bear testimony of your salvation your conversion your new life in Christ.
 - But tragically those whose names are blotted out of The Book of Life, whose names are not found there on the day of judgment, is because their names never made it into The Lambs Book of Life, they never accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior nor were they ever Born Again and thus their name’s removed.
- We are approaching the “Last Judgment” scene in Revelation, but notice that the names are already inscribed in the two sets of books, the “Book of Life” and the “other books.” So, how do the names get there in the first place?
 - Being in the “Book of Life” or being in the “other books”—that is, being among the redeemed or being among the lost—is not a matter of God’s judgment, not a matter of reward or punishment; it is a matter of our individual choice in this life.
 - If we choose to respond to God’s grace through faith in his Son, then our sins are forgiven and we move from the world into the family of God, the Church.
 - Conversely, if we refuse God’s gift of grace, and if we adamantly and steadfastly refuse his freely-given gift of redemption, then we remain in the world, outside the family of God.
 - As John tells us in his gospel: “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.” (3:36)
- The Last Judgment doesn’t determine whether you are in heaven or hell, for you have already decided that
 - Rather, it determines your position in heaven or hell.

- Dante illustrates the concept best in his Divine Comedy.
- 14th Century – Dante’s Divine Comedy – This concept of Hades (or what is later called Hell) reaches its fullest development in the 14th century with Dante’s Divine Comedy, and his 33-Canto portrayal of the Inferno, a descent by Dante and Virgil through the nine circles of Hell, each circle reserved for particular categories of sinners. Dante’s hell (the Inferno) consists of nine concentric circles, each one deeper within the bowels of the earth, and each one residence for those whose lives are defined by increasingly serious sins:

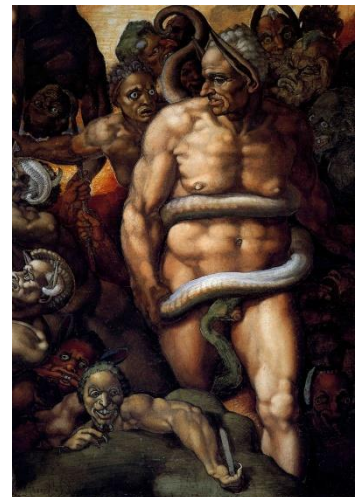
1. Limbo (the abode of virtuous pagans)
2. Lust
3. Gluttony
4. Greed
5. Wrath
6. Heresy
7. Violence
8. Fraud
9. Treachery



- Resurrection and judgement of all unbelievers, who are thrown into Gehenna
 - Demons in Tartarus thrown into Gehenna
 - This is the “time” that the demons that Jesus cast out were referring to
 - Matthew 8:29 And they [the demons] cried out, saying, “What business do we have with each other (lit.: What is to us and to you, a Hebrew idiom), Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time [of judgement]?”

Michelangelo's "The Last Judgment"

- Of course, we'd be remiss if we closed this lesson without seeing Michelangelo's "The Last Judgment" fresco on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City.
- Commissioned by Pope Clement VII in 1534, the original subject was to be the resurrection, but with the Pope's death, his successor, Pope Paul III, requested a "Last Judgment" scene.
- Michelangelo spent much of 1535 preparing the wall, and he completed the work in four years, 1536-1541.
- The fresco was not well received. The Pope's Master of Ceremonies, Biagio da Cesena, complained that "it was mostly disgraceful that in so sacred a place there should have been depicted all those nude figures, exposing themselves so shamefully," observing that it was more fit "for the public baths and taverns" than for the papal chapel. Michelangelo responded by including Cesena's face on the figure of Minos, judge of the underworld, wearing asses ears, with a snake coiled about him biting his penis. When Cesena complained, the Pope laughingly replied that his jurisdiction did not extend into hell!



The New Heaven and Earth (21-22:5)

With the final judgment, the sad, sorry story of humanity on earth ends. In Lesson #19 we witness a new heaven and a new earth, for “the former heaven and the former earth had passed away” (21:1). The linear narrative across the Christian canon of Scripture comes full circle as the new Jerusalem descends “out of heaven from God” (21:2). We are in a new Eden, a place where God dwells with us, where we are his people and he is our God.

The recorded history of man is at its end. All of the ages have come and gone.

- Christ has gathered His church in the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17).
- The Tribulation has passed (Revelation 6—18).
- The battle of Armageddon has been fought and won by our Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:17–21).
- Satan has been chained for the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth (Revelation 20:1–3).
- A new, glorious temple has been established in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 40—48).
- The final rebellion against God has been quashed, and Satan has received his just punishment, an eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:7–10.)
- The Great White Throne Judgment has taken place, and mankind has been judged (Revelation 20:11–15).

With the conflict of sin fully resolved and “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” a memory, our linear narrative doubles back on itself: Revelation 20-22 bring us back to a new beginning. Revelation 21 takes us on a tour of our eternal home.

All Things Made New

In Revelation 21, God does a complete make-over of heaven and earth. The new heaven and new earth are what some call the “eternal state” and will be “where righteousness dwells”.

- Rev 21 ¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.
- Is 65 ¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
- 2Pe 3 ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells

All Things Made New

21 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

- Isaiah also told us about the new creation

Is 65 – The Glorious New Creation

¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;
 For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, And her people a joy.
¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people;
 The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.
²⁰ “No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
 For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed.
²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit *them*; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
²² They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat;
 For as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the days of My people,
 And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
²³ They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble;
 For they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them.
²⁴ “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.
²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
 And dust *shall be* the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,”

- From Genesis through Revelation, the trajectory of Scripture has led us to this very place, this new Eden, where sin and death no longer exist, a place of eternal life and blessedness, as God intended it.
- Curse from Genesis lifted
 - On this new earth God will dwell with us [**σκηνόω**, skae-no’-oh, literally “tent with us”], as he dwelt with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, strolling with them “at the breezy me of the day” (Genesis 3:8), enjoying their company.
 - Rev 21 ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”
 - Rev 22 ¹ And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads. ⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.
- As Christians we rightly understand that if we have responded to God’s freely-given grace and placed our faith in his son, Jesus, who died that our sins may be forgiven, then when we die we will leave our bodies buried in the earth and be with Christ in heaven as spiritual beings.
 - 2Co 5 ⁶ So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.
 - That is only temporary, however!
 - Revelation tells us that our ultimate destination is not in heaven, but on a physically recreated earth, a place where we will live eternally in newly resurrected, physical bodies, perfectly designed for our eternal home.

- **New Heaven and New Earth**
 - **Rev 21 ¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.**
 - Notice that this is not simply a transformed heaven and earth, but “a new heaven and a new earth,” for “the former heaven and earth had passed away.”
 - **2Pe 3 ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**
 - We witnessed this total destruction of the earth with Revelation’s 3 sets of 7 seals, trumpets & bowls
 - **Is 65 ¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. (lit.: heart).**
- **Completion**
 - **Rev 21 ⁶ And He said to me, “It is done!**
 - As Jesus expired on the cross he said, **τετέλεσται**, “It is finished” (John 19:30)
 - The Greek in John 19: 30 is **τελέω** [te-le’-oh], meaning that the end goal has been achieved.
 - We get the English word “telescope” – what is in the distance is brought before our eyes.
 - When the 7th angel poured out the 7th bowl, a voice from the throne said, **γέγονεν**, “It is done” (16:17)
 - Now that the wedding of the Lamb is about to take place, the voice from the throne says to John, **γέγοναν**, “They are accomplished” (21:6).
 - The Greek in Revelation 16:17 and 21:6 is **γίνομαι** [gee’-no-my], meaning that the final step in a sequence of events has been completed.
 - In the first instance, Jesus looks ahead on the cross, knowing that his death ensures the future outcome; in the last instances, the future outcome has been achieved.
 - John’s precise diction—his word choice—is very deliberate and once again, brilliantly precise!
- Jesus is the **A and Ω**, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.
 - **Rev 21 ⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.**
 - As the first and last letters of the alphabet encompass all the letters in between, Jesus is “all that can be said.”
- **Rev 21 ⁶ ... I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.**
 - To the thirsty, Jesus will give “life-giving water”
 - Literally **δώσω ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς ὕδατος τῆς ζωῆς**, “will give out of the spring of the water of life”
 - Placing “will give” [**δώσω**] in the forward position emphasizes the fact that the “water of life” is a freely given gift.
- **Rev 21 ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.**
 - The **νικάω** [nee-kah’-o, the “victor”] will inherit these things.
 - Recall John’s use of the same word in the letters to the seven churches: the “victor” will inherit the blessings.
 - And then we read something truly astounding! Not only will the Church become the bride of the Lamb, but each of us in the Church will become an adopted son or a daughter of God!
 - Jesus called us his “friends” in John’s gospel; here he calls us his “brothers.”
- **Rev 21 ⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”**
 - That is not to say that committing acts of cowardice [**δειλός**, day-lo’s], unfaithfulness [**ἄπιστος**, ah’-pee-stos], depravity [**βδελύσσο**, bde-loo’s-so], murder [**φονεύς**, fo-nyu’s] and deception [**ψευδής**, psyu-day’s] guarantee a place in the “burning pool of fire and sulfur.”
 - Those are all sins that God may forgive, if one turns to Christ in faith.

- Rather, *rejecting* Christ and living a life apart from God, a life that leads to such acts, is what places one on the path to hell.
- A person who genuinely responds to God's grace and accepts his gift of redemption, will strive to "live in a manner worthy of the call" he has received (Ephesians 4:1).
 - Although such a person may sometimes slip up and sin, sin will not characterize his life; it will not be the dominant color, tone and texture of his moral and ethical landscape.

New Jerusalem

The New Jerusalem, which is also called the Tabernacle of God, the Holy City, the City of God, the Celestial City, the City Foursquare, and Heavenly Jerusalem, is literally heaven on earth.

The New Jerusalem

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵ And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷ Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. ¹⁸ The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city *was* pure gold, like transparent glass.

- Isaiah also told us about the new Jerusalem
 - Is 65 ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, And her people a joy.
¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.
- It is referred to in the Bible in several places in the New Testament
 - Gal 4 For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— ²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. ²⁷ For it is written: “Rejoice, O barren, *You* who do not bear! Break forth and shout, *You* who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband.”
 - Heb 11 ⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.
 - Heb 12 ²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the ^[1]general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel.
 - Heb 13 ¹⁴ For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. ¹⁵ Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, ^[d]giving thanks to His name. ¹⁶ But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

It is most fully described in Revelation 21.

- After the re-creation, God reveals the New Jerusalem.
 - John sees a glimpse of it in his vision: “The Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).
 - This is the city that Abraham looked for in faith (Hebrews 11:10).

- It is the place where God will dwell with His people forever (Revelation 21:3).
- Inhabitants of this celestial city will have all tears wiped away (Revelation 21:4).
- New Jerusalem comes down to Earth
 - Rev 21 ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.
 - Rev 21 ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light (lit.: luminary) *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Spiritual New Jerusalem

- As John sees the new earth descending, he sees within it the new Jerusalem “coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (21:2).
 - The “Hallelujah Chorus” of Revelation 19 proclaimed “the wedding day of the Lamb” and we learned there that the “bride has made herself ready” (19:7).
 - Now that Christ has defeated the enemy and rescued his beloved [the Church] from Satan’s clutches, the royal wedding can proceed
- New Jerusalem is the bride, the wife of the Lamb, Jesus Christ
- John sees the new Jerusalem—the bride of the Lamb—coming down out of heaven, stunning in her radiance.
 - Rev 21 ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ... ⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. ¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
- This is a very important statement in Revelation 21. It declares that New Jerusalem is not a just a physical city but also a corporate living person! New Jerusalem is God’s kingdom built up.
 - New Jerusalem is a bride/wife – shows it is a corporate person as the consummation of the church as the Body of Christ, the one new man, and the wife
 - Ep 2 ¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.
- In Ephesians 5 the church is described in the human context of husband and wife. This church will be the glorious bride, New Jerusalem, which Christ will present to Himself.

Ep 5 ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

 - “Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her” through His death to redeem her
 - He is now sanctifying her to match the purity of New Jerusalem, “cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,”

- at His second coming He will “present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.”
- **Rev 21 ¹¹ Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.**
 - Fittingly, the Greek word for “jasper” is Ἱάσπης, [ee’-ah-spes], is a feminine noun.
 - Today jasper refers to an opaque quartz, but in ancient times it was typically a translucent green, often compared to an emerald.
 - In the epic poem, *The Nibelungenlied*, made famous by Richard Wagner’s 19th century opera cycle, the warrior Hagen “across his knee did lay / A sword that shown full brightly, / from whose knob did play / the light of glancing jasper / greener than blade of grass” (29th Adventure —“How He Arose Not before Her,” 1783).

Physical New Jerusalem

- The city will be dazzling in every way.

Huge!

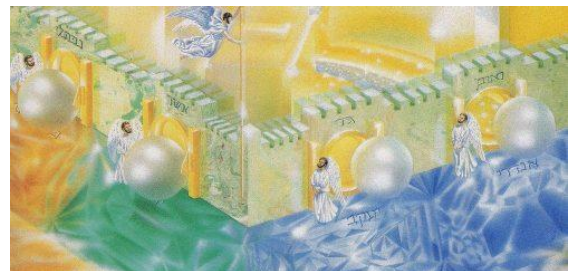
The New Jerusalem will be fantastically huge.

- **Rev 21 ¹⁵ And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷ Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.**
- The actual measurement is σταδίων δώδεκα χιλιάδων, “twelve thousand stadia,”
 - Recalling the 144,000 (12,000 x 12), the number of God’s people who bear his name.
 - These measurements are meant to be literal since they are described as man’s measurements (Rev. 21:17).
- 1,400-1,500 miles long, wide and high—a perfect cube
 - The ESV and NIV versions say it is 12,000 stadia in length and width – Stadia is 607 feet. This translates to 1,400 miles, which is what the NLT Bible says.
 - The KJV and other versions say 12,000 furlongs – Furlong is 660 feet – Translates to 1,500 miles.
- Huge
 - This is the same distance from Maine to Florida
 - The square footage would approximate the size of the moon.
 - Regardless of whether the city is 1,400 miles or 1,500 miles in length and width, it is shaped like a square at the base. This means New Jerusalem is larger than India with nearly 2 million square miles.
 - More astounding than the size at the base is the height that is also at least 1,400 miles (Rev. 21:16).
 - This goes well beyond Earth’s atmosphere and into space. If a building in the city is this high and has a generous 12 feet per story, the building would be over 600,000 stories!
- The only other perfect cube in Scripture is the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle that Moses and the people built in Exodus.
 - It measured 10 cubits x 10 cubits x 10 cubits (or 15 feet x 15 feet x 15 feet).
 - The Tabernacle that Moses built was an exact replica of the genuine Tabernacle, which is in heaven (Hebrews 8:1-6).
 - The Holy of Holies contained the Ark of the Covenant, and it was the dwelling place of God on earth.
 - Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and only one time each year on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.
 - In Revelation, the New Jerusalem is the new Holy of Holies.
 - As God’s redeemed sons & daughters, we are invited into his home to live with him forever!



Walls/Foundations

- Rev 21 ¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates ...¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ...¹⁷ Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. ¹⁸ The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
- Great and high wall – 216 feet high, made of jasper
 - 144 cubits = 216 feet
 - The angel's measurement reveals that the city's great, high wall rises to a height of 144 cubits (about 216 feet), which is impressive enough for an ordinary city, but ridiculously small for a city 1500 miles high!
 - Consequently the NIV renders the measurement as 144 cubits thick
 - This is unlikely because
 - (1) the first mention of the wall (v. 10) called attention to its great height, not its strength or thickness
 - (2) the wall is not built for protection or to keep people out, for its gates are always open (v. 25).
 - Moreover, the word "thick" is not in the text, which says simply "144 cubits."
 - The correct interpretation is "144 cubits high"
 - The 144 cubits perfectly mirror the 144,000 stadia
 - By comparison:
 - The Great Wall of China, although measuring 13,170 miles in length, stands only about 25 feet in height
 - The fortified walls of ancient Dan rose to about 30 feet in height
 - In 1535, Sultan Suleiman I rebuilt the defensive walls around Jerusalem with an average height of around 40 feet.
- 12 foundations bearing the names of the 12 apostles
 - Rev 21 ¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
 - The wall of the new Jerusalem has twelve θεμέλιος [the-mee'-lee-os], "foundation stones," and on each is the name of one of the twelve Apostles.
 - Presumably, Judas is not one of them, but we're not told whether Matthias or Paul is the 12th
- 12 foundations are "decorated with every kind of precious stone"
 - Rev 21 ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.
 - Precious Stones



Jasper	ἵασπις	[ee'-ah-spees]
Sapphire	σάπφειρος	[sahp'-fee-ros]
Chalcedony	χαλκηδών	[khal-kay-don']
Emerald	σμάραγδος	[smah'-rahg-dos]
Sardonyx	σαρδόνυξ	[sahr-doh'-nuks]
Carnelian	σάρδιον	[sahr'-dee-on]
Chrysolite	χρυσόλιθος	[khru-so'-lee-thos]
Beryl	βήρυλλος	[bay'-rul-los]
Topaz	τοπάζιον	[toe-pah'-zee-on]
Chrysoprase	χρυσόπρασος	[khroo-so'-prah-sos]
Hyacinth	ὑάκινθος	[hu-a'-keen-thos]
Amethyst	ἀμέθυστος	[ah-meh'-thoo-stos]

- These are the very stones worn on the breast piece of the high priest, each one symbolizing one of the twelve tribes of Israel!

Ex 28 ¹⁷ And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: *The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row;* ¹⁸ the second row *shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond;* ¹⁹ the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ²⁰ and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. ²¹ And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, *like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes.*

- As the high priest wore the breast piece with 12 jewels over his heart, so does God imbed the 12 jewels in the very foundation of the new Jerusalem, our home.



Gates

- The final chapters of Ezekiel (40-48) describe a new Jerusalem with twelve gates, named after the twelve tribes of Israel
 - Ez 48 – The Gates of the City and Its Name – ³⁰“These *are* the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits* ³¹ (the gates of the city *shall be* named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; ³² on the east side, four thousand five hundred *cubits*, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; ³³ on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits*, three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; ³⁴ on the west side, four thousand five hundred *cubits* with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. ³⁵ All the way around *shall be* eighteen thousand *cubits*; and the name of the city from *that day shall be*: THE LORD IS THERE.”
 - North Side: Ruben, Judah, Levi
 - East Side: Joseph, Benjamin, Dan
 - South Side: Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun
 - West Side: Gad, Asher, Naphtali
- Each gate was a single pearl, bearing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel
 - Rev 21 ¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel ... ²¹ The twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl.
 - Hence the ‘pearly gates’
- There was an angel guarding each gate
 - Rev 21 ¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates



The Glory of the New Jerusalem

²² But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The River of Life

²² ¹ And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads. ⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

- The New Jerusalem will be a place of unimagined blessing.
 - The curse of the old earth will be gone
 - Rev 22 ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.
 - In the city are the tree of life “for the healing of the nations” and the river of life
 - Rev 22 ¹ And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.
 - It is the place that Paul spoke of: “In the coming ages [God] might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus”
 - Ep 2 ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
 - The New Jerusalem is the ultimate fulfillment of all God's promises. The New Jerusalem is God's goodness made fully manifest.
- Residents of the New Jerusalem
 - The Father and the Lamb are there (Revelation 21:22).
 - Angels are at the gates (Revelation 21:12).
 - The city will be filled with God's redeemed children
 - Believers who were alive at the beginning of the Millennium or were born during the Millennium given new physical bodies (most likely)
- In the new heavens and new earth, Scripture says, there are seven things notable for their absence—seven things that are “no more”:
 - no more sea (Revelation 21:1)
 - no more death (Revelation 21:4)
 - no more mourning (Revelation 21:4)
 - no more weeping (Revelation 21:4)
 - no more pain (Revelation 21:4)
 - no more curse (Revelation 22:3)

- no more night (Revelation 22:5)
- No need for sunlight or moonlight
 - It is lighted by the glory of God
 - Rev 21 ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.
 - Rev 22 ⁵ They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light.
 - Their presence permeates the city, as light permeates darkness.
 - In the new Jerusalem Jesus is, indeed, “the light of the world” (John 8:12)
 - In Jesus, “there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).
 - In Christ, the light has triumphed.
- No night
 - Rev 21 ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).
 - Rev 22 ⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no (lit.: do not have) lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light.
- No temple – God and the Lamb are its temple
 - Rev 21 ²² But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
 - There is no need for a temple in the new Jerusalem, for the golden, bejeweled city is not only a temple itself, but the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God and of the Lamb.
- No death, mourning, crying, pain, etc.
 - Rev 21 ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”
- The street will be made of pure gold
 - Rev 21 ²¹ ...And the street of the city *was* pure gold, like transparent glass.
- River of life-giving water
 - John’s vision of the “river of life-giving water” weaves threads of Scripture together, creating an intricate pattern of colors and textures. As we noted, Revelation brings Scripture’s linear narrative full circle, and this is a beautiful example of how it’s done.
 - Garden of Eden
 - Ge 2 ⁸ The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.
 - Ezekiel’s vision of a future Millennial temple
 - Ez 47 The Healing Waters and Trees – ¹ Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. ² He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. ³ And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my ankles*. ⁴ Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my knees*. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up to my waist*. ⁵ Again he measured one thousand, *and it was* a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. ⁶ He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen *this*?” Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. ⁷ When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, *were* very many trees on

one side and the other. ⁸ Then he said to me: “This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. *When it* reaches the sea, *its* waters are healed. ⁹ And it shall be *that* every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. ¹⁰ It shall be *that* fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be *places* for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. ¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. ¹² Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.”

- In John’s vision the “tree of life” flourishes on both sides of the river, as well.
- In the new Jerusalem we witness the complete healing of body, mind and soul, life eternal as God intended it to be from the start.

Epilogue (22)

In the Epilogue we want to keep a close watch on who is speaking, lest we lose track of the narrative and get tangled in a verbal thicket!

The Time Is Near

⁶ Then he said to me, “These words *are* faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

⁷ “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

⁸ Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

⁹ Then he said to me, “See *that you do not do that*. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” ¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. ¹¹ He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

Jesus Testifies to the Churches

¹² “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last.”

¹⁴ Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

A Warning

¹⁸ For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

I Am Coming Quickly

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.”

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Epilogue mirrors the Prologue

We draw Revelation to a close with an Epilogue (22:6-21) that mirrors the opening Prologue (1:1-3) – forming an inclusion to bracket the main body of our text.

- Recall how we began Revelation with a short, 3-part Prologue:

Rev 1 ¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. ³ Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.

- The opening word of the Prologue is ἀποκάλυψις [ah-po-kah'-lip-ses], literally the “unveiling” or “revealing” of a message that God gave to his Son, Jesus Christ, to show us, his “servants” [δούλος, do'-loss], what must take place “soon” [τάχος, ta'-khos].
- In this opening verse we learn three things:
 - a message will be “revealed”
 - the source of the message is God
 - the audience is John and his readers, including us
- We also learn that the “prophetic message,” or literally “words of the prophecy” [λόγους τῆς προφητείας], are to be read aloud, acknowledging the means by which John’s “Revelation” will be delivered.
 - Recall that the visions given to John will be delivered to the seven churches—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea—along with a “cover letter” to each church, and the whole will then be read aloud to the congregation.
- In addition, we learn that both those who read the words and those who hear them will be “blessed” [μακάριος, mah-kah'-ree- os]. There are 7 “blessings” in Revelation
 - Rev 1 ³ Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.
 - Rev 14 ¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ”
 - Rev 16 ¹⁵ “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”
 - Rev 19 ⁹ Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”
 - Rev 20 ⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.
 - Rev 22 ⁷ “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”
 - Rev 22 ¹⁴ Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.
- Rev 22 ⁷ “Behold, I am coming quickly!
 - Quickly - τάχει [tachei, ta'-khos]
 - Same word that we get tachometer from
 - Jesus is coming when things are getting ‘revved up’
- Finally, we learn that those who read and listen must also “heed” [τηρέω, tay-ray'-o] what the prophecy says, for “the appointed time is near” [γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς].
- As Revelation began with a 3-part Prologue, so it ends with a 3-part Epilogue that reiterates and amplifies the Prologue, stressing the urgency of John’s message:

Rev 1 ¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. ³ Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.

Rev 22⁶ Then he said to me, “These words *are* faithful and true.” And the Lord **God** of the holy prophets **sent His angel** to **show His servants** the things which must **shortly take place**.⁷ “Behold, I am coming quickly! **Blessed** is he who keeps the **words of the prophecy** of this book.”⁸ Now I, **John**, saw and heard these things.

- Not only does the first part of the Epilogue mirror and amplify the message of the 3-part Prologue, but notice that in the Epilogue three voices speak:
 - John (a): “And he said to me,
 - Angel: ‘These words are trustworthy and true and the Lord, the God of prophetic spirits, sent his angel to show his servants what must happen soon.’
 - Christ: ‘Behold, I am coming soon.’ Blessed is the one who keeps the prophetic message of this book.
 - John (b): It is I, John, who heard and saw these things . . .”

Life will continue

Now, look closely as we continue examining the Epilogue, paying close attention to the voices:

[John] ⁸ Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me,

[Angel] “See *that you do not do that*. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

- John is so overwhelmed by what the angel says that he falls down to worship the messenger.
- Recall that John made that same mistake earlier in his vision of the fall of Babylon
 - Rev 19 ⁹ Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

[Angel] ¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. ¹¹ He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

- Recall when we first encountered the “words of prophecy” in Daniel’s scroll.
 - Dan 12 ⁴ “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”
- Daniel did, and when the end time came, we saw the Lamb open the scroll’s seven seals in Revelation 6.
- Now that its contents are “unveiled,” the scroll is to remain opened.
- John and his readers—including us—are living in the “end times,” the “Age of the Church.”
 - Through his death and resurrection, Christ has redeemed us on the cross, “purchasing for God those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation” (5:5,9)
 - He has defeated Satan, sin and death
 - He is enthroned in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father
 - He is directing history toward its just conclusion.
 - Although we may be walking around on this earth still, a great number of believers— perhaps the vast majority—are already with Christ in heaven, awaiting resurrection and life eternal in the new Jerusalem
- ¹¹ He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”
 - So, until Christ’s return:
 - let the wicked [**ἀδικέω**, ah-dee-ke’-o] still act wickedly

- let the filthy [ῥυπαρός, rhu-pah-ro's] still be filthy
- the righteous [δίκαιος, dee'-ky-os] must still do right
- the holy [ἅγιος, hah'-gee-os] must still be holy
- In other words, life will go on as it always has.
 - But as Paul said: **2Co 1¹** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, for we know to whom we belong.

Judgement in the end

[Christ] ¹²“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*, the First and the Last.”

- Now Christ reenters the narrative, reemphasizing the imminence of his return and the certainty of his “recompense.”
 - The Greek word for recompense is μισθός [mees-tho's] – the natural consequence of one's actions, either positive and negative – “to each according to his deeds”
 - Rev 20 ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.
- He stresses, too, that he is the alpha and the omega, the first and the last
 - Rev 1 ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.
 - Rev 2 ⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:
 - Rev 21 ⁶ And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

[Angel] ¹⁴Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

- The angel continues speaking, pronouncing the last of seven blessings: ¹⁴Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.
 - The righteous—those who have chosen Christ
 - Have the right [ἐξουσία, eks-oo- see'-ah, “the power of choice”] to the “tree of life,” and they have the right to enter the new Jerusalem through its gates, for they are citizens of the holy city.
- Conversely, ¹⁵ But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.
 - Rev 21 ⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”
 - The unrighteous—those who have rejected Christ and followed their own desires
 - Are outside [ἔξω, ek-so']
 - They are the dogs [κύων, koo-on'] – always a negative term in the Middle East, then and now
 - sorcerers [φάρμακος, fahr'-mah-kos]
 - From the etymology we get pharmakia – pharmacy, drug dealers
 - sexually immoral, unchaste [πόρνος, po'r-nos]
 - From the etymology we get porneia – pornography – describes all matters of sexual sin
 - murderers [φονεύς, fo-nyoo's]
 - idol-worshippers [εἰδωλολάτρης, ay-doh-lo- lah'-tras]
 - deceivers [ψεύδος, psyoo'-dos]

Jesus is the Way

[Christ] ¹⁶“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

- Jesus speaks again, echoing the Prologue
 - Rev 1 ¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.
 - Confirming that it was he who sent his angel to “give you this testimony for the churches”
 - The “you” is grammatically plural [ὑμῖν], referring to John and his audience (including us)
 - The “churches,” of course, are the seven churches to whom John writes in chapters 2-3.
- “I am the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star”
 - Confirms Jesus’ identity as the promised Messiah
 - It recalls as well Jesus’ seven “I am” statements in John’s gospel:
 - I am the bread of life (6:48)
 - I am the light of the world (8:12)
 - I am the door (10:9)
 - I am the good shepherd (10:11)
 - I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
 - I am the way, the truth and the life (14:6)
 - I am the true vine (15:1)

[Holy Spirit] ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

- The Holy Spirit – the engine driving the Church since arriving on the Jewish feast of Pentecost A.D. 32 (Acts 2) – now enters the narrative.
- Come!
 - Speaking on behalf of the “bride” (the Church) he says: “Come”
 - Then he urges John’s audience to extend the invitation: “Come”
 - And finally he urges directly those who want the “life-giving water” to “Come”
- God’s invitation extends to all of humanity
 - 1Ti 2 ¹Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - Yes, God wants all people to be saved. And if that is the case, he will most certainly provide sufficient grace for it to be accomplished. Christ died that all might live. But each person must reach out to receive God’s freely-given gift. Sadly, many reject it.

A Warning

[John] ¹⁸For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

- Identifying the correct speaker here is tricky:
 - Jesus may reenter the narrative here, speaking with his divine authority, or

- John may take over as the person writing down the words given to him.
- A closer look helps: “I warn everyone . . .”
 - “I warn” is μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ, literally, “I testify [μαρτυρέω, mahr-too-re’-o] . . .”
 - This is precisely the role given to John at the beginning of Revelation:
 - Rev 1 ¹...And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness [μαρτυρέω] to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.
 - We might rightly conclude, then, that John issues the warning.
- So, John issues a strong, divinely-inspired warning not to take away or add to anything in his apocalyptic narrative.

[Christ] ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.”

[John] Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

- Jesus closes by once again strongly reminding us that, “Yes,” he is coming “soon.”
- To which John cries out: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”
- John then concludes with a final blessing addressed to the seven churches: “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.”
- The tour of our new home concludes with a final blessing, and with John exclaiming: “Come, Lord Jesus!”

Lessons of Revelation

- Revelation is a complex and enigmatic work, and although readings of it have varied considerably over the past millennia, they can be classified into one or more of four categories:
 1. Historicist – Take the position that Revelation is foretelling a linear “history of the Church” over some period of time
 2. Preterist – Take the position that Revelation applies exclusively to events of the 2nd half of the 1st century
 3. Futurist – Take the position that Revelation applies to the last few years of future human history
 4. Idealist – Take the position that Revelation is purely symbolic, an allegory of good and evil, with no particular relationship to history
- In our study, we understand that like all art (visual, musical and literary), Revelation mirrors the time and culture from which it emerges. Consequently, if we wish to approach our text as educated readers of Scripture, it’s important that we keep in mind Revelation’s:
 - Historical and cultural context within the Roman Empire, c. A.D. 100
 - Its literary genre
 - Its structural and stylistic design
 - Its message, as our author intended it for his audience, c. 100 A.D.
- We learned that Revelation emerges during the latter half of the 1st century A.D., a time that saw:
 - 8 emperors in quick succession, all but one of whom were assassinated or committed suicide
 - The great fire of Rome, A.D. 64
 - The first state-sponsored persecution of the Church under the Emperor Nero, A.D. 64-68
 - The great Jewish revolt, during which 1.2 million Jews were killed, the 2nd Temple destroyed, Jerusalem burnt and the Jews dispersed, A.D. 66-73
 - The eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, A.D. 79
 - The empire-wide persecution of the Church under the Emperor Domitian, A.D. 86-96.
- We learned, too, that Revelation is one work in a long line of apocalyptic literature stretching all the way back to the 7th century B.C.:
 - Apocalyptic literature is an “unveiling” [ἀποκάλυψις] of a truth which would otherwise remain hidden
 - The genre develops in three phases:
 - Phase 1 (7th to 4th centuries B.C.)
 - Phase 2 (late 3rd century B.C. to A.D. 70)
 - Phase 3 (A.D. 70 – 2nd century A.D.)
 - Revelation employs many of the literary conventions of the genre, including: the use of symbolic numbers, vivid imagery, natural and supernatural disasters, angelic messengers and cryptic allusions.
- We learned, as well, that Revelation’s structural and stylistic design is meticulously crafted:
 - Revelation is built on a simple 3-part structure. We are told this in 1:19.
 - what was (past tense, chapter 1)
 - what is (present tense, chapters 2-3, the 7 letters to the 7 churches)
 - what will be (future tense, chapters 4-22).
 - Part 3 consists of 3 sets of 7s:
 - 7 seals
 - 7 trumpets
 - 7 bowls
 - Revelation includes 3 “recapitulations” or “flashbacks” into earlier times:
 - the woman clothed with the sun
 - the war in heaven and fall of Satan
 - the fall of Babylon.
- Consequently, Revelation’s message, as our author intended it for his audience at the end of the 1st century, is clear:
 - Jesus was, first and foremost, a radical prophet living on the bleeding edge of the apocalyptic vision

- In the Olivet Discourse Jesus speaks prophetically of events soon to come, stating flatly that
 - Mt 24 ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.
 - Thus, virtually every Christian during the 2nd half of the 1st century (including the Apostles Peter, Paul and John) expected the fulfillment of Jesus' apocalyptic vision in their lifetime.
 - John's immediate 1st-century audience (those in the 7 churches of Asia Minor) believed that they were living in the "end times" and that Christ's return was imminent.
- We examined our text accordingly, keeping in mind Revelation's
 - Historical and cultural context within the Roman Empire, c. A.D. 100
 - Its literary genre
 - Its structural and stylistic design
 - Its message, as our author intended it for his audience, c. 100 A.D.
 - Nonetheless, we understand that Revelation has immediate application in today's world, for as our study suggested, we continue living in the "end times," in the "Age of the Church."
 - On the cross the Lord Jesus Christ defeated Satan, sin and death
 - With his blood he paid the price of our redemption
 - Today he reigns in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father.
 - God offers each of us the freely-given gift of salvation, enabled by Christ. We need only respond in faith to God's grace and embrace it. By doing so, we become sons and daughters in the family of God, the Church; once in the family, we strive to live a life worthy of our calling, a life of active love (or good works).
 - We continue to experience Satan's presence and ever-growing influence in our world, which seems to be careening toward a cliff. We shouldn't be surprised, however, for we watched it happen in Revelation. But we know from Revelation, as well, that in due time Christ will return, Satan and his crew will be hurled into the "pool of fire and sulfur"; and a new heaven and earth awaits us, our eternal home.

Biblical Topics

Afterlife – Heaven and Hell

The concept of reward and punishment after death has a long & complex history. What happens when we die?

- Early in the Hebrew Scriptures God tells Abraham: “You . . . will go to your ancestors in peace; you will be buried at a ripe old age” (Genesis 15:15). There is nothing about reward or punishment here; Abraham will simply go in peace to his ancestors. Where that will be, or what it will be like, is never addressed.
- In David’s world, 1,000 years later (c. 1010-970 B.C.), the realm of the dead becomes much darker.
 - David writes:

“Do not reprove me in your anger, Lord, nor punish me in your wrath.
Have pity on me, Lord, for I am weak; heal me, Lord, for my bones are shuddering.
My soul too is shuddering greatly—and you, Lord, how long . . . ?
Turn back, Lord, rescue my soul; save me because of your mercy.
For in death there is no remembrance of you, who praises you in Sheol?” (Psalm 6:1-6)
 - For David, reproof and punishment happen in this life; after death, one’s corpse simply lies forgotten in the grave, a place of no remembrance or praise.
 - David’s Sheol is a place of darkness to which all souls go, righteous and unrighteous alike.
 - Sheol’s inhabitants are “shades,” entities without personalities or strength, who drift about, chirping and gibbering, with little, if any, self awareness.
- In Book 11 of Homer’s *Odyssey* [written shortly after the time of David], Odysseus visits the land of the dead in search of Tiresias, the blind seer from Thebes.
 - In Homer’s world, the dead become sentient only by drinking blood [Recall Leviticus 17:11—“The life of the flesh is in the blood.”].
 - Having sailed past the outer limits, the Ocean River’s bounds, Odysseus enters the land of the dead and prepares a blood-feast to awaken the shades:



Alessandro Allori. "Odysseus Questions the Seer Tiresias," *The Story of Odysseus* (fresco), c. 1580. Palazzo Salviati, Florence.

“And once my vows and prayers had invoked the nations of the dead, I took the victims, over the trench I cut their throats and the dark blood flowed in—and up out of Erebus they came, flocking toward me now, the ghosts of the dead and gone . . . brides and unwed youths and old men who had suffered much and girls with their tender hearts freshly scarred by sorrow and great armies of battle dead, stabbed by bronze spears, men of war still wrapped in bloody armor—thousands swarming around the trench from every side—unearthly cries—blanching terror gripped me!” (Odyssey 11:38-48)

- That’s no place I’d want to go, for sure! Even though there is no reward or punishment in this concept of the afterlife, the bleak emptiness, the dark and dreary atmosphere, and the loss of memory and self identity is frightening—like descending into eternal dementia!
- By the 2nd Temple period (516 B.C. - A.D. 70), a more diverse set of ideas develops.
 - The Hebrew “Sheol” becomes the Greek ᾍδης, “Hades” that we find in Luke’s parable of Lazarus and Dives, a place where sentient beings exist in eternal bliss or eternal pain, based upon how they have lived their earthly lives. And there is no movement from one place to the other.
 - Recall in Luke’s parable, Abraham says to Dives: “My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.” (Luke 16:25-26)

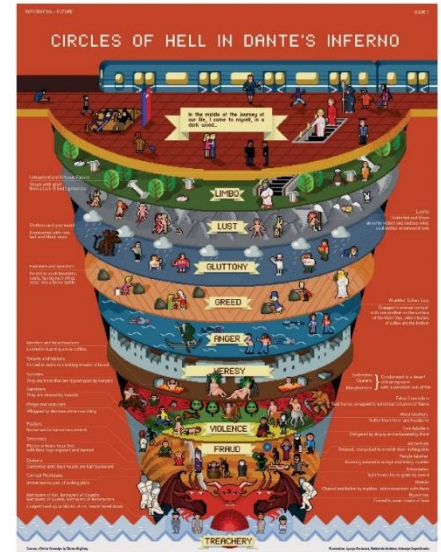
- 14th Century – Dante’s Divine Comedy

- This concept of Hades—or what is later called Hell—reaches its fullest development in the 14th century with Dante’s Divine Comedy, and his 33-Canto portrayal of the Inferno, a descent by Dante and Virgil through the nine circles of Hell, each circle reserved for particular categories of sinners.
- Although there is fire in Dante’s Hell, it’s landscape is primarily cold, dark and windy, a place of bitter isolation where punishment consists both of physical pain (*poena sensus*) and spiritual pain, a terrible sense of eternal loss (*poena damni*).

(See “The Shining Landscape of Hell,” *Comitatus: a Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*. Vol. 11 (1980), 40-65. This was Dr. Creasy’s first published, peer-reviewed scholarly article as a young Ph.D. student!)

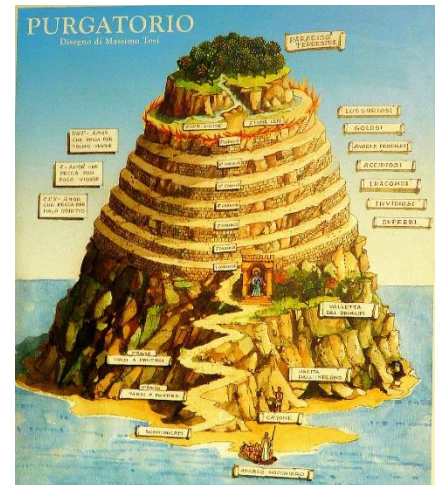
- Dante’s hell (the Inferno) consists of nine concentric circles, each one deeper within the bowels of the earth, and each one residence for those whose lives are defined by increasingly serious sins:

1. Limbo (the abode of virtuous pagans)
2. Lust
3. Gluttony
4. Greed
5. Wrath
6. Heresy
7. Violence
8. Fraud
9. Treachery



- Conversely, Dante’s paradise (the Paradiso) consists of nine ascending spheres, each one drawing closer to the presence of God, and each one residence for those whose who are defined by increasingly virtuous lives:

1. The Moon (The Inconstant)
2. Mercury (The Ambitious)
3. Venus (The Lovers)
4. The Sun (The Wise)
5. Mars (The Warriors of the Faith)
6. Jupiter (The Just Rulers)
7. Saturn (The Contemplatives)
8. The Fixed Stars (Faith, Hope and Love)
9. The Primum Mobile (The Angels)



- Today the Church’s teaching on eternal punishment focuses primarily on this sense of loss (*poena damni*), of spending eternity apart from God, and it is not so much a punishment from God, as it is God respecting our choice to spend eternity without him:

“We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves . . . To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God’s merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell.’” Catechism of the Catholic Church, 3033.

- Revelation

- Angel 3: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and

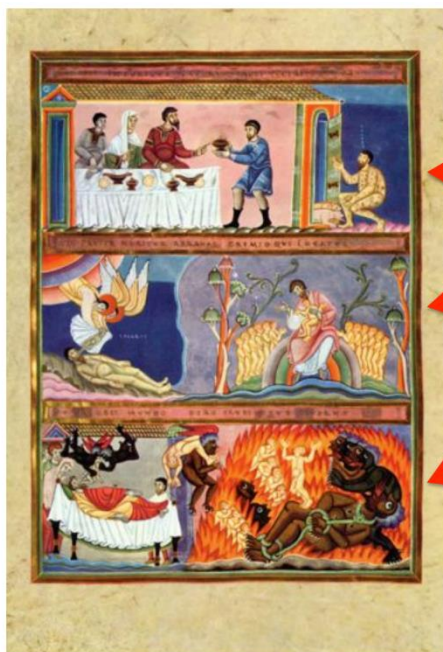
in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” (Rev 14:9-11)

- The third angel cries out in a loud voice, threatening fire and brimstone for those who accept the mark of the beast--those in cahoots with the infernal trinity.
- The vivid imagery draws on:
 - the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis
 - metaphors heaped upon the cursed in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the prophets:

“They shall go out and see the corpses of the people who rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be extinguished; and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (Isaiah 66: 24)
- For the modern reader who hears only about God’s love and mercy, this is troubling imagery at best, intolerable at worst.
- Yet, Jesus uses the very same imagery, even quoting Isaiah 66:24

“Better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’” (Mark 9:47)

 - And in Jesus’ parable of Lazarus, the rich man, and the poor man [traditionally named “Dives”] in Luke 16:19-31, one of the pleasures of Dives as he rests in “Abraham’s bosom” seems to be watching Lazarus roasting in the fires of hell!



Top Register: Lazarus at the rich man’s door, begging for scraps.

Middle Register: Lazarus’ soul carried to Paradise, where he rests in Abraham’s bosom.

Bottom Register: Dives’ soul carried to Hell, where he roasts in the flames!

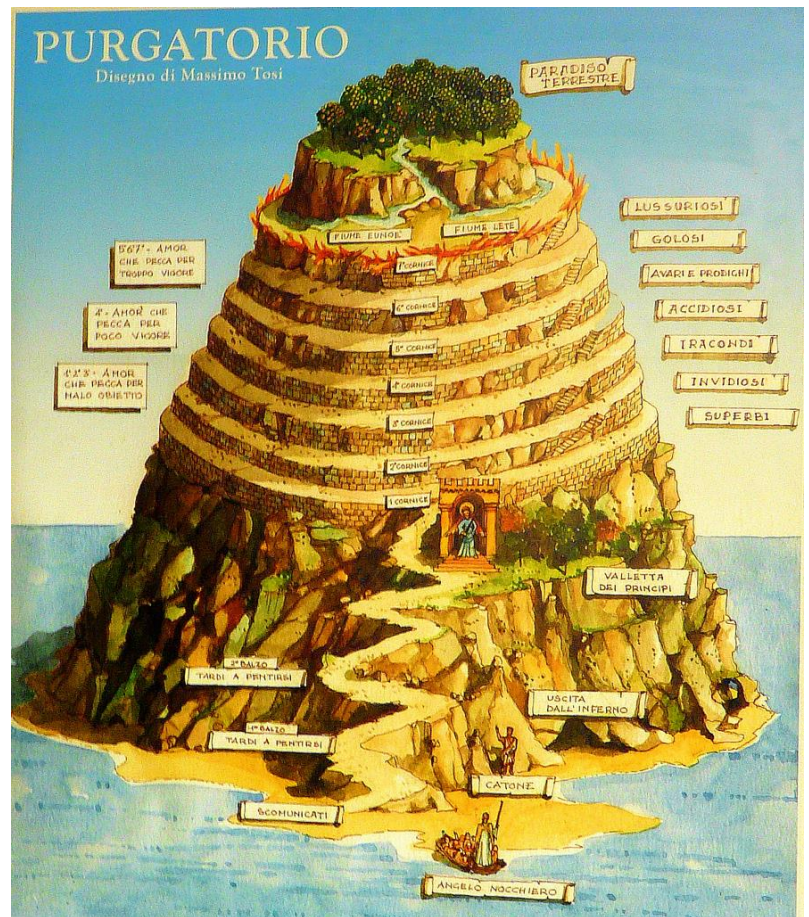
“Parable of Lazarus and the Poor Man,” *Codex Aureus Epternacensis* (Illumination, fol. 78r), c. 1035-1040.
German National Museum, Nuremberg.

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Heaven

- Dante's paradise (the Paradiso) consists of nine ascending spheres, each one drawing closer to the presence of God, and each one residence for those whose lives are defined by increasingly virtuous lives:
 1. The Moon (The Inconstant)
 2. Mercury (The Ambitious)
 3. Venus (The Lovers)
 4. The Sun (The Wise)
 5. Mars (The Warriors of the Faith)
 6. Jupiter (The Just Rulers)
 7. Saturn (The Contemplatives)
 8. The Fixed Stars (Faith, Hope and Love)
 9. The Primum Mobile (The Angels)

See [Don Stewart's Discussion about Heaven](#)



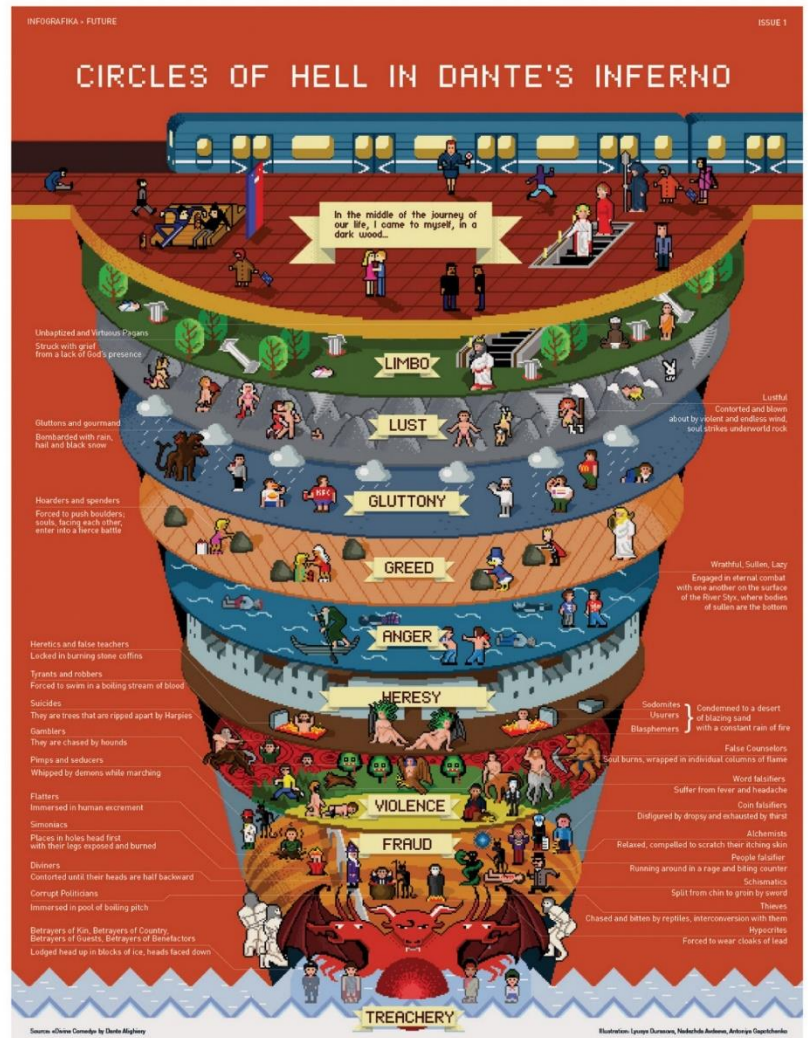
Hell / Second Death / Lake of Fire

- What is the “second death”? Hell – the “lake of fire”
 - It is called the “second” one because it follows physical death.
 - The second death / lake of fire is where those who are separated from God by their sin will dwell for eternity
 - This judgment was recorded in Scripture as a warning to unbelievers to seek the salvation that Jesus Christ provides.
 - The coming judgment should also challenge believers to share their faith. There is a vast difference between the final destination of those who know Christ and those who do not.
 - Rev 20¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.
 - At the end of time, even death and the grave (Hades) will be thrown into the lake of fire.
 - In addition, every person not included in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire.
 - This condition will be final; the destination is permanent.
 - Rev 21⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”
- At the end of the millennium, the unbeliever will be resurrected to stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne judgment
 - There, his failure to believe on the Lord and his refusal to accept God's payment for his sin will condemn him to outer darkness
 - Mt 25²⁹ ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
 - It is a “death” in that it is a separation from God, the Giver of life.
 - But for those who (like the church at Smyrna) stay true, the 2nd death will have no effect
- For those who overcome the threat and acts of violence from Satan, they will never be hurt by the 2nd death
 - Death is conquered for these overcomers
 - Rev 2¹¹ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’
 - Jesus promises that believers will not experience the lake of fire. The second death is exclusively for those who have rejected Christ. It is not a place that believers in Christ should fear.
 - “overcomers” – 1Jn 5⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.
- Revelation 20:6 speaks of the second death in relation to a future period called the Millennium
 - Rev 20⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.
 - This verse notes three important facts.
 - First, those who die for their faith in Jesus during the Tribulation will later be resurrected to enter the Millennium and live with Him.
 - Second, these martyrs will escape the lake of fire or second death.
 - Third, they will reign with Christ.

- Dante's hell (the Inferno) consists of nine concentric circles, each one deeper within the bowels of the earth, and each one residence for those whose lives are defined by increasingly serious sins:

1. Limbo (the abode of virtuous pagans)
2. Lust
3. Gluttony
4. Greed
5. Wrath
6. Heresy
7. Violence
8. Fraud
9. Treachery

See [Don Stewart's Discussion about Hell](#)



Angels

Angels = Messenger
Hebrew – Malak
Greek – Angelos

Classifications of angels

- Seraphim – Is 6
- Cherubim – Genesis, Exodus, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, etc
- Angels – Old and New Testaments
- Archangels – 1Th 4, Jude 1
- Rules/Principalities/Powers – Ep 6
- Authorities/Powers/World Forces of this world/Forces of Darkness – Ep 6
- Powers of this Dark World/Rulers of the Darkness – Ep 6
- Spiritual Forces of Evil on the Heavenly Realms / Spiritual wickedness in high places / Forces of wickedness in Heavenly places – Ep 6

Demons

Where demons came from

Holy/Unfallen/Elect – 1Ti 5:21
Unholy/Fallen/Demon – Satan – Is 14:12-15
Demons – Rev 12:4

Where demons are now

Bound or confined
Tartarus/Permanent – 2Pe 2:4 / Jude 1:6
Pit/Temporary – Rev 9:2,3,10,15
Active
Today – Ep 6:12-13
Future/Torment – Mt 25:41

Apostles Creed

1Co 15

Arminianism

There are two main camps of theology within Christianity in America today: Arminianism and Calvinism. Calvinism is a system of biblical interpretation taught by John Calvin. Calvin lived in France in the 1500's at the time of Martin Luther who sparked the Reformation.

The system of Calvinism adheres to a very high view of scripture and seeks to derive its theological formulations based solely on God's word. It focuses on God's sovereignty, stating that God is able and willing by virtue of his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, to do whatever He desires with His creation. It also maintains that within the Bible are the following teachings: That God, by His sovereign grace predestines people into salvation; that Jesus died only for those predestined; that God regenerates the individual where he is then able and wants to choose God; and that it is impossible for those who are redeemed to lose their salvation.

Arminianism, on the other hand, maintains that God predestined, but not in an absolute sense. Rather, He looked into the future to see who would pick him and then He chose them. Jesus died for all peoples' sins who have ever lived and ever will live, not just the Christians. Each person is the one who decides if he wants to be saved or not. And finally, it is possible to lose your salvation (some arminians believe you cannot lose your salvation).

Question: "What is Arminianism, and is it biblical?"

Answer: Arminianism is a system of belief that attempts to explain the relationship between God's sovereignty and mankind's free will, especially in relation to salvation. Arminianism is named after Jacob Arminius (1560—1609), a Dutch theologian. While Calvinism emphasizes the sovereignty of God, Arminianism emphasizes the responsibility of man. If Arminianism is broken down into five points, similar to the five points of Calvinism, these would be the five points:

Partial Depravity

Humanity is depraved but still able to seek God. We are fallen and tainted by sin but not to the extent that we cannot choose to come to God and accept salvation, with the help of prevenient grace from God. Given such grace, human will is free and has the power to yield to the influence of the Spirit. Note: many Arminians reject partial depravity and hold a view very close to Calvinistic total depravity.

Conditional Election

God only "chooses" those whom He knows will choose to believe. No one is predetermined for either heaven or hell.

Unlimited Atonement

Jesus died for everyone, even those who are not chosen and will not believe. Jesus' death was for all of humanity, and anyone can be saved by belief in Him.

Resistible Grace

God's call to be saved can be resisted and/or rejected. We can resist God's pull toward salvation if we choose to.

Conditional Salvation

Christians can lose their salvation if they actively reject the Holy Spirit's influence in their lives. The maintenance of salvation is required for a Christian to retain it. Note: many Arminians deny "conditional salvation" and instead hold to "eternal security."

Remonstrants

The Remonstrants are Dutch Protestants who, after the death of Jacobus Arminius, maintained the views associated with his name. In 1610, they presented to the States of Holland and Friesland a remonstrance in five articles formulating their points of disagreement with Calvinism.

"The Five Articles" of the Remonstrants.

Point 1: God had simply decreed to save all who would believe in Christ.

Point 2: Christ died for all men and for every man.

Point 3: Man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, inasmuch as he, in the state of apostasy and sin, can of and by himself neither think, will, nor do anything that is truly good; but it is needful that he be born again and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers.

Point 4: Speaking of the absolute need of divine grace, adds: "But as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, inasmuch as it is written concerning many, that they have resisted the Holy Ghost. "

Point 5: Perseverance, resistance in temptation are through the assistance of the Holy Spirit and by the help of Christ; they are not, however, the result of an absolute decree. Believers, therefore, can fall into grievous sins and persevere in these. They can only hope that they may persevere and be confident that divine grace will always be at hand and sufficient.

See Remonstrants

Calvinists vs Arminianism

The only point of Arminianism that four-point Calvinists believe to be biblical is point #3—Unlimited Atonement. First John 2:2 says, “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” Second Peter 2:1 tells us that Jesus even bought the false prophets who are doomed: “But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.” Jesus’ salvation is available to anyone and everyone who will believe in Him. Jesus did not just die for those who will be saved.

Four-point Calvinism (the official position of Got Questions Ministries) finds the other four points of Arminianism to be unbiblical, to varying degrees.

1. Romans 3:10–18 strongly argues for total depravity.
2. Conditional election, or election based on God’s foreknowledge of human action, underemphasizes God’s sovereignty (Romans 8:28–30).
4. Resistible grace underestimates the power and determination of God.
5. Conditional salvation makes salvation a reward for work rather than a gift of grace (Ephesians 2:8–10).

There are problems with both systems, but we see Calvinism as more biblically based than Arminianism. However, both systems fail to adequately explain the relationship between God’s sovereignty and mankind’s free will—due to the fact that it is impossible for a finite human mind to discern a concept only God can fully understand.

Blessings promised by the Bible

Blessed is Israel and those that bless Israel

- Gen 12:1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.
2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
- Ge 35:9 Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. 10 And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.” So He called his name Israel. 11 Also God said to him: “I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. 12 The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.”
- Nu 24:9 “Blessed is he who blesses you, And cursed is he who curses you.”
- Ps 33:11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.
12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.
- Ps 84:4 Blessed are those who dwell in Your house;
- Ps 122:6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you.

Blessed are those that trusts in the Lord

- Job 5:17 “Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.
18 For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.
19 He shall deliver you in six troubles, Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.
20 In famine He shall redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword.
21 You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes.
22 You shall laugh at destruction and famine, And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
23 For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field, And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.
24 You shall know that your tent is in peace; You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss.
- Ps 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.
2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- Ps 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!
- Ps 84:5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in You,
- Ps 84:12 O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!
- Ps 118:24 This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.
25 Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity.
26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.
27 God is the Lord, And He has given us light; Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.
28 You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You.
29 Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.
- Jer 17:7 “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord.
8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when

heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

- Mt 11:6 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”
- Lk 7:23 23 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”
- Jn 20:29 Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”
- Ro 4: 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:
7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;
8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”
- Col 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.
- Gal 3: 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Blessed are those that keep His commands

- Ex 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.
- Lev 26: 3 ‘If you [Israel] walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, 4 then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. 6 I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. 7 You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. 8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. 9 ‘For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. 10 You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new. 11 I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. 12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. 13 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk [d]upright.
- Dt 4:40 You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.”
- Dt 5:29 Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!
- Dt 28: 28 “Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. 2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God:
3 “Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.

4 “Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

5 “Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

6 “Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

7 “The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

8 “The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

9 “The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. 10 Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. 11 And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. 12 The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 13 And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. 14 So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

- Jos 1:8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.
- 1Ki 2:3 And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn;
- Ps 94:12 Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O Lord, And teach out of Your law,
13 That You may give him rest from the days of adversity, Until the pit is dug for the wicked.
14 For the Lord will not cast off His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance.
15 But judgment will return to righteousness, And all the upright in heart will follow it.
- Ps 128:1 Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, Who walks in His ways.
2 When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.
3 Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house,
Your children like olive plants All around your table.
4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the Lord.
5 The Lord bless you out of Zion, And may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life.
6 Yes, may you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel!
- Pro 8:32 “Now therefore, listen to me, my children, For blessed are those who keep my ways.
33 Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain it.
34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors.
35 For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the Lord;
36 But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death.”
- Pro 16:20 He who heeds the word wisely will find good, And whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he.
- Lk 11:28 But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”
- James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

- Rev 22:14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Blessed are those who serve the Lord

- Ex 23: 25 “So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water.
- Ps 1:1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.
- Ps 37:18 The Lord knows the days of the upright, And their inheritance shall be forever.
19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
20 But the wicked shall perish; And the enemies of the Lord,
Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away.
21 The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives.
22 For those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth, But those cursed by Him shall be cut off.
- Ps 41:1 Blessed is he who considers the poor; The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.
2 The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, And he will be blessed on the earth;
You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.
3 The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed.
- Ps 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.
15 Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.
- Ps 106:3 Blessed are those who keep justice, And he who does righteousness at all times!
- Ps 112:1 Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, Who delights greatly in His commandments.
2 His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed.
3 Wealth and riches will be in his house, And his righteousness endures forever.
4 Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
5 A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion.
6 Surely he will never be shaken; The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.
7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.
8 His heart is established; He will not be afraid, Until he sees his desire upon his enemies.
9 He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted with honor.
10 The wicked will see it and be grieved; He will gnash his teeth and melt away;
The desire of the wicked shall perish.
- Ps 119:1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the Lord!
2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!
- Ps 149:4 For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.
- Pro 2:7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;
- Pro 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.
8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.
9 Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;
10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

- Pro 10:6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.
7 The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.
- Pro 16:3 Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts will be established.
- Pro 20:7 The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him.
- Pro 22:9 He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor.
- Mal 3:10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.
- Mt 5: 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.
- Mt 24:45 “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.
- Lk 6:20 ... “Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.
21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled.
Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.
- Lk 12:42 And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.
- Lk 14:12 Then He also said to him who invited Him, “When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the [d]mained, the lame, the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”
- Jn 13:16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
- Jam 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.
- 1Pe 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

Blessed are the persecuted

- Mt 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- Mk 10:29 So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.
- Lk 6:22 Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man’s sake.
23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

Blessed are those that study Revelation

- Rev 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.
- Rev 22: 7 “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”
- Dan 12:12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.
- Rev 16:15 “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

Calvinism (TULIP)

There are two main camps of theology within Christianity in America today: Arminianism and Calvinism. Calvinism is a system of biblical interpretation taught by John Calvin. Calvin lived in France in the 1500's at the time of Martin Luther who sparked the Reformation.

The system of Calvinism adheres to a very high view of scripture and seeks to derive its theological formulations based solely on God’s word. It focuses on God’s sovereignty, stating that God is able and willing by virtue of his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, to do whatever He desires with His creation. It also maintains that within the Bible are the following teachings: That God, by His sovereign grace predestines people into salvation; that Jesus died only for those predestined; that God regenerates the individual where he is then able and wants to choose God; and that it is impossible for those who are redeemed to lose their salvation.

Arminianism, on the other hand, maintains that God predestined, but not in an absolute sense. Rather, He looked into the future to see who would pick him and then He chose them. Jesus died for all peoples' sins who have ever lived and ever will live, not just the Christians. Each person is the one who decides if he wants to be saved or not. And finally, it is possible to lose your salvation (some arminians believe you cannot lose your salvation).

Basically, Calvinism is known by an acronym: T.U.L.I.P. (TULIP)

Total Depravity (also known as Total Inability and Original Sin)

Unconditional Election

Limited Atonement (also known as Particular Atonement)

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of the Saints (also known as Once Saved Always Saved)

These five categories do not comprise Calvinism in totality. They simply represent some of its main points.

T Total Depravity – Total Inability of man to choose Truth:

For

Sin has affected all parts of man. The heart, emotions, will, mind, and body are all affected by sin. We are completely sinful. We are not as sinful as we could be, but we are completely affected by sin.

The doctrine of Total Depravity is derived from scriptures that reveal human character:

- Man's heart is evil (Mark 7:21-23) and sick (Jer. 17:9).
- Man is a slave of sin (Rom. 6:20).
- He does not seek for God (Rom. 3:10-12).
- He cannot understand spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14).
- He is at enmity with God (Eph. 2:15).
- And, is by nature a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3).

The Calvinist asks the question, "In light of the scriptures that declare man's true nature as being utterly lost and incapable, how is it possible for anyone to choose or desire God?" The answer is, "He cannot. Therefore God must predestine."

Calvinism also maintains that because of our fallen nature we are born again:

- Not by our own will but God's will (John 1:12-13);
- God grants that we believe (Phil. 1:29);
- Faith is the work of God (John 6:28-29);
- God appoints people to believe (Acts 13:48);
- God predestines (Eph. 1:1-11; Rom. 8:29; 9:9-23).

Against

This doctrine asserts that every person born into the world is enslaved to sin and not by nature inclined to seek or love God. (Whose fault is that?). This means, that in order to ENABLE people to seek and find God, God must first "wake him up" from his spiritual death. The ones God chooses to wake up are the same as those who will get saved.

This doctrine results in that:

- GOD is the one CHOOSING whom to wake up
- The ones he does not wake up have no chance to get saved which God is aware of
- God does not want all to be saved because then he would have "woken up" more people 4) Most people will remain in their wicked sinful way of living only because God want them to,
- It wouldn't make sense for Jesus to die for people who God never intended to save, but for the elect only.

Scriptures Against: The Word of God teaches that God created man with the ability to reason, choose, & receive Truth.

- Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."
- Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."
- James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and RECEIVE with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls."
- Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us REASON together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
- Deuteronomy 30:19: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore CHOOSE LIFE, that both thou and thy seed may live."
- Joshua 24:15: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, CHOOSE you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
- Psalm 119:30, 111, 173: "I have CHOSEN The Way of Truth: Thy Judgments have I laid before me....Thy Testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for They are the rejoicing of my heart....Let Thine hand help me; for I have chosen Thy Precepts."

- John 1:12: "But as many as RECEIVED him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."
- 2 Timothy 1:12: "...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have COMMITTED unto him against that day."

U Unconditional Election – God selects those who are to be saved without any condition:

For

God does not base His election on anything He sees in the individual. He chooses the elect according to the kind intention of His will (Eph. 1:4-8; Rom. 9:11) without any consideration of merit within the individual. Nor does God look into the future to see who would pick Him. Also, as some are elected into salvation, others are not (Rom. 9:15, 21).

Against

This doctrine asserts that God has chosen from before the foundation of the world those whom he will save, and this choice is not based on anything the individual does or believes (not merit, faith, etc) because it's unconditional. Rather, this doctrine means that God's unconditional election causes individuals TO repent and believe in him, and further that the chosen ones WILL end up in the Kingdom of God.

The election of grace is salvation by grace through faith plus or minus nothing.

This doctrine results in that

- God has WITHHELD mercy from all the rest and those individuals WILL end up in hell
- Repentance and faith are not conditions for salvation since God WITHOUT them will choose to whom he will provide the means of repenting and believing,
- God could save everyone if he wanted but he wanted to save only some,
- It wouldn't make sense for Jesus to die for people who God never intended to save.

Calvinism teaches that God selects those who are to be saved without any condition, but the Bible teaches that there is one condition to salvation: faith.):

- 1 Peter 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ..."
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13: "...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth."
- Luke 7:50: "... Thy faith hath saved thee ..."
- Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."
- Romans 10:9 if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

L Limited Atonement – Christ died only for the elect:

For

Jesus died only for the elect. Though Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all, it was not efficacious for all. Jesus only bore the sins of the elect.

Support for this position is drawn from such scriptures as:

- Matt. 26:28 where Jesus died for 'many';
- John 10:11, 15 which say that Jesus died for the sheep (not the goats, per Matt. 25:32-33);
- John 17:9 where Jesus in prayer interceded for the ones given Him, not those of the entire world;
- Acts 20:28 and Eph. 5:25-27 which state that the Church was purchased by Christ, not all people;
- Isaiah 53:12 which is a prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion where he would bore the sins of many (not all).

Against

This doctrine asserts that Jesus' only died for a few people (the elect) and his death was CERTAIN to bring about salvation for all those he died for.

This doctrine results in that

- 1) only the sins of the elect were covered through Jesus' death and not the sins of the whole world,
- 2) God never had a goal to save "as many as possible" but only the elect, and that's why the atonement was limited for the elect only,
- 3) Those who end up in hell do NOT do so for rejecting Jesus sin offering because his sin offering was never meant for them or intended for them.
- 4) Most individuals are born doomed (even if we can never know exactly who they are) since the atonement was never meant for them.

Calvinism teaches that Christ died only for the elect, but the Bible teaches that He died for all mankind. The reason not all are saved is because they failed to repent and receive the Savior, not because He didn't provide for their salvation:

- 1 Timothy 2:1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
- Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.
- Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- Is 49:6 he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."
- 1 Timothy 4:10 (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.
- 1 John 2:2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
- Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.
- John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.
- John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the WORLD!"
- Acts 13:47 For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."
- 2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
- Names are written in the book of life to start, then blotted out
 - Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.
 - Psalm 69:28 May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.
 - Exodus 32:32 But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written." 33 The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.

I Irresistible Grace – God's grace for salvation cannot be resisted:

For

When God calls his elect into salvation, they cannot resist. God offers to all people the gospel message. This is called the external call. But to the elect, God extends an internal call and it cannot be resisted. This call is by the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts and minds of the elect to bring them to repentance and regeneration whereby they willingly and freely come to God.

Some of the verses used in support of this teaching are

- Romans 9:16 where it says that "*it is not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy*";
- Philippians 2:12-13 where God is said to be the one working salvation in the individual;
- John 6:28-29 where faith is declared to be the work of God;
- Acts 13:48 where God appoints people to believe;
- John 1:12-13 where being born again is not by man's will, but by God's.

All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out," (John 6:37).

Against

This doctrine asserts that God's desire/decision to save individuals cannot be resisted, but WILL cause them to obey his calling. This means that when God sovereignly purposes to save someone, that individual WILL be saved. The Holy Spirit causes the chosen individuals to cooperate, repent and believe.

This doctrine results in that

- God chooses who will end up in heaven or hell and we have nothing to do with this choice,
- It's not totally fair to say that individuals are saved through "faith" since the truth is that they are saved by ELECTION,
- Those who are lost were never offered any grace because IF they were offered grace they wouldn't be able to reject it,
- It's not fair to say that individuals end up in hell due to their SINS, since they are only doomed because God never enabled them to believe in him, and he never intended to save them in the first place. This choice was made BEFORE they were born and BEFORE they could think about sinning, so sinning has nothing to do with their destiny.

Calvinism teaches that God's grace for salvation cannot be resisted, but the Word of God says it can be resisted:

- Lamentations 3:35-36: "To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not."
- Matthew 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and YE WOULD NOT!"
- John 5:39-40: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And YE WILL NOT come to me, that ye might have life."
- Acts 7:51: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always RESIST the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."
- Proverbs 1:24-26: "Because I have called, and YE REFUSED; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."
- Proverbs 29:1: "He, that being often reproveth HARDENETH HIS NECK, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

P Perseverance of the Saints – The elect will continue in faith until the end:

For

You cannot lose your salvation. Because the Father has elected, the Son has redeemed, and the Holy Spirit has applied salvation, those thus saved are eternally secure. They are eternally secure in Christ.

Some of the verses for this position:

- John 10:27-28 where Jesus said His sheep will never perish;
- John 6:47 where salvation is described as everlasting life;
- Romans 8:1 where it is said we have passed out of judgment;
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 where God promises to never let us be tempted beyond what we can handle;
- Phil. 1:6 where God is the one being faithful to perfect us until the day of Jesus' return.

Against

This doctrine asserts that the "saints" (those individuals who God has chosen to save before the foundation of the world) WILL continue in faith until the end. Those who apparently fall away either never had true faith to begin with or will return.

This results in that:

- It's impossible for an individual to at any time know if he is truly saved and "eternally secure" because if he falls away in the latter part of his life this shows "he was never saved to begin with".
- Individuals can safely place the responsibility to avoid sinning on GOD since HE is the one who are to "preserve" those he has chosen to save.
- Christians might easier fall for temptations because they know they will be preserved to the end anyway, if they are among the elect (which all calvinists believe they are).
- It can bring a false sense of security and that you can be saved in your sins.

The Bible teaches preservation of the saints; not perseverance of the saints:

- Jude 1: "... to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and PRESERVED in Jesus Christ..."
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul, and body be PRESERVED blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."
- John 10:27-29: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Fathers hand."
- Colossians 3:3-4: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."
- Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
- Ro 11:17 If some of the [Jewish] branches have been broken off, and you [Gentiles], though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For **if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.** 22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, **but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.** 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

The P in TULIP is the most dangerous point since the TRUTH is that we cannot serve two masters and be saved in our sins – and Satan knows it. This doctrine might cause people to easier fall for temptations, and then their SOULS are at

risk! This is a good reason to highlight the danger of Calvinism/Gnosticism to the world to prevent more people from being deceived.

Contradictions of TUIP

When exposed to the contradictions within TULIP (which makes God the author of sin), the ordinary excuses are soon to follow:

- 1) God's ways are higher than our ways!
- 2) Who are YOU to question GOD?
- 3) It's impossible for our finite minds to fully understand the infinite mind of GOD!
- 4) This only seems contradictory to us – NOT to God!
- 5) The potter always forms the clay to what he wants!
- 6) I believe in paradoxes – so what? The trinity is a paradox...!
- 7) The Roman Catholic Church teaches like you do!

Any cult in the world can defend any contradiction at all by using the above excuses, resulting in that anything goes even if it's totally against the Bible and makes no sense whatsoever.

NONE of the early church fathers taught against free will the first 300 years AD (this can easily be proven), and none of them taught that we are born with a sinful nature or that we are unconditionally eternally secure. ONLY the gnostics taught such unbiblical doctrines.

Calvinists have no answer for why ALL the church fathers were "wrong" (and the gnostics actually RIGHT) for so many years until Augustine entered the scene and got it "right". Most will say that it's the Bible that is important for us and not the views of the church fathers, councils, etc. While it's of course true that it's the BIBLE that should correct us, they must still explain why both the Bible AND the early church fathers taught free will, and they must also explain why they put so much emphasis on the events in the Synod of Dort, and the unfair treatment of Pelagius in councils where he was not even present to defend himself. Suddenly councils are very important....

Hypercalvinism

The Hyper-Calvinist emphasizes the sovereignty of God to such an extent that man's human responsibility is denied. In actuality, Hyper-Calvinism is a rejection of historic Calvinist thought. Hyper-Calvinism denies that the gospel call applies to all, and/or denies that faith is the duty of every sinner, and/or denies the gospel offer to the non-elect, and/or denies that the offer of divine mercy is free and universal, and/or denies that there is such a thing as "common grace," and/or denies that God has any sort of love for the non-elect. Calvinists do not agree with the Hyper-Calvinists.

Scriptural arguments against Calvinism

- Silver bullet: Ro 9:14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.
 - This is bad interpretation. These verses are simply stating that nothing man can do by himself can get him into heaven. Man needs God's grace and mercy, which only God can grant. God grants mercy to those he grants mercy to, and we can presume from Jesus' teachings that God will grant mercy to those whose hearts are truly seeking God and who follow Jesus' path in heart, mind, and action.
- If God has already elected those who are going to heaven, then why evangelize, seek to be saved, or even follow God's path?

- Your traditional Calvinist (RC Sproul) would proclaim, "Because God told us so!" But if God has already elected those who will be going to heaven, no amount of influence from Christians will change who is elected or not. Evangelism may be the means of how God saves the elect, but our conscience decision to not evangelize will not affect the elect.
- The interesting counter-argument would be when Calvinists say to non-Calvinists, "But why bother evangelizing... God already knows if a particular person will ever accept the message or not." However, foreknowledge does not imply predestination, and God transcends time.
- If God predestined everything, then there is no use in praying for your friends or family.
 - Basically, God has already predestined the events and no appealing to God will likely change his mind- it has already been predestined and cannot be changed.
- If God predestined everything, then God created sin.
 - This is where Calvinists disagree among themselves. There are several camps; some that believe every little detail has been predestined, those who believe that God predestined all major events (including salvation), and those who believe that God only predestines those who will be saved. I suppose this point would address the first camp; If indeed God did predestine every little thing, then God did create sin. He caused man to act a specific way knowing in advance what it would lead to.
- If man is totally incapable of good, then man cannot truly be remorseful or repentant.
- If man is totally incapable of good, then man cannot be faulted for his sins.
- If God predestined everything, then there is no such thing as randomness. (Now that's an interesting research topic..)
- If God predestined everything, then why eternally condemn the non-elect? After all, it is not their fault.. they were predestined to be damned!
 - This concept is called double-predestination. The logic is rather simple: if God only allows the elect to be saved, and God predestined the elect, then by default, God predestined everyone else who is not elect to be eternally condemned.
 - Most Calvinists believe it, but there are quite a few who don't. Thomas Aquinas' view was that God does not in fact damn those whose inherent sin would normally be condemning; God simply "passes over" those who he chose to not predestine. While this view is also somewhat arrogant, (how arrogant it is for us to believe we were predestined while our neighbor might not be), it simply doesn't make sense. The bible clearly states otherwise.
 - (never mind that little verse that says "whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life")
- Jesus died for everyone, not just the elect.
 - Calvinists would point out verses such as John 10:11, Acts 20:28, and John 15:13-14, which states that Jesus died for his friends. However, Jesus promptly then states that we are his friends if we obey his commands. Clearly, though, Jesus died for everyone. Verses describe Jesus as the savior of the world, the savior of all men, and etc. Specifically, 1 John 2:2, which states that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."
- Once-saved-always-saved is a farce
 - One only has to read the very last two verses of James (James 5:19-20) to see why. "My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. "
 - Calvinists typically don't have a response to verses like these other than to falsely argue that "well, the sinner must not have ever really been born from above to begin with."
 - It is not unfeasible for someone to be whole-heartedly devoted to God for a majority of their lifetime and then suddenly snap and turn totally against God in his heart. For example, suppose Billy Graham were to all of a sudden denounce God and start worshiping Satan. Calvinists would suggest that Billy Graham must not have ever have been saved whereas any other rational person would say that he once was a great man of faith whose heart was totally devoted to God but then suddenly snapped.

- Everyone's name was written in the book of Life
 - Revelation 3:5, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."
 - Everyone's name is written in the Book of Life until such a time as they, of their own free will choose to reject Jesus Christ, at which time, their name is blotted out.

Christianity vs Culture

One of the great themes of the Reformation was the idea that all of life is to be lived under the authority of God, to the glory of God, in the presence of God. (Sproul, R. C.. Does Prayer Change Things? (Crucial Questions Series) (p. 10). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.)

Coram Deo – What does it mean to be Christian?

What's the big idea of the Christian life?" He was interested in the overarching, ultimate goal of the Christian life.

To answer his question, I fell back on the theologian's prerogative and gave him a Latin term. I said, "The big idea of the Christian life is *Coram Deo*. *Coram Deo* captures the essence of the Christian life."

This phrase literally refers to something that takes place in the presence of, or before the face of, God. To live *Coram Deo* is to live one's entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God.

To live in the presence of God is to understand that whatever we are doing and wherever we are doing it, we are acting under the gaze of God. God is omnipresent. There is no place so remote that we can escape His penetrating gaze.

To be aware of the presence of God is also to be acutely aware of His sovereignty. The uniform experience of the saints is to recognize that if God is God, then He is indeed sovereign. When Saul was confronted by the refulgent glory of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, his immediate question was, "Who is it, Lord?" He wasn't sure who was speaking to him, but he knew that whomever it was, was certainly sovereign over him.

Living under divine sovereignty involves more than a reluctant submission to sheer sovereignty that is motivated out of a fear of punishment. It involves recognizing that there is no higher goal than offering honor to God. Our lives are to be living sacrifices, oblations offered in a spirit of adoration and gratitude.

To live all of life *Coram Deo* is to live a life of integrity. It is a life of wholeness that finds its unity and coherency in the majesty of God. A fragmented life is a life of disintegration. It is marked by inconsistency, disharmony, confusion, conflict, contradiction, and chaos.

The Christian who compartmentalizes his or her life into two sections of the religious and the nonreligious has failed to grasp the big idea. The big idea is that all of life is religious or none of life is religious. To divide life between the religious and the nonreligious is itself a sacrilege.

This means that if a person fulfills his or her vocation as a steelmaker, attorney, or homemaker *Coram Deo*, then that person is acting every bit as religiously as a soul-winning evangelist who fulfills his vocation. It means that David was as religious when he obeyed God's call to be a shepherd as he was when he was anointed with the special grace of kingship. It means that Jesus was every bit as religious when He worked in His father's carpenter shop as He was in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Integrity is found where men and women live their lives in a pattern of consistency. It is a pattern that functions the same basic way in church and out of church. It is a life that is open before God. It is a life in which all that is done is done as to the Lord. It is a life lived by principle, not expediency; by humility before God, not defiance. It is a life lived under the tutelage of conscience that is held captive by the Word of God.

Coram Deo ... before the face of God. That's the big idea. Next to this idea our other goals and ambitions become mere trifles.

Scriptures for further study: Matthew 24:13; Romans 8:31-36; 2 Corinthians 4:7-16; Hebrews 6:9-12; 10:35-39

Under Pressure, Like David Bowie and Jesus Said

Posted: 17 Feb 2015 03:08 PM PST

David Bowie teamed up with Queen on the song *Under Pressure*. Vanilla Ice later ripped that song off and said he didn't, but that's another story. Under Pressure. That is the story of the faith. Around the world, and right here in the U.S. of A. Here are two opposing poles of cultural pressure squeezing Christians here today. There are more than these, but two's a start.

1. The Squeeze of the PC Police (or Thought Police, to be Orwell-y)

To hear the politically correct among us talk these days, you'd almost get the impression that no one could possibly ever do anything evil in the name of religion. You hear this often in reference to Islam. ISIS does represent *true* Islam, you see. *Truer* religion is defined as being loving and gracious and accepting to pretty much everyone no matter who they are or what they do. Anything contrary to this is contrary to the spirit of *true* religion. The spirit of true religion can be summarized doctrinally as *the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man*; the ethic of true religion is *love* (vague and nebulous), which can loosely be defined as being tolerant and accepting. Never mind all those annoying difficult issues like...Who is God? What is his (or is it her?) will? How do we know right from wrong? What is the purpose of life? What about Heaven? Hell? Etc. Don't ask these questions! This distracts from the meaning of *true* religion.

This is a necessary outgrowth of living in a *pluralistic culture*. Lots of different folks believe lots of different things and we all have to get along, so let's just emphasize the stuff we agree on and gloss over the stuff that we don't. It also grows out of *the comparative religions movement*. Let's reduce everyone's belief down to a common core. Let's just agree on what we all agree on and ignore the stuff we don't. Don't Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus (to name just the most significant world religions) pretty much all believe the same stuff at heart (the *true* religious core)? Well...no they don't. Not even close. Subject for another day.

Suffice it to say, this is baloney (other words could be used here). Why? Because, if you are a true Christian in the New Testament sense of the word, you will know that the unforgivable sin is not intolerance, but the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (unbelief, I believe). You will know that Christ doesn't present an offer to follow him on one of many possible paths to the Father, but says (most politically incorrectly!), "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

2. The Squeeze of Militant Atheism (or the Self-Righteous Irreligious)

What is truly ironic is that while the PC among us see religion (in the *true* sense) as being basically positive no matter the creed, denomination, or religion, there is at the same time an opposite pole which views all religions as being inherently evil. Holding to any belief in God, a higher power, or a vague cosmic force is lumped together with a deprecating sneer as ridiculous. God? How about the Tooth Fairy? Leprechauns? Unicorns? God? Seriously? It's the twenty-first century for goodness sake! We've got the internet, nuclear power, nano-technology and all the rest and you are still holding to a belief in your myth of *agod* (these folks love to mock the "divine" with the use of the lower case)? From this perspective there is *no* true religion. Or maybe it would be more accurate to say that any and all religion is truly evil. It should be rejected, purged, forgotten – anything but believed or practiced (or, in some instances, tolerated).

Not only is the core of religion not good, but the whole notion is bad, evil, wicked. It is truly laughable how lost on those affirming such how intellectually dishonest such a position is. For one thing, it is loaded with *absolute language*. And whence the grounding for such morally absolutist statements? All religion is bad? Where is the independent ground upon which one stands that enables the absolute knowledge to make such a judgment? Only God can have such an independent vantage point and universal perspective. Certainly no atheist is making a claim to divinity (though, frankly, such a claim is inherently self-deifying). But, in addition to this – on what ethical grounds can anyone who dismisses God characterize anything as "good" or "bad" anyway? You can classify things as useful for a particular purpose, perhaps. But you can't say anything is "good" unless you are willing to yield the ground of an absolute independent point of ethical standing which is tantamount to affirming the existence of God. It is illogical and self-contradictory to talk about the evil of religion unless

you are willing to acknowledge the existence of God. You might as well rail against the squareness of circles – it is nonsensical, incoherent drivel.

Ironically again, it is only we believers who in fact have the independent vantage point from whence it is possible to judge anything, including religion (the false kind) as evil. One of those evils is unbelief.

There are three possible paths for us true believers to pursue in light of these contradictory cultural forces pressing upon us:

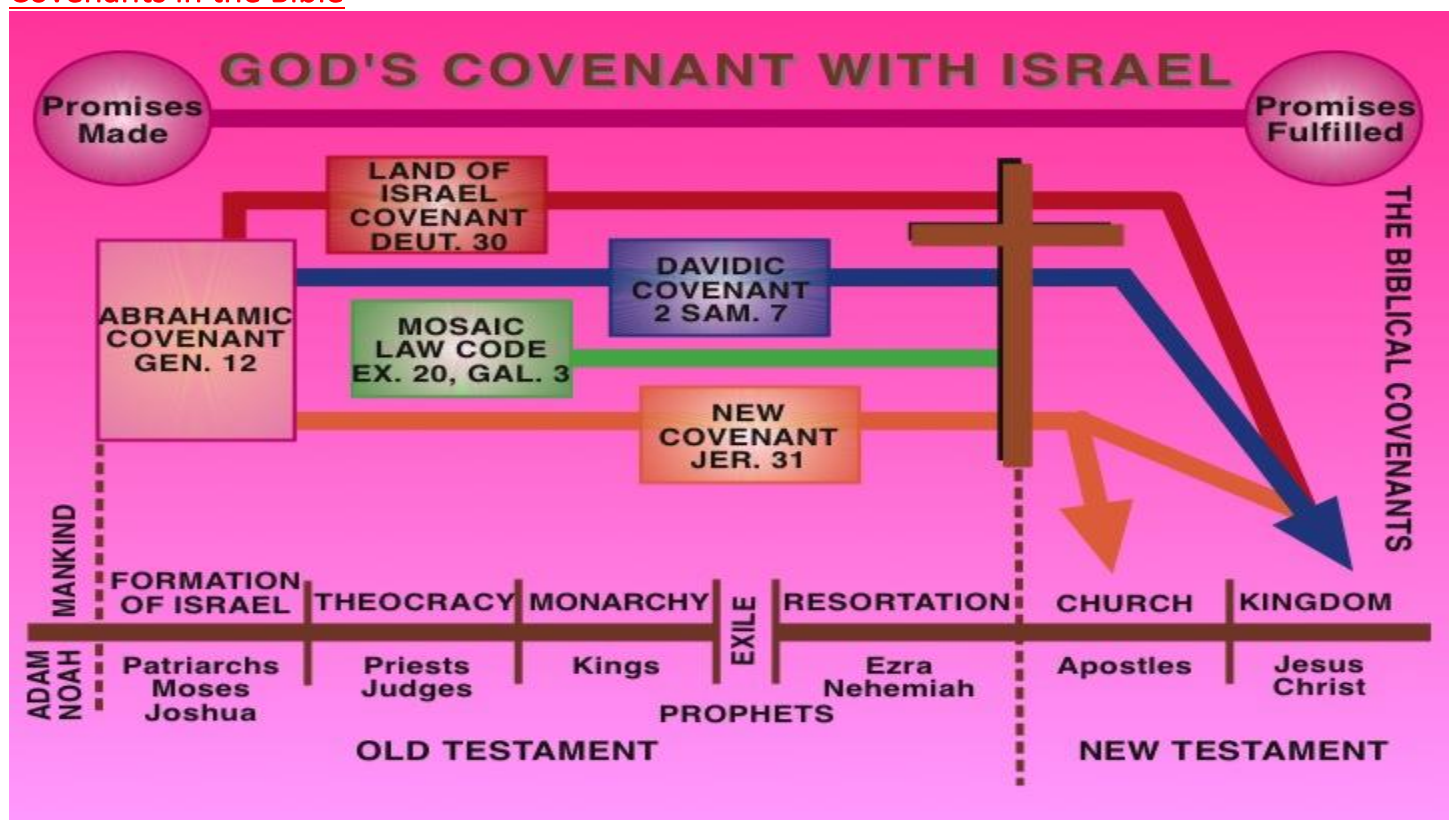
Option 1: *Allow our faith to be reduced to a vanilla caricature of the real thing thereby not offending the politically correct sensitivities surrounding us.* This would violate the Truth and would not satisfy the PC Police anyway, and would certainly not satisfy the militant atheists who exert the opposite pole of pressure. Not an option.

Option 2: *Renounce our faith altogether as being an evil, throwing in our lot with the unbelievers.* Of course, it would be hard to rest securely in the rectitude of so doing, as we'll have surrendered any solid basis for ethical evaluation, as well as the Truth. But we'd make peace with a small but increasingly vocal and vitriolic minority of the population. Umm. Not an option.

Option 3: *Forget about trying to satisfy the cultural forces that squeeze us and seek to satisfy the Lord who called us.* "Take up your cross every day and follow me."

Is there really any other option? After all, our Lord promised us that "in this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33). The term there translated "trouble," by the way, means "pressure." We'll be Under Pressure. Accept it. Expect it. Endure it. Just like Jesus said (and did).

Covenants in the Bible



The Bible speaks of seven different covenants, four of which (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Mosaic, Davidic) God made with the nation of Israel. Of those four, three are unconditional in nature; that is, regardless of Israel's obedience or disobedience, God still will fulfill these covenants with Israel. One of the covenants, the Mosaic Covenant, is conditional in nature. That is, this covenant will bring either blessing or cursing depending on Israel's obedience or disobedience.

Three of the covenants (Adamic, Noahic, New) are made between God and mankind in general, and are not limited to the nation of Israel.

Within the discussion of the biblical covenants, there are a few issues that Christians are not agreed upon. First, some Christians think that all of the covenants are conditional in nature. If the covenants are conditional, then Israel failed miserably at fulfilling them. Others believe that the unconditional covenants have yet to be totally fulfilled and, regardless of Israel's disobedience, will come to fruition sometime in the future. Second, how does the church of Jesus Christ relate to the covenants? Some believe that the church fulfills the covenants and God will never deal with Israel again. This is called replacement theology and has little scriptural evidence. Others believe that the church initially or partially will fulfill these covenants. While many of the promises towards Israel are still in the future, many believe that the church shares in the covenants in some way. Others believe that the covenants are for Israel and for Israel alone, and that the church has no part in these covenants.

Adamic Covenant

The Adamic Covenant can be thought of in two parts:

- The Edenic Covenant (innocence)
 - The Edenic Covenant outlined man's responsibility toward creation and God's directive regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - Ge 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, [b] and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." 29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.
 - Ge 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."
- The Adamic Covenant (grace) ([Genesis 3:16-19](#)).
 - The Adamic Covenant included the curses pronounced against mankind for the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as God's provision for that sin ([Genesis 3:15](#)).
 - Ge 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."
17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Noahic Covenant

Unconditional covenant between God and Noah (specifically) and humanity (generally).

After the Flood, God promised humanity that He would never again destroy all life on earth with a Flood (see Genesis chapter 9). God gave the rainbow as the sign of the covenant, a promise that the entire earth would never again flood and a reminder that God can and will judge sin (2 Peter 2:5).

"I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" (Genesis 9: 23)
(On the road north from Galilee to Dan)



Photography by Ana Maria Vargas.

Ge 9:13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ... Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth." 17 So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.

2Pe 2:5 he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others

Abrahamic Covenant

Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7; 13:14-17; 15; 17:1-14; 22:15-18).

Unconditional covenant with Abram and Israel

- It is an *unconditional* covenant, depending solely upon God's faithfulness, not Abram's behavior.
 - No 'If ...' clause
 - Abram did not pass between beside God – there was nothing for him to uphold – unconditional covenant
 - See description of Suzerain-vassal treaty covenant

Ge 15:9 So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon. " 10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other ... 12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. ... 17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land...

Includes property and people

- Ge 12:7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."
- Ge 15: 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

In this covenant, God promised many things to Abraham.

- He would make **Abraham's name great** (Genesis 12:2)
- He would **bless Abraham** (Ge 12:2-3; Ge 15:14; Ge 22:17)
- That Abraham would have **numerous physical descendants** (Genesis 13:16; Ge 15:5; Ge 17:2; Ge 22:17)
- That Abraham would be the **father of a multitude of nations** (Genesis Ge 12:2; 17:4-6).
- **Families of the world will be blessed** through the physical line of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; 22:18).
 - This is a reference to the Messiah, who would come from the line of Abraham.
 - Through this covenant, God implements the plan of redemption
 - In the great sweep of our narrative, it forges one hinge on which the door of salvation swings.
- Abraham will inherit a **specific designation of land** (Ge 12:7; Ge 13:14-15, 17; Ge 15:7, 18-21; Ge 17:8)
 - The geographical boundaries of the Abrahamic Covenant are laid out on more than one occasion
- Ge 12:1 Now the Lord had said to Abram:
"Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.
2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

...

6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. 7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

- Ge 13:14 And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. 17 Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.”

- Ge 15 – God’s Covenant with Abram

1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”

2 But Abram said, “Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!” 4 And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”

5 Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” 6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

7 Then He said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.” 8 And he said, “Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?” 9 So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.



12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” 17 And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. 18 On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— 19 the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”



- Ge 17 – The Sign of the Covenant

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you

exceedingly.” 3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and **you shall be a father of many nations**. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for **I have made you a father of many nations**. 6 **I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you**. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. 8 Also **I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession**; and I will be their God.” 9 And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. 13 He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

- Ge 22:15 Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— 17 blessing **I will bless you**, and multiplying **I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore**; and your **descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies**. 18 **In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Land (Palestinian) Covenant

Unconditional covenant with Israel

The Palestinian Covenant, or Land Covenant, amplifies the land aspect that was detailed in the Abrahamic Covenant. According to the terms of this covenant, if the people disobeyed, God would cause them to be scattered around the world (**Deuteronomy 30:3-4**), but He would eventually restore the nation (verse 5). When the nation is restored, then they will obey Him perfectly (verse 8), and God will cause them to prosper (verse 9).

- Dt 30:3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. 4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. 5 He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. 6 The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. 7 The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. 8 You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today. 9 Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers,

The land covenant of Dt 28-30 lays down the conditions for the Jews possession and enjoyment of their Promised Land. It contains a panorama of Jewish history:

- Dispersion among the nations as punishment for idolatry (Dt 28:58-64)
- Persecution by nations where the Jews are dispersed (Dt 28:65-67)
- Affliction of the land of Israel until it becomes a “wasteland” (Dt 29:22-28)
- Repentance of the Jews (Dt 30:1-2)
- Spiritual regeneration of the repenting remnant (Dt 30:6,8)
- Regathering of the remnant to the land of promise (Dt 30:3-4)
 - This is regathering in belief that will take place at the 2nd advent, not the regathering in unbelief that is happening now

- Repossession of the Promised Land by the Jews (Dt 30:5)
- Punishment of the enemies of Israel (Dt 30:7)
- Blessing the re-established nation of Israel with material prosperity (Dt 30:5,9)

Mosaic Covenant

Conditional covenant with Israel – Blessing for obedience, Curses for disobedience (Dt 28)

The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant that either brought God's direct blessing for obedience or God's direct cursing for disobedience upon the nation of Israel.

- Part of the Mosaic Covenant was the Ten Commandments ([Exodus 20](#)) and the rest of the Law, which contained over 600 commands—roughly 300 positive and 300 negative.
- [Deuteronomy 11:26-28](#) details the blessing/cursing motif
 - Dt 11:26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse - 27 the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; 28 the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.
 - Lev 26 and Dt 28 detail the blessings and curses
- The history books of the Old Testament (Joshua–Esther) detail how Israel succeeded at obeying the Law or how Israel failed miserably at obeying the Law.

Davidic Covenant

Unconditional covenant with David and Israel

[Davidic Covenant \(2 Samuel 7:8-16\)](#). The Davidic Covenant amplifies the “seed” aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. The promises to David in this passage are significant. God promised that David's lineage would last forever and that his kingdom would never pass away permanently (verse 16). Obviously, the Davidic throne has not been in place at all times. There will be a time, however, when someone from the line of David will again sit on the throne and rule as king. This future king is Jesus ([Luke 1:32-33](#)).

2Sa 7:8 "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. 10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

" 'The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: 12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. 15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.' "

1Ch17:10 ... " 'I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: 11 When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. 14 I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.' "

2Ch 6:16 "Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me according to my law, as you have done.'

- The Davidic Covenant centers on several key promises that are made to David.
 - God reaffirms the promise of the land that He made in the first two covenants with Israel (the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants).
 - 2Sa 7:10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore
 - God then promises that David's son will succeed him as king of Israel and that this son (Solomon) would build the temple.
 - 2Sa 7:12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name
 - Then the promise continues and expands:
 - 2Sa 7:13 I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
 - 2Sa 7:16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.
- What began as a promise that David's son Solomon would be blessed and build the temple turns into something different—the promise of an everlasting kingdom.
 - Another Son of David would rule forever and build a lasting House.
 - This is a reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, called the Son of David in Matthew 21:9.
 - The promise that David's "house," "kingdom," and "throne" will be established forever is significant because it shows that the Messiah will come from the lineage of David and that He will establish a kingdom from which He will reign.
- The covenant is summarized by the words:
 - "house," promising a dynasty in the lineage of David
 - "kingdom," referring to a people who are governed by a king
 - "throne," emphasizing the authority of the king's rule
 - "forever," emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and Israel

New Covenant

New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Covenant is a covenant made first with the nation of Israel and, ultimately, with all mankind. In the New Covenant, God promises to forgive sin, and there will be a universal knowledge of the Lord. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law of Moses (Matthew 5:17) and create a new covenant between God and His people. Now that we are under the New Covenant, both Jews and Gentiles can be free from the penalty of the Law. We are now given the opportunity to receive salvation as a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Jer 31:31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, " declares the LORD. 33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Mt 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Ep 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Destruction of the Temple in 70 AD

The Romans destroyed the Second Temple (Herod's Temple) on the same date that the Babylonians had destroyed the First Temple (Solomon's Temple) in 586 B.C.E. But the exact date of the Babylonian destruction is uncertain. Two different dates are given in the Hebrew Bible for the destruction of the First Temple. In 2 Kings 25:8 the date is the 7th of the Hebrew month of Av; Jeremiah 52:12 says it occurred on the 10th of Av. The rabbis compromised and chose the 9th of Av (Tisha b'Av). That is the date on which observant Jews, sitting on the floor of their synagogues, still mourn the destruction of the First Temple, Solomon's Temple, in 586 B.C.E. and the Second Temple, Herod's Temple, in 70 C.E.

The exact corresponding date in the Gregorian calendar is also a bit uncertain. According to the translator of the authoritative translation of [Josephus](#), the ancient historian who gives us our most detailed (if sometimes unreliable; see sidebar) account of the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., it occurred on August 29 or 30.¹ Others place it earlier in the month.

Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius

The eruption of Mt. Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabia and other nearby sites occurred, according to most commentators, on August 24 or 25 in 79 C.E. According to Seneca, the quakes lasted for several days. But the dates are close enough to raise the question: Were these two catastrophic events connected?

Dispensations

Question: "What are the seven dispensations?"

Answer: Dispensationalism is a method of interpreting history that divides God's work and purposes toward mankind into different periods of time. Usually, there are seven dispensations identified, although some theologians believe there are nine. Others count as few as three or as many as thirty-seven dispensations. In this article, we will limit ourselves to the seven basic dispensations found in Scripture.

The first dispensation is called the Dispensation of Innocence (Genesis 1:28-30 and 2:15-17). This dispensation covered the period of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In this dispensation God's commands were to (1) replenish the earth with children, (2) subdue the earth, (3) have dominion over the animals, (4) care for the garden, and (5) abstain from eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God warned of the punishment of physical and spiritual death for disobedience. This dispensation was short-lived and was brought to an end by Adam and Eve's disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit and their expulsion from the garden.

The second dispensation is called the Dispensation of Conscience, and it lasted about 1,656 years from the time of Adam and Eve's eviction from the garden until the flood (Genesis 3:8–8:22). This dispensation demonstrates what mankind will do if left to his own will and conscience, which have been tainted by the inherited sin nature. The five major aspects of this dispensation are 1) a curse on the serpent, 2) a change in womanhood and childbearing, 3) a curse on nature, 4) the imposing of difficult work on mankind to produce food, and 5) the promise of Christ as the seed who will bruise the serpent's head (Satan).

The third dispensation is the Dispensation of Human Government, which began in Genesis 8. God had destroyed life on earth with a flood, saving just one family to restart the human race. God made the following promises and commands to Noah and his family:

1. God will not curse the earth again.
2. Noah and family are to replenish the earth with people.
3. They shall have dominion over the animal creation.
4. They are allowed to eat meat.

5. The law of capital punishment is established.
6. There never will be another worldwide flood.
7. The sign of God's promise will be the rainbow.

Noah's descendants did not scatter and fill the earth as God had commanded, thus failing in their responsibility in this dispensation. About 325 years after the flood, the earth's inhabitants began building a tower, a great monument to their solidarity and pride (Genesis 11:7-9). God brought the construction to a halt, creating different languages and enforcing His command to fill the earth. The result was the rise of different nations and cultures. From that point on, human governments have been a reality.

The fourth dispensation, called the Dispensation of Promise, started with the call of Abraham, continued through the lives of the patriarchs, and ended with the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt, a period of about 430 years. During this dispensation God developed a great nation that He had chosen as His people (Genesis 12:1–Exodus 19:25).

The basic promise during the Dispensation of Promise was the Abrahamic Covenant. Here are some of the key points of that unconditional covenant:

1. From Abraham would come a great nation that God would bless with natural and spiritual prosperity.
2. God would make Abraham's name great.
3. God would bless those that blessed Abraham's descendants and curse those that cursed them.
4. In Abraham all the families of the earth will be blessed. This is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and His work of salvation.
5. The sign of the covenant is circumcision.
6. This covenant, which was repeated to Isaac and Jacob, is confined to the Hebrew people and the 12 tribes of Israel.

The fifth dispensation is called the Dispensation of Law. It lasted almost 1,500 years, from the Exodus until it was suspended after Jesus Christ's death. This dispensation will continue during the Millennium, with some modifications. During the Dispensation of Law, God dealt specifically with the Jewish nation through the Mosaic Covenant, or the Law, found in Exodus 19–23. The dispensation involved temple worship directed by priests, with further direction spoken through God's mouthpieces, the prophets. Eventually, due to the people's disobedience to the covenant, the tribes of Israel lost the Promised Land and were subjected to bondage.

The sixth dispensation, the one in which we now live, is the Dispensation of Grace. It began with the New Covenant in Christ's blood (Luke 22:20). This "Age of Grace" or "Church Age" occurs between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel 9:24. It starts with the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and ends with the Rapture of the church (1 Thessalonians 4). This dispensation is worldwide and includes both Jews and the Gentiles. Man's responsibility during the Dispensation of Grace is to believe in Jesus, the Son of God (John 3:18). In this dispensation the Holy Spirit indwells believers as the Comforter (John 14:16-26). This dispensation has lasted for almost 2,000 years, and no one knows when it will end. We do know that it will end with the Rapture of all born-again believers from the earth to go to heaven with Christ. Following the Rapture will be the judgments of God lasting for seven years.

The seventh dispensation is called the Millennial Kingdom of Christ and will last for 1,000 years as Christ Himself rules on earth. This Kingdom will fulfill the prophecy to the Jewish nation that Christ will return and be their King. The only people allowed to enter the Kingdom are the born-again believers from the Age of Grace and righteous survivors of the seven years of tribulation. No unsaved person is allowed access into this kingdom. Satan is bound during the 1,000 years. This period ends with the final judgment (Revelation 20:11-14). The old world is destroyed by fire, and the New Heaven and New Earth of Revelation 21 and 22 will begin.

End Times Timeline

- Sometime after the rapture of the church, the Antichrist enters a treaty with Israel. This begins the seven-year tribulation.
- At the midpoint of the tribulation (1,260 days later), the Antichrist breaks the treaty, desecrates the temple, and begins to persecute the Jews.

- At the end of the tribulation (1,260 days after the desecration of the temple), Jesus Christ returns to earth and defeats the forces of the Antichrist.
- During the next 30 days (leading up to 1,290 days after the desecration of the temple), Israel is rebuilt and the earth is restored.
- During the next 45 days (leading up to 1,335 days after the desecration of the temple), the Gentile nations are judged for their treatment of Israel.
- The dispensation of the millennium begins, and it will last for 1,000 years

Church Age (Age of Grace)

- Spread of the Gospel message and growth of the Church
 - Mt 16:18
 - Mt 24:14
 - Great outpouring of the Holy Spirit – the “latter rain”
 - Joel 2:21-29

End of the Church Age

- Increase of wickedness and the spread of evil
 - Mankind’s character will decline – It will be given over to a depraved mind (Ro 1)
 - Evil will wax worse and worse
 - Self and money will be all that matters
 - As it was in the days of Noah – All hearts were wicked; mankind united with the Nephilim
 - Clergy has blessed a late-term abortion clinic as holy
 - Homosexuals
 - Transgenders
 - Drug use is widespread and accepted
 - Family unit has been dissolved
 - Violent crime is now widespread and no longer criminal
 - Mass shootings
 - Abortion
 - Adultery, material greed, and the killing of innocent life will be commonplace (Revelation 17-18);
 - Salacious sexual scandals followed one after another in 2017, most were publicized within Hollywood, Government and the Media. These scandals are but a part that reveal man's evil character and now reflects the end-time warnings of (Roman 1 and 2 Timothy 3).
 - Planned Parenthood sells fetal tissue of aborted babies
 - Iceland Goes For 'Nazi-Era Eugenics' To Wipe Out Children With Down Syndrome
 - The wealthiest 1 percent of the world's population now owns more than half of the world's wealth in 2017
 - Mexico – Raging cartel violence spreading throughout the country has marked 2017 as the bloodiest year since 1997 when the government began documenting such murders.
- Rise of False Prophets and Apostate religion
 - Secular Europe
 - Fastest rising religion in US is ‘None’
 - More people believe in UFOs than believe the Jesus is God
 - Counterfeit Christian Denominations
 - Postmodernism
 - Social Gospel – Religious left
 - Seeker Sensitive – Water everything down – Joel Olsteen
 - New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)
 - So-called “prophets” for profit
 - Holy laughter
 - Contemplative Mysticism – Contemplative prayer – Let’s be like the Buddhists

- Dominionism – Kingdom Now – The church is going to make the world perfect so Jesus can return
 - Latter Rain
 - Amillennialism – Allegorizes everything – Nothing is taken literally
 - Postmillennialism
 - Protestants are moving towards Catholicism
 - No to Bible Prophecy
 - Moving away from Israel support
 - Replacement Theology – The church is the new Israel
 - Christian Palestinianism – Jesus was a Palestinian
 - Christ Alignment
- Increase in knowledge and transportation
 - Antisemitism
 - Christian persecution
 - Deception / Strong delusion
 - Global warming
 - Transgender
 - As in the Days of Noah
 - Ge 6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence
 - Worldwide flooding
 - DNA being tampered with – Nephilim - CRISPR and genetic manipulation
 - As in the Days of Lot
 - Rampant homosexuality and sexual immorality
 - Ge 19:4 Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. 5 They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."
 - Jude 1:7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.
 - Peace & safety
 - Foreshadowings of things to come in the Tribulation
 - One-world government
 - One-world religion
 - One-world financial system – Mark of the Beast
 - Israel restored
 - Aliyah – Regathering of the Jews in unbelief
 - Reestablishment of the State of Israel – May 14, 1948
 - Returns to the land
 - Reclamation of the Land of Israel
 - Revival of the Hebrew Language
 - Resurgence of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF)
 - Reoccupation of Jerusalem
 - World politics would be focused on Israel
 - Conflict in the Middle East
 - Israel will be surrounded by enemies
 - Mt 24:6-7
 - Joel 3:2-14
 - Gog Magog War – Ez 38-39
 - Surrounding nations attack Israel – Ps 83
 - Damascus destroyed – Is 17

Rapture of the church (7 Years in Heaven)

- See section on [Rapture](#)
- Judgement Seat (Bema Seat) – 5 Crowns rewarded
- At the end of the 7-year tribulation is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Tribulation (7 Years on Earth)

- See section on [Tribulation](#)
- Resurrection of a Roman Empire
- Rise of the Antichrist
 - Making/beraking of a peace treaty
 - Temple rebuilt

The second coming

Post-Tribulation

- Satan is bound
- Old Testament saints are resurrected and glorified
- Living Gentiles are Judged – The judgment of the nations – separation of the sheep and the goats
 - Mat 25:31-41
 - Joel 3:2
- Living Jews are Judged
 - Ezekiel

Millennium

- The millennium, Jesus ruling with a rod of iron (Isa 11, Rev 20:1-10)
- The Great White Throne Judgment
- Nature and the Land are redeemed
- Life is enriched
- The last rebellion

The new heavens and and the new earth

- Eternal state
- Death is eliminated
- Righteous are rewarded

Enoch (and Calendar)

<https://man-child.com/enoch-calendar/>

<https://www.enochcalendar.com/enoch-calendar-pdf>

History Channel Documentary – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xrFh-z_u1U

Evangelical Christian

What is an evangelical Christian?

Let's break down the two words.

- The term Christian essentially means "follower of Christ."
 - Christian is the term given to followers of Jesus Christ in the first century A.D. (Acts 11:26).
- The term evangelical comes from the Greek word that means "good news."
 - Evangelism is sharing the good news of the salvation that is available through Jesus Christ.
 - An evangelical, then, is a person dedicated to promoting the good news about Jesus Christ.
- Combined, the description "evangelical Christian" is intended to indicate a believer in Jesus Christ who is faithful in sharing and promoting the good news.

In Western culture today, there are many caricatures of evangelical Christians. However, none of these definitions are inherent in the description "evangelical Christian."

- For some, the term evangelical Christian is equivalent to "right-wing, fundamentalist Republican."
- For others, "evangelical Christian" is a title used to differentiate an individual from a Catholic Christian or an Orthodox Christian.
- Others use the term to indicate adherence to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. In this sense, an evangelical Christian is a believer who holds to the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and salvation by grace through faith alone.

In general, an evangelical Christian has four commitments:

- They must be born again – there must be a conversion experience
- They must hold a high inerrant view of Scripture – includes faith and practice
- The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross is central to everything
- Social activism that lines up with Biblical values

Fasting and prayer

Time to talk to God and ask about His plans for us in the next year

- Here's what I see you doing:
 - In my life
 - In my kids life
 - In my business
- How do you want me to:
 - Steward my finances
 - Serve in your church

What to NOT do

- Boost fast – too much sugar
- Soups – Too much salt

Document

- What I see you doing
- What I think that you want me to do

Prayer

- A living, breathing relationship with our father – a time to talk to dad
 - It is OK to vent to God – He knows anyway, He'd rather that you talk to Him
 - Help me to see like you see
- Prayer and fasting always go together
- God's heart on prayer – How to pray – Mt 6:9-13
 - Worship
 - Trust
 - Provision
 - Forgiveness
- Boundaries of prayer
 - Be yourself – Don't try to be like anyone else

- If you have a problem with someone, forgive them (no forget, just forgive)

Scriptures

- Is 58:3-5 – God correcting Israel for fasting for the wrong reasons
 - Is 58:6-9 – Fasting for the right reasons
 - Fasting is not about us
 - God says to fast to
 - 6 ...To loose the bonds of wickedness,
 - To undo the heavy burdens,
 - To let the oppressed go free,
 - And that you break every yoke?
- Mt 6:16-18 – Lord's Prayer
- Mt 9:14-15
- Lk 18:9-14
- Acts 27:33-37
- Ne 9:1-3
- Php 4:6-7
- Jam 5:16
- Mt 4:1 Passion translation TPT
 - Afterward, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the lonely wilderness in order **to reveal his strength against the accuser** by going through the ordeal of testing.
- Acts 13 – Prayer and fasting to set apart Paul and Barnabas
- Ps 35:13 – Humble yourself
 - Fasting for God's heart for someone else – someone's healing

Seek first the kingdom of God

- Biblical principle that God honors – Removing a piece of me and replace it with God

Types of fasts

- Complete fast
 - Drinking only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option
- Selective fast
 - Remove certain elements from your diet
 - Daniel Fast – Remove meat, sweets, or bread
 - Consume water and juice, fruits and vegetables
- Partial Fast
 - Sometimes called a Jewish Fast
 - Abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon
 - Give up a certain meal
- Soul Fast
 - Instead of food, you select something that is taking your time away from prayer
 - Helps us to refocus areas of our life that are out of balance
 - Ex – no social media, watching TV,
 - At the end of the fast, bring that area back into your life in an appropriate manner

Forgiveness

Brian Williams, Mark Driscoll, and the Discipline of Forgiveness

Rich Herbster, Posted: 12 Feb 2015 11:34 AM PST

The Christian faith has at its core the forgiveness of sin. We are all sinners against a holy God, who by his great grace and compassion to unworthy sinners provides forgiveness of sins through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. We have all sinned and we all deserve God's wrath and condemnation, but we receive salvation instead. And as forgiven sinners we are called upon to forgive others.

We forgive others not because they are worthy of forgiveness, or demonstrate a changed character rendering them fit for forgiveness, but because we are ourselves unworthy recipients of God's gracious forgiveness. We *must* forgive if we are truly Christians. No other option. Consider Jesus' teaching in the Lord's Prayer:

'Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. **Matthew 6:12-15**

Jesus teaches us to pray – forgive us as we forgive others. He then offers a commentary on this petition lest we miss the import of the words. *"If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."* But if you don't forgive...you won't be forgiven! The forgiveness you seek from your heavenly Father in the vertical dimension is only available to you if you forgive your fellow sinner in the horizontal dimension.

Connecting this notion to current events – I was fascinated by [David Brooks' recent New York Times column](#) reflecting on the public response to the Brian Williams scandal. Williams demonstrated an unfortunate tendency to play a bit fast and loose with the truth in his personal reminiscences of certain events such as hurricane Katrina and his travel by helicopter in Iraq over a decade ago. Upon being caught in these whoppers Williams has been thoroughly vilified and now suspended in his role as NBC News anchor and managing editor.

Brooks writes:

The barbaric part is the way we respond to scandal these days. When somebody violates a public trust, we try to purge and ostracize him. A sort of coliseum culture takes over, leaving no place for mercy. By now, the script is familiar: Some famous person does something wrong. The Internet, the most impersonal of mediums, erupts with contempt and mockery. The offender issues a paltry half-apology, which only inflames the public more. The pounding cry for resignation builds until capitulation comes. Public passion is spent and the spotlight moves on.

I've only spoken with Williams a few times, and can't really speak about the man (though I often appear on NBC News's "Meet the Press"), but I do think we'd all be better off if we reacted to these sorts of scandals in a different way. The civic fabric would be stronger if, instead of trying to sever relationships with those who have done wrong, we tried to repair them, if we tried forgiveness instead of exiling.

While everyone would acknowledge that Williams deserves some penalty for his failings, I must confess that I share Brooks' sentiments concerning the piling on that is all too common and predictable in situations like this. Whether it is a newsman, a politician, an athlete, or (in our context within the church) a religious leader, it seems people are all too willing to loudly declaim the villainy of the guilty party. Within the Christian community, [see the example of the former pastor of Mars Hill, the much derided Mark Driscoll](#).

There are times for moral outrage certainly, but what about times for grace? Mercy? Forgiveness? Restoration? We all prefer to receive the benefit of the doubt from others, but are not always so quick to extend the same to those who sin against us. Golden Rule, anybody? Or have we created a whole new class of unforgiveable sins?

As arrogant and vexing as a Brian Williams or a Mark Driscoll may be, they deserve something better than to be cast with loathing on the dustbin of history. From a Christian perspective these are people that we are called upon to forgive, demonstrate grace toward, and ultimately hope to see restored. Delighting in their downfall seems far less than the Christian response.

To a certain degree it matters little what we think about Brian Williams or Mark Driscoll. Chances are you haven't met them and never will. What difference? But, on the other hand, if we pile on the public sins of celebrity newsmen and pastors, aren't we building habits of character that will later be lived out with real flesh and blood sinners whom we do know? If I can't be gracious and forgiving of those I've never met, am I likely to overflow with forgiveness to my boss, neighbor, friend, brother, spouse, etc. when they sin against me?

Practice forgiveness. It is at the center of your identity as someone who follows Jesus.

Holy Spirit (Helper)

Holy Spirit is a person, not a thing

Who is the Holy Spirit and how exactly does He help us?

Sometimes, we refer to the Holy Spirit as some nebulous spirit being that just hovers around to lead us this way and that. But Jesus is very clear: the Spirit is *so much more*. He is our real and necessary helper and advocate, sent to assist us in living the Christian life.

- Jn 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send **Him** to you.
- John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that **He** may abide with you forever.
- Jn 16:13 However, when **He**, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He [a]will take of Mine and declare it to you.

In a recent staff devotional, we read the following quote from Tim Keller's Encounters with Jesus on the role of the Holy Spirit:

Many people say that the Holy Spirit gives us power, and that's true, but how does he do that? Does he merely zap us with higher energy levels? No—by calling him the *other* Advocate [or Helper], Jesus has given us the great clue to understanding how the empowering of the Holy Spirit works. The first Advocate [Jesus] is speaking to God for you, but the second Advocate [the Holy Spirit] is speaking to *you* for you.

In other words, the Holy Spirit was sent to remind us about Christ and empower us to live in light of the gospel. Here are a few ways that the Holy Spirit “speaks” to us both for our good and God's glory:

Reminds us about all that Jesus has taught

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit — the Father will send Him in My name — will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you” (John 14:26).

He is a personal witness to testify about Christ.

“When the Counselor comes, the One I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father — He will testify about Me” (John 15:26).

Convicts us of sin

“When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:8).

Guides us to truth

“When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. He will also declare to you what is to come” (John 16:13).

Brings glory to Jesus

“He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14).

So this is why Jesus tells His disciples that it is to their advantage that He left them ([John 16:7](#)). Because in His leaving, a new Helper was sent. And this Helper would be the most sturdy of lifelines to all those who believe upon the gospel.

To receive the Spirit is to receive a helper and advocate for the soul, One who will always point us to Jesus, our Redeemer and King. Will you listen to Him?

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Jn 16:7

Must heed the Lordship of the Holy Spirit

Dove

Maternal bird - sacrifices for its young

Calm, gentle, peace, rest

Ge 8:11 - Olive branch - peace

Provides insight

Mt 10:16 - Harmless

Ps 55:6-7 - Rest

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Jesus baptism

Mt 3:16

Mk 1:10

Lk 3:22

Jn 1:32

Sacrifice in the OT

Fire

Power, presence, purity

Transforms us

Consuming - breaks everything down

Purifies - impurities removed

Ex 3:2-4

Mt 3:11

Ro 5:5

Act 2:1-4 NLT

1Ki 18:36-39 Elijah vs prophets of Baal

Is 6:6-7

Jn 14:26

Jn 16:13

Water

Jn 4:13-14

Jn 3:5

Jn 7:37-39

Jn 6:63

Ez 36:25-27

Oil - anointing

1Sa 16:13

Lk 4:18

Act 10:37-38

Ps 23:5-6

Fruits of the Spirit (Spiritual gifts)

Spiritual gifts - 1Co 12:4-11

(Paul is writing this as a correction to the church's misuse of the gifts)

Holy Spirit owns and distributes the gifts to us (as the receiver) - it comes from the HS and it is for others - the purpose of you receiving it is to give it to others

Differences and diversity that all bring unity to God

A giver - The discerning gifts

Discerning gifts - 3

Word of Knowledge 1Co 12:8

Knowing something specific that you didn't learn by natural means

Ex - knowing the someone is sick without being told, being told to talk to a stranger about something they couldn't know about

Used to help/encourage others

Jn 4:17-18

Acts 9:10-12

Discerning of Spirits 1Co 12

Making the believer aware of the presence of a demonic spirit

They have no power over believers

We have all power over them

All demons know and submit to Jesus

Mk 5:6-20

Word of wisdom

A Divine answer or solution for a particular question or problem

God uses someone to say/do something that solves an unanswerable problem

Mt 17:24-27

Dynamic gifts - 3

1Co 12:4-11 NLT

Gift of faith

Supernatural portion of belief and confidence for a specific situation

Mk 4:36-41

Heb 11:6-7

Gift of healing

Supernatural provision of divine health

Jn 5:1-15

Gift of miracles

Divine intervention that alters situations

Acts 8:4-8

Acts 8:13

Jn 11:38-44

Declarative gifts

Islam

Is Islam a Religion of Peace?

Posted: 12 Mar 2015 01:26 PM PDT

It is commonly asserted these days that Islam is a religion of peace. Standing in the smoldering remains that had been the Twin Towers, George W. Bush talked about evil men hijacking a great religion. Our current president doggedly refuses to allow the terroristic acts committed in recent days to be described as “Islamic.” We must speak instead generically against terrorism or violence in all its forms.

On one level this is perfectly understandable for a politician. Politicians are called to speak in a political context, and a president represents all the people of the United States (in theory), and this would include as many as seven million American Muslims. It is also a reality that we live in a pluralistic culture and that we aren’t ever allowed to say anything “intolerant” (Intolerance is our culture’s only recognized sin!). We can’t, says our president, talk about Islamic terrorism

because that could send the wrong message – that we somehow believe that all Muslims are terrorists, or that Islam is somehow inherently a religion of violence.

I can understand all of this, but it all stinks. And it is also wrong-headed on a great many levels. The reality is that western civilization is being confronted by many different terroristic threats on many different fronts, at home and abroad, which share one common element: *Islam*. Whether it is Al Shabaab in Somalia/Kenya, Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen, ISIS in Iraq and Syria, or old-fashioned Al Qaeda in places like Pakistan and Afghanistan (not to mention the likes of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and state sponsors like Iran), we are confronted by terror that has one common feature – *it is Islamic*. Domestically, well beyond 9-11, we have the Boston Marathon bombing and the “workplace violence” of the Fort Hood attacks (to name just a few – more could be named, and, I fear, will yet be named). What do these have in common? Terror, yes, but also *adherence to Islam*.

While it is certainly indisputably true that most Muslims in the world are not terrorists, it is equally indisputably true that the vast majority of terrorists are Muslim. What do we make of this? Is it as incidental to their terrorism as our president would imply? No more important than the fact that they are mostly male, or young? Or is there something about Islam itself that gives rise to this kind of violence? Anyone taking a halfway serious look at the question can easily answer the question.

The truth is that violence is not something incidental to Islam; it is at the core of the Muslim identity – the teachings of the Koran (or Quran, if you prefer) and the person of the “prophet” Muhammad (or whatever spelling of his name you prefer). I know that many people reading this will be up in arms at my arrogant presumption at this point. Who am I to speak to what Muslims believe? I’m not a Muslim. No. That’s true. But I can read – history, theology, the news. And I’ve read the Koran. I know what it says.

The Koran isn’t a long document. It is roughly the length of the New Testament. Nor is it a particularly difficult document to read. Its message is not a complex one. Its central message is that all people everywhere must submit to Allah and his prophet Muhammad. If they do so peacefully, great. They are then free to pay some extra taxes and live as second class citizens. If they don’t...well, then things get violent. Take this verse: *So when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, smite the necks; then, when you have overcome them, make (them) prisoners, and afterwards (set them free) as a favour or for ransom till the war lay down its burdens. 47:4*. The message here is a straightforward one, as any sword-wielding ISIS jihadi would agree. Submit, convert, or we’ll remove your head (and kill your family, rape your daughter, etc.). We can say a lot of things about this verse, but one thing we can’t say is that it reflects well upon Islam as a religion of peace.

Now some will here object that I’m yanking a verse out of its context. I am. That’s true. The problem with proof-texting, though, is that you can remove a verse from its context and make it say something inconsistent with that context. This I did not do. The Koran as a whole is a book with a particularly violent overtone, championing violence against unbelievers, and suggesting peace only in contexts devoid of opposition (which means contexts in which no one challenges the truth of Islam – a hijab for every woman! Ignorance and oppression for all schoolgirls! A scimitar in the hand of every young man! Glorious paradise!). Don’t believe me? Go read it.

Not only does the Koran teach this, but Muhammad lived it. Over the next 100 years he and his successors cut a bloody path of destruction across the entire Middle East, North Africa (all the way into Spain), and over Asia Minor into Europe (turned back in what is today France at the Battle of Tours in 732). Violence is not some sort of modern aberration, a twisting of the central message of Islam. *It is the central message of Islam*. Those many hundreds of millions of non-violent Muslims are frankly pretty nominal Muslims (thanks be to God!). The worst thing for the world would be for these folks to take their religion more seriously.

In stark contrast to Islam, Christianity is a religion of peace. At the core of our faith is not Muhammad and a sword, but Christ and a cross. He didn’t come to kill, but to die. He didn’t say, “Avenge!” but “Forgive.” He didn’t say “Go and Kill!” but (as Bonhoeffer famously paraphrases him) “Come and die.” He is the Prince of Peace; the Fruit of the Spirit is peace; the Utopia he promises is the place where *“Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire” (Is 9:5)*. The central ethic of the Christian faith isn’t hatred and destruction of our enemy, but love for our enemy: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Mt 5:43-44)*. There is a religion of peace. It isn’t Islam.

Jehovah's Witnesses

What to do when the JW's come a-knockin'

Posted: 26 Mar 2015 11:22 AM PDT

Pittsburgh is known for many things: steel, rivers, football. Great linebackers like Jack Hamm, Jack Lambert, and Joey Porter. There is currently a crisis for the Pittsburgh Steelers at outside linebacker – James Harrison is very old (though still intimidating to look at); Jarvis Jones is still unproven; Arthur “Don’t-Cross-the” Moats may chip in. But then there is the unexpected retirement of free agent and former first round draft pick Jason Worilds. Worilds had really underachieved given his draft status, but he was nevertheless expected to cash in on a bigtime payday in this, a contract year. It’s always shocking when an athlete walks away from tens of millions of dollars of guaranteed money. Even more shocking is the reason why Worilds walked away – not so much concussion fears or chronic injuries, but to pursue his devotion to his religion, the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Which brings the conversation back to where it began – things for which Pittsburgh is famous. There has been little awareness of one of Pittsburgh’s more dubious contributions to the world: the legacy of Charles Russell. Russell was born near the city in 1852 and (abandoning his Presbyterian upbringing) he began what became the Watchtower Society, now better known as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, an aggressively proselytizing sect of around 8 million people. Perhaps these folks have come knocking at your door.

The JW's frequent my street, a typical dead-end suburbanish place. Many knocks come at my door, usually assorted children asking if so-and-so can come out and play. But probably twice a year it's the JW's. They came to my house just last week. Usually they come in pairs. The pair on this occasion surprised me. A pretty lady, thirty-fiveish, with a cute little toddler in tow, holding her by the hand. There was a similar pair knocking simultaneously at the house next door, another across the street. The use of the kids is a brilliant “in,” a great way to open doors and start conversations.

I must confess, however, that I’m anything but jubilant when a JW comes knocking. Despite being a theologically oriented person who greatly enjoys discourse on such matters, I’m often at a loss as to how to deal with the JW's. Perhaps you’ve felt the same. They always come at the worst possible moment. On this occasion I was just walking out the door somewhat on the late side to cover a class for a colleague. I had my laptop, a massive bag of books, a thermos of coffee, and a couple of loose grapefruits in hand; I wasn’t feeling particularly chatty. Beyond this, I had a nagging conviction that I hadn’t always handled my JW conversations particularly well, and that a kid or two was looking out the window to see how I would handle this situation.

Dealing with the JW's is problematic at two levels: the doctrinal and the relational. Let's deal first with doctrine. The first thing the polite pretty JW assured me when I informed her that we were Christians was that she is a Christian too. But this isn't so. JW's teach (among other things) that:

- Jesus is not the Son of God. He is less than fully divine.
- Jesus was not raised from the dead. There is no bodily resurrection.
- Salvation is not by grace through faith, but is related to human effort (especially witnessing for Jehovah).
- Jesus' return is not an anticipated future event; he came in 1914.
- Only 144,000 people will make it all the way in to heaven. And those folks will be JW's.
- There is no conscious existence after death (*soul sleep*) and there is no hell (they teach *annihilationism*).

These are not small errors regarding minor matters theologically, particularly the first three. They strike at the heart of the Christian faith. You simply can't be a Christian if you don't believe in Christ's divinity and his bodily resurrection from the dead. Where does this doctrine come from? Charles Russell's unique and troubled method of biblical interpretation. But that way of saying it is not fair to the bible. The JW's made their own translation of the bible because the real one didn't conform adequately to their theology. Some folks say you can make the bible say whatever you want it to say. That's literally what was accomplished with the *New World Translation* (there are many good and responsible bible translations – the NWT is *not* one of them!). For instance, the NWT “translates” John 1:1, which traditionally reads “And the Word was God,” as “And the Word was a god.” This is an impossible translation, violating Greek grammatical usage, namely Colwell's Rule. It's not a translation; it's an (impossible and irresponsible) interpretation.

So, there's the doctrine problem. But engaging JW's around doctrine is something I've found to be particularly fruitless. You need to know they've got big problems, but trying to persuade them they have big problems will get you almost

nowhere. I've learned this the hard way. I've spent time discussing Colwell's Rule with some JW "teachers" – futile! Here's what I recommend instead. And this is a rule for general engagement, of application for folks well beyond JWs.

Instead of engaging them doctrinally, engage them relationally. Frankly, this is way harder. But in the end it will also prove to be far more effective. Here are some tips (more really helpful stuff [here](#)):

- **Be polite and kind.** You care about these people. They are walking in darkness. They need you to shine some light, which you will do poorly by pretending not to be home or slamming a door on their nose.
- **Talk to them about what God has done in your life.** That's right – witness to *them* about Jesus! What difference does he (the real Jesus from the bible) make? This should have none of the awkwardness these conversations sometimes entail. *They* knocked on *your* door to talk to you about God – so *you* talk to *them*. And you can do this even if you haven't mastered all the ins and outs of JW (or orthodox) theology.
- **Take their literature** (one less that someone else will get!)
- **Ask questions, push them concerning the practical implications of their faith** – Ask them – “What do you do with your guilt?” “It must be hard to not have real assurance of your salvation?” Etc.
- **Be prepared for them to come back** (and to bring a friend).

In short, be prepared to engage in relational ministry. This takes time, effort, prayer, concern, compassion. Pretty much the stuff Jesus calls us to with regard to all people. Get ready for the next time the JWs come a-knockin'. Who knows? It might even be a former Steeler linebacker.

Judging

Do not “judge,” except for when you should

Posted: 11 Feb 2016 01:07 PM PST

Matthew 7:1-2 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

If there is one word that needs greater clarity and nuance in our day it is the word “judge.” In our cultural context and in our churches there is a great deal of concern about “judging.” *You shouldn't judge. Who are you to judge?* There is a lot of heft to these words. Included in questions like these are certain assumptions about the *judger*: she is self-righteousness, hypocritical, even bigoted perhaps. Jesus is often drug along into discussions of judging: Jesus said, “Don't judge!” That's in red letters!

I'm no champion of hypocrisy, nor of self-righteousness (nor of bigotry). If there is one thing I know about myself, it is that I'm no prize. I'm a sinner saved by God's grace. I'm guilty of great (in the sense of *large*) sin. I offer this preamble of self-humiliation because I'm sure that my discussion of judgment will be judged by some as being judgmental (I judge this to be a tad ironic!). But we simply must bring greater clarity to such emotion-laden words as “judge.” We need to define what in the world we are talking about, what these words mean. Doing so can bring nothing but greater lucidity and civility to our discourse.

I would like to look at “judging” in the New Testament; we will do this through a study of the relevant Greek word group. That sounds boring, but there is big pay-off here. Judging is not nearly as simple as folks assume.

The Greek verb most often translated “judge” would be transliterated as *kríno*. You'd pronounce it just like it looks. *Kríno* is a word with a very broad range of meaning. It means “judge” in the sense of *rendering a legal decision*, but it means a great deal else as well. It includes the ideas of *deciding*, *preferring*, *evaluating*, *holding a view*, *condemning*, and *ruling*. That is a very broad range of meaning! (The technical term for a range of meaning is *semantic domain*). *Kríno*'s semantic domain includes a whole bunch of different kinds of things: some of these carry a negative connotation to most people (such as *condemning*), while others carry a much more positive or neutral connotation (such as *preferring*).

Kríno is an important verb in the New Testament, but as important for our conversation are three related Greek verbs. These verbs are like sisters of *kríno*, differing in form only by the addition of a prefix. These are *diakríno*, *anakríno*,

and *katakríno*. All occur throughout the NT, sometimes in conjunction with *kríno*. They relate closely to the root term (*kríno*), but each carries its own, more narrow, semantic domain.

diakríno – Like *kríno* this means to “judge,” but specifically in the sense of *making a distinction, noting a difference*. **In short, this verb means to distinguish.**

anakríno – Again, this verb means to “judge,” but more specifically carries the nuance of *engaging in careful study, questioning, examining, discerning*. **In short, this verb means to evaluate.**

katakríno – Like *kríno*, *katakríno* means to “judge,” but here the force is consistently negative. It carries the nuance of *pronouncing sentence after determination of guilt, of condemning, or damning*. **In short, the verb means to condemn.**

We opened this post with Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:1-2. The context is the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), a sermon which focuses largely on the condemnation of self-righteousness and hypocrisy (one of the most prominent marks of Jesus’ opponents among the Jewish religious leaders).

Jesus says, “*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*” Which verb is here employed? It is *kríno*. What is the force of *kríno* here, however? Is it referring to judging in the sense of making distinctions (a la *diakríno*)? Is he talking about judging in the sense of making moral evaluations (as in the sense of *anakríno*)? Or, is he talking about judging in the negative sense of condemning (as in the sense of *katakríno*)?

This is not a hard question to answer. Jesus means judge in the sense of *condemn or pronounce judgment upon* (like *katakríno*). How can we know this? The same way we always make sense out of the manifold possibilities for any word’s meaning. We know from context. And what is the context of these words? Well, consider the words immediately following:

³ “*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?*” ⁴ “*How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?*” ⁵ “*You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*”

What is Jesus talking about here? The sin of hypocrisy. The inability to recognize one’s own sin (while clearly seeing the sins of others!). What should we do? Recognize our own sin and repent of it (take the log out!) – this requires that we “judge” ourselves (in the sense of *anakríno*). Note too that “*you will then see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*” The problem isn’t noticing the speck in your brother’s eye; it is failing to notice the log in your own. You are to help your brother out with his speck (sin!), but after first dealing with your own. The “judging” Jesus is *condemning*. It is self-righteous, hypocritical judgment, not *all* judgment. Otherwise, Jesus is contradicting himself (he’s not). He goes on:

⁶ “*Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.*”

Jesus says not to throw our pearls before pigs. This raises an important question – how am I supposed to know who the pigs are? Does this not require me to exercise some measure of discernment? That is, must I not judge the spiritual condition of those around me (in the sense of *diakríno*)? Of course it does. Unless Jesus is contradicting himself (he’s not). He goes on:

¹⁵ “*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?*” ¹⁷ “*Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*”

I’m to watch out for false prophets. How will I spot one? By his fruit! Good fruit indicates a good tree; bad fruit indicates a bad tree. How do I determine good fruit from bad (and therefore a good teacher from a bad one)? I discern (or judge) the fruit (in the sense of *anakríno* or *diakríno*, take your pick). Jesus wants me to judge, unless he’s contradicting himself (he’s not!).

When Jesus talks about judging in Matthew 7:1-2, he clearly means it in the sense of “offering self-righteous and hypocritical condemnation.” This is consistent with what we see so often in the New Testament witness:

Luke 6:37 ³⁷ “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Romans 2:1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Romans 14:10 ¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.

James 4:11-12 ¹¹ Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you— who are you to judge your neighbor?

Clearly, self-righteous, hypocritical condemnation is viewed as a serious sin. But...not all judgment is bad! In fact, we are often expected and even *commanded* to judge. In Luke 12, Jesus rebukes the crowd for hypocrisy because they *fail* to judge! Here *judging* (*kríno*) clearly has the sense of *discerning* (*diakrino*).

Luke 12:54-57 ⁵⁴ He said to the crowd: “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘It’s going to rain,’ and it does. ⁵⁵ And when the south wind blows, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. ⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time? ⁵⁷ “Why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right?

In this sense, it is absolutely wrong *not* to judge. There are a great many other New Testament texts that command us to judge as well (1 Cor 5:11-13; 6:1-6; 10:15; 11:13; John 7:24, to name a few).

The path to this point may seem a long and winding one, but we’re ready to apply. When the Bible (and Jesus in particular) talk about the sin of “judging,” there is a very particular kind of judging in view. We see that:

- “Judging” is NOT moral evaluation of oneself. We are commanded to do this.
- “Judging” is NOT moral evaluation of the actions of others. It is expected we will see and recognize sin (as defined by scripture) in others as well as in ourselves. We are commanded to do this.
- “Judging” is NOT evaluation of the spiritual condition of those around us. We are explicitly commanded to do this (pearls and pigs – recognizing our inherent limitations here and leaving final evaluation to God, who alone is *the* Judge).
- “Judging” is NOT recognizing error and false teaching. We are commanded to evaluate and discern the teaching we receive (trees and fruit).

In contrast we see that:

- “Judging” is an attitude of self-righteousness and hypocrisy.
- “Judging” is condemnatory; It is not primarily concerned with evaluating the truth, or discerning rightly.
- “Judging” usurps the role of God, who alone is *the* Judge in the sense of pronouncing judgment.

The conversation goes off the rails in our day because the cultural definition of “judging” assumes the meaning denied in points 1-4. Instead, “judging” is points 5-7. There is plenty of potential application in our day to the sin of self-righteousness and hypocrisy. We should apply accordingly. However, there is also plenty of mis-application in our day. Discerning moral error is not “judging.” Recognizing sin is not “judging.” Affirming the exclusive truth of the gospel is not “judging.” Affirming salvation through Christ alone is not “judging.”

Let’s understand “judging” rightly (that is, biblically) and not judge or judge accordingly.

9/11 Harbinger (Warning)

Is 9:10 "The bricks have fallen down,
but we will rebuild with dressed stone;
the fig trees have been felled,
but we will replace them with cedars."

This Bible verse is not something that pleases God. Rather, it is a statement of defiance against God! This was Isaiah pronouncing judgement on Israel. This is not a coincidence. This is not a mistake. The Bible verse squarely places America under judgement, just as it meant for Israel.

Harbingers are signs that God has put in His Word to warn a nation of impending destruction (Isaiah 9:10). Some people respond to destruction with arrogance against God and plans of their own to rebuild. A harbinger is not to bring fear, it's to bring a nation to repentance, so that destruction is averted. What happened to Israel is an example of what will happen to the United States of America. God's mercy warns us as a nation, so we can repent and move into revival. Live by faith and you will escape judgment. In ancient Israel in the 700s B.C., God warns them with nine harbingers of the judgment that will come when they turn away from God. These same signs or harbingers are currently appearing in the United States.

- 09/11/2001 – WTC towers hit by planes and fall to the ground.
- 09/11/2001 – A sycamore tree struck down by debris from the last tower to fall is retrieved and made in to a sign called "The Sycamore of Ground Zero."
- 09/12/2001 – Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle at Capital Hills says, "America will emerge from this tragedy as we have emerged from all adversity – united and strong..." and quotes Isaiah 9:10 about rebuilding and recovering.
- 09/28/2001 – Stock market crash (684 points).
- 11/22/2003 – A Norway Spruce "Tree of Hope" is planted at Ground Zero, replacing the lost sycamore.
- 07/04/2004 – A 20 ton stone quarried from upper state New York is installed at Ground Zero with a ceremony on The nation declares then "We will rebuild."
- 09/11/2004 – Presidential candidate John Edwards Isaiah 9:10 about rebuilding in a speech in Washington, D.C on the third anniversary of 9/11.
- 04/27/2006 – America rebuilds on Ground Zero. (Freedom Tower breaks ground).
- 09/29/2008 – Stock market crash (777 points).

1st Harbinger: The Breach

The Breach – A break in protection – God has lifted His protective hand

- Israel – Assyrian army invaded Israel in 732 B.C.
- USA – Terrorists attacked twin towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

In 732 B.C., the hedge of protection was removed and Israel's enemies invade the land and wreak havoc. The calamity traumatizes the nation but it takes place on a limited scale, as with 9/11. The warning is the removal of the hedge. On September 11, 2001, America's hedge of protection was removed – the breach of America's security – and was a sign that God has lifted His protective hand.

2nd Harbinger: The Terrorists

The Middle Eastern Terrorists attack

- Israel – Assyria conquered Israel, crushed the military, and captured the king and its citizens.
- USA – Terrorists flew kidnapped airplanes into the twin towers and brought destruction.

It was the dark shadow of Assyrian terror that loomed over the kingdom of Israel. The danger against which the prophets had warned. And when, years later, Israel's final judgment came, the Assyrians would again be the means through which

it would happen. So, too, the attack on America is carried out by terrorists. The Assyrians were a Semitic people, children of the Middle East. So too were the terrorists of 9/11.

3rd Harbinger: The Fallen Bricks

- Israel – The city walls of protection fell.
- USA – The twin towers fell.

Scripture found at Ground Zero: Matthew 7:27 (great was its fall).

The most visible signs of the attack on ancient Israel were that of the fallen buildings and the ruin heaps of fallen bricks. The third harbinger is the sign of the fallen bricks of the fallen buildings. On Sept 11, 2001, Americans were confronted with the same sign, fallen bricks of the fallen buildings of the wreckage of Ground Zero. America was not turning back to God. It was a short-lived spiritual revival that never came.

Additional scriptures: Genesis 8:22, ch. 15; Hebrews 13:8; Matthew 24:12, 14, 5:12, 7:27; Acts 2:17; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Malachi 2:17; Jeremiah 32:35, ch. 19; 1 Samuel 6:6; Isaiah 5:5, 6:8, 9:6-10, chs. 36-37; Micah 1:1; Hosea 1:1; Galatians 6:7; Matthew 7:27

4th Harbinger: The Tower

Hebrew word for pride is also tower

- Israel – They determined to rebuild for themselves a bigger and better tower.
- USA – Governmental leaders say they will defiantly build a tower without God.

Second scripture found at Ground Zero: Genesis 11:4, Come let us build for ourselves a tower.

Israel defiantly began rebuilding on the devastated ground, vowing to rebuild higher and stronger. So, too, in the wake of 9/11, American leaders vowed to rebuild at Ground Zero higher and stronger – the Tower begins to rise at Ground Zero. Those involved act unwittingly.

5th Harbinger: The Quarried Stone

The Gazit Stone. *We will rebuild with quarried stone*

Gazit stone – Hewn stone — stone of judgment — stone of their defiance

- Israel – They set up a quarried stone that was a symbol that they planned to rebuild bigger and better.
- USA – People of New York had a 20-ton quarried stone brought to Ground Zero where the leaders pronounced words of defiance.

The Gazit Stone. *We will rebuild with quarried stone* - The Israelites carve out quarried stone from mountain rock and bring it back to the ground of destruction where clay bricks once stood. Three years after 9/11, a stone is quarried out of the mountain rock of New York. This massive stone was brought back to Ground Zero. In ancient Israel this stone became a misplaced embodiment of the nation's confidence in its own power. So too the massive stone at Ground Zero became the symbolic cornerstone of the rebuilding. Public ceremonies accompanied the stone placement. Plans to rebuild Ground Zero would be frustrated for years. Eventually they would remove the stone from GZ altogether.

6th Harbinger: The Fallen Sycamore

The Sycamore. *The Sycamores have been cut down*

The Sycamore tree has fallen

- Israel – Assyrians devastated buildings and trees.
- USA – The sycamore tree was struck down by a beam from the falling second tower. People displayed the tree in a glass case thinking it was a good thing. They were unaware this was a sign of God's judgment.

The attack on ancient Israel resulted in the striking down of the sycamore tree, a biblical sign of national judgment. The fallen sycamore is a sign of uprooting, a warning and, in ignoring the warning, it becomes a prophecy of judgment.

On 9/11, as the North Tower fell it sent debris and wreckage which struck and uprooted an object – a sycamore tree growing at Ground Zero. The tree was made into a symbol and named *The Sycamore of Ground Zero*.

When it fell in ancient Israel it prophesied the nation's downfall and the end of its kingdom. What happens to America depends on if the warning is heeded.

7th Harbinger: Replaced with the Cedar Tree

The Erez Tree. *But we will plant cedars in their place*

A cedar (erez) tree, indicating strength, was planted in place of the fallen sycamore tree

- Israel – They planted a stronger tree to replace the sycamore tree.
- USA – A helicopter lowered a cedar tree into the hole where the sycamore had been.

In their defiance of God, the Israelites replace the fallen sycamore with a Cedar tree. The cedar, being stronger than the sycamore becomes a symbol of the nation's arrogant hope that it will emerge from the crisis stronger than before. The English name for this tree is "Cedar," but the Hebrew word is "*Erez*." *Erez* stands not only for cedar but for a conifer tree of the panacea family. In November of 2003, a tree was lowered at the corner of Ground Zero into the soil where the fallen sycamore once stood. The tree was a conifer, a panacea tree, the biblical Erez. A ceremony was held around the tree and it, too, became a symbol – entitled *The Tree of Hope*. There is always hope. A nation's true hope is found only in returning to God.

Additional scriptures: Ruth 1-4; Hebrews 13:8; Isaiah 9:9-10; Jeremiah 45:4; Psalm 78:47; Isaiah 41:19; Proverbs 1:23; 1 Corinthians 10:6; Deuteronomy 30:19; Romans 2:4

8th Harbinger: The Utterance

The Utterance. The Eighth Harbinger was the public speaking of the ancient vow of defiance.

The Utterance —the official vow made by a national leader on behalf of the nation. For this harbinger to manifest, the vow would have to be spoken in the nation's capital by a national leader, as it had been in ancient Israel.

- Israel – Isaiah chronicles the nation's defiance (Isaiah 9:9-10).
- USA – John Edwards' speech three years after 9/11.

On Sept 11, 2004, every object mentioned in the prophecy of Isa 9:10 had manifested. The public utterance of the prophecy had to take place publicly, which happened on Sept 11, 2004 when VP candidate John Edwards, giving a speech in the capital city, quoted this exact scripture word for word in Wash., DC. Without realizing it, he was joining the two nations together and, without realizing it, pronouncing judgment on America. The ancient and the modern were bound together.

John Edwards

The date was September 11, 2004. The event was the third anniversary of the 9/11 breach. The speaker was the senator and vice president candidate John Edwards. The place was America's capital city of Washington. Speaking at a gathering of congressional caucus, Edwards uttered these words:

"Good morning. Today, on this day of remembrance and mourning, we have the Lord's Word to get us through:

The bricks have fallen
But we will rebuild with dressed stones
The sycamores have been cut down
But we will put cedars in their place..."

By quoting Isaiah 9:10, a major American candidate for high office had precisely uttered Israel's ancient vow. He had meant it to be a positive inspiration to the audience. He or presumably his speechwriter didn't read the context. No one realized that in quoting the text, he was unwittingly highlighting America's defiance in response to calamity, following the exact pattern set by Israel's original defiance revealed in the text. In other words, the utterance joined the Assyrian invasion to 9/11 and America's post-9/11 defiance to Israel's defiance in the face of God's judgment.

Even more amazing, the entire speech delivered that day was built around that same ancient vow. Edwards took the objects of Isaiah 9:10, the sycamore, the cedar or erez tree, and the hewn stone, and used them as figures or symbols of 9/11, America's response to 9/11, and what he believed to be national resurgence...

Intending to deliver an inspiring address, he was unwittingly pronouncing judgment on America.

9th Harbinger: The Prophecy

- Israel – The Prophet Isaiah spoke a prophecy of God for judgment (Isaiah 9).
- USA – Tom Daschle's speech on 9/12 "this is what we will do," and President Obama's speech announced, "We will rebuild and come back stronger," and he read Isaiah 9:10.

The Ninth Harbinger is the proclaiming of the ancient vow as prophecy, as a matter of public record, and spoken before the words come true. On Sept 12, 2001, the day after 9/11, America issues its official response to the attack. The one in charge of issuing the response was Tom Daschle, Senate Majority Leader. As he closes his speech he makes a declaration – he proclaims the ancient vow of defiance, word for word, to the world. By doing so he prophesies the nation's future course, all of which comes to pass.

U.S. Senator Tom Daschle Quoted Bible Verse Isaiah 9:10 in Speech on September 12, 2001

On the morning of September 12, 2001, a day after America's calamity, the al Qaeda breach, the US Senate and House of Representatives, the representative bodies of the entire American nation, issued a joint resolution in response to 9/11. After the resolution was read, condemning the attacks, expressing condolences, and calling for unity, a war against the terrorists, and punishment of the guilty parties, the Senate majority Leader, Tom Daschle, the highest representative of the nation's highest legislative body, rose to speak. At the end of the speech, Daschle uttered the following:

I know that there is only the smallest measure of inspiration that can be taken from this devastation, but there is a passage in the Bible from Isaiah that I think speaks to all of us at times like this...

The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with dressed stone;
The fig trees have been felled,
But we will replace them with cedars.

Additional scriptures: 2 Samuel 22:47; Isaiah 9:8-10, 16; John 11:49-51; Romans 10:9-10; John 3:3 (AMP); Hebrews 12:23 (AMP)

3rd Witness

Any truth is established by 2-3 witnesses
Tom Daschle's speech on 9/12/11

- Barak Obama

One month after his first inauguration, President Obama appeared on Capitol Hill in the same place where Tom Daschle had spoken the day after 9/11. On February 24, 2009, after the American economic collapse, the President said: (Tweet that!)

But while our economy may be weakened and our confidence shaken, though we are living through difficult and uncertain times, I want every American to know this:

We will rebuild.

We will recover.

And the United States of America will emerge stronger than before.

(From Jonathan Cahn's The Harbinger Companion with Study Guide page 99 – 100.)

Mystery Ground

The United States of America was dedicated to God by President George Washington and governmental leaders in 1789 at "Ground Zero." The first official act of the new government was to pray together.

Solomon built and dedicated the Temple to God (2 Chronicles 5-7).

- By 586 B.C. Israel had turned away from God.
- Israel's destruction began in Jerusalem at the very spot where it had originally been dedicated to God.

America's consecration ground is known as "Ground Zero" in New York City.

- The only building there that was not destroyed on 9/11 was a little stone chapel where the Founding Fathers prayed. The sycamore tree saved that building from destruction.

Additional scriptures: Jeremiah 2:2, 45:4; 1 Corinthians 1:22; Matthew 6:10; Psalm 122:6

The Second Shaking

The mystery of the Harbinger continues – and lies behind everything from the Global War on Terror, the Collapse of the American economy, the crash of Wall Street, the Great Recession, and more.

Amazingly, events happened with an unseen hand, and people acted unwittingly in the unfolding of this prophecy. The Prophet character says that "The Almighty has His own purposes." God, in His mercy, always reaches out in mercy. At Ground Zero, the ground of devastation becomes the ground of restoration. Incredibly it was at the site of Ground Zero in the miracle church, St Paul's Chapel, that this nation was dedicated to God by first president George Washington & other leaders at his inauguration in 1789. The nation's first government was formed in New York City before DC was formed. God is calling the nation back to Himself. "The heart of God wills for salvation," the Prophet says. "Greater than his judgments are His compassions."

Marriage

- Marriage should be between man, woman and God – 3 together to form 1

- Ecc 4:12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
- God loves marriage
 - Mal 2:10 Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another By profaning the covenant of the fathers? 11 Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The Lord's holy institution which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god.
- God's purpose for marriage
 - To replicate His nature and image on the earth
 - Ge 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
 - To extend God's authority on the earth
 - 1Sam 8:7 And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.
 - God is to be the authority on the earth, not governments
 - Generationally multiply His heart and Kingdom for years to come
 - Ge 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
 - Multiply God's human family with righteous offspring
 - Mal 2:15 Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.

[Astonishing Secret of Marital Health Revealed!](#)

Rich Herbster, Posted: 03 Mar 2015 01:12 PM PST

A marvelous new scientific discovery has unveiled a secret of relevance to most of our population – those who are or will be married. What is the secret you ask? What earth-shattering insight has been garnered that has never before been known to mankind? Some insight from genetics, perhaps? Nope. Some sort of radical new therapeutic methodology? No sir. A never before divined massage technique? By no means.

Secular social science has spoken and the key ingredient that one group of researchers has uncovered is....(*insert dramatic drum roll here!*)...*kindness*. That seems rather anti-climactic doesn't it? Kindness. Here is the gist of the study. A fellow by the name of Gottman gathered 130 newlywed couples to a retreat and watched them do ordinary stuff that newlywed couples do. Well, *noteverything* that newlywed couples do, but stuff like "cook, clean, listen to music, eat, chat, and hang out." That led to the radical discovery: *Kindness is the key to relational health*. Kindness seen in how couples respond in everyday interactions. Emily Esfahani Smith writes about it in [a fascinating article posted to businessinsider.com](#):

Throughout the day, partners would make requests for connection, what Gottman calls "bids." For example, say that the husband is a bird enthusiast and notices a goldfinch fly across the yard. He might say to his wife, "Look at that beautiful bird outside!" He's not just commenting on the bird here: he's requesting a response from his wife — a sign of interest or support — hoping they'll connect, however momentarily, over the bird.

The wife now has a choice. She can respond by either "turning toward" or "turning away" from her husband, as Gottman puts it. Though the bird-bid might seem minor and silly, it can actually reveal a lot about the health of the relationship. The husband thought the bird was important enough to bring it up in conversation and the question is whether his wife recognizes and respects that.

People who turned toward their partners in the study responded by engaging the bidder, showing interest and support in the bid. Those who didn't — those who turned away — would not respond or respond minimally and continue doing whatever they were doing, like watching TV or reading the paper. Sometimes they would respond with overt hostility, saying something like, "Stop interrupting me, I'm reading."

This is fascinating because the bid-moment seems so trivial. On the one hand, how important in the grand scheme of things is some dumb goldfinch? (It should be noted as a sidebar that I'm not widely regarded as a bird enthusiast). On the other hand, this is a huge deal because it isn't *just* a meaningless avian observation; it is a "bid" to connect. The content isn't really that important; the connection is. How many such "bids" pass between a husband and wife in any given 24 hour period? I don't know, but I'm guessing the answer could be summed up with some version of the answer "a lot." Each bid is an opportunity to connect, to show respect via a demonstration of basic kindness.

This may not seem very important – this whole "turning toward a bid" thing. But consider Smith's summary of the impact of this:

These bidding interactions had profound effects on marital well-being. Couples who had divorced after a six-year follow up had "turn-toward bids" 33 percent of the time. Only three in ten of their bids for emotional connection were met with intimacy. The couples who were still together after six years had "turn-toward bids" 87 percent of the time. Nine times out of ten, they were meeting their partner's emotional needs.

In other words: this bid thing is a small thing that has a huge impact over time. By ignoring your spouse's bids to connect you communicate disrespect. You basically say something like, "Yea, I really don't care about your dumb goldfinches (or possibly insert here 'sports thingummy' or 'work scuttlebutt' or 'uninteresting family matter'). I'm doing something more important (like stare at my smartphone)." This isn't just received as disinterest, but as disrespect. And over time that takes a serious relational toll, making it roughly three times more likely you'll be divorced in six years.

Marital relationships very rarely go bad in a violent explosion one day. More often they die a death by a thousand cuts. This is painfully evident to me when I sit down with a couple and hear a wife say, "I just don't love him anymore," while the fellow says some version of, "I thought things were great!" Sure, but you were clueless to the relational cost of turning away from a thousand and one seemingly insignificant bids. You were only looking at the big things, but a marriage is built on the capital of relational trust built by a thousand little investments of kindness, reaping long-term dividends.

As helpful as the social sciences and Dr. Gottman are at this point, we could have made this a much shorter article by beginning with a wiser teacher. The Apostle Paul wrote words that were likely read at your wedding: *Love is kind*. Be kind in your response to the small stuff. It might save your marriage.

[Practicing the Kindness of Attitudinal Loyalty](#)

Posted: 16 Apr 2015 01:50 PM PDT

In a (brilliantly written) [earlier post](#), I shared a helpful insight that researchers have uncovered that is key to marital happiness: kindness, and this displayed through gracious response in the midst of seemingly insignificant conversation.

[The same study](#) discovered another way in which kindness is demonstrated in a successful marriage. That is our attitude toward our spouse. Before your husband/wife ever opens their mouth, or walks through the door, have you already prejudged them? Have you concluded the worst about them? Doubt their good intentions?

According to researchers, those marital relationships that are most likely to fail (here dubbed "disasters") share this common feature: a poor attitude concerning one another's intentions.

One way to practice kindness is by being generous about your partner's intentions. From the research of the Gottmans, we know that disasters see negativity in their relationship even when it is not there. An angry wife may assume, for example, that when her husband left the toilet seat up, he was deliberately trying to annoy her. But he may have just absent-mindedly forgotten to put the seat down.

Or say a wife is running late to dinner (again), and the husband assumes that she doesn't value him enough to show up to their date on time after he took the trouble to make a reservation and leave work early so that they could spend a romantic evening together. But it turns out that the wife was running late because she stopped by a store to pick him up a gift for their special night out.

Imagine her joining him for dinner, excited to deliver her gift, only to realize that he's in a sour mood because he misinterpreted what was motivating her behavior. The ability to interpret your partner's actions and intentions charitably can soften the sharp edge of conflict.

“Even in relationships where people are frustrated, it’s almost always the case that there are positive things going on and people trying to do the right thing,” psychologist Ty Tashiro told me. “A lot of times, a partner is trying to do the right thing even if it’s executed poorly. So appreciate the intent.”

In other words, in successful marriages each spouse is likely to give their partner the benefit of the doubt. They are likely to think the best of their spouse, their intentions, their motivations. They are not in the habit of pre-judging them, assuming their maliciousness or carelessness.

R. Paul Stevens provides some helpful perspective along these lines in a terrific little book called *Married for Good*. There is a lot of gold here for a Christian couple seeking to faithfully live out the covenant of marriage, but among the most helpful sections of the book is a chapter entitled “The Six Loyalties.” A marriage is built on trust, faithfulness, loyalty. Stevens describes six aspects of this loyalty as he unpacks the meaning of the Hebrew term *Hesed*, usually translated as something like “steadfast love.” All six loyalties are tremendously helpful, but for our purposes here the loyalty of relevance is “Attitudinal Loyalty.”

Hesed involves cherishing our spouses, thinking the best of them. This is not a game of “let’s pretend.” It comes from choosing to see them with an attitude of respect rather than of withering criticism.

Sometimes attitudinal loyalty is not so much an “act of faith” as the result of faith, since it requires seeing our partners from Christ’s perspective.

Doris found herself constantly bogged down with her negative attitudes toward Bob. She had good reason. Bob was an overbearing husband who, largely unconsciously, tried to run his home the way he did the office. There was a lot of work to be done in their relationship, work which Bob was not ready to do. But there was something Doris could do.

She could change her attitude toward her husband. Instead of concentrating on his obvious faults, verbally criticizing him or falling into a sullen, depressed silence, Doris asked God to reveal his viewpoint on Bob....She began once again to see his good qualities, so easily forgotten. With the Lord’s grace she could foresee the possibility that even those troublesome qualities were areas where great character development could be experienced in Christ.

It is easy to see your spouse’s faults. It is easy to be negative. You don’t have to try to do so; you don’t need to be disciplined to do so. It is much harder to have a good attitude. It requires effort. And it requires a healthy dose of grace. It grows from the humility of recognizing that you’re no prize either, that you have plenty of faults. Despite your failings (sin!), God loves you in his Son, Jesus Christ. You are the recipient of grace. Your responsibility in all of your earthly relationships (particularly marriage) is to love as you have been loved. By being gracious. By having an attitude that is gracious. Attitudinal loyalty.

Paul was driving at this exactly when he says “love always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” Focus on your spouse’s positive qualities. Practice grace. Pray for a God’s eye view on your spouse. Be attitudinally loyal.

Communication is Key

Rich Herbster, Posted: 07 May 2015 10:48 AM PDT

Studies have shown that if you have 4-6 pre-marital counseling sessions prior to marriage, you are 50% less likely to ultimately divorce. This is a remarkable statistic. Especially when you consider that those pre-marital sessions are conducted by someone like me. Why is pre-marital counseling so important and helpful in laying the groundwork for marital success? I would argue it is pretty simple to explain. The reason it helps so much is that we work on basic relational skills such as communication and conflict resolution.

Communication is vital to marital health. If you can communicate effectively, you can resolve conflict. If you can resolve conflict, you can work through whatever issues emerge in the midst of marital life: financial stress, sexual frustrations, difficult in-laws, mis-aligned schedules, problems with kids, etc. If you can’t, you’re sunk. So we work on communication skills in pre-marital counseling sessions.

The chief of these communication skills are assertiveness and active listening. Assertiveness is the ability to express what you are thinking or feeling – to put into words what’s on your mind and heart – to transmit a message to your spouse. The content of this message is important – it needs to be clear and understandable, specific and measurable. But the other end

of the communication is also vital. Active listening describes listening for understanding (without interrupting, assuming you know what's being said, etc.). If you have all three parts (a willing communicator, a coherent message, and an engaged listener), communication works. If you don't, it doesn't.

Basically any form of communication has three parts: The communicator, the content of what is communicated, and the recipient of the communication. Different authors use different ways of referring to these three things:

- Transmitter – Message – Receiver
- Encoder – Code – Decoder
- Author – Text – Reader

Any communication will involve these three elements. This could be written communication (like the Constitution or the Bible), it could be a work of art, it could be a radio transmission, a conversation with your spouse, or graffiti scribbled on a subway wall. Whatever the mode of communication, there is a communicator, that which is communicated, and the communicatee (the recipient of the communication).

When we consider the Bible and its interpretation (hermeneutics), these three elements are all important. For any biblical text there is the Author (say...Paul), the text (say...Philippians), and the reader (say...you!). When we consider the Paul-Philippians-You triad of communication, where does meaning lie? Which element of the triad is most important when we consider understanding the meaning of the thing? Believe it or not, there are those who have argued for each of the three!

1) **The Text** – at one time it was argued that the meaning is to be found in the text, in and of itself. The author is irrelevant. Who he was or what he intended is unimportant. We have a text and we have to make sense of that text in and of itself. But...texts don't mean. Imagine if you walked into a museum and saw a painting. What does it mean? What is it saying? You might say that it is a Monet, and that as an impressionist he is interested in.... But you can't say this. Monet is irrelevant. All you have is brushstrokes on canvas. This doesn't work in art interpretation – nor will it do so in any other form of communication (including biblical hermeneutics).

2) **The Reader** – in our day the assumption is that meaning is to be derived by the reader. This is known as reader-response theory. What matters isn't what the author intended, or what the text says, but what *you* do with the text. What matters isn't what the text meant, but what the text means *to me*. This has given rise all manner of schools of interpretation: liberation theology, feminist theology, etc. In more extreme forms such as deconstructionism, we are told that no text can have any meaning other than the meaning that a reader chooses to receive. One wonders...why would anyone ever bother to read a book written by a deconstructionist? This is exactly what enables activist judges to justify nearly any action they deem appropriate. If the Constitution means whatever it means to me, then it means nothing at all (or anything I want it to mean!).

3) **The Author** – the traditional way of interpreting the Bible, and the model that Jesus himself followed, was to interpret the Bible in keeping with the Author's intended meaning. If I want to know what Philippians means, then I need to try to understand what Paul was trying to say. This means I need to know as much as I can about Paul, about the Greco-Roman world in which he lived, about the Greek language he spoke and wrote in, about first century Judaism, about the city of Philippi, etc. Philippians doesn't mean whatever I want it to mean, it means what Paul and the Holy Spirit intended it to mean. Only once I understand what the text meant can I take the next step – asking what the text means now to me. But this personal application grows out of the text's original intended meaning. ***I can't know what it means until I know what it meant.*** If Paul walked into your bible study would he say, "Yes, that is precisely what I meant"? If not, then you have the wrong interpretation. Interpretation is not a free for all. In the Constitution example, would Madison say to the Supreme Court, "Yes, that is exactly what we framers intended"? If not, then the court has it wrong.

If you want to effectively communicate with your spouse, you need to listen with care to what they are saying to seek to understand their meaning. If you want to understand what the Bible means, and how it applies to your life, you must likewise listen to what the biblical author was trying to communicate. ***You can't know what it means unless you first understand what it meant.***

Millennial Kingdom

The millennial kingdom is the title given to the 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.

If the Bible says point blank in Revelation 20 that Jesus is going to reign from Jerusalem for a thousand years how in the world does the majority of Christendom, both Catholic and Protestant, come to the conclusion that will not happen?

- Sometimes too many in Christendom itself dismiss the entire book of Revelation.
- Or they say, “Well, we can’t look at that part of Revelation as being literal, it has to be spiritualized.” So, they come up with fanciful interpretations of how that doesn’t mean what it says when the Lord talks about coming and reigning for a thousand years.

What is the Millenium

The Millennium (also known as the Millennial Kingdom) is the 1,000-year reign of Jesus after the Tribulation and before all the people of the world are sent to either heaven or hell. Jesus will reign as king over Israel as well as all the nations of the world (Isaiah 2:4; 42:1). The world will live in peace (Isaiah 11:6–9; 32:18), Satan will be bound (Revelation 20:1–3), and, at the beginning, everyone will worship God (Isaiah 2:2–3).

1000-year literal, physical kingdom on Earth ruled by Christ

- Rev 20⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.
- Is 9⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- Jer 30 ‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ Says the LORD of hosts, ‘*That* I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them.
⁹ But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them.

Christ will reign on David's throne, which is on Earth

- Is 9⁷ Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever.
- Lk 1³⁰ Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Peace, productivity, prosperity, long lifespans

- Is 2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the LORD’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.
- Amos 9¹¹ “On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; ¹² That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,” Says the LORD who does this thing.

¹³ “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “When the plowman shall overtake the reaper,
And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine,
And all the hills shall flow *with it*.

¹⁴ I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit *them*;
They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.

¹⁵ I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them,”
Says the LORD your God.

- Is 65 ¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, And her people a joy.
¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.
²⁰ “No more shall an infant from there *live but a few* days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed.
²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit *them*; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
²² They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
²³ They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them.
²⁴ “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.
²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust *shall be* the serpent’s food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the LORD.

Great increase in Earth's population – we deduce this from the fact that the enemies of God, alone, will be numerous

- Rev 20 ⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.

Jerusalem will become the "centre"/focus of Earth

- 4th temple built in Jerusalem
 - Described in Ezekiel 40–48
- A river flows from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea
 - Zec 14 ⁸ And in that day it shall be *That* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.
⁹ And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.
In that day it shall be— “The LORD *is* one,” And His name one.

“Shekinah” Glory (visible manifestation of the invisible God) returns to Israel for the first time after leaving the 1st temple (Solomon's temple) c. 586 BC

- Ez 43 ⁴ And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. ⁵ The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

Purpose of the Millennium

What is the purpose of the 1000-year reign of Christ?

Answer: The purpose of the 1,000-year reign is to fulfill promises God made to the world that cannot be fulfilled while Satan is free and humans have political authority. Some of these promises, called covenants, were given specifically to Israel. Others were given to Jesus, the nations of the world, and creation. All of these will be fulfilled during Jesus’ 1,000-year reign.

The Palestinian Covenant, also called the Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10)

God has already fulfilled the personal aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant; Abraham did go to the Promised Land, he did

have many descendants, and he is the forefather of many nations. Several hundred years after Abraham, Joshua led the Israelites to claim ownership of the Promised Land. But Israel has never possessed the specific boundaries that God promised in Genesis 15:18–20 and Numbers 34:1-12. Not even Solomon ruled over this particular area (1 Kings 4:21–24). Although he did reign from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates, he did not hold the area from Mount Hor to Hazarenan (Numbers 34:7–9)—into present-day Lebanon and Syria. In addition, the covenant God made with Abraham was that he and his descendants would have the land for eternity (Genesis 13:15; 17:8; Ezekiel 16:60). The current Israeli state may be a step in this direction, but they still do not possess the boundaries God laid out.

The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7)

God’s covenant with David was that his line would never die out and that David’s heir would sit on the throne of Israel forever (2 Samuel 7:16). Biblical scholars agree that Jesus is the fulfillment of this covenant—one of the reasons His genealogy is given for both His step-father (Matthew 1:1–17) and His mother (Luke 3:23–38). The Jews understood this when they laid down palm branches and their cloaks as Jesus rode into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1–17). They expected Him to be a military/political leader that would liberate them from the Romans and make Israel a great nation again. But they didn’t understand the nature of Jesus’ work at the time was for the New Covenant, not the Davidic Covenant. The 1,000-year reign will be the beginning of Jesus’ eternal reign over Israel and the earth (Revelation 20:4, 6).

The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

The work of the New Covenant—Jesus’ death and resurrection to reconcile hearts to God—has been accomplished. But we have not yet seen the complete fulfillment. Jeremiah 31:33 says, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Ezekiel 36:28 gives more specifics: “You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” Isaiah 59:20–21 explains that this covenant is possible because of the Redeemer, and the reconciliation He provides will last forever. This covenant does not mean that every Jew will be saved. But it does mean that Israel as a nation will worship their Messiah. The Old Testament prophets who spoke of this covenant, including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Ezekiel, all wrote that it will be fulfilled in the future. From their time on, Israel has yet to be an independent nation that worshiped its Messiah (Romans 9—11). They will be in the 1,000-year reign of Christ.

Other Promises

Those are the covenants God made with Israel that are to be fulfilled in Jesus’ 1,000-year reign, but the Bible lists other promises that will be fulfilled, too. God promised Jesus He will make His enemies a footstool, and that Jesus’ followers will worship Him freely (Psalm 100). God promised the nations of the world that they would live in peace with Jesus as their ruler (Daniel 7:11–14). And He promised creation that the curse would be lifted (Romans 8:18–23), animals and the earth would be restored to peace and prosperity (Isaiah 11:6–9; 32:13–15), and people would be freed from disease (Ezekiel 34:16). These, too, will be fulfilled during the 1,000-year reign.

The main purpose of Jesus’ 1,000-year reign is to fulfill the prophecies given to Israel and the promises made to Jesus, the nations, and the whole earth. God’s covenants were voluntary and one-sided. He promised He would bless Israel and restore the world in specific ways, and He will.

Characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom

Attribute	Description	Scriptures
Duration	One thousand years.	Rev. Rev. 20:2-5+
Theocratic Rule	God will rule in the person of Jesus Christ on the throne of David. King David reigns as a prince under Christ. See Millennial Reign of Messiah .	2S. 2S. 7:16 ; Ps. Ps. 89:20-37 ; Isa. Isa. 24:23 ; Jer. Jer. 30:9 ; Jer. 33:15-17 ; Eze. Eze. 34:23-24 ; Eze. 37:24-25 ; Eze. 45:22 ; Dan. Dan. 7:13-14 ; Hos. Hos. 3:5 ; Luke Luke 1:30-33 .

Representative Rule	The twelve apostles will represent Christ ruling over the twelve tribes. Church-age and Tribulation saints will represent Christ ruling over the Gentiles. See Millennial Reign of the Saints .	Isa. Isa. 32:1 ; Dan. Dan. 7:17-18 , Dan. 7:21-22 , Dan. 7:27 ; Mtt. Mat. 19:28 ; Luke Luke 22:30 ; Rev. Rev. 3:21+ ; Rev. 5:10+ .
Universal Rule	Christ's rule will extend both spiritually and literally over the entire earth.	Ps. Ps. 2:6-9 ; Ps. 72:8 ; Dan. Dan. 2:44 ; Dan. 4:34 ; Dan. 7:14 , Dan. 7:27 ; Mic. Mic. 4:1-2 ; Zec. Zec. 9:10
Seat of Government	The earthly Jerusalem will be restored, blessed, and greatly expanded to serve as the seat of government and worship. See Jerusalem Married to God . ²	Isa. Isa. 62:1 ; Isa. Isa. 65:18-19 ; Eze. Eze. 48:15-19 ; Luke Luke 21:24 ; Rev. Rev. 11:2+ .
Global Environment	The heavens and earth will be renewed to restore the creation to Eden-like conditions and repair the damage from man's long reign of abuse and the judgments of the Tribulation period. ³	Isa. Isa. 65:17 ; ⁴ Mtt. Mat. 19:28
Populace	Resurrected and glorified saints will rule in the midst of Christ's "brothers" (the faithful Jewish remnant), and the "sheep" (faithful Gentiles) who survive the Tribulation and enter the kingdom to form its initial population. Children will be born to those who enter the kingdom in their natural bodies.	Dan. Dan. 12:2 ; Isa. Isa. 26:19 ; Isa. 65:20 , Isa. 65:23 ; Mtt. Mat. 25:31 ; Rev. Rev. 20:4+
The Curse	Many aspects of the curse (Gen. Gen. 3:15-19) will be reversed. People will live to a great age, but death will still occur. ⁵ As before the flood, animals will revert to vegetarianism and will no longer fear man. Living waters will flow from beneath the sanctuary of the Millennial Temple bringing life to the regions they water.	Isa. Isa. 11:6-9 ; Isa. 65:20 , Isa. 65:25 ; Eze. Eze. 47:8-12 ; Zec. Zec. 8:4 ; Zec. 14:8 ; (cf. Rev. Rev. 21:1-2+)
Productivity	The earth will be fruitful and men will enjoy the fruit of their labors. ⁶	Ps. Ps. 67:6-7 ; Ps. 72:16 ; Isa. Isa. 35:1 ; Isa. 55:13 ; Isa. 65:22 ; Joel Joel 2:24-26 ; Joel Joel 3:18 ; Amos Amos 9:13-14
Mount Zion	The region of Mount Zion will be lifted up to form the Mountain of the Lord's House. ⁷ See Millennial Temple .	Isa. Isa. 2:2 ; Isa. 56:7 ; Eze. Eze. 20:40 ; Eze. 40:2 ; Zec. Zec. 14:4 , Zec. 14:10-11 ; Mic. Mic. 4:1
Israel	Israel will finally inhabit the Promised Land permanently. She will serve as the focal point of the nations because Jesus will reign from Jerusalem. ⁸	Gen. Gen. 13:15 ; Gen. 17:8 ; 1Chr. 1Chr. 17:9 ; Ps. Ps. 105:8-11 ; Isa. Isa. 60:21 ; Jer. Jer. 3:18 ; Jer. 7:7 ; Jer. 30:3 ; Jer. 31:8-9 ; Eze. Eze. 37:25 ; Eze. 39:25-29 ; Amos Amos 9:11-15
Peace	All implements of war will be destroyed in favor of implements of productivity. Nations will no longer go to war. Disagreements between nations will be judged by Christ from Jerusalem.	Ps. Ps. 72:3-7 ; Isa. Isa. 2:5 ; Isa. 9:7 ; Eze. Eze. 37:26 ; Mic. Mic. 4:3

Worship	A temple will stand in Jerusalem and all the nations will go up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles. Sacrificial offerings will be resumed. ⁹	Isa. Isa. 2:3 ; Isa. 56:6-7 ; Isa. 66:20-23 ; Eze. Eze. 43:20 , Eze. 43:26 ; Eze. 45:15 , Eze. 45:17 , Eze. 45:20 ; Jer. Jer. 33:18 ; Dan. Dan. 9:24 ; Joel Joel 3:18 ; Hag. Hag. 2:7-9 ; Zec. Zec. 6:12-15 ; Zec. 8:20-23 ; Zec. 14:16-21 ; Mal. Mal. 3:3-4 . See Millennial Sacrifices .
Demonic Realm	Satan will be bound in the abyss and demons will be imprisoned in the regions of Babylon, Edom, and possibly, the abyss. See commentary on Revelation 18:2 and Revelation 20:1 .	Isa. Isa. 34:8-17 ; Rev. Rev. 18:2+ ; Rev. 20:3+
Language	The curse of Babel (Gen. Gen. 11:7), the introduction of varied languages, will be reversed. All the earth will have one language.	Zep. Zep. 3:8-12 ¹⁰

[There will be nations](#)

- The people who survive the Tribulation will split out and form countries again.
- We know that Egypt and Assyria will be nations again.
- Israel of course, the prime nation of the world.
- It talks about Russia, a second Gog and Magog War at the end of the Tribulation.

[All people will be believers at the beginning](#)

- For those people who have entered as believers, they will be looking forward to that wonderful kind of life because they will have endured seven years of great terror during the Tribulation. Their children and grandchildren will grow up in a world not knowing any of the darkness that we see today.
- And then they will begin to propagate.

[Tremendous population explosion](#)

- The indication of Scripture is that the lifespan of man will be returned to what it was at the beginning when men lived like a thousand years.
- You won't be limited to your 30's, your 20's and 30's to have children.
- You might be having children up to 100 or 200. Can you imagine how many?
 - Mic 4:20 "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days,
Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.
21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people,
And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, And their offspring with them.
24 "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.

[Spiritual bounty and blessing as the Lord reigns from Jerusalem](#)

- The world will be flooded with peace and righteousness.

- It says that even the bells on the horse's bridles, the pots in the kitchens will say, "*Holy unto the Lord.*" In other words, everything.
 - Zec 14: 20 In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21 Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts.
- Everything will be set apart as holy for God.
 - With that kind of righteousness, you can just imagine there is no crime, there is no injustice, there is no sin anywhere in the world.

Justice will be swift and certain

- I don't think it would be exactly correct though to say there will be no crime during that time, because you are going to have people in the flesh, and the flesh is going to want what the flesh wants. And what I think is going to happen is that when people violate the law of God, there won't be legislatures, there will be the law of God. And when they violate it they will be arrested immediately. They will be tried immediately. There will be no appeal because that judge is going to be in a glorified body with the mind of Christ. Justice will be swift. Justice will be certain. Justice will be for sure. In fact, it indicates in Micah that if a person is rebellious that they won't live beyond the age of 100. I'm not quite sure what all that means but it indicates it.
- How can there be any evil during the Millennium because Satan is going to be tied up during that time? He is going to be chained. So how can there be any evil?
 - Well, that is a proof that evil is not just external to mankind, it's in our very heart. It is inside us. And that will be what happens in what is demonstrated in that great finality at the end of the Millennial reign.

Tabernacle with the Lord in Jerusalem

- Jesus wants to connect with His people. The nations are supposed to go up at least once a year to Jerusalem to see Jesus. And we read about how Egypt at some point is going to say, "Ah, we are not going up." And the Lord shuts off the rain until they finally repent and come to see Him. So, we already see a little bit of rebellion during that time period.

The animal kingdom will be restored

- Creation being restored, and that is what the Lord promises to all of creation, like the Garden of Eden.
- One of my all-time favorite religious cartoons shows during the Millennium this lion is sitting under a tree and he is reading a book. And this little lamb next to him just leaning over sleeping. And the title of the book is, "Veggie Recipes."
 - Is 11:6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.
9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.
 - Is 65: 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the Lord.

End of the Millennial Kingdom

- People will turn away from God

- For those people who have entered as believers, they will be looking forward to that wonderful kind of life because they will have endured seven years of great terror during the Tribulation. Their children and grandchildren will grow up in a world not knowing any of the darkness that we see today. But some of them sadly, will not be eager to subject themselves to the Lord's reign, and so they will be the ones who will eventually revolt against Him in the second wars of Gog and Magog at the end of the Millennium. But spiritually the world will be flooded with peace and righteousness. We can only imagine.
- The release of Satan.
 - And people say, "Why release Satan?" It's like letting a serpent into a daycare center. But when it says that Satan will lead an army against Jerusalem one last time to try to overthrow Jesus, and that people beyond count will follow him. They will turn. I mean it is a true tragedy that you could have a utopia society and all these children that are born of the Tribulation Saints will follow Jesus in an attempt to overthrow Him.
 - John Milton wrote in "Paradise Lost" a phrase attributed to Satan, but there will be many people who will share this philosophy, "Better to reign in Hell, then to serve in Heaven." People will live in a heavenly kind of environment with perfect peace and righteousness, and justice but even then they'll realize I'm serving someone, Jesus Christ, and perhaps not willingly. So, given the opportunity and half a chance they will seek to rebel. And that is very tragic.
 - I suspect that during the Millennial reign when people see that justice is swift and certain and sure that what you'll have is people saying, "We love you Jesus," with their teeth clenched because they want everything that the evil nature wants. And so, at the end of that time when Satan is released he'll have a whole bunch of people ready for rebellion.

History goes in a circle here

- It begins with two people in a perfect environment, and they rebel.
- It ends with all of humanity in a perfect environment, and humanity rebels.
- I think God is trying to prove, and will prove that Humanism is absolutely wrong, because Humanism is basically the religion of the world it goes under many different names. But it is the belief in man, and it is the belief that man can be perfected. And it is a belief that all the sin in the world is due to society, not man. And if we could just perfect society, man will be perfected. No, the Bible says that the problem is man, the problem is the evil nature of man, and that the only thing that can change that is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Why are there sacrifices during the Millennial Kingdom?

- Well, that is a very complicated thing, and many different opinions on it. I don't know. All I know is the Bible says that will be the case. And they're certainly not sacrifices to save people's souls.
- Many people take the position that these sacrifices that will be offered at the Millennial Temple will be sacrifices like reminding people of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, they are a remembrance process, very similar to what communion is today it reminds us of the cross.
- It may all relates to the fact that there will be Gentiles, and there will be Jews who are unsaved during this time. And that they have to go through certain cleansing processes to even go on the Temple Mount and enter the Temple.
- I think the ritual purification for the priests makes sense. Not sacrifices for everyone – there wouldn't be any animals left on the earth if all 20 billion people had to have sacrifices for them.
- Well and I think it is almost a first fruits giving over to the Lord, whether it is bounty of crops, or we do consume animals, giving over to Him a first fruits just out of recognition and honoring of Him.

Why a Millennium?

- The unconditional covenants demand a literal, physical return of Christ to establish the kingdom.
 - The Bible tells us that when Christ returns to the earth He will establish Himself as king in Jerusalem, sitting on the throne of David (Luke 1:32–33).
 - The Abrahamic Covenant promised Israel a land, a posterity and ruler, and a spiritual blessing (Ge 12:1–3).
 - The Palestinian Covenant promised Israel a restoration to the land and occupation of the land (Dt 30:1–10).

- The Davidic Covenant promised Israel a king from David's line who would rule forever—giving the nation rest from all their enemies (2Sa 7:10–13).
- At the second coming, these covenants will be fulfilled as Israel is:
 - Re-gathered from the nations (Matthew 24:31)
 - Converted (Zechariah 12:10–14)

To Fullfill Unfulfilled Promises

Why would He come back? Why not just do away with this world, take us all to Heaven, and be done with it.

- There are so many prophecies and promises in the Bible that must be fulfilled for there to be a Millennial Kingdom
 - Jesus Christ was promised to sit on the Throne of David and rule over this earth
 - Sure, He can do that spiritually, through the Church and providentially. But the Bible has many prophecies that say that Jesus will rule and reign from Jerusalem, that King David will be a co-regent under him as like mayor of Jerusalem.
 - Jesus is going to receive the honor and glory during that time that He should have received the first time He came.
 - Jerusalem will become the capital of the world
 - It will be raised up above the other nations
 - All the Gentile nations will flow through it
 - The Gentiles will grab the hem of a Jew and say, “Hey, you’re with Jesus, take us to Jesus.”
 - Is that happening today? No

The perfection of the world will be restored

- The Lord created the world in perfection. We are told over and over again in Genesis that the world was good, His creation was good. Mankind was declared as being very good. So, when peace, righteousness, and justice floods the world, then even the material world around us, the animal kingdom, the creation itself will be restored to its perfected state, and that is part of God's goodness in the creation.
 - Creation itself is groaning for the return of the Creator, for the restoration of the perfection that He established, again in the Garden of Eden, which we will see once again during that Millennial reign.

Promises to the Church for that Millennial reign

Resurrected Christians (the Church Age Christians) will rule and reign with Jesus

- Those Christian who will be resurrected, the Church Age Christians, will rule and reign with Jesus. In our glorified bodies we are going to reign over those who are natural bodies.
 - Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.
 - Dan 7:18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’
 - Dan 7: 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.
- When the Rapture occurs, all Church Age believers living and dead are going to receive glorified bodies. When Jesus returns at the Second Coming He is going to resurrect the Old Testament saints, and the Tribulation martyrs and they will receive their glorified bodies. So, who are we going to reign over?

- Survivors of the Tribulation, who are believers – Through the Tribulation period there will be people who are able to endure, and who survive that terrifically, horrible period of time, and enter the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ in mortal bodies. And they will then have children, their children will have children to repopulate the earth. So, those living people, who are still mortal will go into the Millennial reign.
- Who is left after the tribulation?
 - Sheep Goat Judgment in Matthew 25 describes that, after the Second Coming, at the end of the Tribulation, the Lord gathers all the people together for a judgment, and they fit in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
 - The 144,000
 - The Jews protected in the wilderness
 - There's not many people
- Think about what the Millennial Kingdom must be like – If you don't have sickness and disease, and the life spans go as long as a tree, so like a thousand years. What would the population be? I once read that one theologian estimated by the end of the thousand years there could be 20 billion people living on this planet. And with the bounty, there is no scarcity and want, everybody has plenty of food.
- There will be a Jewish priesthood over the earth, in their human physical, earthly bodies, but we will come down and we will reign over the earth in our glorified bodies. Every president, every governor, every member of a school board, or a city council is going to be a person in a glorified bodies. No wonder the world is going to be flooded with peace, righteousness, and justice. The only law will be coming out of Jerusalem, and it will be God's law

Literal interpretation, not 'spiritual'

In order for God to keep His promises to Israel and His covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:8-16, 23:5; Psalm 89:3-4), there must be a literal, physical kingdom on this earth. To doubt this is to call into question God's desire and/or ability to keep His promises, and this opens up a host of other theological problems. For example, if God would renege on His promises to Israel after proclaiming those promises to be "everlasting," how could we be sure of anything He promises, including the promises of salvation to believers in the Lord Jesus? The only solution is to take Him at His word and understand that His promises will be literally fulfilled.

Clear biblical indications that the kingdom will be a literal, earthly kingdom are:

1. Christ's feet will actually touch the Mount of Olives prior to the establishment of His kingdom (Zechariah 14:4, 9);
 2. During the kingdom, the Messiah will execute justice and judgment on the earth (Jeremiah 23:5-8);
 3. The kingdom is described as being under heaven (Daniel 7:13-14, 27);
 4. The prophets foretold of dramatic earthly changes during the kingdom (Acts 3:21; Isaiah 35:1-2, 11:6-9, 29:18, 65:20-22; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Amos 9:11-15); and
 5. The chronological order of events in Revelation indicates the existence of an earthly kingdom prior to the conclusion of world history (Revelation 20).
- Some seek to interpret the 1000 years in an allegorical manner.
 - They understand the 1000 years as merely a figurative way of saying "a long period of time," not a literal, physical reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.
 - Revelation 20:2-7 gives the precise time period of the millennial kingdom. Even without these scriptures, there are countless others that point to a literal reign of the Messiah on the earth. The fulfillment of many of God's covenants and promises rests on a literal, physical, future kingdom. There is no solid basis for denying the literal interpretation of the millennial kingdom and its duration being 1000 years.

- 6 times in Revelation 20:2-7, the millennial kingdom is specifically said to be 1000 years in length.
 - If God wished to communicate “a long period of time,” He could have easily done so without explicitly and repeatedly mentioning an exact time frame.
 - The golden rule of interpretation - if the plain sense makes sense, look for no other sense, lest you end up with nonsense.
 - It says a thousand years, not just once but six times, so I am going to take it literally.
 - Rev 20:1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and **Satan, and bound him for a thousand years**; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that **he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished**. But after these things he must be released for a little while. 4 And **they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years**. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again **until the thousand years were finished**. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall **reign with Him a thousand years**. 7 Now **when the thousand years have expired**, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.
- All the First Coming prophecies meant exactly what they said, so that should be a guideline for the Second Coming prophecies.
 - 109 distinct prophecies about the First Coming prophecies all came true literally.
 - “I can prove to you that the thousand years in Revelation 20 does not mean a thousand years, because over in the Psalms there is a psalm that says that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and certainly, there are more than a thousand hills. So, that had to be symbolic, therefore this has to be symbolic.”
 - You can end up with again, absolute nonsense when you start applying poetic language from the Psalms to a very clear narrative description of a reign of a thousand years.
- John doesn’t use like or as when you get to Revelation 20
 - Not like a thousand years, or sort of a thousand years – nothing symbolic
 - The problem is when you spiritualize prophecy then you never know when it is fulfilled. And that allows the interpreter to become the declarer of what the Word of God means, instead of letting the Word of God speak for itself.
- Restored to the land under the rule of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Conditions during the millennium will be perfect

The Bible speaks of the conditions during the millennium as a perfect environment physically and spiritually.

- It will be a time of peace (Micah 4:2–4; Isaiah 32:17–18), joy (Isaiah 61:7, 10), and comfort (Isaiah 40:1–2).
- The Bible also tells us that only believers will enter the millennial kingdom. Because of this, it will be a time of obedience (Jeremiah 31:33), holiness (Isaiah 35:8), truth (Isaiah 65:16), and the knowledge of God (Isaiah 11:9, Habakkuk 2:14).
- Christ will rule as king (Isaiah 9:3–7; 11:1–10). Nobles and governors will also rule (Isaiah 32:1; Matthew 19:28), and Jerusalem will be the political center of the world (Zechariah 8:3).

Recreation of the Earth

The earth will be in such havoc that the Lord must recreate it at (or shortly after) the second coming because it will be uninhabitable; all the oceans will have been turned to blood and be full of rotting dead corpses of all the sea creatures – certainly not a nice place to live!

- Rev 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.
- Rev 16:17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. 19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.
- Is 24 – Impending Judgment on the Earth

1 Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
 2 And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master;
 As with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller;
 As with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
 3 The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the Lord has spoken this word.
 4 The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish.
**5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws,
 Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.**
 6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate.
 Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left.
 7 The new wine fails, the vine languishes, All the merry-hearted sigh.
 8 The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, The joy of the harp ceases.
 9 They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
 10 The city of confusion is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.
 11 There is a cry for wine in the streets, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone.
 12 In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction.
 13 When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
 It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.
 14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; For the majesty of the Lord They shall cry aloud from the sea.
 15 Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, The name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
 16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!"
 But I said, "I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me!
 The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."
 17 Fear and the pit and the snare Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.
 18 And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear Shall fall into the pit,
 And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare;
 For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken.
19 The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.
**20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut;
 Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.**
 21 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones,
 And on the earth the kings of the earth.
 22 They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison;
 After many days they will be punished.
 23 Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed;
 For the Lord of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.
- Is 34 – Judgment on the Nations

34 Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people!
 Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it.
 2 For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies;

He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.

3 Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses,
And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

4 All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;

All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.

5 “For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom,
And on the people of My curse, for judgment.

6 The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, It is made overflowing with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats, With the fat of the kidneys of rams.

For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah, And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

7 The wild oxen shall come down with them, And the young bulls with the mighty bulls;
Their land shall be soaked with blood, And their dust saturated with fatness.”

For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

9 Its streams shall be turned into pitch, And its dust into brimstone; Its land shall become burning pitch.

10 It shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever.

From generation to generation it shall lie waste;

No one shall pass through it forever and ever.

11 But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it, Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.
And He shall stretch out over it The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.

12 They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, But none shall be there, and all its princes shall be nothing.

13 And thorns shall come up in its palaces, Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
It shall be a habitation of jackals, A courtyard for ostriches.

14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
Also the night creature shall rest there, And find for herself a place of rest.

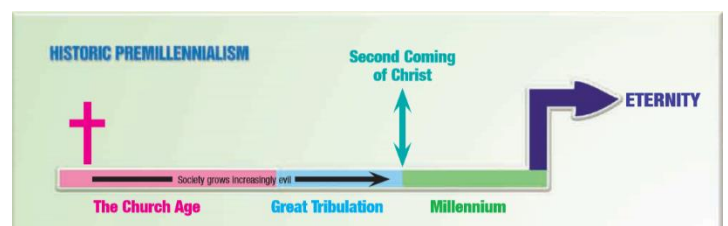
15 There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay eggs And hatch, and gather them under her shadow;
There also shall the hawks be gathered, Every one with her mate.

16 “Search from the book of the Lord, and read: Not one of these shall fail; Not one shall lack her mate.
For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.

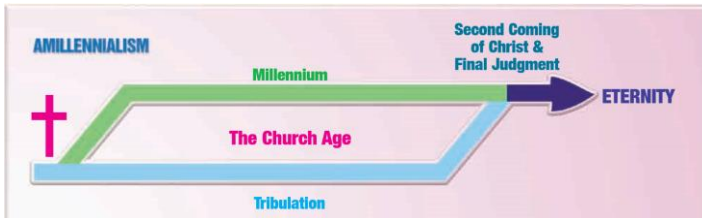
17 He has cast the lot for them, And His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line.
They shall possess it forever; From generation to generation they shall dwell in it.”

Millennial Viewpoints

Premillennialism as a system is primarily based on a literal method of biblical interpretation. The main premise of premillennialism is that Jesus will literally return to the earth before (pre) the millennium begins and that He himself will inaugurate and rule over it from Jerusalem for a literal 1000-year reign.



Amillennialism is the belief that there will not be a literal 1000-year reign of Christ from Jerusalem. The millennium is the spiritual reign of Jesus in the hearts of His followers. Satan was defeated at the cross and we are now living in the ‘symbolic’ millennial kingdom. All end-time prophecy is symbolically referring to the church.



Postmillennial is the belief that the church is in the process of building the kingdom of God right now by being a positive influence in the world. Post-Millennialism teaches that the Millennium is future, and will occur on this earth but it will consist of the Church reigning over all of the world for a thousand years, without the presence of Jesus.

Premillennial - Literal

Premillennialism as a system is primarily based on a literal method of biblical interpretation. The main premise of premillennialism is that Jesus will literally return to the earth before (pre) the millennium begins and that He himself will inaugurate and rule over it from Jerusalem for a literal 1000-year reign.

In order to understand and interpret the passages in Scripture that deal with end-times events, there are two things that must be clearly understood:

- A proper method of interpreting Scripture
- The distinction between Israel (the Jews) and the church (the body of all believers in Jesus Christ).

Proper method of interpreting Scripture

First, a proper method of interpreting Scripture requires that Scripture be interpreted in a way that is consistent with its context. This means that a passage must be interpreted in a way that is consistent with

- the audience to which it is written
- those it is written about
- whom it is written by, and so on

The historical and cultural setting will often reveal the correct meaning of a passage.

For each passage one interprets, it is critical to know:

- the author
- intended audience
- historical background

It is also important to remember that Scripture interprets Scripture.

- That is, often a passage will cover a topic or subject that is also addressed elsewhere in the Bible.
- It is important to interpret all of these passages consistently with one another.

Finally, and most importantly, passages must always be taken in their normal, regular, plain, literal meaning unless the context of the passage indicates that it is figurative in nature.

- The golden rule of interpretation - if the plain sense makes sense, look for no other sense, lest you end up with nonsense.
- A literal interpretation does not eliminate the possibility of figures of speech being used.
- Rather, it encourages the interpreter to not read figurative language into the meaning of a passage unless it is appropriate for that context.
- It is crucial to never seek a “deeper, more spiritual” meaning than is presented.
 - Spiritualizing a passage is dangerous because it moves the basis for accurate interpretation from Scripture to the mind of the reader. Then, there can be no objective standard of interpretation; instead, Scripture becomes subject to each person’s own impression of what it means.

- Second Peter 1:20-21 reminds us that “no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

Israel and the Church

Applying these principles of biblical interpretation, it must be seen that Israel (Abraham’s physical descendants) and the church (all New Testament believers) are two distinct groups. It is crucial to recognize that Israel and the church are distinct because, if this is misunderstood, Scripture will be misinterpreted. Especially prone to misinterpretation are passages that deal with promises made to Israel (both fulfilled and unfulfilled). Such promises should not be applied to the church. Remember, the context of the passage will determine to whom it is addressed and will point to the most correct interpretation.

With those concepts in mind, we can look at various passages of Scripture that produce the premillennial view.

Abrahamic Covenant

See notes on Abrahamic Covenant

In this covenant, God promised many things to Abraham.

- He would make **Abraham’s name great** (Genesis 12:2)
- He would **bless Abraham** (Ge 12:2-3; Ge 15:14; Ge 22:17)
- That Abraham would have **numerous physical descendants** (Genesis 13:16; Ge 15:5; Ge 17:2; Ge 22:17)
- That Abraham would be the **father of a multitude of nations** (Genesis Ge 12:2; 17:4-6).
- **Families of the world will be blessed** through the physical line of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; 22:18).
 - This is a reference to the Messiah, who would come from the line of Abraham.
 - Through this covenant, God implements the plan of redemption
 - In the great sweep of our narrative, it forges one hinge on which the door of salvation swings.
- Abraham will inherit a **specific designation of land** (Ge 12:7; Ge 13:14-15, 17; Ge 15:7, 18-21; Ge 17:8)
 - The geographical boundaries of the Abrahamic Covenant are laid out on more than one occasion

Genesis 12:1-3: “The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’”

In Genesis 15:9-17, God ratifies His covenant with Abraham. By the way this is done, God places sole responsibility for the covenant upon Himself. That is, there was nothing Abraham could do or fail to do that would void the covenant God made. Also in this passage, the boundaries are set for the land that the Jews will eventually occupy. For a detailed list of the boundaries, see Deuteronomy 34. Other passages that deal with the promise of land are Deuteronomy 30:3-5 and Ezekiel 20:42-44.

Davidic Covenant

See notes on Davidic Covenant

In 2 Samuel 7:10-17, we see the promise made by God to King David. Here, God promises David that he will have descendants, and out of those descendants God will establish an eternal kingdom. This is referring to the rule of Christ during the millennium and forever. It is important to keep in mind that this promise must be fulfilled literally and has not yet taken place. Some would believe that the rule of Solomon was the literal fulfillment of this prophecy, but there is a problem with that. The territory over which Solomon ruled is not held by Israel today, and neither does Solomon rule over Israel today. Remember that God promised Abraham that his descendants would possess a land forever. Also, 2 Samuel 7 says that God would establish a king who would rule for eternity. Solomon could not be a fulfillment of the promise made to David. Therefore, this is a promise that has yet to be fulfilled.

Many literal promises have not yet happened

Now, with all this in mind, examine what is recorded in Revelation 20:1-7. The thousand years which is repeatedly

mentioned in this passage corresponds to Christ's literal 1000-year reign on the earth. Recall that the promise made to David regarding a ruler had to be fulfilled literally and has not yet taken place. Premillennialism sees this passage as describing the future fulfillment of that promise with Christ on the throne. God made unconditional covenants with both Abraham and David. Neither of these covenants has been fully or permanently fulfilled. A literal, physical rule of Christ is the only way the covenants can be fulfilled as God promised they would.

Applying a literal method of interpretation to Scripture results in the pieces of the puzzle coming together. All of the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus' first coming were fulfilled literally. Therefore, we should expect the prophecies regarding His second coming to be fulfilled literally as well. Premillennialism is the only system that agrees with a literal interpretation of God's covenants and end-times prophecy.

Historic Premillennialism vs Dispensational Premillennialism

Premillennialists can be divided into two groups with respect to their central approach to the prophetic Scriptures, historic premillennialists and dispensational premillennialists. The **basic difference between the two is the emphasis that each gives to the nation of Israel during the millennium**, the period of a thousand years during which Christ will reign on earth (see Revelation 20:1-7).

Historic premillennialists believe that scriptural prophecy, especially the passages in Daniel and Revelation, give the entire history of the Church in symbolic form. Thus, they look into the Church's past and present to find prophetic fulfillment and to see where they are in God's prophetic timetable. Most historic premillennialists hold that the nation of Israel will undergo a national salvation immediately before the millennium is established, but there will be no national restoration of Israel. Thus, the nation of Israel will not have a special role or function that is distinct from the Church.

In contrast to historic premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism has gained popularity among modern evangelicals. Dispensational premillennialists hold that the second coming of Christ, and subsequent establishment of the millennial kingdom, is to be preceded by a seven-year-long period known as the "Tribulation," the earthly activity of the Antichrist as well as the outpouring of God's wrath on mankind. Dispensational premillennialists hold that the nation of Israel will be saved and restored to a place of preeminence in the millennium. Thus, Israel will have a special function of service in the millennium that is different from that of the Church.

Another difference is that most dispensational premillennialists hold that the millennium is for a literal 1000 years, while some historic premillennialists assert that the 1000 years is figurative for a long period of time. Basically, **the fundamental difference between historic premillennialism and dispensational premillennialism consists in the latter's insistence on maintaining a distinction between the nation of Israel and the Church**. According to dispensationalists, the millennium will be a period of history in which God reverts back to fulfilling His Old Testament promises made to ethnic Israel, after this modern "Church Age" in which we live today is concluded. As such, the millennium will be a state of Jewish dominion over all the world, along with a newly restored Jewish temple and priesthood.

The Christians who reign with Christ will all have been given eternal, glorified bodies, and will reign spiritually, while the Jews will own the world physically, and will live, marry, and die (although evincing incredible longevity), just as people have throughout the history of the world. It is only after this thousand-year period, in which God fulfills His promises to ethnic Israel, that Christ will put down a final rebellion and usher in the eternal state with its New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21-22).

Historic premillennialism, conversely, requires none of this strict dichotomy between God's spiritual people, the Church, and His physical people, ethnic Israel; it merely looks ahead to a time when Christ will reign visibly on the earth, before He brings in the eternal state.

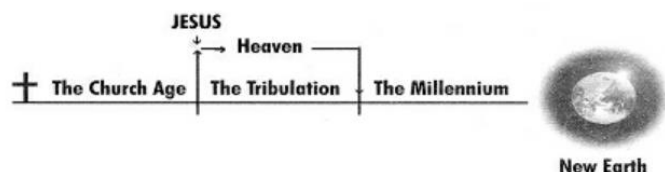
Historic premillennialism and dispensational premillennialism are two different systems of eschatology. Here are a few examples of the differences between the two:

Dispensationalism	Historic premillennialism
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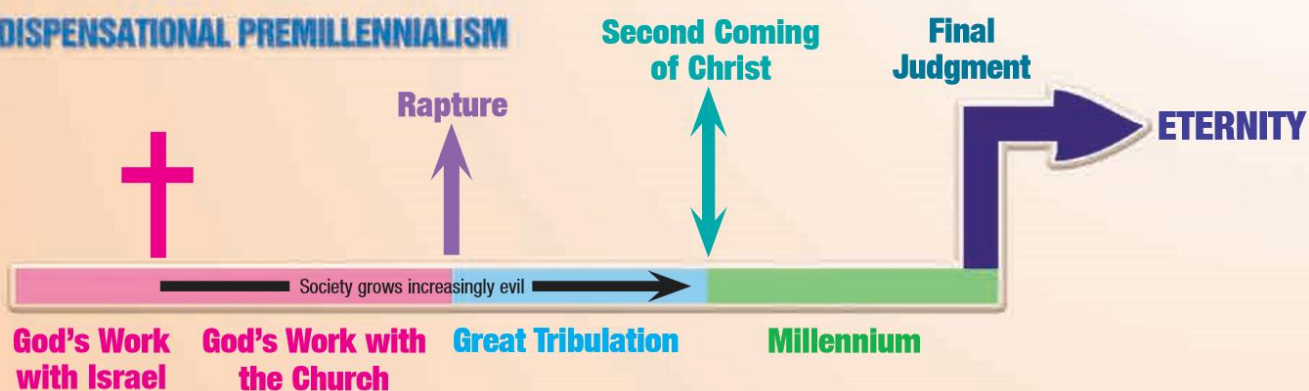
The church is hardly, if at all, mentioned by the Old Testament prophets.	The church was in the fore-vision of Old Testament prophecy.
The present age was unforeseen in the Old Testament and thus is a “great parenthesis” in history introduced because the Jews rejected the kingdom.	The present age of grace was predicted in the Old Testament.
Teaches seven divisions of time. The present age is the sixth such dispensation; the last one will be the millennial age after the second coming.	Teaches a millennium after the second advent of Christ but is not much concerned with classifying other epochs of history.
Posttribulational rapture	Pretribulational rapture

The premillennial view of the end times is thus advanced in two different ways: historic premillennialism and dispensational premillennialism. The Bible contains many prophecies about the future, with the New Testament speaking extensively about the return of Jesus to earth. Matthew 24, much of the book of Revelation, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 are the more salient references to the second coming.

****Dispensational (Modern) Premillennial (This is the correct one)**



DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM



What is dispensational premillennialism?

Dispensational premillennialism is the belief that the Second Coming of Christ will precede the millennium and that God will still give the nation of Israel the land described in Genesis 15:18.

Dispensational premillennialism treats the millennium as a literal, future event. Most dispensational premillennialists are pre-tribulationists; they understand Rev. 4:1, 2 to refer to “the rapture,” when Christ removes Christians from the earth before the great tribulation begins. Some dispensational premillennialists, known as mid-tribulationists, believe the rapture will occur during the great tribulation. According to the dispensational premillennialists . . .

- God’s promises to Abraham and his offspring were unconditional; therefore, the Jews will still receive the land described in Genesis 15:18.
- During the great tribulation, many Jews will turn to Jesus Christ.
- All references to Israel in Revelation refer to the nation of Israel.

What Scriptures seem to support dispensational premillennialism?

- God’s promises to Abraham and his offspring were unconditional—Genesis 15:7-21.
- God will keep Christians from the outpouring of His wrath during the tribulation—I Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10.
- The church is not specifically mentioned between Revelation 4 and 19.

When has dispensational premillennialism been popular? This view emerged in the 1800’s among the Plymouth Brethren. Dispensational premillennialism increased in popularity in the late 1800’s and has remained widespread throughout the 20th century. Proponents have included J. Nelson Darby, C.I. Scofield, Harry A. Ironside, Gleason Archer, Donald G. Barnhouse, Hal Lindsey, Chuck Smith, John MacArthur, Charles Ryrie, Charles Stanley, Norman L. Geisler, and Tim LaHaye.

A dispensation is a way of ordering things—an administration, a system, or a management. In theology, a dispensation is the divine administration of a period of time; each dispensation is a divinely appointed age. Dispensationalism is a theological system that recognizes these ages ordained by God to order the affairs of the world. Dispensationalism has two primary distinctives: 1) a consistently literal interpretation of Scripture, especially Bible prophecy, and 2) a view of the uniqueness of Israel as separate from the Church in God’s program. Classical dispensationalism identifies seven dispensations in God’s plan for humanity.

Dispensationalists hold to a literal interpretation of the Bible as the best hermeneutic. The literal interpretation gives each word the meaning it would commonly have in everyday usage. Allowances are made for symbols, figures of speech, and types, of course. It is understood that even symbols and figurative sayings have literal meanings behind them. So, for example, when the Bible speaks of “a thousand years” in Revelation 20, dispensationalists interpret it as a literal period of 1,000 years (the dispensation of the Kingdom), since there is no compelling reason to interpret it otherwise.

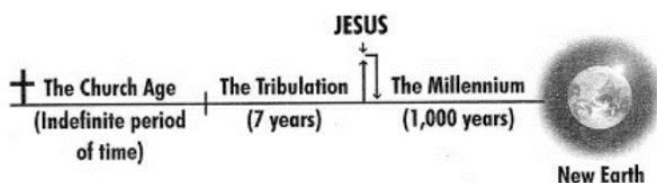
There are at least two reasons why literalism is the best way to view Scripture. First, philosophically, the purpose of language itself requires that we interpret words literally. Language was given by God for the purpose of being able to communicate. Words are vessels of meaning. The second reason is biblical. Every prophecy about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament was fulfilled literally. Jesus’ birth, ministry, death, and resurrection all occurred exactly as the Old Testament predicted. The prophecies were literal. There is no non-literal fulfillment of messianic prophecies in the New Testament. This argues strongly for the literal method. If a literal interpretation is not used in studying the Scriptures, there is no objective standard by which to understand the Bible. Each person would be able to interpret the Bible as he saw fit. Biblical interpretation would devolve into “what this passage says to me” instead of “the Bible says.” Sadly, this is already the case in much of what is called Bible study today.

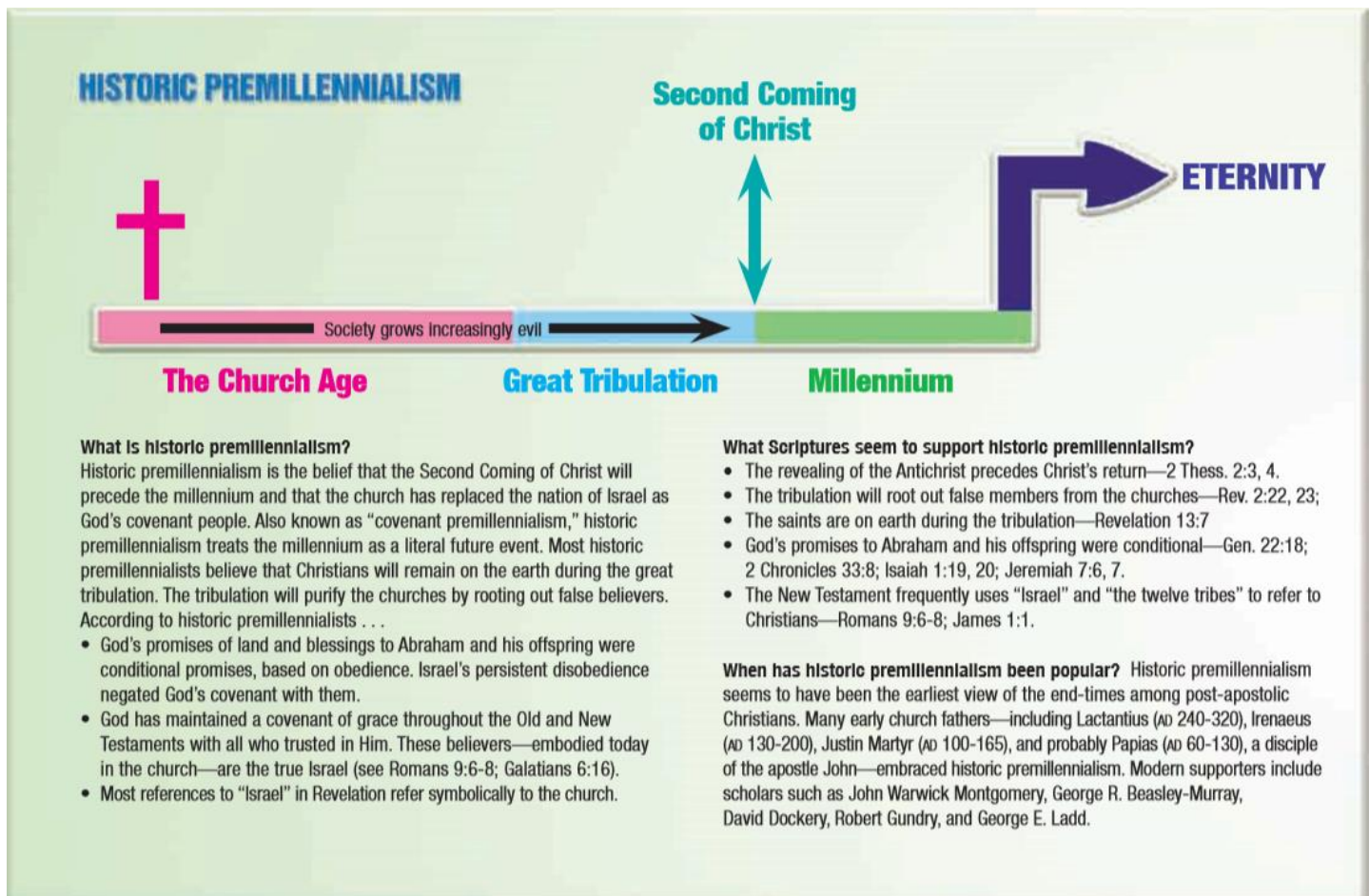
Dispensational theology teaches that there are two distinct peoples of God: Israel and the Church. Dispensationalists believe that salvation has always been by grace through faith alone—in God in the Old Testament and specifically in God the Son in the New Testament. Dispensationalists hold that the Church has not replaced Israel in God’s program and that the Old Testament promises to Israel have not been transferred to the Church. Dispensationalism teaches that the promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament (for land, many descendants, and blessings) will be ultimately fulfilled in the 1000-year period spoken of in Revelation 20. Dispensationalists believe that, just as God is in this age focusing His attention on the Church, He will again in the future focus His attention on Israel (see Romans 9–11 and Daniel 9:24).

Dispensationalists understand the Bible to be organized into seven dispensations: Innocence (Genesis 1:1—3:7), Conscience (Genesis 3:8—8:22), Human Government (Genesis 9:1—11:32), Promise (Genesis 12:1—Exodus 19:25), Law (Exodus 20:1—Acts 2:4), Grace (Acts 2:4—Revelation 20:3), and the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:4–6). Again, these dispensations are not paths to salvation, but manners in which God relates to man. Each dispensation includes a recognizable pattern of how God worked with people living in the dispensation. That pattern is 1) a responsibility, 2) a failure, 3) a judgment, and 4) grace to move on.

Dispensationalism, as a system, results in a premillennial interpretation of Christ’s second coming and usually a pretribulational interpretation of the rapture. To summarize, dispensationalism is a theological system that emphasizes the literal interpretation of Bible prophecy, recognizes a distinction between Israel and the Church, and organizes the Bible into different dispensations or administrations.

Historic Premillennial





Answer:

Historic premillennialism was held by a large majority of Christians during the first three centuries of the Christian era. Many of the church fathers such as Irenaeus, Papias, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and others taught that there would be a visible kingdom of God upon the earth after the return of Christ. Historic premillennialism taught that the Antichrist would appear on earth and the seven-year tribulation would begin. Next would be the rapture, and then Jesus and His church would return to earth to rule for a thousand years. The faithful spend eternity in the New Jerusalem.

When Christianity became the official religion of Rome in the fourth century, many things began to change, including acceptance of historic premillennialism. Amillennialism soon became the prevailing doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

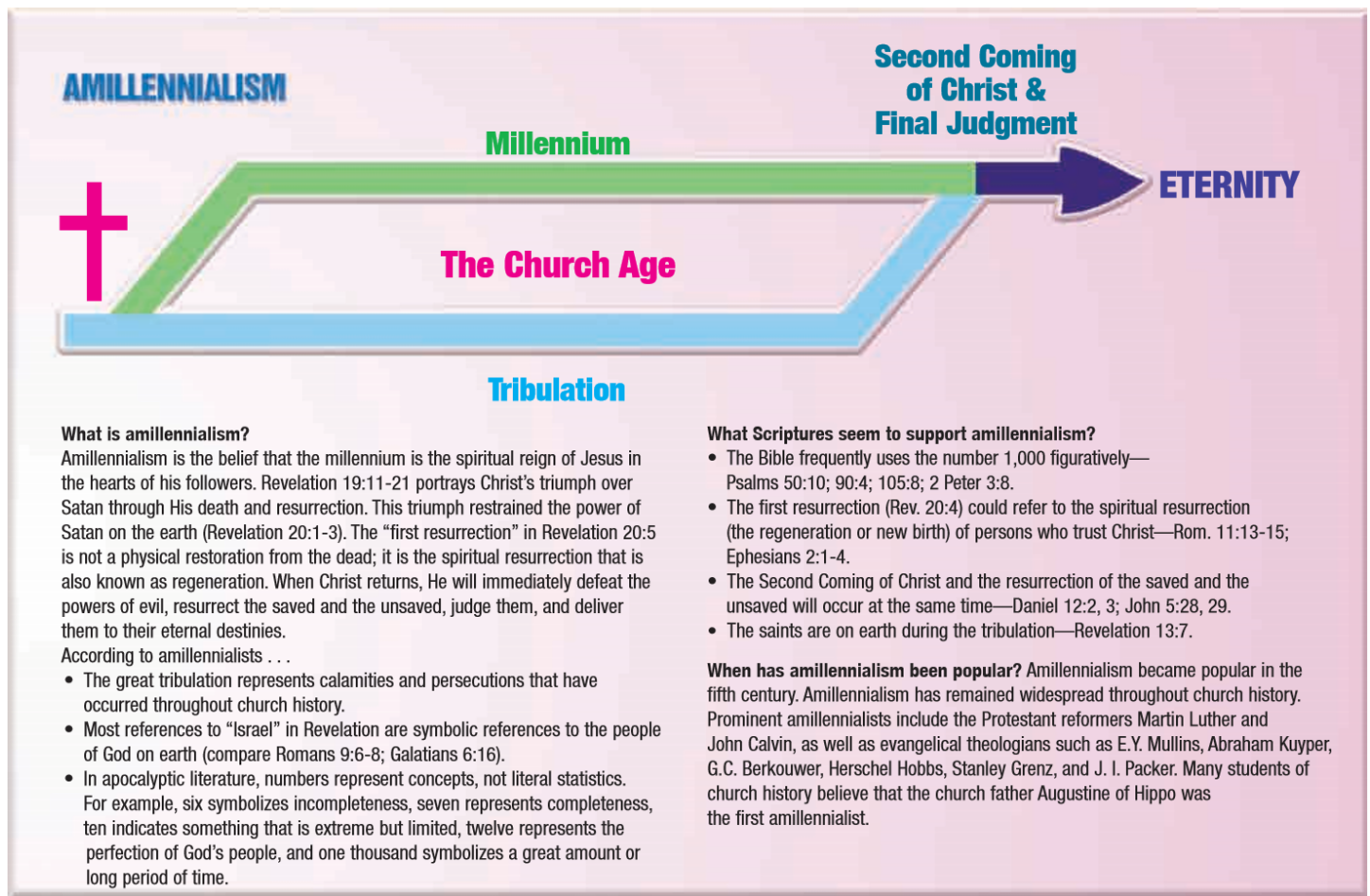
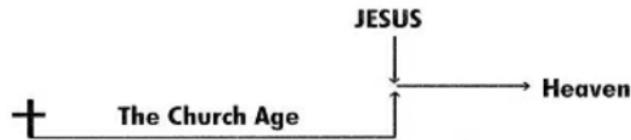
One of the most influential historic premillennialists was George Eldon Ladd, an evangelical New Testament scholar and professor of New Testament exegesis and theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. It was through Ladd's work that historic premillennialism gained scholarly respect and popularity among evangelical and Reformed theologians of the twentieth century. Other well-known historic premillennialists include Walter Martin; John Warwick Montgomery; J. Barton Payne; Henry Alford, a noted Greek scholar; and Theodor Zahn, a German New Testament scholar.

Historic premillennialism is one system of eschatology that has support in the Protestant community. Generally, all of the premillennialist beliefs teach that the tribulation is followed by 1,000 years of peace when all live under the authority of Christ. Afterwards, in a brief, final battle, Satan is permanently conquered. The placement of the rapture in relation to the other events is one of the main differences between historic premillennialism and premillennial dispensationalism.

Amillennialism – Symbolic

There will not be a literal 1000-year reign of Christ from Jerusalem. The millennium is the spiritual reign of Jesus in the hearts of His followers. Satan was defeated at the cross and we are now living in the ‘symbolic’ millennial kingdom. All end-time prophecy is symbolically referring to the church.

- a = no
- They do not interpret the future Bible prophecies as literal, but rather symbolic or spiritual



Answer: Amillennialism is the name given to the belief that there will not be a literal 1000-year reign of Christ. The people who hold to this belief are called amillennialists. The prefix “a-” in amillennialism means “no” or “not.” Hence, “amillennialism” means “no millennium.” This differs from the most widely accepted view called premillennialism (the view that Christ’s second coming will occur prior to His millennial kingdom and that the millennial kingdom is a literal 1000-year reign) and from the less-widely accepted view called postmillennialism (the belief that Christ will return after Christians, not Christ Himself, have established the kingdom on this earth).

However, in fairness to amillennialists, they do not believe that there is no millennium at all. They just do not believe in a literal millennium—a literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. Instead, they believe that Christ is now sitting on the

throne of David and that this present church age is the kingdom over which Christ reigns. There is no doubt that Christ is now sitting on a throne, but this does not mean that it is what the Bible refers to as the throne of David. There is no doubt that Christ now rules, for He is God. Yet this does not mean He is ruling over the millennial kingdom.

The amillennial view comes from using one method of interpretation for unfulfilled prophecy and another method for non-prophetic Scripture and fulfilled prophecy. Non-prophetic Scripture and fulfilled prophecy are interpreted literally or normally. But, according to the amillennialist, unfulfilled prophecy is to be interpreted spiritually, or non-literally. Those who hold to amillennialism believe that a “spiritual” reading of unfulfilled prophecy is the normal reading of the texts. This is called using a dual hermeneutic. (Hermeneutics is the study of the principles of interpretation.) The amillennialist assumes that most, or all, unfulfilled prophecy is written in symbolic, figurative, spiritual language. Therefore, the amillennialist will assign different meanings to those parts of Scripture instead of the normal, contextual meanings of those words.

The problem with interpreting unfulfilled prophecy in this manner is that this allows for a wide range of meanings. Unless you interpret Scripture in the normal sense, there will not be one meaning. Yet God, the ultimate author of all of Scripture, did have one specific meaning in mind when He inspired the human authors to write. Though there may be many life applications in a passage of Scripture, there is only one meaning, and that meaning is what God intended it to mean. Also, the fact that fulfilled prophecy was fulfilled literally is the best reason of all for assuming that unfulfilled prophecy will also be literally fulfilled. The prophecies concerning Christ's first coming were all fulfilled literally. Therefore, prophecies concerning Christ's second coming should also be expected to be fulfilled literally. For these reasons, an allegorical interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy should be rejected and a literal or normal interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy should be adopted. Amillennialism fails in that it uses inconsistent hermeneutics, namely, interpreting unfulfilled prophecy differently from fulfilled prophecy.

We are being taught that we are in the Millennium right now. Jesus is reigning from Heaven now.

- Since when? When did that thousand years start if they think we are in it right now? Because if they interpret it literally as a thousand years there had to be a beginning point, and an end point.
- And I don't see that there is a reign of Jesus Christ being manifest on the earth. In other words, is Satan bound? If he is, he sure has a lot of free reign in the midst of his binding because you can see his manifestation all around the world with descending darkness even as we sit here today.
- Mic 4:1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it.
2 Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.”
For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.
 - Latter days = millennium
 - Amillennialist would say that's talking about the Church and that we are in the Millennium now.
 - Is Jerusalem exalted today?
 - Is the house of God up on Jerusalem today?
 - Is the law of the world coming out of Jerusalem?
 - So, the Church is up on top of that mountain?
 - Is the Church reigning over all the world?
 - If this is the Millennium, Jesus is doing a very, very poor job of ruling over it.
 - Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Messianic Jew always says, “If we're in the Millennium now, then we are living in the slum portion of it.”
- And He will rule with a rod of iron

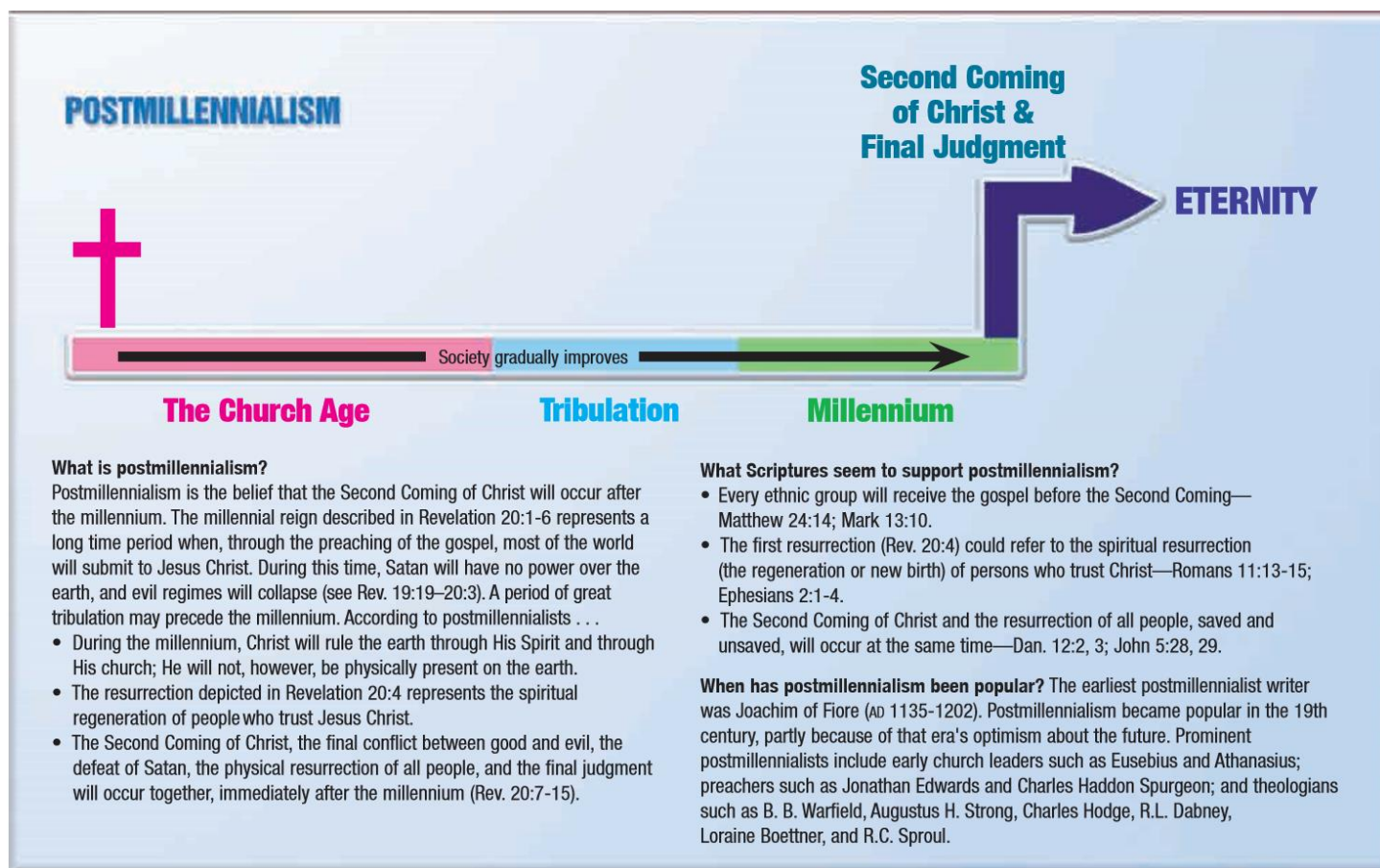
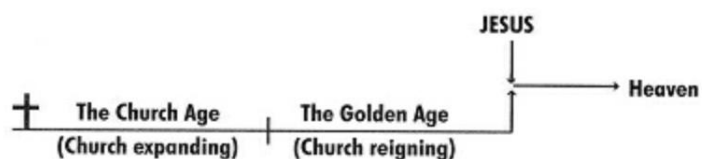
- Means all of the evil that we see manifest around the world today, will not be tolerated. So, clearly he is not reigning in that manner right now, even through the Church.
- Rev 2:25 But hold fast what you have till I come. 26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father;
- Ps 2:7 “I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ ”
- The earth will be flooded with righteousness as the waters cover the seas.
 - This is clearly not happening today
 - Hab 2:14 For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.
 - Is 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.
- The Dead Sea will be alive again – teeming with life – fish and green cliffs
 - Ez 47:7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. 8 Then he said to me: “This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12 Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.”
 - Amillennialists claim that this is symbolic language for the Gospel going out all over the world
- Cotton Mather was a Puritan pastor back in the 1700’s and he said, “The Kingdom of Christ was a four part kingdom, it was a spiritual kingdom, a providential kingdom, and a ecclesiastical kingdom...” Which it is, the Church is over the earth right now, the Lord through it. But there is a fourth aspect and that is the Davidic Kingdom where Jesus will rule, and reign on the seat of David in Jerusalem. And that aspect has not been claimed yet, but He will when Jesus returns.
- Greek philosophy just invaded the Church when the Church began to be dominated by Gentiles – especially by Augustine.
- All the early Church Fathers were very anti-Semitic, and that also propels Amillennialism because the kingdom that is portrayed in the Scriptures both Old Testament, and New is going to be a Jewish Kingdom where Jesus is going to reign from Jerusalem, all the blessing of God are going to go out through the Jewish people. In fact, it says that they will be so honored during that time that ten Gentiles will grab hold of a robe of a Jew and say, “*Can we walk with you, because we know God is with you?*” And these fellas could not accept that, God had washed His hands of the Jews, and there is not going to be any future kingdom where Israel is the prime nation of the world.

Postmillennial – Church reigns

The church is in the process of building the kingdom of God right now by being a positive influence in the world. Post-Millennialism teaches that the Millennium is future, and will occur on this earth but it will consist of the Church reigning over all of the world for a thousand years, without the presence of Jesus.

- They believe that Christ will return after the church establishes a righteous kingdom on earth
 - Although a good thought, we are watching the world become less and less influenced for Christ

- A lot of missionaries are postmillennial
- Works-based environment



Answer: Postmillennialism is an interpretation of Revelation chapter 20 which sees Christ's second coming as occurring after the "millennium," a golden age or era of Christian prosperity and dominance.

- The term includes several similar views of the end times, and it stands in contrast to premillennialism (the view that Christ's second coming will occur prior to His millennial kingdom and that the millennial kingdom is a literal 1000-year reign) and, to a lesser extent, amillennialism (no literal millennium).

Postmillennialism is the belief that Christ returns after a period of time, but not necessarily a literal 1000 years. Those who hold this view do not interpret unfulfilled prophecy using a normal, literal method. They believe that Revelation 20:4-6 should not be taken literally. They believe that "1000 years" simply means "a long period of time." Furthermore, the prefix "post-" in "postmillennialism" denotes the view that Christ will return after Christians (not Christ Himself) have established the kingdom on this earth.

Those who hold to postmillennialism believe that this world will become better and better—all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding—with the entire world eventually becoming "Christianized." After this happens, Christ will return. However, this is not the view of the world in the end times that Scripture presents. From the book of

Revelation, it is easy to see that the world will be a terrible place during that future time. Also, in 2 Timothy 3:1-7, Paul describes the last days as “terrible times.”

Those who hold to postmillennialism use a non-literal method of interpreting unfulfilled prophecy, assigning their own meanings to words. The problem with this is that when someone starts assigning meanings to words other than their normal meaning, a person can decide that a word, phrase, or sentence means anything he wants it to mean. All objectivity concerning the meaning of words is lost. When words lose their meaning, communication ceases. However, this is not how God has intended for language and communication to be. God communicates to us through His written word, with objective meanings to words, so that ideas and thoughts can be communicated.

A normal, literal interpretation of Scripture rejects postmillennialism and holds to a normal interpretation of all Scripture, including unfulfilled prophecy. We have hundreds of examples in Scripture of prophecies being fulfilled. Take, for example, the prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament. Those prophecies were fulfilled literally. Consider the virgin birth of Christ (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). Consider His death for our sins (Isaiah 53:4-9; 1 Peter 2:24). These prophecies were fulfilled literally, and that is reason enough to assume that God will continue in the future to literally fulfill His Word. Postmillennialism fails in that it interprets Bible prophecy subjectively and holds that the millennial kingdom will be established by the church, not by Christ Himself.

- This perspective of the Church actually gaining ascendancy.
- I think this was disproven in the last century with World War I
 - The Church thought it was beginning to globalize the Gospel message, and evangelize the world
 - At the end of the 19th Century – In the 1890’s – the Church was flooded with articles and magazine and all about how the 20th Century was going to be the century of the Church. And the Church would take over the world through the proclamation of the Gospel.
 - Nearly all Christians were Post-Millennialists in that sense. They anticipated that that was about to be fulfilled.
 - And then came World War I and World War II, and the Great Depression, and the Cold War, and suddenly you couldn’t find a Post-Millennialist anywhere.
- Post-Modernist
 - What we have now is Post-Modernist who are actually reverting to pagan religion, and pagan culture.
 - Even within the last weeks, we have seen in our country a dramatic decline in the impact of the Church here.
 - There has been a twelve-point drop in ten years in the number of people in the United States who even identify as being Christian – Which doesn’t mean they are Christians, that’s just self-identification.
 - And of course, generationally it is dropping precipitously, to where the Millennial generation today less than half of them even will claim a faith at all, let alone a Christian faith.
 - And so, the Church is obviously not gaining ascendancy.

Great White Throne Judgement - Final judgment for *unbelievers*

The Great White Throne Judgment

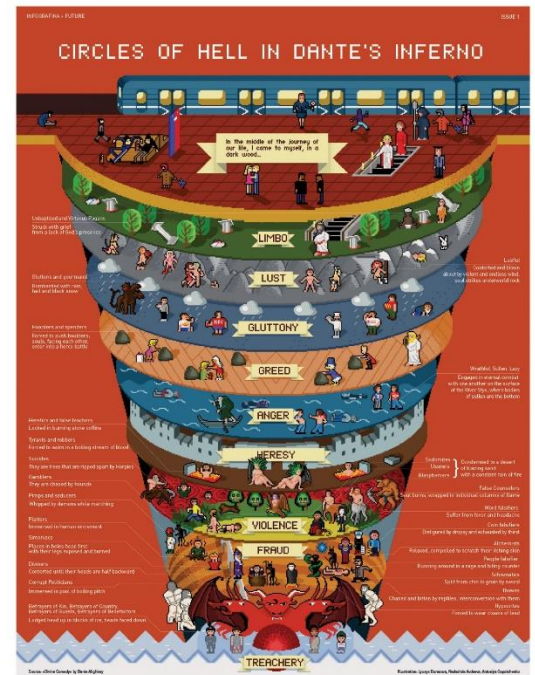
¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

- “a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it.”
 - Describing it as μέγας [me’-gahs, “large” or “great”] and λευκός [lyi-kos’, “white”] distinguishes this throne from the ones belonging to the twenty-four elders.

- We are not told who is sitting on the throne, which appears to be God's throne, but we might rightly infer that it is Jesus:
 - Jn 5 ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. ²² For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.
- The Book of Life and other books are opened.
 - Notice that now ALL the dead are raised:
 - 1) the martyrs and those who bore the names of God and the Lamb who were raised in 20:4 and have reigned with Christ as his companions during the 1,000-year "Millennial Kingdom"
 - Their names written in βιβλίον ["book" singular], the "book of life."
 - 2) those who are raised now, those allied with Satan and his crew who bore the number 666.
 - Their names written in βιβλία [bee-blee'-a, "books" plural]
 - This suggests there are far more names written in the "books" than there are in the singular "book of life," recalling Jesus saying:

Mt 7 ¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.
- Resurrection and judgement of all unbelievers, who are thrown into Gehenna
 - Demons in Tartarus thrown into Gehenna
 - This is the "time" that the demons that Jesus cast out were referring to
 - Matthew 8:29 And they [the demons] cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other (lit.: What is to us and to you, a Hebrew idiom), Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time [of judgement]?"
- We are approaching the "Last Judgment" scene in Revelation, but notice that the names are already inscribed in the two sets of books, the "Book of Life" and the "other books." So, how do the names get there in the first place?
 - Being in the "Book of Life" or being in the "other books"—that is, being among the redeemed or being among the lost—is not a matter of God's judgment, not a matter of reward or punishment; it is a matter of our individual choice in this life.
 - If we choose to respond to God's grace through faith in his Son, then our sins are forgiven and we move from the world into the family of God, the Church.
 - Conversely, if we refuse God's gift of grace, and if we adamantly and steadfastly refuse his freely-given gift of redemption, then we remain in the world, outside the family of God.
 - As John tells us in his gospel: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him." (3:36)
- The Last Judgment doesn't determine whether you are in heaven or hell, for you have already decided that
 - Rather, it determines your position in heaven or hell.

- Dante illustrates the concept best in his Divine Comedy.
- 14th Century – Dante’s Divine Comedy – This concept of Hades (or what is later called Hell) reaches its fullest development in the 14th century with Dante’s Divine Comedy, and his 33-Canto portrayal of the Inferno, a descent by Dante and Virgil through the nine circles of Hell, each circle reserved for particular categories of sinners. Dante’s hell (the Inferno) consists of nine concentric circles, each one deeper within the bowels of the earth, and each one residence for those whose lives are defined by increasingly serious sins:
 1. Limbo (the abode of virtuous pagans)
 2. Lust
 3. Gluttony
 4. Greed
 5. Wrath
 6. Heresy
 7. Violence
 8. Fraud
 9. Treachery



Judgment

- Judgment – The word Judgment Seat in 2Co 5:9-11 (Bema Seat) is an entirely different word for the word Judgment or Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation.
 - Both are judgment seats, and both are translated judgment seat in English, but in the Greek they are two different words with two entirely different meanings.
 - The word in the Corinthian letter is the word “bema” B-E-M-A,
 - The bema in the Corinthian passage is the Judgment seat for rewards, much like the judge at the Olympics stands before the contestants and he gives the gold, the silver, and the bronze.
 - The word in the Revelation letter is the word “krino”
 - The judgment seat at the Great White Throne in Revelation is like a court of law where sentence is passed.
 - The Great White Throne Judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15 is a judgment for unbelievers.
 - It is clear that no one at that judgment has his name in the Book of Life (Rev 20:12-14).
 - The fate of the ungodly is sealed; their names are not in the Book of Life; their punishment is sure.

Final judgment

- The fact that there is going to be a final judgment for all men, both believers and unbelievers, is clearly confirmed in many passages of Scripture. Every person will one day stand before Christ and be judged for his or her deeds. While it is very clear that the great white throne judgment is the final judgment, Christians disagree on how it relates to the other judgments mentioned in the Bible, specifically, who will be judged at the great white throne judgment.
- Some Christians believe that the Scriptures reveal three different judgments to come.
 - The first is the judgment of the sheep and the goats or a judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31-36). This takes place after the tribulation period but prior to the millennium; its purpose is to determine who will enter the millennial kingdom.
 - The second is a judgment of believers’ works, often referred to as the “judgment seat [bema] of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10). At this judgment, Christians will receive degrees of reward for their works or service to God.
 - The third is the great white throne judgment at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:11-15). This is the judgment of unbelievers in which they are judged according to their works and sentenced to everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.

- Other Christians believe that all three of these judgments speak of the same final judgment, not of three separate judgments. In other words, the great white throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 will be the time that believers and unbelievers alike are judged.
 - Those whose names are found in the book of life will be judged for their deeds in order to determine the rewards they will receive or lose.
 - Those whose names are not in the book of life will be judged according to their deeds to determine the degree of punishment they will receive in the lake of fire.

Those who hold this view believe that Matthew 25:31-46 is another description of what takes place at the great white throne judgment. They point to the fact that the result of this judgment is the same as what is seen after the great white throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15. The sheep (believers) enter into eternal life, while the goats (unbelievers) are cast into “eternal punishment” (Matthew 25:46).

- Whichever view one holds of the great white throne judgment, it is important to never lose sight of the facts concerning the coming judgment(s).
 - First, Jesus Christ will be the judge, all unbelievers will be judged by Christ, and they will be punished according to the works they have done.
 - The Bible is very clear that unbelievers are storing up wrath against themselves (Romans 2:5) and that God will “give to each person according to what he has done” (Romans 2:6).
 - Believers will also be judged by Christ, but since Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to us and our names are written in the book of life, we will be rewarded, but not punished, according to our deeds.
 - Romans 14:10-12 says that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and that each one of us will give an account to God.

Great White Throne Judgment

The great white throne judgment is described in Revelation 20:11-15 and is the final judgment prior to the lost being cast into the lake of fire. We know from Revelation 20:7-15 that this judgment will take place after the millennium and after Satan is thrown into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are (Revelation 19:19-20; 20:7-10).

- Rev 20:7 Now when the thousand years have expired, ... 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.
- The Book of Life, in this context, is the set of names of those who will live with God forever in heaven. It is the roll of those who are saved. This Book of Life is also mentioned in Revelation 3:5; 20:12; and Philippians 4:3. The same book is also called the Lamb’s Book of Life because it contains the names of those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus (Revelation 13:8; 21:27).
 - How can you be sure your name is written in the Book of Life? Be sure you’re saved. Repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5). Once your name is written in the Book of Life, it is never erased (Revelation 3:5; Romans 8:37-39). No true believer should doubt his eternal security in Christ (John 10:28-30).
- Some people point to Revelation 3:5 as “proof” that a person can lose his salvation. However, the promise of Revelation 3:5 is clearly that the Lord will not erase a name: “He who overcomes . . . I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life.” An overcomer is one who is victorious over the temptations, trials, and evils of this world—in other words, one who is redeemed. The saved are written in God’s registry and have the promise of eternal security.

- Another passage over which confusion sometimes arises is Psalm 69:28: “Let them [David’s enemies] be blotted out of the book of the living.” This “book of the living” should not be confused with the Lamb’s Book of Life. David is referring to earthly, physical life, not eternal life in heaven. The same is true of the “book” mentioned in Exodus 32:32-33.
- God keeps good records. He knows His own, and He has set the names of His children permanently in His book.

He will reward or punish each one accordingly

The books that are opened (Revelation 20:12) contain records of everyone's deeds, whether they are good or evil, because God knows everything that has ever been said, done, or even thought, and **He will reward or punish each one accordingly**.

- Ps 28:3 Do not take me away with the wicked And with the workers of iniquity, Who speak peace to their neighbors, But evil is in their hearts. 4 Give them according to their deeds, And according to the wickedness of their endeavors; Give them according to the work of their hands; Render to them what they deserve. 5 Because they do not regard the works of the Lord, Nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them And not build them up.
- Ps 62:11 God has spoken once, Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God. 12 Also to You, O Lord, belongs mercy; For You render to each one according to his work.
- Ro 2{God's Righteous Judgment} 2 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God.
- Rev 2:22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.
- Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6 Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. 7 In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' 8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.
- Rev 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." 14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

Book of Life (Lamb's Book of Life)

Also at this time, another book is opened, called the "book of life" (Revelation 20:12). It is this book that determines whether a person will inherit eternal life with God or receive everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.

- Several places in Scripture refer to God's "book"
 - Exodus 32:32
 - Psalm 56:8
 - 69:28
 - Daniel 7:10
 - Daniel 12:1
 - Revelation 13:8
 - Revelation 20:15

- Although Christians are held accountable for their actions, they are forgiven in Christ and their names were written in the “book of life from the creation of the world” (Revelation 17:8).
 - Rev 17 {The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast} 7 But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.
- We also know from Scripture that it is at this judgment when the dead will be “judged according to what they had done” (Revelation 20:12) and that “anyone’s name” that is not “found written in the book of life” will be “thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).
- Rev 13:7 It was granted to him {Antichrist} to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
- Rev 3:5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
- Dan 7:9 “I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.
- Dan 12:1 “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.
- Rev 21:22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.
- Phil 4:2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 [a]And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.
- Ps 139:1 6 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

[Book of the Living](#)

A passage over which confusion sometimes arises is Psalm 69:28: “Let them [David’s enemies] be blotted out of the book of the living.” This “book of the living” should not be confused with the Lamb’s Book of Life. David is referring to earthly, physical life, not eternal life in heaven. The same is true of the “book” mentioned in Exodus 32:32-33.

- Ps 69: 28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.
- Ex 32:31 Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! 32 Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.” 33 And the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

Book of Remembrance

Mal 3 – A Book of Remembrance

16 Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them;

So a book of remembrance was written before Him

For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name.

17 “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels.

And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.”

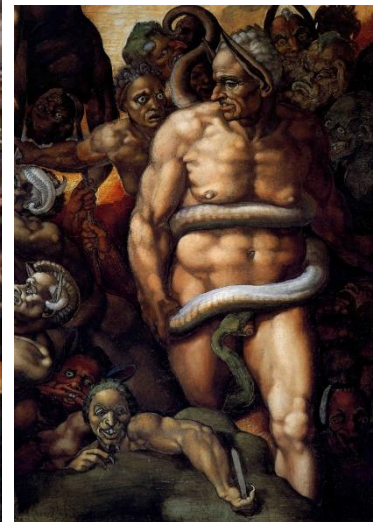
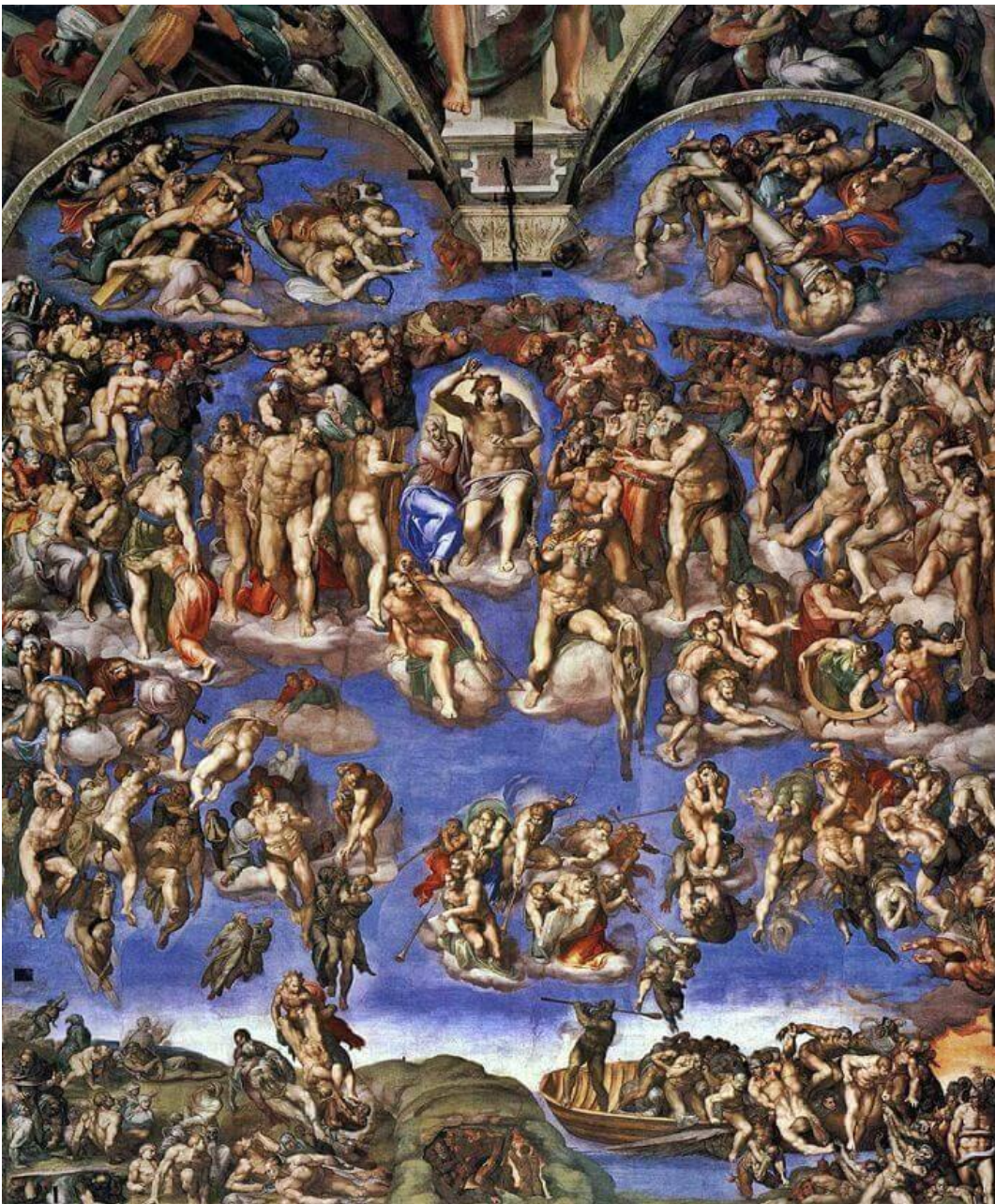
18 Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked,

Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.

- The book of Malachi is a detailed account from the Lord to Israel about their disobedience.
 - His charges against them includes:
 - Offering defective sacrifices (1:8)
 - Teaching error (2:8)
 - Being unfaithful to their wives (2:13–14)
 - Complaining that it was futile to serve the Lord (3:13–14).
 - God pronounces strict judgments upon those guilty of such offenses (Malachi 2:2, 9).
 - He then makes it clear that He hears and knows the intent of every heart and desires to honor those who honor Him. He knows those who refuse to murmur against Him (Numbers 14:27, 36; Deuteronomy 1:27; Psalm 106:25).
- In His infinite knowledge, God does not need a written record in order to keep track of human deeds. However, when He speaks to us, He often uses metaphor or parable to help us understand (Mark 4:33).
 - As Malachi presented God’s words to the people, they would have understood what a book of remembrance represented. The kings of Persia kept such books, records of those who had rendered service to the king, that those servants might be rewarded. The book of Esther contains a good example of this (Esther 6:1–3).
- It is also important to note that the reward was often delayed. That’s why books were needed, so that no worthy deed for the king went unrewarded.
 - In Malachi 3:17 the Lord says, “‘On the day when I act’” He is indicating that faithful service may go on for years with no apparent reward, but He is taking note.
 - There is coming a day when He will act.
 - One reason the Israelites had grown lax in their obedience and were becoming jealous of evildoers was that they thought the Lord did not see or care (Malachi 3:14–15; cf. Psalm 94:7; Ezekiel 8:12).
- However, Scripture is clear that loyalty to God does not go unnoticed or unrewarded.
 - Jesus spoke of this many times (Matthew 10:42; Mark 9:41; Luke 6:23; Revelation 22:12).
 - He spoke of storing up treasure in heaven, as though making deposits into a bank account (Matthew 6:20).
 - The implication is that what is done on earth is forever recorded in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:10).
 - The book of remembrance is simply a concept God used to encourage His faithful ones that their love and service for Him was appreciated. It is His promise that, when His judgment comes against those who reject Him, He knows His own and will preserve them. The account of righteous Noah is a good illustration of God’s preserving those who honor Him (Genesis 6:9).
- Jesus encouraged His followers to “rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20).
 - Even as He said it, Jesus knew that their faithfulness to Him would result in earthy trouble, heartache, and even death (Matthew 24:9; Acts 9:16; 12:2). But knowing that their names were written in God’s book helped the disciples persevere to the end (Matthew 10:22; Mark 13:13).
 - Galatians 6:9 continues the theme of future reward: “Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” Those who continue to honor the Lord when many around them fall away can rest in the confidence that their names are written in God’s book of remembrance.

Michelangelo's "The Last Judgment"

- Of course, we'd be remiss if we closed this lesson without seeing Michelangelo's "The Last Judgment" fresco on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City.
- Commissioned by Pope Clement VII in 1534, the original subject was to be the resurrection, but with the Pope's death, his successor, Pope Paul III, requested a "Last Judgment" scene.
- Michelangelo spent much of 1535 preparing the wall, and he completed the work in four years, 1536-1541.
- The fresco was not well received. The Pope's Master of Ceremonies, Biagio da Cesena, complained that "it was mostly disgraceful that in so sacred a place there should have been depicted all those nude figures, exposing themselves so shamefully," observing that it was more fit "for the public baths and taverns" than for the papal chapel. Michelangelo responded by including Cesena's face on the figure of Minos, judge of the underworld, wearing asses ears, with a snake coiled about him biting his penis. When Cesena complained, the Pope laughingly replied that his jurisdiction did not extend into hell!



Prophecies about the Millennial Kingdom

Revived Israel (Green)

Tribulation/Birth Pains (Orange)

Millennial Kingdom (Blue)

New Heavens / New Earth (Red)

Is 2 – The Future House of God

1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

Is 9 - The Government of the Promised Son

6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Is 11 – The Reign of Jesse's Offspring

1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord,
And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.
9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time
To recover the remnant of His people who are left,
From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.

12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

13 Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

14 But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west;
Together they shall plunder the people of the East; They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab;
And the people of Ammon shall obey them.

15 The Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River,
And strike it in the seven streams, And make men cross over dry-shod.

16 There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria,
As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

Is 32 – A Reign of Righteousness

1 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice. 2 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.
3 The eyes of those who see will not be dim, And the ears of those who hear will listen. 4 Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge, And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.

5 The foolish person will no longer be called generous, Nor the miser said to be bountiful; 6 For the foolish person will speak foolishness, And his heart will work iniquity: To practice ungodliness, To utter error against the Lord, To keep the hungry unsatisfied, And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. 7 Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; He devises wicked plans To destroy the poor with lying words, Even when the needy speaks justice. 8 But a generous man devises generous things, And by generosity he shall stand.

Is 32 – The Peace of God's Reign

16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness remain in the fruitful field. 17 The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. 18 My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places, 19 Though hail comes down on the forest, And the city is brought low in humiliation. 20 Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, Who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.

Is 35 – The Future Glory of Zion

1 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
2 It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord, The excellency of our God.
3 Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees.
4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."
5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing.
For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.
7 The parched ground shall become a pool, And the thirsty land springs of water;
In the habitation of jackals, where each lay, There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
8 A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others.

Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray.
9 No lion shall be there, Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; It shall not be found there.
But the redeemed shall walk there, 10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Is 42 – The Servant of the Lord

1 “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2 He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.”

5 Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: 6 “I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, 7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. 8 I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. 9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

Is 51 - The Lord Comforts Zion

4 “Listen to Me, My people; And give ear to Me, O My nation:
For law will proceed from Me, And I will make My justice rest As a light of the peoples.
5 My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples;
The coastlands will wait upon Me, And on My arm they will trust.
6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath.
For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will die in like manner;
But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.
7 “Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law:
Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults.
8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool;
But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation.”

Is 62 – Assurance of Zion’s Salvation

1 For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest,
Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns.
2 The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory.
You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the Lord will name.
3 You shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of the Lord,
And a royal diadem In the hand of your God.
4 You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate;
But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah;
For the Lord delights in you, And your land shall be married.
5 For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you;
And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.
6 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night.
You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent,
7 And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
8 The Lord has sworn by His right hand And by the arm of His strength:
“Surely I will no longer give your grain As food for your enemies;
And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine, For which you have labored.
9 But those who have gathered it shall eat it, And praise the Lord;
Those who have brought it together shall drink it in My holy courts.”

10 Go through, Go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people;
Build up, Build up the highway! Take out the stones, Lift up a banner for the peoples!
11 Indeed the Lord has proclaimed To the end of the world:
“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Surely your salvation is coming;
Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.’”
12 And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord;
And you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

Is 65 – The Glorious New Creation

17 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.
20 “No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.
21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, And their offspring with them.
24 “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent’s food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the Lord.

Is 66 – The Lord Vindicates Zion

7 “Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child.
8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once?
For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.
9 Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?” says the Lord.
“Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?” says your God.
10 “Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her;
Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;
11 That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom,
That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory.”
12 For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.
Then you shall feed; On her sides shall you be carried, And be dandled on her knees.
13 As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”

Jer 23 – The Branch of Righteousness

3 “But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the Lord.

5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7 “Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ 8 but, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the

house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ And they shall dwell in their own land.”

Jer 31 – The Remnant of Israel Saved

31 “At the same time,” says the Lord, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.”

2 Thus says the Lord:

“The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness—Israel, when I went to give him rest.”

3 The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying:

“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

4 Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel!

You shall again be adorned with your tambourines,

And shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice.

5 You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria;

The planters shall plant and eat them as ordinary food.

6 For there shall be a day When the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim,

‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the Lord our God.’ ”

7 For thus says the Lord:

“Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations;

Proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!’

8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, And gather them from the ends of the earth,

Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child

And the one who labors with child, together; A great throng shall return there.

9 They shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them.

I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble;

For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.

10 “Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say,

‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’

11 For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, And ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he.

12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, Streaming to the goodness of the Lord—

For wheat and new wine and oil, For the young of the flock and the herd;

Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, And they shall sorrow no more at all.

13 “Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together;

For I will turn their mourning to joy, Will comfort them, And make them rejoice rather than sorrow.

14 I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance,

And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord.”

Ez 44 – The East Gate and the Prince

1 Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. 2 And the Lord said to me, “This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. 3 As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.”

Ez 44 – Those Admitted to the {Millennial} Temple

4 Also He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; so I looked, and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord; and I fell on my face. 5 And the Lord said to me, “Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears, all that I say to you concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord and all its laws. Mark well who may enter the house and all who go out from the sanctuary.

6 “Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “O house of Israel, let Us have no more of all your abominations. 7 When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it—My house—and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations. 8 And you have not kept charge of My holy things, but you have set others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you.” 9 Thus says the Lord God: “No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.

Ez 44 – Laws Governing Priests

10 “And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. 11 Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, as gatekeepers of the house and ministers of the house; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. 12 Because they ministered to them before their idols and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity, therefore I have raised My hand in an oath against them,” says the Lord God, “that they shall bear their iniquity. 13 And they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priest, nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy Place; but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. 14 Nevertheless I will make them keep charge of the temple, for all its work, and for all that has to be done in it.

15 “But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood,” says the Lord God. 16 “They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge. 17 And it shall be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that they shall put on linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court or within the house. 18 They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with anything that causes sweat. 19 When they go out to the outer court, to the outer court to the people, they shall take off their garments in which they have ministered, leave them in the holy chambers, and put on other garments; and in their holy garments they shall not sanctify the people.

20 “They shall neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed. 21 No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. 22 They shall not take as wife a widow or a divorced woman, but take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests.

23 “And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. 24 In controversy they shall stand as judges, and judge it according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed meetings, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.

25 “They shall not defile themselves by coming near a dead person. Only for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister may they defile themselves. 26 After he is cleansed, they shall count seven days for him. 27 And on the day that he goes to the sanctuary to minister in the sanctuary, he must offer his sin offering in the inner court,” says the Lord God.

28 “It shall be, in regard to their inheritance, that I am their inheritance. You shall give them no possession in Israel, for I am their possession. 29 They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering; every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. 30 The best of all firstfruits of any kind, and every sacrifice of any kind from all your sacrifices, shall be the priest’s; also you shall give to the priest the first of your ground meal, to cause a blessing to rest on your house. 31 The priests shall not eat anything, bird or beast, that died naturally or was torn by wild beasts.

Dan 2 - Daniel Explains the Dream

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of

men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

Dan 7 – Vision of the Ancient of Days

9 “I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire;
10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him.
A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was seated, And the books were opened.

11 “I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.
14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

Dan 7 – Daniel’s Visions Interpreted

15 “I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 ‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’

19 “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

21 “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

23 “Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.

24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom.

And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law.

Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

26 ‘But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,

Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

28 “This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.

Amos 9 – Israel Will Be Restored

11 “On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages;
I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old;

12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,”
Says the Lord who does this thing.

13 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord,
“When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed;
The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it.

14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel;
They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them;
They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;
They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.

15 I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them,”
Says the Lord your God.

Mic 4 – The Lord’s Reign in Zion

1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord’s house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it.

2 Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.”

For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid;
For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

5 For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the Lord our God
Forever and ever.

Mic 4 – Zion’s Future Triumph

6 “In that day,” says the Lord, “I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted;
7 I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation;

So the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.

8 And you, O tower of the flock, The stronghold of the daughter of Zion,
To you shall it come, Even the former dominion shall come, The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.”

9 Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished?
For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor.

10 Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs.
For now you shall go forth from the city, You shall dwell in the field, And to Babylon you shall go.
There you shall be delivered; There the Lord will redeem you From the hand of your enemies.

11 Now also many nations have gathered against you, Who say, “Let her be defiled, And let our eye look upon Zion.”

12 But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, Nor do they understand His counsel;
For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

13 “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; For I will make your horn iron,
And I will make your hooves bronze; You shall beat in pieces many peoples;
I will consecrate their gain to the Lord, And their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.”

Zec 6 - The Command to Crown Joshua

- A time is coming when the offices of priest and king would be united in the One who will rule the earth forever.

11 Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. 12 Then speak to him, saying, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying:

"Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH!

From His place He shall branch out,

And He shall build the temple of the Lord;

13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord.

He shall bear the glory,

And shall sit and rule on His throne;

So He shall be a priest on His throne,

And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." '

Zec 8 – Jerusalem, Holy City of the Future

1 Again the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying,

2 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.'

3 "Thus says the Lord: 'I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the Lord of hosts, The Holy Mountain.'

4 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit In the streets of Jerusalem,

Each one with his staff in his hand Because of great age.

5 The streets of the city Shall be full of boys and girls Playing in its streets.'

6 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days,

Will it also be marvelous in My eyes?' Says the Lord of hosts.

7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east And from the land of the west;

8 I will bring them back, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.

They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.'

9 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Let your hands be strong,

You who have been hearing in these days These words by the mouth of the prophets,

Who spoke in the day the foundation was laid For the house of the Lord of hosts, That the temple might be built.

10 For before these days There were no wages for man nor any hire for beast;

There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in;

For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor.

11 But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' says the Lord of hosts.

12 'For the seed shall be prosperous, The vine shall give its fruit, The ground shall give her increase,

And the heavens shall give their dew— I will cause the remnant of this people To possess all these.

13 And it shall come to pass That just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel,

So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, Let your hands be strong.'

14 "For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Just as I determined to punish you When your fathers provoked Me to wrath,'

Says the Lord of hosts, 'And I would not relent,

15 So again in these days I am determined to do good To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear.

16 These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor;

Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace;

17 Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; And do not love a false oath.

For all these are things that I hate,' Says the Lord."

18 Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying,

19 "Thus says the Lord of hosts:

'The fast of the fourth month, The fast of the fifth, The fast of the seventh, And the fast of the tenth, Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts For the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.'

20 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Peoples shall yet come, Inhabitants of many cities;

21 The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying,

"Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord, And seek the Lord of hosts. I myself will go also."

22 Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem,

And to pray before the Lord.'

23 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." ' "

Zec 14 – The Nations Worship the King

16 And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 20 In that day “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21 Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.

Mt 19 - With God All Things Are Possible

28 So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Lk 1 – Christ’s Birth Announced to Mary

32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Rev 5 - Worthy Is the Lamb

9 And they sang a new song, saying:
“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;
For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
10 And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.”

Rev 11 – Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed

15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

Rev 20 – Satan Bound 1,000 Years

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Rev 20 – The Saints Reign with Christ 1,000 Years

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand

years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Rev 20 – Satanic Rebellion Crushed

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Rev 20 – The Great White Throne Judgment

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Mormons

Mormonism has many, many problems theologically:

- **New Scripture which isn't scripture.** Mormons believe that special revelation continues beyond the canon as we know it. Consequently, they affirm the Book of Mormon ("translated" by Joseph Smith in the 19th century) as scripture, as well as other revelations to their ongoing apostles and prophets. Their canon is open (ours is closed).
- **The new revelation often contradicts the old.** This new revelation thing might not be as big a deal if the new revelation basically re-hashed the old. It doesn't. It is contradictory at many points.
- **Mormons believe God was once a man.** The eternal, omniscient, all-powerful being we worship was once a man as we are (on another planet, of course). He sort of graduated to deity. And you can too (but only if you're a man, and a Mormon).
- **Mormons deny the full divinity of Jesus Christ.** This won't be obvious. They may even reference him as the Son of God. But, don't be fooled. They don't believe he is of the same substance and essence as the Father. They actually believe something pretty close to tri-theism (at least seem to sometimes) – this would affirm that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all God, but are not all one. Big trouble. Other times they seem to affirm a view of Christ that affirms a lower level of deity – still big, big trouble.
- **Mormonism is essentially a works-righteousness religion.** Though they will nod their heads understandingly at our proclamation of the gospel, Mormons hold to a form of religion that is man-centered. It is about human endeavors and good works, particularly missionary endeavors. We please God not through trusting in Christ's finished work, but by doing good stuff for him. In contrast to this, the Christian faith is from beginning to end about the grace of God to sinners who can do nothing on their own to please him. It is only Christ's work on our behalf (and appropriated *by faith alone*) which can render us or any of our works pleasing to God.
- **Mormons are generally super-duper people.** This may not seem like a theological problem, but it really is. The apparent outward goodness blinds the conscience to the true heart condition of even the devoutly religious. In short...if we're apparently good in human terms we can mistakenly believe that means we're OK before God. A really bad assumption.
- **Lots of other weird things:** Native Americans are actually Jewish (the ten lost tribes of Israel), Jesus visits North America, Baptism for the dead, etc. And the polygamy thing. Theological problems.

How to engage your friend:

- **Be her friend.** It sounds like she's bounced from religion to religion and probably doesn't have a terribly strong doctrinal commitment to Mormonism either. She is likely seeking community in a faith context as much as she's seeking that faith in and of itself. Befriend her, seek opportunities to be her community. This in and of itself can weaken the hold this false belief system has on her.
- **In the context of your friendship, ask questions.** Once you're friends, you can really engage her in conversation. "What caused you to change from this faith to that one?" "What is it about Mormonism that attracted you?" Your goal isn't just to convert her, but to genuinely get to know her better. And it is in that context that you are most likely to gain a hearing for your perspective.
- **Use the Bible!** If she's reading the Bible, is open to the Bible, by all means use the Bible! Be aware that Mormons have their own translation of the Bible, translated by Joseph Smith (the same guy who "translated" the Book of Mormon!). This means their official Bible does have some problems. But open up your Bibles together (you use a trustworthy one) and look at what the scriptures say. I would say that Romans would be a great place to go, as Paul is so clear there about how serious a sin problem we have (this is death to works righteousness).

One warning particular to Mormonism: The Mormon church has been very adept at disguising itself as another Christian denomination. They call themselves *The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints*. They use orthodox Christian lingo, **but all the words are redefined** with a completely different content from what we know and understand. For instance, a Mormon can say quite sincerely, "I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. He died on the cross in my place and was raised from the dead on the third day. I will live forever with him in heaven and look forward to his coming." That all sounds great, but none of the words mean what you and I mean by them. Every term is redefined. So you have to spend time defining terms. "What do you mean by *saved*?" for instance. You'll find (if they know what Mormonism teaches) that none of these terms means what they mean. So you'll have to start with "here's what I mean..."

This isn't accidental. The LDS has calculated that one of the best potential opportunities for their missionary activity is clueless Christians. People who will hear a statement like the one in the last paragraph and they'll say "Well, that sounds OK!" They will assume that Mormons are just another Christian denomination. In other words, **clueless nominal Christians are among those most likely to be converted to Mormonism**. This is part of the reason why the Church of Jesus Christ (the real one), needs to get much more serious about *catechesis* – actually teaching our kids and our people generally what it is that the Bible actually teaches.

New Heaven and New Earth

Prophecies about the New Heaven and New Earth

Tribulation/Birth Pains (Orange)

Millennial Kingdom (Blue)

New Heavens / New Earth (Red)

Is 51 - The Lord Comforts Zion

4 "Listen to Me, My people; And give ear to Me, O My nation:
For law will proceed from Me, And I will make My justice rest As a light of the peoples.
5 My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples;
The coastlands will wait upon Me, And on My arm they will trust.
6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath.
For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will die in like manner;
But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.
7 "Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law:
Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults.
8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool;
But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation."

Is 65 – The Glorious New Creation

17 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.
20 “No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.
21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, And their offspring with them.
24 “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent’s food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the Lord.

Lk 1 – Christ’s Birth Announced to Mary

32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Jn 14 – The Way, the Truth, and the Life

1 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

Jn 18 – Jesus’ Kingdom

36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

Rev 2 - The Loveless Church {Ephesus}

1 “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,
‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil.
And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

Rev 2 – The Persecuted Church

8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,
‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9 “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be

faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.**” ’

Rev 2 – The Compromising Church

12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. **16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.** 17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.**” ’

Rev 2 – The Corrupt Church

18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 19 “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. 20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. **22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.** 24 “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast what you have till I come. **26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star.** 29 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Rev 3 – The Dead Church

1 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,

‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. **Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. 4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.** 6 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

Rev 3 – The Faithful Church

7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”: 8 “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. **10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your**

crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. 13 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

Rev 3 – The Lukewarm Church

14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,
‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ”

Rev 21 – All Things Made New

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

6 And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Rev 21 – The New Jerusalem

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. 17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the

twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Rev 21 – The Glory of the New Jerusalem

22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Prayer

START YOUR DAY GODS WAY
TAKE YOUR LIFE TO HIM IN PRAYER,
AND LEAVE IT THERE.
TRUST HIM TO BE IN COMPLETE CONTROL,
AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR LIFE COMPLETELY WHOLE.

Start your day God's way

- God's way is perfect. Psalm 18:30a
- For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts higher than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:9
- God alone understands the way to wisdom; he knows where it can be found. Job 28:23
- So obey the commands of the Lord your God by walking in His ways and fearing Him. Deuteronomy 8:6
- O God, Your ways are holy. Is there any god as mighty as you? Psalm 77:13:
- The way of the Godly leads to life; that path does not lead to death. Proverbs 12:28

Take your life to Him in prayer

- Pray that the Lord your God will show us what to do and where to go. Jeremiah 42:3
- Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done. Philippians 4:6
- Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but You. Psalm 5:2
- (The Lord's Prayer) Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may Your Name be kept holy. May Your kingdom come soon. May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. Matt 6:9-13

And leave it there.

- And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him. Romans 12:1
- Now a true widow, a woman who is truly alone in this world, has placed her hope in God. 1 Timothy 5:5a
- But the Lord will redeem those who serve Him. No one who takes refuge in Him will be condemned. Psalm 34:22
- We know that our old sinful lives were crucified with Christ, so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. Romans 6:6

Trust Him to be in complete control

- And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them. Romans 8:28
- But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. Romans 8:9a
- Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. He said, Praise the name of God forever and ever, for He has all wisdom and power. He controls the course of world events; He removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars. He reveals deep and mysterious things and knows what lies hidden in darkness, though He is surrounded by light. Daniel 2:19b-22
- For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

And He will make your life completely whole.

- When he (any believer) prays to God, he will be accepted. And God will receive him with joy and restore him to good standing. Job 33:26
- But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, Who sees everything, will reward you. Matthew 6:6
- I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Psalm 34:4
- I cry out to God most high, to God Who will fulfill His purpose for me. Psalm 57:2
- May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Ephesians 3:19

[Does Prayer Change Things? \(RC Sproul: Crucial Questions Series\)](#)

What is the goal of the Christian life? It is godliness born of obedience to Christ. Obedience unlocks the riches of the Christian experience. Prayer prompts and nurtures obedience, putting the heart into the proper “frame of mind” to desire obedience.

Prayer is both a privilege and a duty

Prayer is both a privilege and a duty, and any duty can become laborious. Prayer, like any means of growth for the Christian, requires work. In a sense, prayer is unnatural to us. Though we were created for fellowship and communion with God, the effects of the fall have left most of us lazy and indifferent toward something as important as prayer. Rebirth quickens a new desire for communion with God, but sin resists the Spirit. The neglect of prayer is a major cause of stagnation in the Christian life.

Still it is very important for us to call upon him: First, that our hearts may be fired with a zealous and burning desire ever to seek, love, and serve him, while we become accustomed in every need to flee to him as to a sacred anchor. Secondly, that there may enter our hearts no desire and no wish at all of which we should be ashamed to make him a witness, while we learn to set all our wishes before his eyes, and even to pour out our whole hearts. Thirdly, that we be prepared to receive his benefits with true gratitude of heart and thanksgiving, benefits that our prayer reminds us come from his hand. (Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960], Book 3, chapter 20, section 3.)

In a sermon titled “The Most High, a Prayer-Hearing God,” Jonathan Edwards gave two reasons why God requires prayer:

- With respect to God, prayer is but a sensible acknowledgement of our dependence on him to his glory. As he hath made all things for his own glory, so he will be glorified and acknowledged by his creatures; and it is fit that he should require this of those who would be subjects of his mercy ... [it] is a suitable acknowledgement of our dependence on the power and mercy of God for that which we need, and but a suitable honor paid to the great Author and Fountain of all good.

- With respect to ourselves, God requires prayer of us ... Fervent prayer many ways tends to prepare the heart. Hereby is excited a sense of our need ... whereby the mind is more prepared to prize [his mercy] ... Our prayer to God may excite in us a suitable sense and consideration of our dependence on God for the mercy we ask, and a suitable exercise of faith in God's sufficiency, so that we may be prepared to glorify his name when the mercy is received. (The Works of Jonathan Edwards [Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974], 2: 116)

Holy Spirit assists us

Whenever we are unable to express the deep feelings and emotions of our souls or when we are completely unclear about what we ought to be praying, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. Romans 8: 26– 27 says: “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” When we don't know how to pray or what to pray for in a given situation, the Holy Spirit assists us.

Prayer is effective

Prayer, like everything else in the Christian life, is for God's glory and for our benefit, in that order. The very reason we pray is because of God's sovereignty, because we believe that God has it within His power to order things according to His purpose.

Time and again the Bible says that prayer is an effective tool. It is useful; it works. James says that we have not because we ask not (James 4: 2). He also tells us that the prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much (James 5: 16).

The promise of the Scriptures is that “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (James 5: 16). The problem is that we are not all that righteous. What prayer most often changes is the wickedness and the hardness of our own hearts. That alone would be reason enough to pray, even if none of the other reasons were valid or true.

Good Morning Prayers

Is there a right and wrong time for prayer? Isaiah 50: 4 talks about the morning as the time when God gives the desire to pray on a daily basis. (Sproul, R. C.. Does Prayer Change Things? (Crucial Questions Series) (p. 4). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.)

PSALMS 51:1–8

O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.
For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil may not dwell with you.
The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.
You destroy those who speak lies;
the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.
But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,
will enter your house.
I will bow down toward your holy temple
in the fear of you.
Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness

because of my enemies;
make your way straight before me.

JONAH 2:2-9

When my life was fainting away,
I remembered the Lord,
and my prayer came to you,
into your holy temple.
Those who pay regard to vain idols
forsake their hope of steadfast love.
But I with the voice of thanksgiving
will sacrifice to you;
what I have vowed I will pay.
Salvation belongs to the Lord!

EXODUS 33:13

Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight.

PSALM 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.

PSALM 33:6-11

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made
And by the breath of His mouth all their host
He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap
He lays up the deeps in storehouses
Let all the earth fear the LORD
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him
For He spoke, and it was done
He commanded, and it stood fast
The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations
He frustrates the plans of the peoples
The counsel of the LORD stands forever
The plans of His heart from generation to generation

ISAIAH 46:9-10

Remember the former things long past
For I am God, and there is no other
I am God, and there is no one like Me
Declaring the end from the beginning
And from ancient times things which have not been done
Saying, My purpose will be established
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure

PSALM 135:6

Whatever the LORD pleases, He does
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

DANIEL 4:35

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And among the inhabitants of earth

And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, What have You done.

PSALM 143:10

Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God

Lord, Teach Me To Pray!

Posted: 13 Apr 2016 01:29 PM PDT

I feel altogether inadequate in my prayer life. I'm a crummy pray-er. I'm highly distractible in prayer (despite being an intensely focused person generally). I'm inconsistent in prayer. I tell people I'll pray for them, then forget to do so. I fall asleep praying. I start praying, then realize I'm thinking about the Steelers depth chart (or a thousand other random unrelated items). I stink at prayer.

This would seem to be something of a liability as a professional pray-er. Praying is sort of my job. I pray in public. I lead corporate prayer. I'm also frequently asked to pray for various groups, meetings, conferences, etc. I've prayed for babies, houses, cars. I even prayed for a firetruck once. I also pray with and for people – almost every day I pray with a sick, struggling, or dying person. Despite frequent practice, I still think I'm no good at it.

I don't think I'm alone. I don't know many folks who consider their prayer life to be particularly stellar. My biggest heroes in prayer, prayer warriors, are often pretty quick to confess their prayer lives aren't what they think they ought to be. I include in this list many pastors.

What's wrong with our prayer lives? A bunch of stuff really.

- **Some of what's wrong is definitional** and relates to a misunderstanding of the nature of prayer. What is prayer? That is a question that requires some consideration. Sometimes we assume the answer, and sometimes we're wrong.
- **Sometimes what's wrong is theological.** We believe the wrong stuff about how prayer works. We're not really very clear on what we're doing, or what God's doing.
- **Sometimes what's wrong is behavioral.** We're doing it all wrong. Sometimes we are praying the wrong things, or in the wrong way, or for the wrong reasons.
- **Sometimes what's wrong is that we are just plain not praying.** It's all well and good to affirm faith with our lips, but if we aren't living out the faith relationally through prayer we aren't really living the life of faith at all. The proof is in the pudding (and the central ingredient in the pudding might be prayer).

We really need to listen to Jesus – his words and his witness. One of the main themes of his teaching and ministry was prayer. It is astonishing how much Jesus has to say about prayer. It is central to all he has to say. The only things Jesus talks about as much as prayer are hell, money, and the kingdom of God. That's it. Prayer is in the top 4.

The disciples got a lot of things wrong. Very often they totally misunderstood what their master was all about. He'd be talking about his impending death and resurrection, while they were arguing about which of them was the greatest (Mark 9). But one of the smartest things the disciples ever did was to ask Jesus for a prayer lesson:

Luke 11:1 *One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."*

This is one of the wisest things any disciple of Jesus could ever say. And it comes from a sense of their own inadequacy in prayer. They recognize in Jesus something they lack: real intimacy with the Father. They long for it. And they submit to his teaching. They've got something to learn, and Jesus is their teacher. We must do the same. Let's come to Jesus as our teacher.

We'll spend some time in the coming months considering what Jesus has to say about prayer.

Lord's Prayer

Mt 5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for **your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**

Mt 9 “This, then, is how you should pray: ““Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. ’
14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Our – he who will not have the church as their mother, can not have god as their father - siprian
Our – corporate, my – personal – need both
Both personal and corporate are appropriate

1. Father - acknowledge Him as Source
2. Hallowed be Your name - acknowledge Him as Sacred
3. Thy Kingdom come - acknowledge Him as Sovereign
4. Thy will be done - acknowledge Him as Superior
5. Give us our daily bread - acknowledge Him as Supplier
6. Forgive us our sins - acknowledge Him as Savior
7. Lead us not into temptation - acknowledge Him as Shelter

Teach Us to Pray: Small But Powerful

Posted: 20 Apr 2016 09:10 AM PDT

One teaspoon of botulinum toxin is enough to kill more than 1 billion human beings (or so the Internet tells me; I've never experimented). Some ants can lift as much as 5,000 times their body weight. Small doesn't mean weak. More of something isn't always better than less. This is true of prayer.

It is absolutely certain that the most commonly prayed Christian prayer in history is the Lord's Prayer, the Our Father, or whatever name we give this prayer. The disciples, recognizing their great need for help in their prayer lives (help that we desperately need as well!), asked Jesus to teach them to pray. Jesus accedes to their request:

Luke 11:2-4 ² He said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

Matthew's version of the prayer parallels this closely:

Matthew 6:9-13 ⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

This is not a long prayer. In Greek, Luke's version has 38 words; Matthew's has 57 words. Words, mind you. The Declaration of Independence has 1,458 words. The Gettysburg Address, widely praised for its succinctness, has 272 words. In short: this is not a long prayer. We should learn something from this. Especially since the preceding context in Matthew's gospel is this:

Matthew 6:7-8 ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

In other words: part of the reason I'm giving you this prayer is so that you won't yammer on forever in your prayers. There is no need for that! God doesn't need a laundry list; he knows what you need before you ask him. Just letting God know stuff is not the purpose of prayer.

Nor is prayer filling up time with lots of words. There is no virtue in length for length's sake, or as Jesus puts it, "babbling like pagans." It's pagans who value logorrhea, not God. Prayer is simple. Kids get this. And I've never had someone complain to me, "Hey, fella, that prayer was too short!"

Sometimes folks feel their prayers are too simple, too raw. They are afraid to pray in public because of their self-perceived lack of sophistication. They devalue their own prayers because of the lack of verbosity, floweriness, or poetic ornamentation. Yet, the model prayer of Jesus is a model of simplicity. It is profound, but it is simple.

Here are some of the most profound (and shortest/simplest) prayers of the bible:

Matthew 20:31 "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Mark 9:24 "I believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Matthew 8:2 "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

No complex syntax. No vivid metaphors. Just the simple request of a trusting soul. The kind of prayers that anyone can offer (and that children do). The kind of prayers that Jesus answers (see each of these in context, and the Lord's response). These kinds of prayers can't be improved upon.

In prayer, keep it simple. Really great prayer can come in tiny and unadorned packaging.

Teach us to pray: Model prayer

Rich Herbster

Christianity isn't magic. God's not a genie. There is no necessary correlation between performing certain religious ceremonies and experiencing good things. If we think about any prayer in this way (including the [Lord's Prayer](#)), we've got it all wrong. This is superstition.

Perhaps one of the great tragedies of the Lord's Prayer is that it has come to be viewed as a mantra. Some treat it as a formal rite that somehow carries some potency just by repetition. This isn't a magic prayer and it doesn't have magical power. It doesn't conjure up blessing just by giving utterance to the syllables.

There is evidence that very early on in church history the Lord's Prayer began to be treated as a mantra. The [Didache](#) includes the words of the Lord's Prayer with instructions to pray it three times each day (this threefold prayer is no doubt in imitation of Daniel's pattern of threefold prayer in Dan 6:10). Certainly for many Christians recitations of the Lord's Prayer are made routinely with little or no reflection on the *content* of the prayer. In nearly every Christian church the prayer is offered corporately in every worship service.

There is nothing wrong with praying the Lord's Prayer (Jesus *did* give us this prayer). However, there is something very wrong with praying this prayer in some sort of ritualistic, mechanical way with the assumption that there is some sort of blessing to be found simply based on said behavior.

Good teachers use examples. Lots of them. Jesus is the best teacher who ever lived. As a master teacher, he used examples as well. The Lord's Prayer isn't a mantra; it is a model prayer. In fact, some refer to this prayer as The Model Prayer. Jesus didn't give it to us so that we would just repeat it verbatim, ad nauseam. He gave it to us as a model, an example.

That the Lord's Prayer is a model prayer is evident from the way he gives it in Matthew: You should pray, he says, *houtōs*, a Greek conjunction meaning *in this manner*. *houtōs* indicates the *how* of prayer, the manner in which prayer is to be offered. If Jesus was interested in emphasizing the content (or the *what*) he would have introduced the prayer differently.

This is also obvious from the context of the prayer in Luke: **Luke 11:1** *One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."* The disciples don't want a mantra, they want to learn to pray. They want to understand *how* to pray, not a magical formula to repeat.

The answer is the Lord's Prayer. It sets a pattern. It lays down a paradigm for prayer. It is to be followed as an example. It is to be imitated, not necessarily simply recited. To be clear: the issue here isn't whether it is appropriate to recite the Lord's Prayer (it is); it is whether it is the intent to *simply* recite the Lord's Prayer (it isn't). Jesus' intent was to teach us *how* to pray, not *what* to pray.

Jesus himself rules out any superstitious understanding with his preamble to the Lord's Prayer in Matthew:

Matthew 6:7 *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.*

Mindless babbling is good form for pagans, but not for Christians. What he has in view for the Lord's Prayer is something different. Not magical words, no mantra, but an example, a model to be imitated.

So we should consider: what does this example teach us about prayer? What is it that Jesus would have us to learn from it? How can I live out that paradigm in my own life of prayer?

[Our Father in heaven](#)

Father - acknowledge Him as Source

[Does Prayer Change Things? \(RC Sproul: Crucial Questions Series\)](#)

The first two words of the prayer are radical as used in the New Testament. The word Father was not the basic form of address for God found in the old covenant community. His name was ineffable; He was not to be addressed with any degree of intimacy. The term Father was almost never used to speak of God or to address Him in prayer in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, Jesus brought us into an intimate relationship with the Father, breaking down the partition symbolized by the veil in the temple. Jesus gave us the incomparable privilege of calling God "Father." Jesus was the first on record to take prayer and make it a personal discourse with God. Jesus, who spoke Aramaic, used the Aramaic word Abba, best translated "Dad" or "Papa." We can almost hear the cry of alarm from the disciples and see the looks of astonishment on their faces: "You don't mean it, Jesus. You can't be serious! We're not even allowed to speak the name of God aloud. We don't even call him Father, much less Dad!"

Ironically, today we live in a world that assumes God is the Father of everyone, that all men are brothers. We hear Greek word *exousia*, translated "right to become," denotes the freedom to act and the authority for that action. Calling God "Father" without the proper credential of sonship is an act of extreme presumption and arrogance.

There is a clear distinction between the children of God and the children of the Devil. God's children hear His voice and obey Him. The children of the Devil do not listen to God's voice; they disobey Him by doing the will of their father, Satan. There are only two families, and everyone belongs to one or the other. Both groups have one thing in common, however. The members of each family do the will of their respective fathers, whether God or Satan.

Romans 8: 14– 17a says this: For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father." The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. It is only because we are in Christ and Christ is in us that we have the privilege of addressing God as our Father and of approaching Him in a filial relationship.

Although we are to come before the Lord in an attitude of intimacy, there is still an element of separation. “Our Father” speaks of the nearness of God, but “in heaven” points to His otherness, His being set apart. The point is this: When we pray, we must remember who we are and whom we are addressing.

Our Father, Who Art In Heaven

Posted: 19 May 2016 06:56 AM PDT

One of the most astonishing features of the Lord’s Prayer is its beginning. There are many ways to call upon God: many titles, many names, many descriptors. But the model Jesus provides is a unique and remarkable pattern for addressing God. With an incredible economy of words, he challenges traditional notions of God, and highlights two important aspects of his nature: his *immanence* and his *transcendence*.

Our Father. Living in the *anno domini* side of history, we take for granted that God is our father. This seems a normal way to speak about God. Yet it is anything but normal. Other religions don’t speak of God in this way. Some religions don’t even have a personal view of God (Buddhism for instance). Others do view God as a person, but still don’t refer to him as father – certainly not Islam, but this is also largely true of Judaism.

In the time of Jesus it was not unusual within Judaism to talk about God as father in a sort of loose metaphorical sense. But Jesus does something quite revolutionary when he speaks about God as *His* Father. His opponents recognized this and found it blasphemous:

John 5:18 ¹⁸ *For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

Jesus also uses an even more familiar form – the Aramaic *Abba* (Mark 14:36), which some have argued would carry the weight of a childlike “Daddy.” And he sweeps us up with himself into this remarkable personal relationship with God by teaching us to pray *Our* Father.

It is important to note here that in the sense Jesus teaches here, God is *not* the Father of all men. God is the Father of his children. And childhood of God is not a natural right, it is one received when we are adopted into the household of God through faith in Jesus Christ:

John 1:12-13 ¹² *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—* ¹³ *children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.*

The intimate nature of our relationship with the Father has enormous implications for our prayer lives as is seen in several teachings of Jesus, particularly the lesson concerning the desire of God to give good gifts to his children (Luke 11:11-13 – we’ll revisit this another time). God is present in the lives of his children like any good father is. He cares for his children, watches over them, provides for them, loves them.

We call this doctrine of God’s nearness and presence with us divine *immanence*. The Christian God is not sitting up in the heavens, aloof and remote, removed from interaction with his creatures. He is here; he is present in our midst. This is captured most powerfully in the great *Immanuel* biblical theme: God with us – whether in pillar of cloud and fire, in the Ark of the Covenant, in his manifest *Shekinah* glory in the Temple, or most ultimately in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit – God is with us!

Who Art in Heaven. Jesus teaches us to pray to God in a personal intimate way as Our Father, but he adds a modifier that we translate as a relative clause: “*who art in heaven.*” The language of “*art*” is obviously archaic. We aren’t talking about painting or sculpture; we would say “*is*” here in common speech. Modern translations go with “*Our Father in heaven,*” or, appropriately (since this is what this means), “*Our heavenly Father.*”

What is the significance of this additional descriptor? It serves as a check to a certain kind of error. While many systems of belief have a view of God that is too transcendent, or removed, from his Creation (Islam, for one), other systems of belief get carried away in the opposite direction. God is viewed as being overly immanent – he can be identified with the

Creation itself. You see this in forms of Pantheism (Buddhism is essentially pantheistic), but also in many other forms of Monism (such as New Age “spirituality”). You also see it in some really bad theological systems (like Process Theology).

God is intimately present in his Creation – in fact, he ultimately enters into his Creation to affect the redemption of the world via the incarnation. But he is also distinct from Creation. He Created Creation. He reigns transcendent over it. He is not like his creatures. He is “Holy! Holy! Holy!” Jesus reminds us of this by teaching us to call upon our *heavenly* Father. Though our Father, God is still *God*. As such, we reverence him; we fear him; we recognize (and we pray in light of) his transcendent glory.

Jesus teaches us to avoid the Scylla and Charybdis of both a radically immanent and a radically transcendent God. Both are serious errors and will lead to tremendous problems in our understanding of the God we serve. Instead he models for us a life of devotion to a God with whom we can both know intimate care and relationship (*Our Father*), but also a God who reigns supremely in majesty and glory over his creatures (*Who Art In Heaven*).

Hallowed be Your name

Hallowed be Your name - acknowledge Him as Sacred

Does Prayer Change Things? (RC Sproul: Crucial Questions Series)

No matter how close God invites us to come, there is still an infinite gulf between our sinfulness and His majesty. He is the heavenly one; we are of the earth. He is perfect; we are imperfect. He is infinite; we are finite. He is holy; we are unholy. We must never forget that God is wholly “other” than we.

God demands to be treated as holy, for He is holy. The top priority for the Christian is to see that God’s name is kept holy, for it is holy. God’s honor must become the obsession of the Christian community today. Honor must go not to our organizations, our denominations, our individual modes of worship, or even our particular churches, but to God alone.

Today a frightening lack of fear of God prevails in our world. Yet the top priority that Jesus established is that the name of God should be hallowed, honored, and exalted.

Hallowed Be Thy Name

Posted: 23 Jun 2016 09:45 AM PDT

An athlete focused on things other than training isn’t going to be a very good athlete (at least not for too long). A musician who doesn’t devote her primary energies to practicing will never be a great musician. Devote the scraps and leftovers of your energies to your relationship with your spouse and you will get a crummy marriage. It is impossible to overstate the importance of rightly ordered priorities.

The Lord’s Prayer is often broken down this way: An introduction (*Our Father, Who Art in Heaven*), a conclusion (*For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory...*), and, in between, seven petitions (petition is just another name for a request, something we ask for). The first petition is “*Hallowed Be Thy Name*.”

Two observations about the language here. First: this doesn’t sound like a petition at all. It sounds more like a declarative statement. It sounds like we are saying, “Lord, your name is hallowed.” But we’re not. We are actually asking God for something. We are asking God, “Lord, let your name be hallowed!” The form of the verb is what is called a third person imperative. An imperative gives a command. When concerning someone of greater authority, however, it doesn’t carry the sense of a command, but of a petition. A request is being made.

The second language issue here is the term “hallowed” itself. This is not a commonplace word for us. In fact, I’d wager that most folks never use this term outside of the first petition of the Lord’s Prayer! So what does it mean?

We can zero in on the meaning by considering a more commonly used English cognate: *Halloween*. What is “Halloween” (besides being an occasion to dress up and ask our neighbors for candy)? “Halloween” is short for “All Hallows Eve,” or “The Night before All Hallows Day.” Which raises the question, what is All Hallows Day? Well, it is All Saints Day – a day

set apart in the liturgical calendar to remember and celebrate all of the saints. “Saints” is just a term for all those who’ve been set apart as holy unto the Lord: that is to say, believers in Jesus Christ.

So the archaic English term “hallow” has to do with “holiness.” And the petition to ask God to let his name be hallowed would best be understood as something like this: Please, Lord, let your name be made holy!

Now that is an interesting place to begin a prayer! Think of all the things you ask God for, have asked God for, will ask God for. We make requests for healing, for financial blessing and provision, for food, for our children, and for a great many other things. But Jesus says, “When you pray, here is a model for you. Start out by asking God for his name to be set apart as holy! That’s where you should begin!”

First things are first. According to Jesus, the first thing that should be in our hearts and minds when we turn to our God, the first petition in terms of priority and importance shouldn’t concern us and our temporal worldly needs at all; rather our first desire should be for God to be honored and glorified through the setting apart of his name as holy.

When this is our first desire, all else pales in comparison. When this is our first desire, so much that seems absolutely vital and essential from our limited earthly perspective becomes secondary, tertiary, or just downright irrelevant. What matters, what really matters, is that God’s name be recognized, adored, worshiped, glorified: that he be hallowed.

Praying this way, putting this first, has the practical effect of reorienting our priorities, of turning upside down our understanding of what is really important. What is first in the desire of your heart? Is it the hallowing of the name of God? If not, then your petitions are disordered. Let’s reorient our priorities around the model Jesus provides.

[Your kingdom come](#)

Thy Kingdom come - acknowledge Him as Sovereign

[Does Prayer Change Things? \(RC Sproul: Crucial Questions Series\)](#)

The kingdom of God was the main thrust of Jesus’ teaching and preaching.

- Jesus came as the fulfillment of John the Baptist’s message “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”
- Jesus focused on the kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount, the keynote address of His preaching
 - Jesus was talking about character traits of people who live a redeemed lifestyle within the kingdom of God

Jesus is King of the universe. That is the fact of the ascension. This reality, however, is not believed or acknowledged by the world. Christians are to pray for the manifestation of the reign of Christ and the emergence of His kingdom. If that is our prayer, it is our responsibility to show our allegiance to the King. People won’t have to guess about whom we are exalting.

[Thy Kingdom Come](#)

Posted: 30 Jun 2016 11:06 AM PDT

The greatest theme of the teaching of Jesus was not love. Nor was it forgiveness. Not heaven. Not salvation. The central theme of Jesus’ teaching (and whatever comes in second isn’t even close) is *the kingdom of God*.

The kingdom of God (or *the kingdom of heaven* in Matthew’s gospel) occurs at least 81 times in Jesus’ teaching. The kingdom of God is offered as a summary of his preaching, “*The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!*” (Mark 1:15). He tells parables of the kingdom, “*The kingdom of God is like....*” He was honored as a king in his birth (Matt 2:2), and he was crucified as a king (John 19:9). He demonstrated his identity as the Son of David, the rightful heir to the royal line of Israel, and to the messianic promises to be fulfilled by David’s Son (2 Sam 7).

It is impossible to overstate the importance of the kingdom in Jesus’ view. When [he taught his disciples to pray](#), he dedicated the second of the seven petitions to the kingdom: “*Thy kingdom come.*” Like [the first petition](#), this is a

petition. A request is being made. We would more fully communicate the meaning this way: “Lord, let your kingdom come! (please).”

But what is the kingdom? What are we asking God to do here? First a summary of what Jesus teaches about the kingdom (when all of those teachings are taken together):

What/Where is the kingdom of God? It is the rule of God. It is not a place; it is not to be considered geographically. Where God’s dominion is evident (as opposed to where the kingdom of darkness and its sovereign, Satan, hold sway), there is the kingdom of God. This is true of the hearts of individuals; this is true of institutions.

Where Christ reigns, there is the kingdom. Now in one sense it is certainly true that God is and always has been sovereign everywhere. But it is also true (speaking as we are in this “kingdom” sense) that sin has corrupted Creation. Humans in rebellion against God have submitted to Satan’s rule (almost never consciously, but wherever there is failure to submit perfectly to God, there is Satan sovereign). Christ is reclaiming Creation by plundering the dominion of darkness.

When is the kingdom of God? In one sense the kingdom has been here since Christ arrived. The king came to establish his kingdom. He came to bind the strong man (Satan!) and plunder his house. He gave evidence of that (he said) through exorcisms and healings and resurrection events. He won the decisive victory over our enemy at the cross and the empty tomb, undoing death, removing the guilt of sin, and crushing the head of the serpent. But the kingdom did not come at that time in its fullness. This awaits Christ’s return to consummate his kingdom. We look forward to Christ coming again to remove the presence of sin and death in a renewed creation, and the final judgment of our enemy as well. **The kingdom is already and not-yet.** It is already here; it is not yet here in its fullness.

In the meantime, our responsibility is to help foster the kingdom’s advance. To help see the reign of Christ extend throughout a world still held captive by our enemy. This isn’t accomplished in any kind of literal military sense (the kingdom does not advance through the sword, though the Bible often uses warfare metaphors to describe it). Rather, we are caught up in a spiritual battle, and each day our decisions and actions represent either an advance or a retreat for the kingdom of light.

Our deepest desire is to see (or should be!) Christ’s return and the full establishment of the kingdom of God. This should order our priorities. We don’t live as sovereigns over our own lives, seeking to establish our own kingdoms. Instead, we are sons and daughters of the Great King, and our purpose in life is to build his kingdom. We long for the reign and rule of Christ to be established over all creation. We long for it for our lost friends and family members. We long to see a just society – devoid of crime and rape and war. We long for a world in which there is no disease or famine or depression or death. Not only do we long for these things, but we order our lives and our prayers to see them become so.

The second petition reminds us of who Jesus is (the King!), who we are (his servants), and what our purpose in life is (his kingdom’s full coming). It encourages us by reminding us that the king is on his throne, that the serpent’s head has been crushed, that we are citizens of heaven. It gives us hope that this misery surrounding us is temporal, but that the eternal kingdom brings far greater things. It compels us to take our eyes off of our petty concerns, fighting for our own petty fiefdoms, and to live instead for the glory and honor of our King, and the building of his kingdom.

Thy Kingdom Come

Our greatest desire should be to see the Lord reigning as King in His **kingdom**, to have the honor and authority that have always been His but that He has not yet come to claim. The King is inseparable from His kingdom. To pray **Thy kingdom come** is to pray for the program of the eternal Deity to be fulfilled, for Christ to come and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. His program and His plan should be the preoccupation of our lives and of our prayers.

But how self-centered our prayers usually are, focused on our needs, our plans, our aspirations, our understandings. We are often like tiny infants, who know no world but the world of their own feelings and wants. One of the greatest struggles of the Christian life is to fight the old sinful habits, with their constant and unrelenting focus on self.

Even problems and issues outside of ourselves can cloud our supreme concern for God’s **kingdom**. It is our responsibility to pray for our families, pastors, missionaries, national and other leaders, and for many other people and things. But our prayers in every case should be that God’s will be done in and through those people that they would think, speak, and act

in accordance with God's will. The best we can pray for any person or for any cause is that God's **kingdom** be advanced in that person or that cause.

The holy purpose of the divine Father is to exalt Christ in the consummation of history when the Son rules and reigns in His **kingdom**. The Talmud is right in saying that if a prayer does not name the **kingdom** of God, it is not a prayer.

The greatest opposition to Christ's kingdom, and the greatest opposition to Christian living, is the **kingdom** of this present world, which Satan rules. The essence of Satan's kingdom is opposition to God's kingdom and God's people.

The (kingdom) does not refer primarily to a geographical territory but to sovereignty and dominion. Therefore when we pray **Thy kingdom come**, we are praying for God's rule through Christ's enthronement to come, His glorious reign on earth to begin. It is the coming millennial **kingdom** (Rev. 20:4) of which the Lord is speaking, not an indirect effort to create a more goodly society on earth through the progressive, human-oriented work of Christians.

To pray **Thy kingdom come** is to pray for God's kingdom, the kingdom over which He, and He alone, is Lord and King. It will be a kingdom on earth, but it will not be a kingdom of this world-that is, of this present world system. "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus told Pilate (John 18:36). No human kingdom could dovetail with God's kingdom, even partially. Sinful man could not be a part of a divine reign. That is why we do not advance God's kingdom by trying to improve human society. Many good and worthy causes deserve the support of Christians, but in supporting those causes we neither build the earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ or bring it closer. Even the best of such things are but holding actions that help retard the corruption that will always and inevitably characterize human societies and human kingdoms-until the Lord returns to establish His own perfect **kingdom**.

The kingdom of God, or of heaven, was the heart of Jesus' message. He came to "preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 4:43). There is no other gospel but the good news of the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Always and everywhere He went, Jesus preached the message of salvation as entrance to the kingdom. He even stated that He "must preach the kingdom ... for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43). For the forty days that Jesus remained on earth between His resurrection and ascension He spoke to His disciples "of the things concerning the **kingdom** of God" (Acts 1:3).

God's kingdom is past, in the sense that it embodied Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 8:11). It was present in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, in the sense that the true divine King was present "in the midst of you" (Luke 17:21, lit.). But the particular focus of our praying is to be on the **kingdom** that is yet to **come**.

God now and always has ruled the kingdom of the universe. He created it, and He controls it, orders it, and holds it together. God's is an "everlasting kingdom" (Ps. 145:13), and even now "His sovereignty rules over all" (Ps. 103:19; cf. 29:10; 1 Chron. 29:11-12; etc.).

But the most obvious fact of life is that God is not now ruling on earth as He rules in heaven (Matt. 6:10c)-and it is the divine earthly **kingdom** we are to pray will **come**. Our praying should be for Christ to return and to establish His earthly kingdom, to put down sin and enforce obedience to God's will. The Lord will then "rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:27; cf. Isa. 30:14; Jer. 19:11). After a thousand years His earthly kingdom will blend into His eternal kingdom, and there will be no distinction between His rule on earth and His rule in heaven (see Rev. 20-21).

The Greek of this verse could be translated "Let **Thy kingdom come** now." There is therefore a sense in which we pray for God's **kingdom** to come presently. In a present and limited, but real and miraculous way, God's kingdom is coming to earth each time a new soul is brought into the kingdom.

First of all, the kingdom comes in this way by conversion (Matt. 18:1-4). So prayer should be evangelistic and missionary-for new converts, new children of God, new kingdom citizens. Conversion to the kingdom involves an invitation (Matt. 22:1-14), repentance (Mark 1:14-15), and a willing response (Mark 12:28-34; Luke 9:61-62). The present existence of the kingdom on earth is internal, in the hearts and minds of those who belong to Jesus Christ, the King. We should pray for their number to mightily increase. Praying for the kingdom to come, in this sense, is praying for the salvation of souls. Every believer should seek others who can sing, "King of my life, I crown Thee now, Thine shall the glory be" ("Lead Me to Calvary," by Jennie Evelyn Hussey).

The **kingdom** for which we are to pray, and of which we now have a taste, is of infinite value. “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field” or a “pearl of great value” which a person sells all his possessions to buy (Matt. 13:44–46). Its value is so great that each of those parables emphasizes that the procurer sold all he had to purchase salvation (cf. Matt. 10:37).

Second, the kingdom comes now through commitment. The desire of those already converted should be to respond to the rule of the Lord in their lives now so that He rules in them as He rules in heaven. When we pray as Jesus teaches, we will continually pray that our lives will honor and glorify our Father in heaven.

The call for the kingdom to come is also related to the second coming of the Lord. John says in the last chapter of Revelation: “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (22:20).

In that day, our prayers will finally be answered. Paul emphasizes that waiting for the kingdom to come in its final form is not so much looking for an event as for a person—the King Himself (1 Thess. 1:10).

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Thy will be done - acknowledge Him as Superior

This third petition is a prayer for obedience on the part of God’s people, that those who are the people of God will obey the mandates of God. (Sproul, R. C.. Does Prayer Change Things? (Crucial Questions Series) (p. 32). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.)

Thy Will Be Done

Posted: 07 Jul 2016 11:10 AM PDT

One of the biggest problems we have in prayer is that we have horrifically bad practical theology. We pray as though we understand God to be a genie and ourselves to be his master. We present God a laundry list of stuff we want from him, then get annoyed if we don’t get what we want. “I prayed about that, but it didn’t work. Nothing happened.”

But God’s not a genie; we’re not his master. He is the Master; we are his servants. He’s God. He doesn’t submit to our will; we submit to his. One major purpose of prayer is to help us to get this all clear. Prayer reminds us that *we* worship and serve *him*. Prayer reminds us to orient our thoughts and desires around his will rather than our own. Prayer teaches us to submit to God and to his will.

Jesus teaches us this in response to the disciples’ request: *Lord teach us to pray*. The third petition is “Thy Will Be Done.” As in *the first* and *second* petitions, this is a third person imperative functioning as a petition. It could be translated, “Lord please bring to pass whatever you desire to happen.”

Why does Jesus teach us to pray this way? God is sovereign. Isn’t he going to do whatever he desires to do anyway? Yes, he is. But this is a way of conforming my will, my mind, to his plan and purposes. This is about adapting myself to God’s plan and purposes rather than to my own. I might think God ought to do X, Y, or Z, but most fundamentally what needs to change is I. I need to be transformed from a creature who seeks my will, my purposes, my personal desires, to one who seeks God’s plan, purposes, and desires.

One way of describing human sinfulness is *selfishness*. It is “My will be done” rather than “Thy will be done.” This is part of the narrative of the fall of man, “Eat of it and you will be as God....” Sin is the affirmation that I am the god of me. I will pursue my own ends. But a disciple says, “Thy will be done.”

Jesus wasn’t just blowing smoke. He practiced what he preached (and prayed). On the last night prior to his death, he battled the temptation of his own human desire – to live, to not suffer – as he cried out in prayer:

My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” Matthew 26:39

Jesus came to die, but that didn't mean it was fun for him. The cup of suffering was no cup of tea. As fully man, he would have been happy to have some other means of redemption than his suffering and death. However, ultimately as a perfect man, as the God-man, he submits to the will of his Father.

Jesus doesn't just tell us to pray this way; he does so himself. Submitting to God's will results in the salvation of the world. The path of blessing is found not in pursuing our own will (that leads only to brokenness and misery), but in pursuing the perfect will of God.

Your Will Be Done

Luke 22:42

Jesus said, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

John 4:34

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

John 5:30

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

Ephesians 1:11

Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will."

Psalms 143:10

Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God"

The will of God is not meant to be a secret we must uncover. God wants us to understand His will far more than we want to understand it or do it. He always makes His will clear to those who seek it with an obedient heart.

Most of the real problem areas in the question of God's will are settled for us in Scripture. The Bible reveals that it is God's will for all of us to be:

1) Saved: John 6:38-40

³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own **will**, but the **will** of Him who sent Me. ³⁹This is the **will** of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

2) Spirit-filled: Ephesians 5:15-19

¹⁵Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So then do not be foolish, but understand what the **will** of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord."

3) Sanctified: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

³ For this is the **will** of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you*. ⁷ For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.

4) Submissive: 1 Peter 2:13-15

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵ For such is the **will** of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

5) Suffering: 1st Peter 4:1-2

¹ Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the **will** of God.

6) Saying Thanks: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's **will** for you in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 37:4

"Delight yourself in the Lord; and He **will** give you the desires of your heart."

That means that if you are conforming to God's **will** in all the six ways listed above, He will place in your heart desires that reflect His **will**.

Give us today our daily bread

Give us our daily bread - acknowledge Him as Supplier

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

Posted: 21 Jul 2016 11:46 AM PDT

Sometimes prayer becomes a laundry list. *"God, please help me get this job. Please heal John's gout. Please help Marie with her sciatic pain. I'd love to have good weather for Sunday's picnic. Also...peace on the earth."* And so on.

We all have stuff we'd like to have from God. There's nothing inherently wrong with that. Jesus teaches us to ask God for things. It is fascinating, though, to see the kinds of things Jesus teaches us to ask for, and the kinds of things he doesn't mention. There are seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer. We've already examined the first three. The fourth petition, *"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"* is the subject for today.

This fourth petition differs from the first three in a couple of interesting ways. The first thing that is different is that the first three petitions focused on God's name, his kingdom, and his will. They are concerned with God, not with us and our needs. Obviously, Jesus wants us to learn something from this. Don't focus first on yourself, but upon the Lord and his purposes.

The fourth petition and those that follow also shift from third person passive petitions “Let your...” to second person active petitions. The first three petitions really focus on an attitude that seeks first God’s purposes, the last four petitions really zero in directly on making requests on behalf of the petitioner.

The subject of this fourth request: daily bread. Actually, in Greek, the petition is somewhat repetitive: “*Give us today our daily bread.*” Translations don’t translate it this way, probably because it is awkward and redundant. But that’s what Jesus says.

It is impossible to consider this petition without having in view the Old Testament context of the manna miracle. When the Israelites were delivered from captivity in Egypt, they grumbled against Moses. What were they to eat in the wilderness? The answer was manna – God brought daily bread from heaven for the next forty years of wilderness wandering.

Every morning the Israelites would gather their bread for the day. They were strictly forbidden, however, from storing any up. They could only gather the manna for one day’s use. Any more would spoil and get maggoty. On the day before the Sabbath they gathered double so they wouldn’t need to violate the command for rest. On this day alone the stored manna didn’t spoil.

What was the purpose of this daily manna miracle? It forced Israel to learn to depend upon God *every day* for their very survival. It made explicit what is always true everywhere for all people. Everything we need (air, food, water, shelter) comes from the gracious hand of God. We are absolutely dependent upon him to provide what we need.

Jesus reminds us of that absolute dependence. When you pray, ask God to give you your daily bread.

Practical applications:

- **Don’t worry about the future; Trust God.**

It is human nature to seek long-term solutions. To plan. There is nothing inherently wrong or sinful about this. In fact, the wise man (scripture teaches) will do these things. But this wise tendency is easily overcome by subtle sinful twists. Particularly *worry* about the future. The fourth petition teaches us not to worry about the future. Just focus on the needs of today. You don’t have to spend your life fretting over possible future calamities. You need to trust your heavenly Father, and simply ask him to provide what’s necessary for you today. This is what Jesus is also teaching in his famous *don’t worry* teaching:

Matthew 6:31-34 ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

- **Don’t ask God for what you want; Ask him for what you need.**

Jesus doesn’t teach us to pray for what we want. He teaches us to pray for what we need. Anyone with children knows their tendency to amplify their wants into perceived needs. “Mom, I have to have some lunch, I’m starving!” Not actually. We’re often like this spiritually. We need to keep in perspective what we actually need, trust in God to provide this, and let go of some (most?) of our wants. This leads to simpler living, greater contentedness, and deeper faith.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors

Forgive us our sins - acknowledge Him as Savior

Every true Christian knows that he cannot blame God for his sin. I may not understand the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, but I do realize that what stems from the wickedness of my own heart may not be assigned to the will of God. So we must pray because we are guilty, pleading the pardon of the Holy One whom we have

offended. (Sproul, R. C.. Does Prayer Change Things? (Crucial Questions Series) (pp. 12-13). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.)

[Forgive us Our...Debts? Trespasses? Sins?](#)

Posted: 05 May 2016 09:22 AM PDT

Despite an enormous variety of denominational (and non-denominational) bodies, there is remarkable unity around the praying of [the Lord's Prayer](#). Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants of all stripes pray this prayer and the prayer is prayed nearly verbatim in all traditions...except for the “*forgive us our...*” section of the prayer.

For some it is “*Forgive us our **trespasses**, as we forgive **those who trespass against us**.*” For others it is “*Forgive us our **debts**, as we forgive **our debtors**.*” For still others it is “*Forgive us our **sins**, as we forgive **those who sin against us**.*” I’ve often been asked, “Hey...how’s come?”

I grew up in the “sin/sin against us” context of the United Methodist Church. I teach at an Anglican seminary where we pray each morning in the “trespass/trespass against us” form. I pastor a Presbyterian congregation where we pray the prayer using “debts/debtors.” Sometimes I forget where I am and pray the prayer in the wrong way (it helps keep a fella humble). Why this variety? Who’s right? Well...in some ways, they all are.

Matthew presents Jesus petition like this: **Matthew 6:12** ¹² *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.* Debts and debtors. This is a very literal translation of the Greek noun *opheleēmata* (“debts”) and *opheleṗtais* (“debtors”). The terms mean in Greek what they mean in English: financial obligations and the people who owe them.

Clearly Jesus is using a metaphor from the marketplace. We all understand financial obligations (some of us all too well!), and we can understand financial obligations as a metaphor representing sin. We need God to forgive our debts not because we are his debtors in any financial sense; we owe him rather perfect obedience and righteousness which we don’t fulfill. We’re sinners. And we are to forgive our debtors, that is to say, metaphorically, those who sin against us. This is all quite obvious if we compare the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21-35). There Jesus uses financial obligation again as a vivid picture of our sin. It works well too with the notion of forgiveness. Debts can be forgiven, and forgiveness of sin is what we seek from God. Debt=sin.

In Luke’s gospel Jesus puts it this way: **Luke 11:4 NIV84** ⁴ *Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.* So, “sin/sin against us” the NIV 1984 translates. The ESV reads a little differently: **Luke 11:4 ESV** ⁴ *and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.* Here “sins/those indebted to us.” Why the difference in translation? The Greek literally says “sin” in the first half of the verse, and “to the one who owes us” (*opheilonti* – a sister of the “debt” forms discussed above) in the second half of the verse. Luke is making explicit what is implicit in Matthew. When Jesus talks about forgiving “debts” he *means* forgiving “sins.” The debts he’s talking about are sin debts. We need to be forgiven our sins by God and we need to forgive others their sins against us.

So, “debts/debtors” pray-ers pray the prayer in the form presented in Matthew, preserving the debts-for-sin metaphor; the “sin/sin against us” pray-ers pray the prayer in a form closer to that preserved in Luke’s gospel, making the metaphor of debts=sins explicit.

So where did “trespasses/trespass against us” come from? This is a hard question to answer in some ways. It is rather puzzling because it is the most widespread traditional English version of the prayer, but it doesn’t really reflect the biblical wording of the prayer in either gospel. It showed up in the Greek versions of the prayer in the 3rd century author Origen of Alexandria (the Greek term is *paraptōmata*). This wording made its way into important English translations such as the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*.

Where did it come from in the first place if not from the prayer of Jesus as presented by Matthew and Luke? The most likely explanation is that it comes from the mention of “trespasses” in the context immediately following the prayer in Matthew’s gospel.

Jesus follows up the prayer with this teaching on forgiveness: **Matthew 6:14-15 NIV** ¹⁴ *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* ¹⁵ *But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.* The term for “sins” used here? Technically it is “trespasses” (*paraptōmata*). **Matthew 6:14-**

15 ESV ¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

So Jesus here uses yet another metaphor for sin. Now it is not a financial metaphor, but a property one. “Trespassing” – an illegal violation of a boundary, crossing a limit. To trespass is to violate a boundary, to transgress the Law of God. It is a picture of sin. The NIV translates out the metaphor, making it simply “sins.”

So, what seems to have happened is that the church fathers (later followed by some important English translators) imposed Jesus’ property metaphor (“trespasses”) back onto the Lord’s Prayer in place of the financial metaphor (“debts”). Why did they do this? It is difficult to say. My personal theory is that they like the word “trespass” because it relates to a familiar Old Testament metaphor of sin. Sin is often pictured in the OT using the Hebrew verb *gah-var* – to transgress (or trespass). They chose the more common metaphor across the whole of scripture.

One of my favorite things to do at a funeral is to pray the Lord’s Prayer. It is an interesting occasion which often brings together a disparate group of people, including folks from many different Christian traditions. I always offer the preamble, “We Presbyterians pray using ‘debts/debtors,’ but you pray the prayer however you know it.” I love the cacophony that follows when we reach that petition. It is beautiful picture of unity in our common faith despite minor differences.

Debts, transgressions, sins. Whatever word or metaphor we use, we’ve all got them before a holy God. And they need to be forgiven.

[Forgive us Our Debts and Trespasses](#)

Posted: 12 May 2016 12:31 PM PDT

In [our last post](#), we considered the variety found in praying the petition for forgiveness in the Lord’s Prayer. Forgive us our...sins? debts? trespasses? Each of these forms of the petition has something to be said for them. But, let’s drill down a little bit into the two metaphors Jesus uses for sin: “debts” in Matthew 6:12 and “trespasses” in Matthew 6:14.

A metaphor is non-literal language. It is a way of saying what something (in this case “sin”) is *like*. Though non-literal, it is still unfolding truth. The image isn’t literal, but the truth is. Sin is like a debt; sin is like a trespass. Jesus uses both metaphors. And both are important, because each highlights a different aspect of sin. Each reveals something about what sin is like.

Sin is like a trespass. We violate God’s Law. We transgress God’s express commandments. God says, “Thou shalt not murder.” But, we’re all murderers. We murder our fellow man in our unrighteous anger (Matt 5:21-22). We lie, cheat, deceive. God’s law lays down boundaries, borders, and we are told, “Do not cross that line!” But we *do* cross that line. We’re trespassers.

Sin as trespass is a vivid picture of *sins of commission* – doing those things which we ought not to do. We are responsible to respect, obey, and submit to the authority of God. But we are rebels at heart.

Sin is like a debt. We owe God. He made us to know, love, and serve him, with our whole heart, soul, strength, and mind. We are obligated to do so (we also find our greatest joy in doing so – this is for *our* good). But we don’t fulfill that requirement. We have run up an enormous debit in the divine ledger, and we have no means of providing any credit therein, apart from his gracious provision for us.

Sin as debt is a wonderful way of portraying *sins of omission* – those things which we ought to do, but fail in. We should be kind, generous, loving, forgiving – but we fail to do so. Sin isn’t just doing bad stuff; it is failing to do all the good stuff we were made to do. And we are all debtors of a sum that we could never hope to repay.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism captures both dimensions of sin succinctly in Question 14:

What is sin? *A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.*

Sin is any “*want of conformity unto the law of God*” – that is to say, it is any way we that are debtors to God, any way in which we are guilty of a sin of omission, failing to do that which we are supposed to do.

Sin is any “*transgression of the law of God*” – that is to say, it is any way that we are trespassers against God, any way in which we are guilty of a sin of commission, doing that which are not supposed to do.

Another way of saying all of this is to say that God requires of us both our active righteousness and our passive righteousness. Active righteousness would mean doing all that we’re supposed to do, with no omissions, no debts to God. Passive righteousness would mean not doing any of that which we are not supposed to do, no commissions of sin, no trespasses against God.

We fail on both counts! We are doubly sinners. The good news:

2 Corinthians 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

We have no active righteousness, but Christ does. We have no passive righteousness, but Christ does.

Hebrews 4:15 ¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are— yet was without sin.*

He fulfills all righteousness on our behalf – his righteousness is credited to our bankrupt account. The penalty for our trespasses is paid at the cross. Forgive us, Lord!

[Forgive Us Our Debts As We Forgive Our Debtors](#)

Posted: 28 Jul 2016 10:52 AM PDT

The fifth petition is “*forgive us our debts.*” A consideration of God and his holiness, will, and kingdom will necessarily make us cognizant of our own sin and need of forgiveness. We can’t draw near to God without simultaneously recognizing how far we are from him. Repentance is always the appropriate response to a holy God. Jesus teaches us to pray for forgiveness.

He does not simply teach us to ask for forgiveness, however. He qualifies the petition by adding, “*as we forgive our debtors.*” And what a qualifier this is! To ask God for forgiveness seems easy and obvious, but we are taught to ask God to forgive us “*as we forgive our debtors.*”

That’s a significant “as.” What does “as” mean here? Not hard to understand. The Greek conjunction *hoōs* means “as” in the sense of “like.” It introduces a simile. We are asking God to forgive us “just as” or “in the same manner as” we forgive others.

I think I had probably prayed the Lord’s Prayer a few thousand times before what I was praying first penetrated my mind. “*God, forgive me my sins. But I’m asking you to forgive me in the same way that I forgive my fellow man. And if I’m hard-hearted, bitter, and unforgiving toward my fellow man, you apply that same standard toward me. Don’t forgive me.*”

Yikes. In a sense it is an easy thing to humble myself before God in seeking his forgiveness in the vertical dimension. It is a much harder deal to do this in the horizontal dimension, with my fellow man. My natural tendency (according to the sin nature) is to harbor resentment. But the Lord’s Prayer teaches me that I can’t do this. This prayer is the most practical thing in the world because it reminds me in my regular life of prayer that if I claim to follow Christ I must (no option!) live a life of radical grace to my fellow man. I must live a life of forgiveness.

If we had any doubt that Jesus means exactly this in teaching us the Lord’s Prayer, our doubts are removed when we compare the rest of his teaching. Consider Matthew 18:21-22:

²¹ *Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?”* ²² *Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.*

The intent of Peter's question is obvious: to fix a limit on forgiveness (in the horizontal realm). It should also be recognized that Peter believes his seven time standard is an exceedingly gracious one. Jesus' answer explodes this understanding, however. Not seventy, but seventy-seven (or "seventy times seven" – there is debate about how to understand Jesus' answer). In other words, there is no limit on forgiveness. We buck at this, humanly speaking. But, to underline his point, Jesus tells the parable of the unmerciful servant:

²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶ "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. ²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. ²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' ³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

What could be clearer? "This is how your heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." Unless you forgive you can expect no forgiveness. We should expect God to forgive us as we forgive others.

This is not easy for us to do. We tend to amplify our neighbor's sins and downplay our own. The parable indicates that this is the problem. We don't recognize how great our debt is before a holy God (the GDP of nations was measured in talents – the servant had no ability to ever pay such a debt). Whatever debts we are owed pale before the enormity of that debt burden.

This is also Jesus' point in the Sermon on the Mount. We hypocritically spot the sins of our neighbors, but diminish our own:

Matthew 7:1-5 *Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³ "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

We miss the log jutting from our own eye, but are good at spotting specks of dust in the eye of our neighbor. We are natural born hypocrites, desperately in need of repentance displayed in gracious forgiveness.

We honor God by first recognizing our sinfulness and need of his grace. Out of this flows a lifestyle of radical, Christ-like forgiveness of our neighbors. The fifth petition is a reminder, a spiritual string on the finger, of our need to extend forgiveness to our neighbor.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one

Lead us not into temptation - acknowledge Him as Shelter

Lead us Not Into Temptation

Posted: 04 Aug 2016 09:07 AM PDT

No one plans on tramping through a poison ivy patch (at least not anyone (like me) who has a known poison ivy (hyper)sensitivity!). No one purposes to swim in shark infested waters, or in a toxic waste dump site. No one intentionally gets ambushed by banditti. These dangers befall the unaware, the unsuspecting. It isn't hard to get oneself in a mess. In fact, it often takes careful forethought and prudence to avoid it.

The reason we so often fall victim to temptation is that we don't see it coming. It is far easier to defend oneself against an anticipated attack. The Pearl Harbor and 9/11 attacks were so effective because they were so unanticipated. Who could have conceived that anyone would fly airplanes into buildings? But, of course, they did.

Armies rely on the element of surprise. So too does the Devil. It is one of his greatest tools of tradecraft. He likes to catch us napping. He's quite effective at it! So, we are warned repeatedly to "be sober-minded," to be "watching," to be "alert" for many dangerous temptations. Here are a few such scriptural warnings:

*Watch out for false prophets. **Matthew 7:15***

*Watch out that no one deceives you. **Matthew 24:4***

*Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod. **Mark 8:15***

*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed... **Luke 12:15***

*I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. **Romans 16:17***

These are warnings against all sorts of temptations:

- Temptations of false teachings and phony worldviews.
- Temptations concerning the nature and identity of Christ and the understanding of his saving work.
- Temptations that lead to divisions within the community of faith.
- Temptations to pursue our own selfish desires.

The sixth petition is an acknowledgement of our vulnerability. We are going to walk into paths where temptation is a real possibility (and even likelihood). Our first parents were tempted (and they fell). The Israelites were led in the midst of the wilderness for forty years; they were tested repeatedly (and they repeatedly fell). Our Lord (like us in every way, yet free from sin) was tempted (but did *not* fall). We seek to walk the path that he walked – the path of trusting in the Father and in the Word of God.

We *will* be tempted. But praying in keeping with the Lord's Prayer alerts us to our danger. We wake up, sober ourselves in mind, put ourselves on alert. We make ourselves vigilant to the danger of attack. And we determine on resistance, with God's help. The God who will lead us through the valley of the shadow of death is certainly able to sustain us in the face of the temptation of today.

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." **1 Peter 5:8***

[Deliver Us From Evil](#)

Posted: 01 Sep 2016 12:04 PM PDT

The seventh and final petition of the Lord's Prayer (and the original concluding words of the prayer) are "*but deliver us from evil.*" This petition stands in [parallel](#) to the preceding petition, "[lead us not into temptation.](#)" [Each helps interpret the other.](#) We are to live lives of continual vigilance, recognizing the ongoing danger of temptation. We call upon God to deliver us from that which tempts: evil.

It is necessary to note an ongoing point of debate in translation regarding this petition. The traditional form of the prayer simply reads "evil," thereby calling to mind evil as an abstract concept. This is reflected in many translations:

KJV Matthew 6:13 ¹³ *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

NAS Matthew 6:13 ¹³ *'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

ESV Matthew 6:13 ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

But, some translations have offered a different interpretation. The word “evil” is the Greek adjective *poneōros*. The adjective could be understood either as an abstract adjectival concept (as in the above translations), or it could be understood to refer to a person. Understood in this light, *poneōros* would be rendered not as “evil,” but as “the Evil One.” This is reflected in several other translations:

NLT Matthew 6:13 ¹³ And don't let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

NRSV Matthew 6:13 ¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

NIV Matthew 6:13 ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Now, tinkering with the verbiage of the Lord's Prayer should not be taken lightly. But accuracy in translation should be the highest goal in seeking to handle the Word of God. We don't want to innovate, but we do want to be accurate. And the translation “Evil One” is more likely to be the understanding that Jesus had in view.

We are driven toward this interpretation, I believe, from the broader New Testament context. Jesus himself was tempted three times in the wilderness. Not only was he tempted, he was tempted by a Tempter; he was tempted by Satan.

Mark 1:12-13 ¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, ¹³ and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan.

The threefold temptation is described for us in Matthew 4:1-11, and also in Luke 4:1-13. Both gospel writers relate Satan's attempts to lead the Lord from his path of perfect obedience to the Father's will. Three times Satan tempts Jesus. Three times Jesus successfully resists that temptation, appealing on each occasion to the Word of God in scripture.

Of course, Satan appeals to scripture too. This is itself a form of temptation as he skews the intended meaning of the words of God. Jesus doesn't fall for this. Not only is he committed to God's Word, he is also committed to its faithful interpretation.

These temptation narratives are obviously intended to remind us of the temptation of our first parents. Eve was thrice tempted in the Garden by the Serpent. Unlike Christ, who displayed threefold faithfulness, Eve (and Adam, who was there with her!) fell in sin.

It wasn't only Jesus and our first parents who were tempted by Satan. Rather, we are repeatedly warned of the danger of temptation by “*the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan*” (Revelation 20:2).

Jesus warns Peter:

³¹ “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” **Luke 22:31-32**

Peter (himself having fallen in his threefold temptation, but having turned back) likewise in turn warns us:

⁸ Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **1 Peter 5:8**

It sounds ridiculously old fashioned in our contemporary context to talk about the Devil. People make jokes about red tights, pitchforks, and horns. I suppose the Devil is a bit old-fashioned (he has been around since before there *was* fashion...or tights, or clothing of any variety), but there is nothing the least bit funny about him. He is a malevolent being bent on our destruction.

He doesn't need to get us through some sort of *Exorcist*-style possession, or through some sensational ritual of the occult. He seeks to get us (and he quite often succeeds) by availing himself of old and familiar tools. He tempts us to sin (in an enormous variety of ways, custom-catered to our particular vulnerabilities). He leads us into temptation: to do those things which we ought not to do; to refrain from doing those things which we ought to do.

We may not believe in him. He is OK with that. As C.S. Lewis famously reminds us, *“If devils exist, their first aim is to give you an anesthetic — to put you off your guard. Only if that fails, do you become aware of them.”* Satan is perfectly happy not to be believed in. He is much more powerful for our spiritual slumber.

All the more reason to pray the Lord’s Prayer – to call upon God to deliver us from our ancient enemy, the Evil One.

The Lord’s Prayer: Parallel Petitions

Posted: 14 Jul 2016 10:49 AM PDT

I’ve never considered myself to be especially strong as a poet. I love to write, but I’m far more prosy than otherwise. But I can appreciate poetry, and the Bible is certainly full of loads of it. The Psalms take a poetic form, obviously, but so too do the wisdom books, huge swaths of the prophets, and many of the teachings of Jesus. There is even poetic structure to [the Lord’s Prayer](#).

When most people think of poetry in a western, English-speaking context, they think primarily in terms of rhyme. In particular, they think in terms of rhyme at the *end* of parallel couplets. But rhyme is only one element of poetry. Equally important is meter. And the prevalence of metaphoric language. You can see all this in song lyrics – rhyme, meter, metaphorical imagery. For instance, as I type Pandora is playing the Clash’s *Should I Stay Or Should I Go*:

*It’s always tease tease tease
You’re happy when I’m on my knees
One day is fine and next is black
So if you want me off your back
Well come on an’ let me know*

*Should I stay or should I go?
Should I stay or should I go now?
Should I stay or should I go now?
If I go there will be trouble
An’ if I stay it will be double
So come on and let me know*

The rhyme is obvious, but so too is the meter (and metaphors also abound). Plus...it’s a great song.

In Hebrew poetry, rhyme as we think of it doesn’t seem to have been all that important (though often poetic lines would *begin* with the same sound). Meter is important, as is metaphorical imagery.

What is most important to Hebrew poetry, though, is what is known as **parallelism**. Hebrew poets loved to structure their poems using two or three lines of parallel text that function as a team. Sometimes two lines say sort of the opposite of each other. This is often called **antithetical parallelism** and is very common in the Proverbs:

*He who obeys instructions guards his life,
but he who is contemptuous of his ways will die.” Proverbs 19:16*

But Jesus does this too:

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. Luke 16:10

Sometimes poetic lines will say similar things, or say slightly different things about the same thing. This is often called **synonymous parallelism**. Here is one of these in a proverb:

*Laziness brings on deep sleep,
and the shiftless man goes hungry.” Proverbs 19:15*

But Jesus does this too:

*“Ask and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks receives;
he who seeks finds;
and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” Matthew 7:7-8*

Each line of poetry is pretty much saying the same thing.

How does all this relate to the Lord’s Prayer? Well, consider [the first three petitions](#) of the Lord’s Prayer:

*Hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done” Matthew 6:9-10*

Or translated in keeping with the nature of a request:

*Let your name be made holy,
Let your kingdom come,
Let your will be done”*

These three requests should be recognized as parallel statements following the Hebrew poetic structure of synonymous parallelism. In other words, each of these three petitions is asking for the same thing. They are parallel petitions that serve to mutually interpret one another.

What does it mean to for God to hallow his name? It means for his kingdom to come. And what does it mean for God’s kingdom to come? It means for the will of God to be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.

Perhaps the notion of “hallowing God’s name” seems vague at times. Perhaps the advance of the kingdom even seems a bit abstract. If so, perhaps then we should focus on doing God’s will. We obey God’s commands; we submit to his Word. In so doing we advance his kingdom and hallow his name.

This is helpful stuff to enable us to practically apply puzzling abstract biblical truth. It also helps us to recognize that many things we do every day (doing our jobs with integrity, being patient with our children, encouraging a friend) are not mundane matters at all. They are profoundly spiritual acts which serve to advance the kingdom of God and thus sanctify his name.

[ACTS](#)

[Adoration](#)

[Confession](#)

[Thanksgiving](#)

[Does Prayer Change Things? \(RC Sproul: Crucial Questions Series\)](#)

Our understanding of God’s sovereignty should provoke us to an intense prayer life of thanksgiving. Because of such knowledge, we should see that every benefit, every good and perfect gift, is an expression of the abundance of His grace. The more we understand God’s sovereignty, the more our prayers will be filled with thanksgiving.

Supplication

Tips to a Better Prayer Life

Pray

“There is no way to learn to pray but by praying.” – Samuel Chadwick.

This has been said hundreds of times by many Godly people, but we will never grow in prayer if we don’t pray. You can’t wait until you have figured it all out before you start, prayer is something with which you need to practice and experiment. Prayer takes you into the presence of God, and it is in His presence that you take on His likeness and change your heart. You cannot live the life God planned for you without prayer because the things He has planned require His involvement, which is found in prayer.

Kneel

Kneeling is a begging posture – we must all come to God as beggars

- Kneeling is done throughout Scripture
 - Jesus (Luke 22:41)
 - Stephen (Acts 7:60)
 - Peter (Acts 9:40)
 - Paul and the other leaders in the church (Acts 20:36)
 - Luke (Acts 21:5)

Rest

“Our rest lies in looking to the Lord, not to ourselves.” – Watchman Nee

Prayer reminds us that everything has been accomplished through Christ’s death and resurrection. The work we now do is to apply what He has done to our world. “Consider yourself dead.” Rest in the presence of God, in His goodness, and in His love for you. It is out of this confidence you can work out of rest. Prayer is not earning God’s favor; it enters you into the favor He already has for you.

God’s Face

“We don’t look at problems. Whatever you look at becomes bigger. We look at God.” – Pastor Spinoza

Most of our prayers become pleas for God to act because we are so focused on what we want Him to do. To enhance our prayers we need to focus on God’s face, see His love for us and see His confidence in the situation. By keeping our focus on God’s face the things of this world will grow strangely dim.

God’s Voice

“Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.” – Mother Teresa

Prayer is communication with God, but too often we treat it as our monologue to Him. Without taking the time to listen to God’s voice, we are not valuing His input and God’s role in the relationship. Allow God a chance to talk. His words will always bring your life.

Joy

“Joy makes way for hope, which leads to faith that creates the atmosphere for God’s miraculous answers.” – Kevin Shorter

I pulled joy out of the fruit of the Spirit because too many Christians have forgotten it is required. Prayer is to be enjoyed. You get to spend time with the One who created you and loves you. You get filled with purpose and direction in life. You

find joy through prayer because it is one thing that you were specifically created for. If you don't find joy in prayer, go to a trusted friend who you can talk it over with. Don't stop sharing with this person until you find the joy. What you will find is that there is a lie you are believing about God that is stopping up the fount of joy.

Ask

"God wants us to push the limits of what we can ask or imagine." – Steven Furtick

God is our Heavenly Father and is pleased when His children ask things of Him. He will not turn us away. Sure, He longs for the relationship, but asking things from Him can enhance that relationship. Asking shows a dependence on Him, a belief that He will come through for us, and a confidence that He is more than able.

Thanksgiving

"Praise and thanksgiving not only open the gates of heaven for me to approach God, but also prepare a way for God to bless me." – The Kneeling Christian

Thanksgiving is a sign that we are filled with the Spirit. It is also the avenue to get filled. To be effective in prayer we are called to give thanks in all things. Gratitude opens the heart to receive more from God. By being thankful you are also more prone to see the fulfillment of the requests you have made to God, which encourages more prayer. I pray that these 7 tips take you into deeper levels of prayer. You may not visit each area every time you pray, but these items added to your prayer routine can show you the way to experience a better prayer life. God loves you and desires you to come to Him.

Necessities for effective prayer

Cursing of the Fig Tree

Mark 11:20-26

²⁰ As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots *up*. ²¹ Being reminded, Peter *said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered." ²² And Jesus *answered saying to them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be *granted* him. ²⁴ Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you. ²⁵ Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. ²⁶ But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.

The Barren Fig Tree

Matthew 21:18-22

¹⁸ Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. ¹⁹ Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He *said to it, "No longer shall there ever be *any* fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered.

²⁰ Seeing *this*, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither *all* at once?" ²¹ And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. ²² And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

- 1st Destructive Miracle by Jesus that symbolizes divine judgement on Israel and the temple.
- Demonstration of Divine Power
- Peter said, "how does that power work"

Five elements to draw down divine and powerful prayer:

1. Historical Component: “Remember”

- God has displayed his power and authority in the past, it is to remember that power and you are aware of it!
- Prayer Begins Here! Gods past power displayed!
- When we remember what God has personally done for us and the people around us, as well as through the Bible our faith will increase tenfold.
- Prayer anchors our confidence and fuels us for the highest form of worship to Our Father.
- You will see the mighty hand of God on display.

Isaiah 46:9-10 ⁹“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

2. Theological Component: Trust Verse 22

- Have trust and unwavering faith in God (it’s about God)
- Don’t doubt/disbelieve God
- Trust His power, purpose, promise & plans & (His Will) for our lives.
- Submit To God/Empty yourself
- Trust your circumstance with God
- Trust your life with God
- Trust your soul with God

Ephesians 1:11 - Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.

3. Spiritual Component: “Believe” Verse 23

- Have faith in the goodness of God
- Have faith in the power of God
- Have faith in the wisdom of God
- Jesus said; little faith and a small amount struggling faith is sufficient. (Matthew- 6:8,14,16 & 14:29) (Mark 9:14-17)

James 4:3-4

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

John 14:13-14

¹³ Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.

1st John 5:14-15

¹⁴ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

4. Practical Component: “Ask” Verse 24

- Asking God all things according to (His Will)

James 1:6-7

But he must **ask** in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and **ask**, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you.

Mark 14:26

You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you **ask** of the Father in My name He may give to you.

Matthew 7:7-8

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

5. Moral Component: “Forgive” Verse 25-26

- Forgive.... or the Lord will not hear us!
- Sin will interrupt your prayer life & will stand between you and God

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Mark 11:25-26

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. ²⁶ But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.

Prophecy

<https://www.ithasbeenwritten.com/>

Bible prophecy outlines future history in stunning detail. The Bible claims that all prophecy will be fulfilled exactly as foretold, with 100% accuracy, 100% of the time. No other ‘sacred’ writings of any other religious belief systems make such a claim.

Is 46:9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. 11 From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.

2Pe 2:19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- Truth of the Bible
 - The Bible makes a unique claim of 100% accuracy, 100% of the time.

- No Scripture has ever failed, only those that have yet to be fulfilled
- For 20 centuries, scholars and skeptics from all walks of life, in all nations, in all generations, have debated the truth of the Bible. Yet in all those generations, among all those scholars and skeptics, given all the accumulated knowledge of medicine, history, archeology, and science, have yet to disprove a single word of the Bible's 31,102 verses.
- No book in human history has endured more challenges to its accuracy across the centuries
- Jesus fulfilled hundreds of prophecies during His short time on earth – through His life, death & resurrection
 - The odds of any 1 person fulfilling just 8 of these prophecies are a billion to one
 - Jesus went above the conceivable odds and fulfilled over 300 specific prophecies
 - Only God can make the impossible possible!
- About 1/3 of the Bible is prophetic in nature
 - There is prophecy in each and every book of the Bible.
 - The Bible contains about 1,000 prophecies, of which nearly 2/3 have already been fulfilled.
 - The remaining 1/3 will be fulfilled during the 'end times'
 - Of the 46 Old Testament prophets, less than 10 speak of Christ's 1st coming, but 36 speak of His 2nd coming
 - The 2nd coming is mentioned in 23 of the 27 books of the New Testament
- Why churches now do not teach eschatology
 - They do know it
 - Preterist – They believe that it already happened
 - They are afraid that they will lose their parishioners
- Core Christian Views that your church should teach
 1. Holy Trinity - God in 3 persons – Father, Son & Holy Spirit
 2. Full divinity and humanity of Christ
 - a. Fully God – as part of that Holy Trinity
 - b. Fully human – or He could not have taken our place and paid our penalty
 3. Vicarious (substitutionary) atonement
 - a. Christ took our sins on himself and he paid the penalty for our sins in our place
 - b. He fully died on the cross and spent 3 days in hell paying for our sins
 4. Physical bodily resurrection
 - a. Christ was physically, bodily raised from the dead
 - b. Paul – If he was not, then your faith, as sincere as it might be, is futile because you are still in your sins
 5. Salvation by grace, through faith
 - a. We appropriate salvation (who Christ is and what He did) by grace through faith
 6. The Holy Scripture is authoritative

THE BIBLE'S MOST AMAZING PROPHECIES

by Bryan Mistele

The Bible contains literally thousands of specific prophecies that have endured the test of time. What's so significant about the Bible is that the prophecies it contains, many of which were given thousands of years before their actual fulfillment, have been fulfilled with 100% accuracy over time. In more than five hundred specific cases, the Bible has clearly and specifically predicted the future, with the fulfillment verified by historians and archeologists throughout the ages. In many cases, the fulfillment of these prophecies can be verified using a common encyclopedia. No other book would dare to predict future events in such great detail, and certainly no other book can come close to matching this level of accuracy. The Bible is truly unique, for its track record of predicting the future simply defies mathematical probability.

Prophecy is what makes the Bible unique among other religious works such as the writings of Muhammad, Buddha, Confucius or the Book of Mormon. Indeed, thousands of years ago, the God of the Bible made a bold challenge to all other religions and prophets to use prophecy as the test by which to measure all other religions (Isaiah 41:22-23). So far, there has been no credible response to God's challenge for a religion to put its reputation on the line by accurately predicting the future.

In the opportunities I have had to teach over the past year, I have frequently found people shocked to learn that the Bible accurately predicted the exact dates certain events would occur – often thousands of years ahead of time. These events include when Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, would come to the earth, when Israel would be restored to being a nation again following World War II, when Israel would gain control of Jerusalem again as well as when the people of ancient Israel would be released from their captivity in Babylon. All of these prophecies had specific dates and timelines associated with them in the Bible, and all were fulfilled *exactly* as they were predicted – many to the exact day — even though their fulfillment was often thousands of years later.

These prophecies are amazing because unlike more generic prophecies (such as the fall of certain world empires or moral decay in the end times), there can be no question that these prophecies were divinely inspired and positively prove that the Bible is unique among all other works. For a book to predict the future *to the day* not once, not twice but at least half-a-dozen different times hundreds or thousands of years into the future is unquestionably and mathematically impossible – unless God’s hand were at work.

My purpose in writing this article is to provide an overview of a few of these prophecies, and to show how they were fulfilled exactly as predicted to demonstrate the power of prophecy in the Bible.

BACKGROUND

Before delving deeply into each specific prophecy, it’s important to point out a couple of things that will help individuals replicate the calculations and timelines that follow.

First, the prophecies cited in this article come from the Old Testament and were delivered by prophets 500-600 years before the coming of Christ. At this time, of course, the Christian (also known as the Julian and then subsequently Gregorian) calendar had not yet been invented. The calendar used by the prophets was the Jewish calendar, which is very different than our own. It is lunar-solar and has only twelve months of thirty days each, for a total of 360 days a year, as opposed to the solar year used by us today which consists of 365.242 days (the .242 fraction represents the leap year which occurs every four years, and the occasional leap century). Although this may sound confusing, all it means is that when a prophecy in the Bible says something will take “70 years” for example, it means “70 years of 360-days each” or a total of 25,200 days as opposed to the “70 years of 365.242 days” or a total of 25,567 days which we would be used to.

This difference in the length of a Jewish year from our own solar year is important to keep in mind when evaluating prophecies in the Bible that have specific, measurable time frames that can be computed. Failure to take this into account has frequently confused people through time and led to miscalculations and misinterpretations of prophecy. Evidence that the 360 day Jewish calendar was used in prophecy includes Noah’s account of the flood in the book of Genesis where 150 days are recorded as five months (from the seventeenth day of the second month to the seventeenth day of the seventh month, Genesis 7:11, 24, 8:3-4), Esther’s account of the six-month long feast of King Xerxes (which lasted exactly 180 days, Esther 1:4) and John’s account of the end times in Revelation where he describes the last three and one-half years as precisely 1,260 days or forty two months (Revelation 12:6,14, 13:5).

The second important point to keep in mind when calculating timelines in the Bible is that there was no year zero on the Christian calendar – we went directly from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. Adjusting for this requires that we add a year when converting from the Jewish calendar to the Christian calendar when the period in question crosses the 1 B.C./1 A.D. date.

With these two points in mind, we can then proceed to evaluate some of the Bible’s most amazing prophecies.

APPENDIX: TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Event	Sources
May-June, 605 BC	Egypt defeated at battle of Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar.	Bible Dictionary, Ryrie/Bible (Jeremiah 46:2)-MM, World History (-MM), Lion (-MM)
	Judah loses its ‘protection’.	
June-August, 605 BC	First siege – Jehoiakim of Judah submits to Nebuchadnezzar.	Ryrie/Bible (Daniel 1:1)
	Numerous carried off to Babylon (including Daniel) as well as various Temple treasures.	
December, 598 BC	Start of second siege after Jehoiachin rebels.	Bible Dictionary, World History (-MM)

March 16, 597 BC	End of second siege. Jehoiachin, the king of Judah at the time, and many others (including the prophet Ezekiel) as well as various temple treasures were taken to Babylon in exile	Bible Dictionary, Bible (2 Kings 24:10-17) -DD, World History (-DD), Lion (-DD) Ryrie/Bible (Jeremiah 39:1-10, 52:1-23), 2 Kings 24:20b-25:1), World History (-DD)
January 15, 588 BC	Start of third siege after Zedekiah rebels End of third siege. Zedekiah blinded and he with the remaining survivors (including the prophet Jeremiah) were carried off as slaves to Babylon along with various temple treasures.	Ryrie/Bible (2 Kings 25:2-4), World History (-DD), Lion (-DD) Ryrie/Bible (2 Kings 25:8-10)
July 16, 586 BC	Nebuchadnezzar destroys city of Jerusalem & Temple by fire.	Ryrie, Bible (Ezra 1:1)-DD, World History (-DD), Lion (-DD) Bible Dictionary Bible (Ezra 1:1), Lion To His Glory Ministries, Bible Dictionary (-MM) Ryrie/Bible (Ezra 1-2)
October 12, 539 BC	Babylon empire falls to Media-Persia	Ryrie/Bible (Ezra 3:4) Ryrie/Bible (Ezra 3:8-13) To His Glory Ministries Bible (Ezra 6:15)
October 16, 539 BC	Edict by Cyrus II to release Israel from captivity	Ryrie/Bible (Nehemiah 2:1-8)
July 23, 537 BC	Israel released from servitude	Bible (Matthew 21:1-11)
536 BC	First return of people (49,897) to Israel	Various
September-October 536 BC	Alter rebuilt	Various
Spring 535 BC	Foundation for second Temple laid	
August 16, 518 BC	Completion of “desolations of Jerusalem”	
March 12, 515 BC	Rebuilding of Temple completed	
March 14, 445 BC	Decree issued by Artaxerxes to “restore and rebuild” city of Jerusalem Christ makes triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday	
April 6, 32 AD	Israel restored to being a sovereign nation	
May 14, 1948	Jerusalem & temple mount re-captured	
June 7, 1967		

Sources:

- ‘Bible Dictionary’: *New Bible Dictionary*, Second Edition., Tyndale.
- ‘Ryrie/Bible’: *Ryrie Study Bible*, Expanded Edition. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Moody Press.
- ‘World History’: *Encyclopedia of World History*, Peter N. Stearns, Houghton Mifflin.

Two useful (secular) resources that I’ve found to verify events and dates include Peter N. Stearns, *The Encyclopedia of World History* and Microsoft’s *Encarta Encyclopedia*.

These calculations based on “The Fig Tree Blossoms” from To His Glory Ministries

This calculation originally performed in 1895 by Sir Robert Anderson, the head of Scotland Yard in *The Coming Prince*, p. 127

Preterism

Christian eschatological view that interprets some (partial preterism) or all (full preterism) prophecies of the Bible as events which have already happened.

Promise of Protection during the birthpains

Psalm 91 – Safety of Abiding in the Presence of God

- 1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”
- 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge;

His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,

6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you.

8 Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place,

10 No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;

11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.

12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.

14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;

I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."

Fulfilled Prophecies

Babylonian Captivity

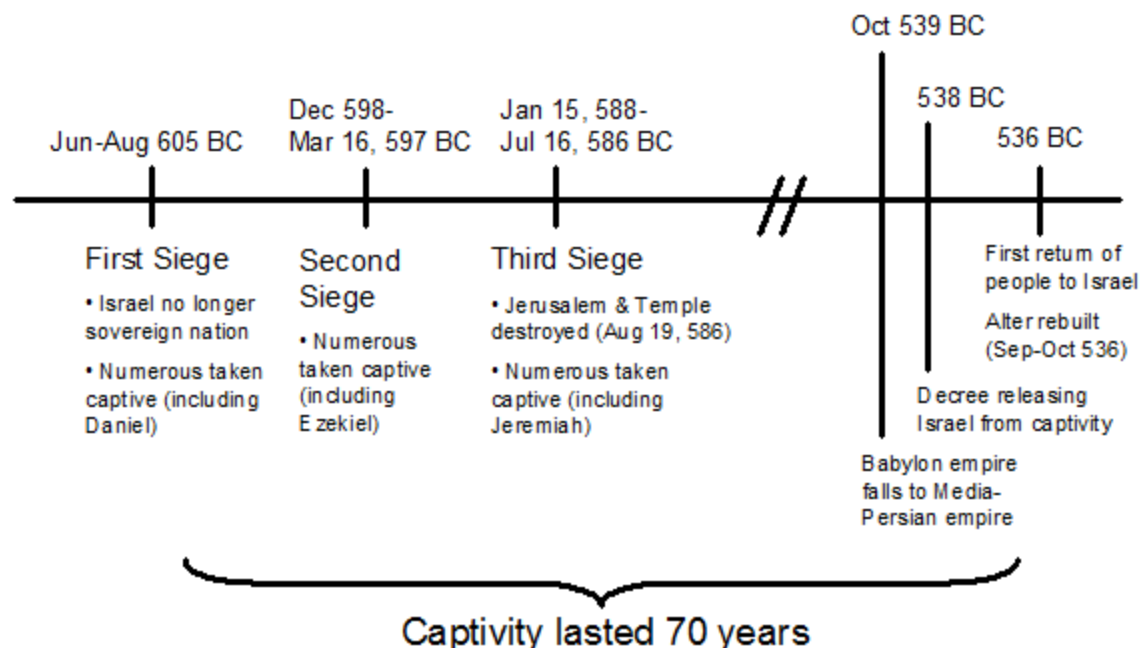
In the Old Testament days, after the time of David and Solomon, the ancient nation of Israel fell into decline and turned away from God. Because of this, the Lord sent various prophets (Jeremiah, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah and Habakkuk) to warn the people of Israel of the consequence of their sin and to pronounce His judgment upon them. This judgment was certain destruction of the nation by the hands of foreign invaders if Israel did not turn from its wicked ways. The people of Israel did not listen to the prophets and continued to disobey, so God sent Babylon to invade and destroy the nation (Jeremiah 5:19, 7:22-34). The story of Israel's disobedience, the warnings given by the prophets, Israel's captivity into Babylon, and their return from this captivity fills the majority of the Old Testament.

One of the most interesting prophecies regarding this captivity was given by the prophet Jeremiah the year Israel was taken captive by Babylon. In this prophecy, Jeremiah predicted that the captivity would last seventy years, after which, the Israelites would return to the city of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10). Was Jeremiah correct in his prediction? Was the Bible accurate in this case?

To understand these events, we need look no further than a history book or a common encyclopedia . From these, we learn that the nation of Israel encountered three separate sieges by the Babylonians:

- The first started in 605 B.C. when King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon invaded the region and subsequently laid siege to Jerusalem and defeated Jehoiakim, the King of Judah (the southern kingdom of Israel). Nebuchadnezzar then carried off many Israelites (including the prophet Daniel), along with some of the articles from the Temple to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-2). Judah then became a subject state of Babylon and had to pay tribute (taxes) to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1).
- The second siege started after the Egyptians encouraged Judah to rebel in 601 B.C. In 598 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem and again laid siege to the city of Jerusalem. The city fell on March 16, 597 B.C. and the rebellion was crushed. Jehoiachin, the king of Judah at the time, and many of the country's leaders, laborers and craftsmen (including the prophet Ezekiel) were taken to Babylon in exile (2 Kings 24:10-16).
- The final siege occurred in 588 B.C. when despite the two prior attempts, Zedekiah, a puppet king placed on the throne of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, appealed to the Egyptians for help and once again rebelled. On January 15th, 588 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar again invaded Judah and laid siege to Jerusalem. After about 30 months, the city was taken on July 18th, 586 B.C. and the rebellion crushed. Zedekiah and the remaining survivors (including the prophet Jeremiah) were carried off as slaves to Babylon. During this final siege, Nebuchadnezzar plundered the Temple and carried off various articles (including the bronze pillars of the Temple). He then set fire to, and destroyed the city of Jerusalem along with Solomon's Temple, the great centerpiece of the Jewish faith, on August 13, 586 B.C. (Jeremiah 39:1-10, 52:1-23, 2 Kings 20b-25:21). The Jewish people still commemorate this tragic day which is known as "Tisha b' Av".

A complete timeline of these, and other events mentioned in this article, is contained in the appendix. With this knowledge, we can then proceed to look at the timeline and the fulfillment of Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy:



In October, 539 B.C., the Babylonian Empire fell to the empire of the Medes and Persians. The city of Babylon itself fell without a battle when the Medes and Persians diverted the water of the Euphrates River flowing through the city and, marching at night under the gates of the city, captured it while the Babylonian king was throwing a large feast. Both the secular historians Herodotus and Xenophon describe this event as did the prophet Daniel (Daniel 5). Cyrus II, the king of the Media-Persian Empire, established a new, enlightened policy of peaceful relationships throughout the empire and in 538 B.C. issued a decree that Jews would be allowed to return to Israel along with the treasures that were originally taken from the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. It was this policy that allowed Cyrus to expand the Empire and still administer and control far-off nations. About 50,000 Jews left Babylon in 537 B.C. and did return to their original homeland, arriving in 536 B.C.

Unfortunately, we don't know from history the exact day that the first siege of Jerusalem occurred which would start Jeremiah's clock, but we do know that it had to occur between June and August of 605 B.C. because of two events that history records bookmarked this event – the first being the battle of Carchemish between the Egyptians and Nebuchadnezzar which occurred between May and June of 605 B.C. and the second being when Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon on August 16, 605 B.C. upon hearing of the death of his father.

The prophecy from Jeremiah states that the captivity would last 70 years after which the Israelites would return to the city of Jerusalem. If we convert from the Jewish calendar to the Christian calendar (by multiplying 70 by 360 and then dividing by 365.242), we end up with almost exactly 69 years of time on the Jewish calendar. Starting from June-August 605 B.C. (the year Israel lost its sovereignty and the first group of Jewish people were taken into captivity following the first siege), we can subtract 69 and expect to see from this prophecy that the captivity should have ended in the summer of 536 B.C. with the return of the first group of Jews back to Jerusalem. From history, we can clearly see that this was the case – the people of Israel were indeed taken captive in 605 B.C. from their nation and did return exactly 70 years later on the Jewish calendar – arriving in the summer of 536 B.C. Unfortunately, again, history doesn't record the exact day of their return, but we do know that the Alter of the Temple was rebuilt in September-October 536 B.C. and rebuilding this would have been a priority for the Jewish people, so it is logical to conclude that they did, indeed, arrive one to three months prior in the summer as we would expect.

We can see from this that Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70-years of captivity was fulfilled exactly as predicted. Clearly, Jeremiah was a prophet of the true God.

1st Coming of the Messiah

The third and final prophecy that we'll look at pertains to the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Although certainly many Christians are aware that the Old Testament contains many prophecies concerning the coming of Christ – literally hundreds related to aspects such as where He would be born, where He would minister, what lineage He would descend from, what His death would be like and so forth, I've found very few people are aware that the Bible actually predicted the *exact day* of His coming, which was foretold by the prophet Daniel.

In 538 BC, during the time that Israel was being held captive by the Babylonians, the prophet Daniel recognized that the time of Israel's captivity would soon be coming to an end. It had been sixty-seven years since Jerusalem was conquered by Babylon, and Daniel had been studying the prophecies that said the captivity would last only seventy years. He then proceeded to pray for the people of Israel and that the prophecies concerning the 70-year captivity would be fulfilled. During this time of prayer, the angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel and provided one of the most amazing prophecies in all of scripture (Daniel 9:23-27). Although the seventy years of captivity would come to an end, the angel of God declared that this would not be the end of Israel's punishment for breaking God's covenant. Rather, the punishment would last 'seventy sevens':

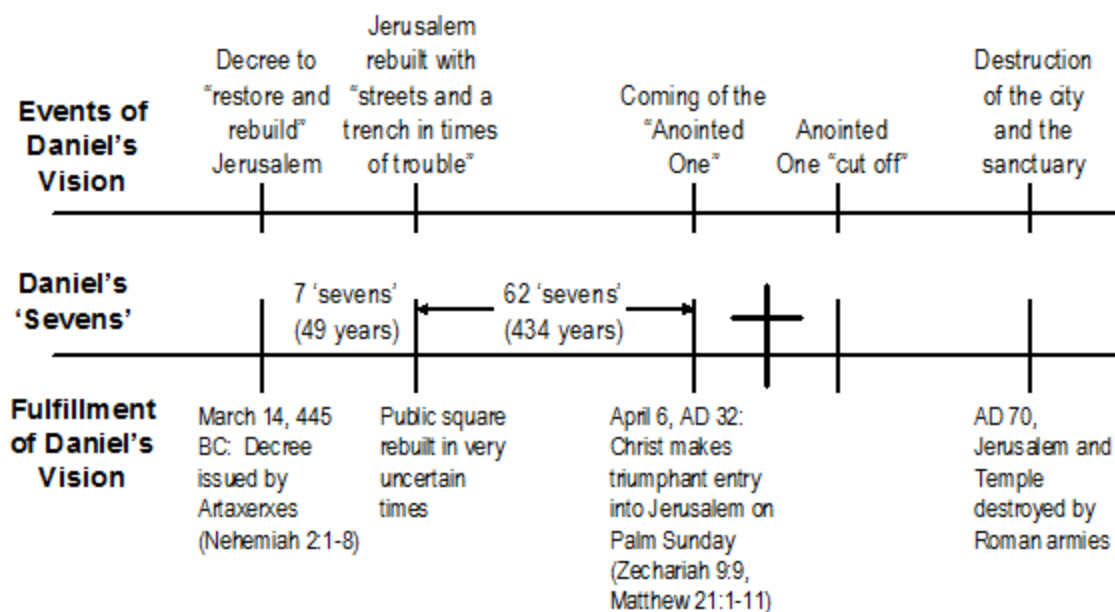
Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision: Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city... from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary...(Daniel 9:23-26a)

In essence, Gabriel was correcting Daniel's misunderstanding concerning when the Messianic Kingdom would be set up. He did this by providing a timeline and series of events that would not only lead to the end of the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of Jerusalem, but also to the first coming of the Messiah and various other future events related what most know of as the Tribulation period, which occur prior to Christ's second coming. For the sake of this article, however, we will only focus on the timeline leading up to the first coming of Christ.

The key to understanding this passage (Daniel 9:23-27) is to recognize that the 'sevens' mentioned refer to seven-year periods. This is certainly the case: the original Hebrew translation of this phrase supports this interpretation and Daniel had clearly been thinking about the years of captivity Israel had endured. Gabriel was essentially using a play on words in the Hebrew text, pointing out that the Messiah's Kingdom would not be established in "seventy years", which is what Daniel had been expecting, but rather "seventy sevens of years" (seventy times seven, a total of 490 years). Therefore, the "seventy sevens" refers to seventy, seven-year periods of time. Essentially, what the angel was telling Daniel about Jeremiah's prophecy was similar to what we saw related to Ezekiel's prophecy – namely that the punishment of Israel was to be multiplied by seven due to Israel's disobedience.

The seventy 'sevens' are divided into three separate units – seven 'sevens', 62 'sevens' and one 'seven'. The second block of time is said to immediately follow the first for a total of 69 'sevens' or 483 years (69 periods of 7 years each). The first event we read of in Daniel's timeline is "the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem." From history we know that this decree was issued by the Persian King Artaxerxes on March 14, 445 B.C., which started the countdown of Daniel's seventy 'sevens'. The decree was issued at the request of Nehemiah, an advisor to the king, who was deeply concerned upon hearing news that the remnant that traveled back to Jerusalem had run into significant difficulties in rebuilding the city of Jerusalem itself. From the issuing of this decree in 445 B.C., this prophecy says there will be 483 years until the "anointed one, the ruler, comes". Who is this "anointed one?" The Hebrew translation of this word literally means "mashiach" or "the Messiah". Therefore, this is a prophecy about the timing of the coming of the Messiah to the earth.

What will the arrival of the Messiah look like? The prophet Zechariah provides the answer: "Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (Zechariah 9:9). Zechariah's prophecy describes the coming of the Messiah, riding into Jerusalem. The people of Israel were awaiting a political savior to ride into the city of Jerusalem and free them from the nations that ruled over them. Zechariah describes this event, but describes it not as a conquering King riding into the city on a lofty steed, but rather as a humble savior riding in a humble donkey.



Converting between the calendars, the 483 years mentioned in this prophecy (the first 49 plus the second 434) add up to 173,880 days. If we add this time to March 14, 445 B.C., we end up with the 6th day of the 4th month of the 32nd year or April 6, AD 32 which is when we would expect the Messiah to arrive. What happened on this day? Exactly 173,880 days from the issuing of Artaxerxes' decree, Jesus Christ made His triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and fulfilled this prophecy just as it was predicted.

The passage then goes on to say that various events would happen after the sixty-nine 'sevens'. These events include the "cutting off" of the Anointed One, the destruction of the city and the Temple, and the continuation of wars. These events were fulfilled just as they were predicted. The Hebrew word "cut off" translated is a common word used in the Mosaic Law and simply means, 'to be killed'. This is fitting with the coming of Jesus Christ and His death on a cross. The destruction of the city and the Temple a second time we know from history would occur in 70 AD at the hands of the Romans.

The implications of this single prophecy and what it describes are enormous – this Old Testament passage actually predicted that the Messiah would come in AD 32 and would later be killed at some point before the destruction of the city and the Temple which we know would later occur in 70 AD. It is amazing to consider why so many Jewish people ignored this prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah and rejected Jesus Christ, when they had waited so patiently for His arrival and their own Scriptures predicted the exact day of His coming. If the Messiah was not on earth 483 years after the decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem and then was not killed in accordance with this prophecy sometime before the destruction of the city and the Temple in 70 AD, then Daniel was a false prophet and his book shouldn't be included in the Hebrew Scriptures. But if Daniel was not a false prophet, then there is no other conclusion but that Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah that the Hebrew Scriptures describe. There is simply no other person that could have fulfilled this prophecy – and he fulfilled it to the exact day it was predicted to occur.

Again, looking at this amazing prophecy and the others contained in this article, what can we say other than God's hand was at work and that the prophets of the Old Testament truly were inspired by God? What other book could so accurately and precisely foretell events that would occur hundreds and thousands of years into the future and get them right, often to the exact day? The implications are simply that we must believe in the God of the Bible, the word of God as contained in scripture, and be obedient to what it says. There is simply no other conclusion one can draw from a book that has shown that it could foretell the future to the exact day, multiple times thousands of years in advance.

End time prophecies fulfilled

Ez 36

Ez 37

Feasts (Lev 23)

Feast of Trumpets - also known as Rosh Hashanah - is the Jewish New Year. This occurs Sept 21-22. Jesus fulfilled all of the spring feast days already - in order. Feast of Trumpets is the next festival day on the Jewish calendar in which Jesus is expected to return. Is it a coincidence that this happens at the same time as the Revelation 12 sign??? I don't think so . . .

Passover (Leviticus 23:4-8)

- Jesus died
- Pointed to the Messiah as our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7) whose blood would be shed for our sins. Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover at the same hour that the lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal that evening (John 19:14).

Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:4-8)

- Jesus went into the grave
- Pointed to the Messiah's sinless life (as leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible), making Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' body was in the grave during the first days of this feast, like a kernel of wheat planted and waiting to burst forth as the bread of life.

First Fruits (Leviticus 23:9-14)

- 3 days later, Jesus was resurrected and presented as the First Fruits to the Father
- Pointed to the Messiah's resurrection as the first fruits of the righteous. Jesus was resurrected on this very day, which is one of the reasons that Paul refers to him in 1 Corinthians 15:20 as the "first fruits from the dead."

Weeks or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-22)

- Holy spirit was poured out to believers and body of Christ (the church) was conceived
- Occurred fifty days after the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and pointed to the great harvest of souls and the gift of the Holy Spirit for both Jew and Gentile, who would be brought into the kingdom of God during the Church Age (see Acts 2). The Church was actually established on this day when God poured out His Holy Spirit and 3,000 Jews responded to Peter's great sermon and his first proclamation of the gospel.

Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25)

- The first of the fall feasts. Many believe this day points to the Rapture of the Church when the Messiah Jesus will appear in the heavens as He comes for His bride, the Church. The Rapture is always associated in Scripture with the blowing of a loud trumpet (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:52).

Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32)**Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-44)**

There is an extremely thorough explanation of the significance of this in the Rapture playlist on God's Roadmap to the End <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgkxVtdHaobhy5CVeF8Rsdg/playlists>

THE SEVEN JEWISH FEASTS

Appointed Feasts and Holy Convocations of Leviticus 23

"These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ"

Colossians 2:17

Month of Nisan		Month of Sivan	
14th	15th	17th	7th
SPRING FEASTS			
3 days		50 days	
Passover	Unleavened Bread	Firstfruits	Pentecost
Exodus 12 Matthew 26:17-27 Leviticus 23:5	Leviticus 23:6-8	Leviticus 23:9-14 Deuteronomy 26:1-11	Leviticus 23:15-22 Deuteronomy 16:10
Crucifixion	Burial	Resurrection	Holy Spirit
John 18:28 1 Corinthians 5:7	John 6:47-51 Acts 2:29-32	1 Corinthians 15:20-23 James 1:18	Acts 1 & 2
Feasts Fulfilled at Christ's First Coming			
Priestly role - Suffering Servant			

Month of Tishrei		
1st	10th	15th
FALL FEASTS		
70th week of Daniel		
Trumpets	Day of Atonement	Tabernacles
Leviticus 23:23-25 Numbers 29:1-6	Leviticus 23:26-32 Zechariah 12:10 Zechariah 13:1	Leviticus 23:33-44 Isaiah 65:17-19 Ezekial 43:7 Micah 4:1-3
Rapture	2nd Coming	Millennium/Heaven
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Revelation 4:1-6 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Philippians 3:20-21	Matthew 24:29-30 Luke 21:25-28 Revelation 19:11-21 2 Thess 1:5-10 Romans 11:25-27	Revelation 20:1-6 Revelation 21:1-27 Revelation 22:1-6 John 14:1-6
Feasts to be Fulfilled at Christ's 2nd Coming		
Kingly role - Coming King		

Scriptural references to the last days

Isaiah 2 – The Day of the Lord

⁵ O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD.

⁶ For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with eastern ways;
They *are* soothsayers like the Philistines, And they are pleased with the children of foreigners.

⁷ Their land is also full of silver and gold, And there is no end to their treasures;
Their land is also full of horses, And there is no end to their chariots.

⁸ Their land is also full of idols; They worship the work of their own hands, That which their own fingers have made.

⁹ People bow down, And each man humbles himself; Therefore do not forgive them.

¹⁰ Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty.

¹¹ The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

¹² For the day of the LORD of hosts *Shall come* upon everything proud and lofty,
Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low—

¹³ Upon all the cedars of Lebanon *that are* high and lifted up, And upon all the oaks of Bashan;

¹⁴ Upon all the high mountains, And upon all the hills *that are* lifted up;

¹⁵ Upon every high tower, And upon every fortified wall;

¹⁶ Upon all the ships of Tarshish, And upon all the beautiful sloops.

¹⁷ The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low;
The LORD alone will be exalted in that day,

¹⁸ But the idols He shall utterly abolish.

¹⁹ They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth,
From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.
²⁰ In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver And his idols of gold,
Which they made, *each* for himself to worship, To the moles and bats,
²¹ To go into the clefts of the rocks, And into the crags of the rugged rocks,
From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.
²² Sever yourselves from such a man, Whose breath *is* in his nostrils; For of what account is he?

Isaiah 13 – Proclamation Against Babylon

13 The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

² “Lift up a banner on the high mountain, Raise your voice to them;
Wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles.
³ I have commanded My sanctified ones;
I have also called My mighty ones for My anger—Those who rejoice in My exaltation.”
⁴ The noise of a multitude in the mountains, Like that of many people!
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together!
The LORD of hosts musters The army for battle.
⁵ They come from a far country, From the end of heaven—
The LORD and His weapons of indignation, To destroy the whole land.
⁶ Wail, for the day of the LORD *is* at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.
⁷ Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man’s heart will melt,
⁸ And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of *them*;
They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth;
They will be amazed at one another; Their faces *will be like* flames.
⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.
¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light;
The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.
¹¹ “I will punish the world for *its* evil, And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
¹² I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.
¹³ Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.
¹⁴ It shall be as the hunted gazelle, And as a sheep that no man takes up;
Every man will turn to his own people, And everyone will flee to his own land.
¹⁵ Everyone who is found will be thrust through, And everyone who is captured will fall by the sword.
¹⁶ Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes;
Their houses will be plundered And their wives ravished.
¹⁷ “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them,
Who will not regard silver; And *as for* gold, they will not delight in it.
¹⁸ Also *their* bows will dash the young men to pieces,
And they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; Their eye will not spare children.
¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride,
Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
²⁰ It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation;
Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.
²¹ But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, And their houses will be full of owls;
Ostriches will dwell there, And wild goats will caper there.
²² The hyenas will howl in their citadels, And jackals in their pleasant palaces.
Her time *is* near to come, And her days will not be prolonged.”

Isaiah 26 - Take Refuge from the Coming Judgment

¹⁶ LORD, in trouble they have visited You, They poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening *was* upon them.

¹⁷ As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs,
When she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.

¹⁸ We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind;
We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

¹⁹ Your dead shall live; *Together with* my dead body they shall arise.

Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you;

Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.

²¹ For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.

Isaiah 34 – Judgment on the Nations

¹ Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people!

Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it.

² For the indignation of the LORD *is* against all nations, And *His* fury against all their armies;
He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.

³ Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses,
And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

⁴ All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;
All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as *fruit* falling from a fig tree.

⁵ “For My sword shall be bathed in heaven;
Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse, for judgment.

⁶ The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, It is made overflowing with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats, With the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

⁷ The wild oxen shall come down with them, And the young bulls with the mighty bulls;
Their land shall be soaked with blood, And their dust saturated with fatness.”

⁸ For *it is* the day of the LORD’s vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

⁹ Its streams shall be turned into pitch, And its dust into brimstone; Its land shall become burning pitch.

¹⁰ It shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever.
From generation to generation it shall lie waste; No one shall pass through it forever and ever.

¹¹ But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it, Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.
And He shall stretch out over it The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.

¹² They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, But none *shall be* there, and all its princes shall be nothing.

¹³ And thorns shall come up in its palaces, Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
It shall be a habitation of jackals, A courtyard for ostriches.

¹⁴ The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
Also the night creature shall rest there, And find for herself a place of rest.

¹⁵ There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay *eggs* And hatch, and gather *them* under her shadow;
There also shall the hawks be gathered, Every one with her mate.

¹⁶ “Search from the book of the LORD, and read: Not one of these shall fail; Not one shall lack her mate.
For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.

¹⁷ He has cast the lot for them, And His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line.
They shall possess it forever; From generation to generation they shall dwell in it.”

Isaiah 46 – God tells us the end from the beginning

⁹ Remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,

¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,

Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.

Indeed I have spoken *it*; I will also bring it to pass.

I have purposed *it*; I will also do it.

Isaiah 66 – Israel born in 1 day

⁷ "Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child.

⁸ Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things?

Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? *Or* shall a nation be born at once?

For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.

⁹ Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD.

"Shall I who cause delivery shut up *the womb*?" says your God.

¹⁰ "Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her;

Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;

¹¹ That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom,

That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory."

¹² For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed;

On *her* sides shall you be carried, And be dandled on *her* knees.

¹³ As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

Jeremiah 49 – Judgment on Elam (Iran)

³⁴ The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, ³⁵ "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, The foremost of their might.

³⁶ Against Elam I will bring the four winds From the four quarters of heaven,

And scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.

³⁷ For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies And before those who seek their life.

I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger,' says the LORD;

'And I will send the sword after them Until I have consumed them.

³⁸ I will set My throne in Elam, And will destroy from there the king and the princes,' says the LORD.

³⁹ 'But it shall come to pass in the latter days: I will bring back the captives of Elam,' says the LORD."

Daniel 9 – The Seventy "Sevens"

²⁰ Now while I *was* speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, ²¹ yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. ²² And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. ²³ At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell *you*, for you *are* greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

²⁴ "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city,

To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity,

To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

²⁵ "Know therefore and understand, *That* from the going forth of the command

To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, *There shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;

The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

²⁶ "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

The end of it *shall be* with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;

But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

Daniel 12 – The End Times

1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. 4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. 6 One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?"

7 The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

9 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

11 "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

Joel 1 – The Land Laid Waste

² Hear this, you elders, And give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!

Has *anything like* this happened in your days, Or even in the days of your fathers?

³ Tell your children about it, *Let* your children *tell* their children, And their children another generation.

⁴ What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten;

What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;

And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

⁵ Awake, you drunkards, and weep; And wail, all you drinkers of wine,

Because of the new wine, For it has been cut off from your mouth.

⁶ For a nation has come up against My land, Strong, and without number;

His teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.

⁷ He has laid waste My vine, And ruined My fig tree;

He has stripped it bare and thrown *it* away; Its branches are made white.

⁸ Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth For the husband of her youth.

⁹ The grain offering and the drink offering Have been cut off from the house of the LORD;

The priests mourn, who minister to the LORD.

¹⁰ The field is wasted, The land mourns;
For the grain is ruined, The new wine is dried up, The oil fails.
¹¹ Be ashamed, you farmers, Wail, you vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley; Because the harvest of the field has perished.
¹² The vine has dried up, And the fig tree has withered;
The pomegranate tree, The palm tree also,
And the apple tree—All the trees of the field are withered;
Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

Joel 1 – Mourning for the Land

¹³ Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; Wail, you who minister before the altar;
Come, lie all night in sackcloth, You who minister to my God;
For the grain offering and the drink offering Are withheld from the house of your God.
¹⁴ Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders *And* all the inhabitants of the land
Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD.
¹⁵ Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD *is* at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.
¹⁶ Is not the food cut off before our eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of our God?
¹⁷ The seed shrivels under the clods, Storehouses are in shambles;
Barns are broken down, For the grain has withered.
¹⁸ How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless,
Because they have no pasture; Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.
¹⁹ O LORD, to You I cry out; For fire has devoured the open pastures, And a flame has burned all the trees of the field.
²⁰ The beasts of the field also cry out to You, For the water brooks are dried up, And fire has devoured the open pastures.

Joel 2 – The Day of the Lord

2 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand:
² A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains. A people *come*, great and strong,
The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any *such* after them, Even for many successive generations.
³ A fire devours before them, And behind them a flame burns;
The land *is* like the Garden of Eden before them, And behind them a desolate wilderness;
Surely nothing shall escape them.
⁴ Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like swift steeds, so they run.
⁵ With a noise like chariots Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, Like a strong people set in battle array.
⁶ Before them the people writhe in pain; All faces are drained of color.
⁷ They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like men of war;
Every one marches in formation, And they do not break ranks.
⁸ They do not push one another; Every one marches in his own column.
Though they lunge between the weapons, They are not cut down.
⁹ They run to and fro in the city, They run on the wall;
They climb into the houses, They enter at the windows like a thief.
¹⁰ The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble;
The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness.
¹¹ The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong *is the One* who executes His word.
For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; Who can endure it?

Joel 3 – God Judges the Nations

3 “For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,
² I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;

And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.

³ They have cast lots for My people, Have given a boy *as payment* for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.

⁴ “Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?
Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me,
Swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head;

⁵ Because you have taken My silver and My gold, And have carried into your temples My prized possessions.

⁶ Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem You have sold to the Greeks,
That you may remove them far from their borders.

⁷ “Behold, I will raise them Out of the place to which you have sold them,
And will return your retaliation upon your own head.

⁸ I will sell your sons and your daughters Into the hand of the people of Judah,
And they will sell them to the Sabeans, To a people far off; For the LORD has spoken.”

⁹ Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men,
Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up.

¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, ‘*I am strong.*’ ”

¹¹ Assemble and come, all you nations, And gather together all around.
Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD.

¹² “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full,
The vats overflow—For their wickedness *is* great.”

¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision.

¹⁵ The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness.

¹⁶ The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.

¹⁷ “So you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain.
Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”

Joel 3 – God Blesses His People

¹⁸ And it will come to pass in that day *That* the mountains shall drip with new wine,
The hills shall flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water;
A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD And water the Valley of Acacias.

¹⁹ “Egypt shall be a desolation, And Edom a desolate wilderness,
Because of violence *against* the people of Judah, For they have shed innocent blood in their land.

²⁰ But Judah shall abide forever, And Jerusalem from generation to generation.

²¹ For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted; For the LORD dwells in Zion.”

Amos 5 – The Day of the Lord

¹⁶ Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this:

“*There shall be* wailing in all streets, And they shall say in all the highways,
‘Alas! Alas!’ They shall call the farmer to mourning, And skillful lamenters to wailing.

¹⁷ In all vineyards *there shall be* wailing, For I will pass through you,” Says the LORD.

¹⁸ Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!

For what good *is* the day of the LORD to you? It *will be* darkness, and not light.

¹⁹ It *will be* as though a man fled from a lion, And a bear met him!

Or *as though* he went into the house, Leaned his hand on the wall, And a serpent bit him!

²⁰ *Is* not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? *Is it not* very dark, with no brightness in it?

²¹ "I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.

²² Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept *them*, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.

²³ Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

²⁴ But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.

Zechariah 12 – Jerusalem's Enemies to Be Destroyed

1 This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: 2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. 4 On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness," declares the LORD. "I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. 5 Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.'

6 "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

7 "The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. 8 On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them. 9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.

Mourning for the One They Pierced

10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. 11 On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, 13 the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, 14 and all the rest of the clans and their wives.

Matthew 24 – Signs of the End of the Age

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The Great Tribulation

¹⁵ “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

²³ “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.

²⁶ “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸ For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

³² “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

³⁶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food ^[1] in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying ^[1] his coming,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25 – The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. ³ Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no

oil with them, ⁴but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶“And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹²But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

¹³“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴“For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. ¹⁶Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. ¹⁸But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

²⁰“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ ²²He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ ²³His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

²⁴“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.’

²⁶“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.

²⁹‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

³¹“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

³⁷“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? ³⁸When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? ³⁹Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

⁴¹“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

⁴⁴ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Luke 17 – The Coming of the Kingdom

²² Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*. ²³ And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. ²⁴ For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. ²⁵ But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. ³⁰ Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

³¹ “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. ³² Remember Lot’s wife. ³³ Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. ³⁴ I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵ Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. ³⁶ Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”

³⁷ And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?”

So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

Luke 21 – Signs of the End of the Age

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

⁵ Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ⁶ “These things which you see—the days will come in which not *one* stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.”

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

⁷ So they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?”

⁸ And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. ⁹ But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will not come* immediately.”

¹⁰ Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. ¹³ But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. ¹⁴ Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. ¹⁷ And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head shall be lost. ¹⁹ By your patience possess your souls.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter

her. ²² For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴ And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁵ “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶ men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

The Parable of the Fig Tree

²⁹ Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰ When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

The Importance of Watching

³⁴ “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

³⁷ And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. ³⁸ Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

Mark 13 – Signs of the End of the Age

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

13 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*”

² And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”

⁵ And Jesus, answering them, began to say: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁶ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and will deceive many. ⁷ But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

⁹ “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹ But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

The Great Tribulation

¹⁴ “So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁷ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ¹⁸ And pray that your flight may not be in winter. ¹⁹ For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. ²⁰ And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

²¹ “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, *He is* there!’ do not believe it. ²² For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²³ But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

²⁸ “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁰ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

³² “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”

Romans 1 – God’s Wrath on Unrighteousness

God’s Wrath on Unrighteousness

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of

God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

1 Corinthians 15 - Resurrection

³⁵ But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” ³⁶ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other *grain*. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

³⁹ All flesh *is* not the same flesh, but *there is one kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, *and* another of birds.

⁴⁰ *There are* also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another. ⁴¹ *There is* one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory.

⁴² So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.

⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As *was* the *man* of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *Man*, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *Man*.

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5 - The Day of the Lord

The Day of the Lord

5 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.** ³ **For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them,** as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. **And they shall not escape.**

⁴ **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** ⁵ **You** are all sons of light and sons of the day. **We** are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let **us** not sleep, as others *do*, but **let us watch and be sober.** ⁷ For **those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.** ⁸ But let **us** who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

¹¹ **Therefore comfort each other** and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

2 Thessalonians 2 – The Man of Lawlessness

The Great Apostasy

2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³ Let no one deceive you by any means; *for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed*, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And *now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time*. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only *He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way*. ⁸ *And then the lawless one will be revealed*, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹ *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders*, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Timothy 3 – Perilous Times and Perilous Men

3 But know this, that *in the last days perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!* ⁶For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; ⁹but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

2 Peter 3 – The Day of the Lord

God's Promise Is Not Slack

3 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), ² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, ³ knowing this first: *that scoffers will come in the last days*, walking according to their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, ⁶ by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. ⁷ But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that *with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*. ⁹ 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.

The Day of the Lord

¹⁰ But *the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night*, in which the *heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Be Steadfast

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; ¹⁵ and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his epistles, **speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.**

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; ¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Jude – Apostates Predicted

¹⁶ These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. ¹⁷ But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: ¹⁸ how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. ¹⁹ These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Signs of the End of the Age

Biblical reasons that we believe that we are at the end of the age

- Wars and rumors of wars (Mt 24:6)
- Nations rise against nations (Mt 24:7)
- False Christs (Mt 24:5; Lk 21:8)
- Distress of Nations (Lk 21:25)
- Famines (Mk 13:8; Mt 24:7)
- Fearful sights in the heavens (Lk 21:11)
- Earthquakes in diverse places (Mt 24:7)
- Love of many waxing cold (Mt 24:12)
- Iniquity shall abound (Mt 24:12)
- Disobedient to parents (2Ti 3:2)
- Gospel preached throughout the world – evangelism (Mt 24:14)
- Convergence of SO MANY signs of the end times
- Call for peace and safety
- Business as usual
- Mocking and scoffing
- Lawlessness – Rise of wickedness
- Strong delusion
- Advancement in technology

Parable of the Fig Tree

When asked about the signs of His coming and the end of the age (Matt. 24:3), Jesus responded, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree (Israel); When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves (starting to grow), ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:32-33). This truth alone (the official expansion of Israel's borders and development of the nation) causes many students of Bible prophecy to know that it is near (close), even at the doors. It has taken 100 years (1917-2017), for the Fig Tree nation of Israel to have grown from a barren wasteland to a thriving nation of more than 7 million people. A 'March of the Nations' will take place in Israel on May 13-15, 2018, celebrating a historic date: the 70th Anniversary of the Founding of the State of Israel.

God sees the beginning from the end and knows all things. God has a schedule and has appointed times for events to happen. God has lovingly given us a look at His schedule so that we won't be caught off guard when these events take place. He has graciously given us all the signs that we need to be looking for, and they are all happening right now.

- ❖ Is 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.
- ❖ Luke 21:7 "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

8 He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. 9 When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

12 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. 13 This will result in your being witnesses to them. 14 But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. 17 All men will hate you because of me. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By standing firm you will gain life.

20 "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. 22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. 23 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

29 He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. 30 When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. 31 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The end times are equated to birth pangs, increasing in frequency and intensity

- ❖ Matthew 24:7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.
- ❖ Mark 13:8 "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

As Christians, it is important for us to be able to recognize the "signs of the times" or "times of the signs"

- We are living in a very exciting age, about which the Bible has a lot to say if you really take the time to study it diligently
- God made no mistake by placing us in this time and place, and as such we are admonished to be brave and to contend for the faith
- We are soldiers in a mighty spiritual army. Each has a unique mission incapable of being filled by another

- It is time to pray for direction and purpose, and then boldly do what He commands us to do.
- If we truly believe that we are in the “times of the signs”, and that our Messiah is near, then we need to be about our Master’s business.
- Our goal is to hear the words “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

We are living in perilous times. At no other time in history were times more perilous on a global scale

- There have always been wars and rumors of wars, but never has the potential for the utter destruction of the human race been more profound.

Revelation 12 Sign - September 23, 2017

The sun, moon and stars were given to us to be signs (Ge 1:14). Revelation 12 details a very specific celestial event that occurs on September 23, 2017. Revelation 12 also describes one of the rapture scenarios (child is caught up to God) and 7 year tribulation when Satan will have full dominion over the earth (after the war in heaven, Satan and his angels are hurled down to the earth where they make war against it's inhabitants). Read Revelation 12.

This information has been sealed up until the time of the end (Dan 12:9). Only now do we have the technology (computer software) to know when this will happen. Since she will be 'clothed in the sun', we will not actually see it. Only now, in the time of the end, do we know that it is happening.

The last time that this sign appeared was 2000 years ago at the conception of Jesus in September of 3 BC (as seen from Babylon). See Star of Bethlehem <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGUIWa2r-bk&t=9s>.

This is the sign of the Son of Man - Jesus is coming back!

3 prerequisites before Jesus Christ can return to this earth.

- First, Israel needs to exist as a nation state.
- Second, the Jewish Temple needs to be rebuilt.
- Finally, an Altar needs to be placed and properly consecrated inside the Temple so that sacrifice can once again be offered in Jerusalem to the Lord God.

As in the First Coming of Christ, the Second Coming will also involve a personal return of the Messiah to the actual, physical land of Israel, making its existence and rebirth in the last days an absolute necessity.

Equally, before the Second Coming can happen, a Jewish Temple needs to be rebuilt in Jerusalem with a functioning Holy Altar inside it. This is so that - at some point in the near future - one man, the Antichrist, can come forth and "...confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him" (Daniel 9:27).

Today, in 2017, the nation of Israel already exists and has existed for close to one full, biblical generation (Psalm 90:10). At the same time, the world is suddenly awash with talk of rebuilding the Jewish Temple. The Jewish Temple is one of the last pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that yet needs to fall into place before the end can come.

Israel

4 Prophecies fulfilled before the 20th century

Dispersion and Persecution (Anti-Semitism)

Lev 26:33 I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. 34 Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. 35 All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it.

Dt 28:58 If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book ... 64 Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. 65 Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. 66 You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. 67 In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!"—because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see.

Desolation

Dt 29:22 Your children who follow you in later generations and foreigners who come from distant lands will see the calamities that have fallen on the land and the diseases with which the LORD has afflicted it. 23 The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur—nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in fierce anger. 24 All the nations will ask: "Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?" 25 And the answer will be: "It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt. 26 They went off and worshiped other gods and bowed down to them, gods they did not know, gods he had not given them. 27 Therefore the LORD's anger burned against this land, so that he brought on it all the curses written in this book. 28 In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now."

Mt 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

- Mark Twain visited Israel in 1867 and published his impressions in *Innocents Abroad*.

He described a desolate country – devoid of both vegetation and human population:

“..... A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds... a silent mournful expanse.... a desolation.... we never saw a human being on the whole route.... hardly a tree or shrub anywhere. Even the olive tree and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country.”

He was amazed by the smallness of the city of Jerusalem:

“A fast walker could go outside the walls of Jerusalem and walk entirely around the city in an hour. I do not know how else to make one understand how small it is.”

And he described the Temple Mount thus:

“The mighty Mosque of Omar, and the paved court around it, occupy a fourth part of Jerusalem. They are upon Mount Moriah, where King Solomon’s Temple stood. This Mosque is the holiest place the Mohammedan knows, outside of Mecca. Up to within a year or two past, no christian could gain admission to it or its court for love or money. But the prohibition has been removed, and we entered freely for bucksheesh.”

Preservation

Jer 30:11 I am with you and will save you,' declares the LORD. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'

2Sa 7:24 You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God.

Jer 31:35 This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD Almighty is his name: 36 "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me." 37 This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.

Is 11:10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. 12 He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.

Is 66:22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure.

Is 49:15 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! 16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.

7 Prophecies fulfilled in part or in whole during the 20th century

Aliyah – Regathering of the Jewish people in unbelief

As a nation, Israel was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD. At that time, the Jews scattered throughout the whole world, keeping the hope based on prophetic promises of an eventual regathering to the chosen land God gave to Israel.

The Bible says that in the last days, Aliyah will take place

- Aliyah is the Hebrew word for the physical return of the Jewish people (Jewish Diaspora) to their ancient Promised Land from abroad.
- Ynet News reported that 2014 was a record year for Aliyah
- ❖ Is 11:10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. 12 He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.
- ❖ Ez 36:22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. 23 I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,' declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. 24 " 'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will

sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.

- ❖ Ez 37:21 and say to them, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. 22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.

- Regathering of the Jews in unbelief

- Ezekiel predicted a 2-stage return – a physical regathering and a spiritual rebirth (Ez 37:1-14)
- Is 43:4-7
- Jer 16:14-15
- Jer 23:7-8
- Jer 24:4-7
- Jer 30:1-3
- Jer 46:27
- Ez 11:16-17
- Ez 36:22-24
- Ez 37:1-12
- Amos 9:14-15
- Ez 20:34



Reestablishment of the State of Israel – May 14, 1948

Restoration of the land of Israel – Ez 36 – A prophecy to the mountains of Israel

- Ez 36:8 " 'But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. 9 I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, 10 and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11 I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 12 I will cause people, my people Israel, to walk upon you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children.
- When Israel was first restored – for about the first 20-30 years – the Holocaust survivors that inhabited the land felt the sword coming against their newly rebirthed nation
 - Many nations around it wanted to destroy it – Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq
- Joel 3:1-2
- Amos 9
- Jeremiah 31
- Ezekiel 36
- Is 52:8-10
- Zec 12:1-3, 6

Restoration of the people – Hope returns to Israel – Ezekiel 37 – Dry bones brought to life

- Ez 37:11 Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. **They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'** 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves

and bring you up from them. 14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.' "

- Many of the people that returned to Israel were Holocaust survivors

God restored Israel as a nation in a single day, exactly as promised, on May 14, 1948

- Is 66:7 "Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. 8 Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.

Reclamation of the Land of Israel

These prophecies indicate that God always blesses the land when the Jews are in it – as He is doing today.

The ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies will occur during the millennial reign of Jesus.

- Is 35:1 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God. 3 Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; 4 say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." 5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. 7 The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
- Ez 36:33 " 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. 34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. 35 They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." 36 Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.'
- Joel 2:21 Be not afraid, O land; be glad and rejoice. Surely the LORD has done great things. 22 Be not afraid, O wild animals, for the open pastures are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches. 23 Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. 24 The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil. 25 "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm—my great army that I sent among you. 26 You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed.
- Is 51:3 The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.
- Is 41:18-20

Revival of the Hebrew Language

Prior to the restoration of Israel, the Hebrew language was on the brink of extinction. Once, again, just as God promised, the Hebrew language was restored.

Zep 3:9 "Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

Jer 31:23 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity, the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'The LORD bless you, O righteous dwelling, O sacred mountain.'

Europe → Hebrew + German = Yiddish

Mediterranean Basin → Hebrew + Spanish = Ladino

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda – The driving spirit behind the revival of the Hebrew language in the modern era.

- In 1881 Ben-Yehuda immigrated to Palestine, then ruled by the Ottoman Empire, and settled in Jerusalem. He found a job teaching at the Alliance Israelite Universelle school. Motivated by the surrounding ideals of renovation and rejection of the diaspora lifestyle, Ben-Yehuda set out to develop a new language that could replace Yiddish and other regional dialects as a means of everyday communication between Jews who made aliyah from various regions of the world. Ben-Yehuda regarded Hebrew and Zionism as symbiotic: "The Hebrew language can live only if we revive the nation and return it to the fatherland," he wrote.

Resurgence of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF)

- ❖ Zec 12:6 "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place. ... 8 On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them. 9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.
- ❖ Is 41:15

Reoccupation of Jerusalem

The Bible predicted that Jerusalem would be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled

- From 70 AD until the 6-Day Arab-Israeli War, Jerusalem was under Gentile control.
- ❖ Lk 21:24 ... Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Lord claims Jerusalem as His own for all eternity

- ❖ (First Song of Moses) – Ex 15: 17 You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance—the place, O LORD, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established. 18 The LORD will reign for ever and ever."
- ❖ 2Ch 6:5 'Since the day I brought my people out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built for my Name to be there, nor have I chosen anyone to be the leader over my people Israel. 6 But now I have chosen Jerusalem for my Name to be there, and I have chosen David to rule my people Israel.'
- ❖ Zec 2:12 The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem.

Jerusalem would be rebuilt in the last days on its old ruins

The Bible predicted that Jerusalem would be rebuilt in the last days on its old ruins, which is exactly what happened

- ❖ Jer 30:18 "This is what the LORD says: " 'I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's tents and have compassion on his dwellings; the city will be rebuilt on her ruins, and the palace will stand in its proper place.
- ❖ Zec 12:6 "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.
- ❖ Is 52:1-3

- ❖ Zec 12:2-3, 6, 9
- ❖ Zec 14:1-2
- ❖ Lk 21:24

World politics would be focused on Israel

Jerusalem will be a major source of conflict in the last days

- Jerusalem is a very small city with:
 - No natural resources
 - No ports
 - Insignificant manufacturing and industrial capabilities
- Prior to 1948, diplomatic leaders seldom mentioned Jerusalem
 - In the last days, Israel will be embroiled in peace talks that will include many nations
- ❖ Dan 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing *of the temple* he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Jerusalem will be a cup of trembling and an immovable stone

- ❖ Zec 12: 2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.
- ❖ Zec 14:1-2

Israel will be surrounded by enemies

- Conflict in the Middle East
 - Israel will be surrounded by enemies
 - Mt 24:6-7
 - Joel 3:2-14
 - Gog Magog War – Ez 38-39
 - Surrounding nations attack Israel – Ps 83
 - Damascus destroyed – Is 17
 - Arab nations – Ez 35-36
 - All the nations of the world will be against Israel – Zec 12:3

5 Prophecies yet to be fulfilled

2nd Holocaust

Zec 13:8 In the whole land," declares the LORD, "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. 9 This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.' "

Repentance of the Jewish People

Dt 4:30 When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him.

Zec 13:1 "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

Mt 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Salvation of a Remnant

Mt 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Zec 12: 10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

Regathering in Belief

Hos 3:5 Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.

Dt 30:1 When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, 2 and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, 3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. 4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back.

Primacy among Nations

Zec 8:22 And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him." 23 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.' "

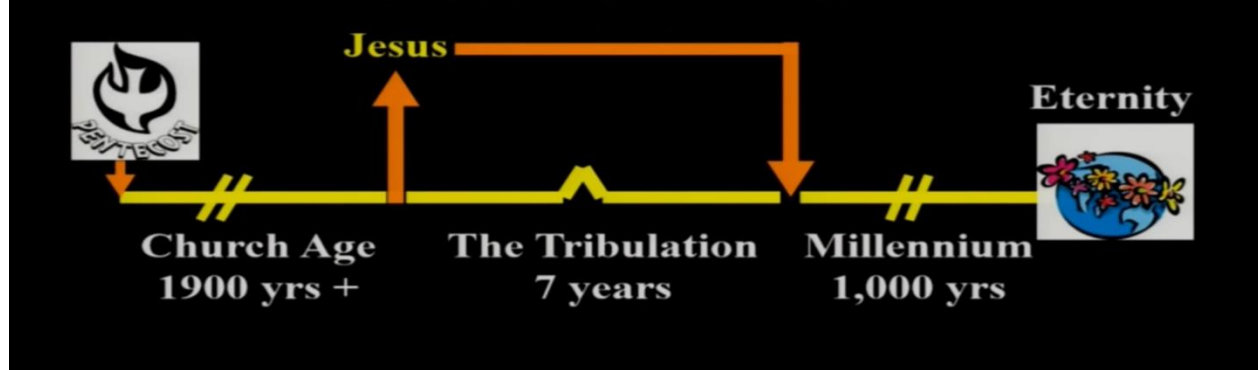
Conclusion

God's Word is true and reliable
God is in control
God still loves the Jewish people and has a great purpose for them
We are living on borrowed time
Jesus is returning soon!

Overview of Major Future Events



Promises to the Church



Wars

15. Wars and rumors of war (threats of war (Mark 13:7)); Russia's submarines swarm the Mediterranean at highest rate since Cold War. Russia has begun developing permanent Syrian bases to host nuclear warships and warplanes. Russia is reportedly now building EMP weapons. In the Korean Peninsula, North Korea's war rhetoric and launching and testing of ballistic missiles has rattled the region and attracted worldwide scorn. Iran's nuclear program threatens the entire Middle East. Fatah, Hamas, ISIS, are terrorist organizations that are playing various roles in the chessboard of global conflict. We are reminded daily of the ongoing threats of major wars around the world. In 2018, worldwide defense spending will reach its highest level since the end of the Cold War, according to Jane's Defense Budgets Report published by IHS Markit on December 18. The report predicts that the world will spend \$1.67 trillion in defense next year. This marks the fifth year in a row that global defense spending has risen significantly. As world conditions destabilize, many countries around the globe are reacting by increasing their defense spending. The causes for the increase are different by region, but in numerous regions, the trend is the same.

There has been an increase of international revolution
Increase in wars

Famine

14. Great Famines (Luke 21:11); The world faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the United Nations was founded in 1945 with more than 20 million people in four countries at risk of starvation and famine. According to the U.N. humanitarian chief, Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria are facing catastrophic shortages of food. Specifically in Yemen, two-thirds of the population (18.8 million people) need immediate aid and seven million are starving. Most famines are caused by nature, however, these famines are being caused by war.

- ❖ Mat 24:7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.
- ❖ Lk 21:10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.
- A famine is a widespread scarcity of food
 - Caused by several factors including crop failure, population unbalance, or government policies
 - This phenomenon is usually accompanied or followed by regional malnutrition, starvation, epidemic, and increased mortality
- The world is less than 40 years away from a food shortage that will have serious implications for all people and governments (Science Daily)
 - "For the first time in human history, food production will be limited on a global scale by the availability of land, water and energy" (senior science advisor on food security)
 - "Food issues could become as politically destabilizing by 2050 as energy issues are today"
 - The world's population is expected to increase by 30% to 9 billion people by mid-century. That would call for a 70% increase in food to meet that demand.
- Nearly every continent in the world has experienced a period of famine throughout history
 - Some countries, particularly in the sub-Saharan Africa, continue to have extreme cases of famine
- Global hunger now afflicts nearly 1 billion people worldwide
 - 1 out of every 6 people in the world does not get enough to eat
 - Aid agencies estimate that as much as 1/3 of the earth's 6 billion people are victims of starvation
- Severe acute malnutrition is the immediate killer – It threatens the lives of 34 million children
 - Every day, 34,000 people die from famine-related causes
 - Every year, at least 1 million children die from malnutrition-related causes

Pestilence/Disease

13. Great Pestilences in diverse places (Luke 21:11); Deadly flesh-eating illness has infected over 500 people in Japan. Approximately 1,300 people have been killed by the Bubonic Plague (yes, you read that right) in Madagascar and

has spread to Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Reunion, Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros. Yemen's Cholera outbreak is now the worst in history as the millionth case is recorded, at least 600,000 of these are children. This has become the largest and fastest spreading disease outbreak in modern history. 4,000 suspected cases are being reported daily. Here, in the U.S., the current opioid epidemic is the deadliest drug crisis in American history. Opioids are the leading cause of death for Americans under 50 years old and have killed more people than guns or car accidents, and doing so at a pace faster than the H.I.V. epidemic did at its peak. Deaths involving synthetic opioids, mostly fentanyl, has risen 540% in just three years. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also announced epidemics involving the ZIKA, Ebola and Yellow Fever viruses.

- ❖ Lk 21:10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.
- Disease epidemic – Rapid, widespread outbreaks among many thousands or millions of people
 - Usually strike suddenly
 - Often the damage is done before authorities can react
- Of the 59 million people who die each year, approximately ½ (nearly 30 million) perish from sickness
 - “Infectious diseases...have probably been the most dangerous enemies of mankind, much more so than war.” (Folke Henschen, Swedish pathologist)
 - The world loses the rough equivalent of 1 nation of Canada every year to disease
 - And it is about to get much worse!
- The global threat posed by infectious diseases has never been greater
 - Just a few decades ago, scientists were forecasting that advances in medicine might soon eradicate deadly diseases. Today, diseases thought long ago conquered are back with a vengeance – TB, cholera, black death – this time much more resistant to standard treatments. As new diseases emerge, and older ones suddenly mutate, modern medicine has fallen far behind in the effort to eradicate them
 - Poor sanitation, war, overcrowding & poverty are creating environments ripe for the massive spread of sickness
 - The world's resources – clean air, water and food – are being stretched to the limit
 - Wars between desperate countries competing for scarce resources are increasing, both in scope & intensity
 - Wars lead to famine, which ultimately results in disease
 - The world has become more interconnected than any other time in history
 - Cheap and fast air travel means that more people travel abroad for vacations and business
 - This increases the chances of being infected by foreign viruses and carrying them to others around the world in just a few days
- Terrorism – Biological weapons and terrorists make the threat of a biological attack very real today
 - Terrorism is on the rise – All around the world, people live in fear of terror
 - Hardly a day goes by without an act of terrorism somewhere in the world, some days several acts
 - There has been an almost fivefold increase in fatalities since 9/11 (2014)
 - 18,000 deaths in 2014 (Global Terrorism Index) – an increase of 60% over the previous year
 - Most of the terrorism acts have been carried out by radical Muslim fundamentalists
 - 4 groups primarily responsible
 - Islamic State (Isis) – Iraq and Syria
 - Boko Haram – Nigeria
 - Taliban – Afghanistan
 - al-Qadiah – Various parts of the world
 - Muslims are taking over many countries of the world – increases the threat for terrorism
 - In US, approximately 16% of the population was born outside of the US
 - According to Newsmax, about 2.4 million of them are Muslim

- Immigrants from primarily Muslim countries to the US
 - 2014 – More than 2.4 million
 - 2010 – 2.1 million
 - 2000 – 1.5 million
- “In the last several years, there has been unprecedented recognition of the enormous toll on global health, prosperity and stability from the 3 major diseases in poverty – AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria” (study from Georgetown University)
- Current deadly diseases that are spreading include:
 - AIDS – In sub-Saharan Africa, 23 million children are infected with HIV
 - Ebola – Discovered in 1976
 - The breakout in West Africa was first reported in March 2014 and has rapidly become the deadliest occurrence of the disease since its discovery
 - The current epidemic sweeping across the region has killed more than all other known Ebola outbreaks combined
 - As of Feb 2015, 9,177 people have been reported as having died from the disease in 6 countries, including Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Mali, and the US.
 - Hanta virus
 - Dengue
 - West Nile
 - SARS
 - Bird flu
 - Cholera
 - Yellow fever
 - Mad cow disease
 - Lyme disease
 - Polio
 - Black plague
 - Malaria
 - Tuberculosis
 - Drug-resistant strains of many old diseases
- Disease will soon alter the course of history in a profound way
 - The coming disease pandemics will dwarf all that have previous occurred
 - Hundreds of millions will perish – and not only the poor, underdeveloped countries
 - Horrific epidemics, the like of which have never been seen, will strike the world’s wealthiest nations, which will collapse under the impact
 - The ensuing chaos will affect you and your loved ones

May 14, 1948 Restoration of Israel as a nation

Start 18:05

Fulfilled scripture:

- Ez 36
- Ez 37
- Is 66

Miracle of Israel

Miracle – An extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs – Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Replacement theology – Don’t teach Bible prophecy, they look at prophetic scriptures as allegorical, not literal

- Don’t believe that the rebirth of Israel means anything

- Consequently, they do not understand the importance of Israel to the God of Israel, or God's redemptive plan for Israel and the other nations
- Those of us who understand Bible prophecy are fully aware of the significance of Israel, God's time clock, and are watching the times with great interest and expectancy.

The rebirth of Israel as a country in 1948 after 2,000 years of dispersion is a hallmark event in Bible prophecy. Many Old Testament prophets foresaw this event and many people are familiar with these prophecies. When Israel became a nation again on May 14, 1948, it marked the first time since AD 70 that the people of Israel had a nation to call their own. It marked the first time since 605 BC that Israel had its own sovereign nation, which was not under the control of another world power. The importance of this event cannot be overestimated – no other nation in history has ever ceased to exist for centuries and then returned as a nation to its former land to regain its place in world history – and the Bible predicted this is exactly what would occur, thousands of years before it happened.

However, as remarkable as it was for the nation of Israel to be reborn at all, it was even more remarkable that the nation was reborn *on the exact day* in history when the Bible said it would be! To understand this prophecy, we must look to the prophet Ezekiel. In 593 B.C., Ezekiel received a vision from God. In this vision, the prophet was told to “act out” the coming siege of Jerusalem. Ezekiel's vision and subsequent timeline starts with the siege of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 4:2). Ezekiel is told to “lay siege to it. Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it.” Clearly, the timeline of this prophecy starts with Nebuchadnezzar's sieges against Jerusalem as described above. Ezekiel is then told by God in his vision to lie on his left side for 390 days to represent the bearing of the sins of the house of Israel (the Northern kingdom following their split) and then on his right side for 40 days to represent the bearing of the sins of the house of Judah (the Southern kingdom of Israel). Ezekiel is told that God has “assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin” (Ezekiel 4:4-6). What this prophecy means is that God's pronounced judgment for the people of Israel would last 430 years. God then proceeds to describe the nature of the coming judgments upon Israel.

Was this prophecy correct in its prediction? We know from the previous section that the Babylonian captivity lasted 70 years. If we subtract this from the 430, we end up with 360 years of punishment that should remain for the people of Israel following the Babylonian captivity. If we convert between the calendars and do the math, we would expect to see God's punishment for Israel end between 182 and 164 B.C. (depending upon whether we use the first siege when Israel lost being a sovereign nation or the third siege when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed – both very significant events to the Jewish people). However, looking through history, these dates don't correspond to any known dates or significant events in Israel's history. What should we say then? Was the Bible wrong in its prediction?

To better understand this prophecy and God's punishment for Israel in more detail, we need to go back to the original covenant the people of Israel made with God at Mt. Sinai. After Moses led the people of Israel out of captivity in Egypt, they wandered around the wilderness for 40 years. During this time, God made a covenant (or contract) with the people of Israel through Moses. In this covenant, God promised that if Israel obeyed His commandments, He would treat them as His treasured possession. He would make them a kingdom of priests, with direct access to God, and a Holy nation. The people of Israel affirmed this covenant and agreed to “do everything the Lord had said” (Exodus 19:3-8). The Israelites however, promptly broke God's commandments by making and worshiping idols (Exodus 32:1-10). They then repented of this sin, and God renewed the covenant He had made with them. God promised to bless them above every nation of the earth, and do wonders for them never before done for any nation in the world if they remained obedient to Him (Exodus 34:10, Deuteronomy 28:1). However, as part of this renewed covenant, God promised that if they disobeyed Him again, they would be disciplined. Moses prophesized that this discipline would take the form of two future dispersions, where the nation of Israel would be taken from their country and scattered throughout the nations.

Moses prophesized that the first time the Israelites disobeyed God, they would be conquered by an as-of-yet unknown nation which would lay siege to Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 28:36, 49, 52). The first conquering of Jerusalem was, of course, by Babylon, which did not exist in 1410 BC when Moses made this prophecy and wouldn't conquer Israel until 800 years later. The second time the Israelites disobeyed God Moses prophesized, the survivors would be scattered throughout the world in every nation. They would worship idols, be relentlessly persecuted and be without a country (Deuteronomy 4:27-31, 28:64-68).

What's interesting to note about these prophecies from Moses regarding Israel's punishment are several passages in Leviticus. In these verses, God clearly stated four different times that if Israel didn't obey God the first time (Babylon), he would multiply Israel's punishment by seven.

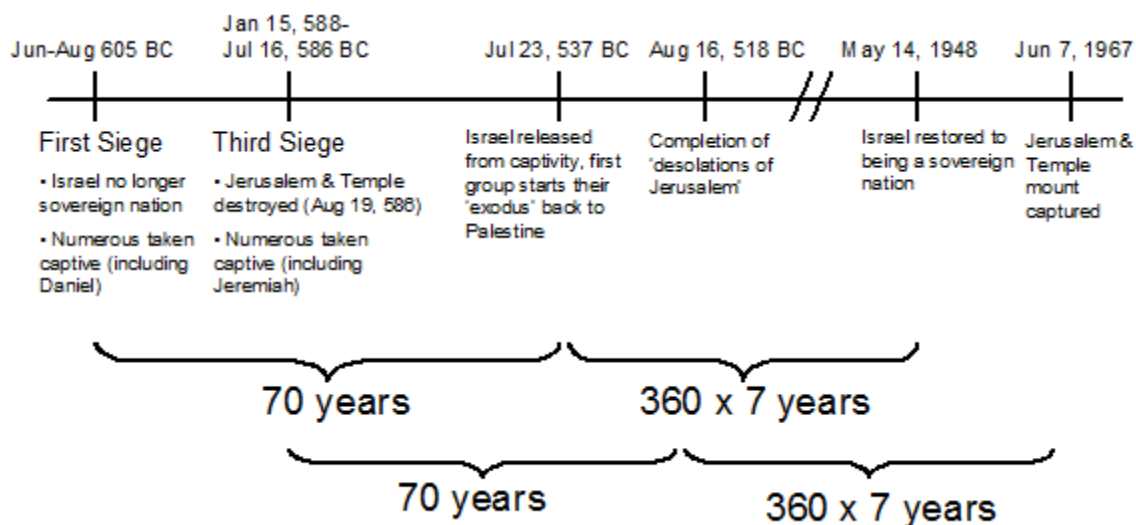
- “If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over” (Leviticus 26:18).
- “If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over” (Leviticus 26:21).
- “If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over” (Leviticus 26:23-24).
- “If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over” (Leviticus 26:27).

God then proceeds to describe His punishment: “I will scatter you among the nations....” (Leviticus 26:33).

Basically, when God made the original covenant with the people of Israel, He knew they would break it, even though He would send numerous prophets warning the Israelites of His pending judgment. God is merciful and the first dispersion (the Babylonian captivity) was intended as a wakeup call or warning shot. Even though the people ignored the prophets, surely they would recognize God’s hand in their captivity and turn back to Him so that upon their release, they would again be obedient to His laws and have a right and restored relationship with Him. However, as stated in Leviticus, if they didn’t turn back to Him and continued to break God’s laws even after this warning shot, God’s anger would burn and he would multiply their punishment by seven.

Knowing this, let’s then look at the timeline and see if multiplying the remaining punishment after the Babylonian captivity by seven yields anything meaningful.

First, looking at Ezekiel’s prophecy, we have to realize the clock starts with the *beginning* of the siege of Jerusalem (“lay siege to it”) as opposed to the end of the sieges when the city itself actually fell. This leads us to use slightly different dates than what we did for Jeremiah’s prophecy. The question, of course, is which ‘siege’ should we use? Ezekiel didn’t specify in his prophecy and both the first siege (when Israel lost its national sovereignty) and the third siege (when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed) were very significant to the Jewish people. Let’s see what happens if we look at both.



If we consider the first siege when Israel lost its national sovereignty and was taken captive by Babylon, we should subtract the time of the captivity (the 70 years) and start from the date that Israel was released from this captivity to evaluate if multiplying the remaining punishment by seven yields a fulfillment. Although Cyrus issued an edict in 538 B.C. regarding Israel’s release, it wasn’t until July 23, 537 B.C. when the first group of Jewish captives organized, gathered their provisions and former Temple treasures as allowed by Cyrus’s decree, and left Babylon on their “exodus” to return to their original land in Palestine. If we start from this date, we would expect the fulfillment to occur 360 years times seven later on the Jewish calendar – or a total of 2,520 years or 907,200 days. Converting between the calendars and adding one to account for the fact that there was no year zero on the Christian calendar, we end up with 2,483 years, 9 months and 12 days on the Christian calendar. Adding this to July 23, 537 B.C., we would then expect the fulfillment to occur on the 14th day of the 5th month of 1948 or May 14, 1948. What happened on this date? This is the *exact* date that the nation of Israel declared its independence and was reborn after almost 2,000 years of dispersion. In fact on May 14,

1948 the first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion, cited this prophecy in the book of Ezekiel as his authority for proclaimed Israel as the new Jewish homeland. The nation of Israel was re-established on the exact day predicted by the Bible! The story of how Israel was reborn is a remarkable one, since no other nation in history ever has fallen off the map only to be reborn thousands of years later. The rebirth truly was a miracle of God, but even more so since He fulfilled the rebirth exactly *to the day* which the prophet Ezekiel predicted more than 2,500 years earlier.

Now consider what happens if we start with the third siege by Babylon when the city of Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed. If we subtract the time of the captivity (the 70 years), we see we should start from the date when the “desolations of Jerusalem” (the time when Jerusalem was uninhabited) was recognized as having been completed, which was on August 16, 518 B.C. Counting from this date and converting between the calendars as we did before, we would then expect the fulfillment to occur on the 7th day of the 6th month of 1967 or June 7, 1967. What happened on this date? This is the *exact* date that the nation of Israel captured the old city of Jerusalem (the site of the Temple Mount) in the Six Day War. Even though Israel was permitted to declare statehood under a plan by the United Nations in 1948, it didn’t hold Jerusalem. It was only on this date that Jerusalem was fully again under the control of Israel – the first time this was the case since the original fall of the city to Nebuchadnezzar.

What we see from Ezekiel’s prophecy is that God fulfilled *to the exact day* the time during which Israel would be punished. And even though there were multiple sieges of the city, God’s timeline still held – Israel lost its national sovereignty for “430 years” and Jerusalem and the Temple mount were out of Jewish control of “430 years”. Obviously, these prophecies defy mathematical probability of occurring by random chance and certainly couldn’t have been fulfilled by calculating Jews who may have been aware of these prophecies, since the Jewish people certainly didn’t control the timing of the initial sieges by Babylon or when the nation of Israel would be reborn. The later only occurred after the horrible events of World War II when Jewish refugees had nowhere to go and world sentiment was such that it was actually feasible for a new Jewish homeland to be created in the land of Palestine by the United Nations. Certainly, Israel also couldn’t predict the timing of the Six Day War or exactly the date upon which Jerusalem would be recaptured. So, what can we conclude? Only that once again the hand of God must have been at work in the fulfillment of these prophecies and that Ezekiel was a true prophet of God.

An extinct nation, has come back into existence

- For the 1st time in history, an extinct nation has come back into existence.
 - After almost 1900 years, Israel was again declared a nation and officially reestablished in the promised land, exactly as God had promised.
-
- ❖ Joel 3:1-2
 - ❖ Amos 9:11 “In that day “I will restore David’s fallen shelter—I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins—and will rebuild it as it used to be, 12 so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,” declares the Lord, who will do these things. 13 “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills, 14 and I will bring my people Israel back from exile. “They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. 15 I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the Lord your God.
 - ❖ Ezekiel 11:17 “Therefore say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.’
 - ❖ Ezekiel 28:25 ““This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. 26 They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God.””.

- ❖ Ezekiel 34:13 I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.
- ❖ Hosea 8:10
- ❖ Jeremiah 31
- ❖ Ezekiel 36
- ❖ Ezekiel 37 – The dry bones have come back to life

Aliyah - return of the Jewish people

As a nation, Israel was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD. At that time, the Jews scattered throughout the whole world, keeping the hope based on prophetic promises of an eventual regathering to the chosen land God gave to Israel.

The Bible says that in the last days, Aliyah will take place

- Aliyah is the Hebrew word for the physical return of the Jewish people (Jewish Diaspora) to their ancient Promised Land from abroad.
- Ynet News reported that 2014 was a record year for Aliyah
- ❖ Is 11:10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. 12 He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.
- ❖ Ez 36:24 " 'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.
- ❖ Jer 31:8 See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return.
- ❖ Micah 2:12 "I will surely gather all of you, Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people.

God restored Israel on May 14, 1948

Restoration of the land of Israel – Ez 36 – A prophecy to the mountains of Israel

- Ez 36:8 " 'But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. 9 I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, 10 and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11 I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 12 I will cause people, my people Israel, to walk upon you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children.
- When Israel was first restored – for about the first 20-30 years – the Holocaust survivors that inhabited the land felt the sword coming against their newly rebirthed nation
 - Many nations around it wanted to destroy it – Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq

Restoration of the people – Hope returns to Israel – Ezekiel 37 – Dry bones brought to life

- Ez 37:11 Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. **They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'** 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.' "
- Many of the people that returned to Israel were Holocaust survivors

God restored Israel as a nation in a single day, exactly as promised, on May 14, 1948

- Is 66:7 "Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. 8 Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.

Ezekiel's 2520 Prophecy

Israel's history as recorded in the Bible is a continuing cycle of blessing and punishments for Israel's obedience and disobedience to God's law. Throughout times of victory and defeat, kings and judges, priests and prophets, restoration and exile – the Israelites are blessed when they obey God and disciplined when they do not.

- Ez 4:4-15 Siege of Jerusalem symbolized – Ezekiel lays on his side, 1 day for each year of their sin

390 days	Judgement against Israel – LF side
<u>+ 40 days</u>	Judgement against Judah – RT side
430 years	Total judgement against the nation of Israel
- In 606 BC, Israel (Judah) was taken into captivity by Babylon for exactly 70 years

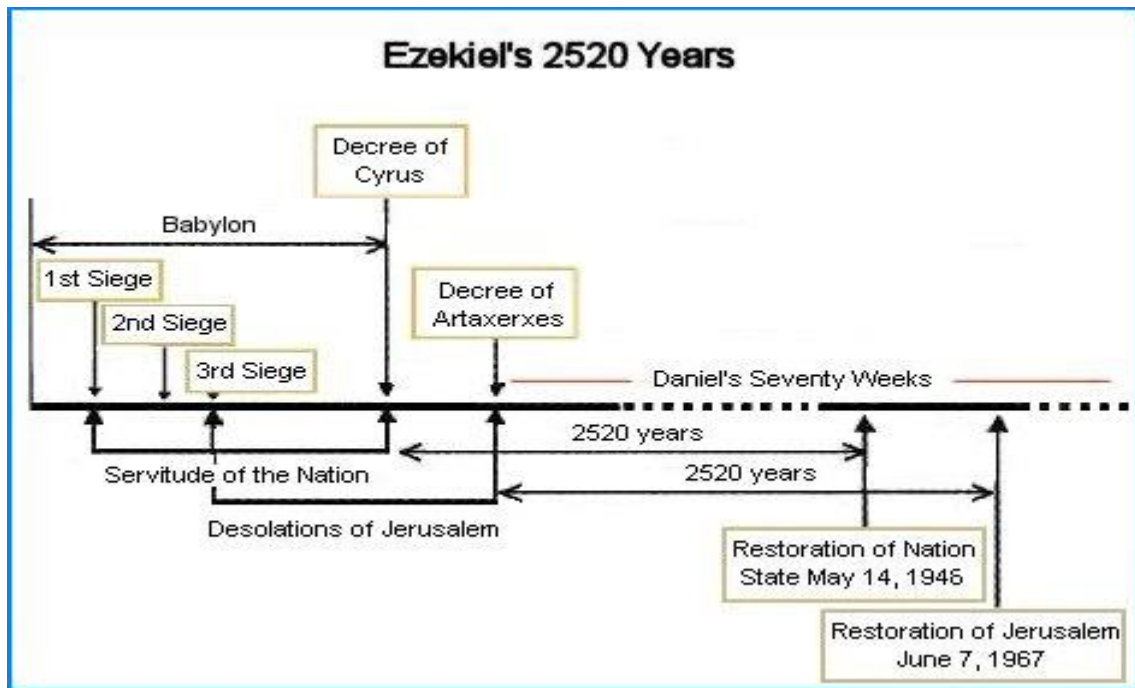
430 years	Total judgement against the nation of Israel
<u>-70 years</u>	Judgement fulfilled during the Babylonian captivity
360 years	Years remaining in judgement against the nation of Israel
- Leviticus 26 Blessings and Curses
 - Reward for Obedience (Blessings) – 11 verses, 13 blessings
 - Punishment for Disobedience (Curses) – 36 verses, 98 curses
 - 18 " 'If after all this you will not listen to me, **I will punish you for your sins seven times over.**
 - 21 " 'If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, **I will multiply your afflictions seven times over,** as your sins deserve.
 - 23 " 'If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, 24 I myself will be hostile toward you and **will afflict you for your sins seven times over.**
 - 27 " 'If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, 28 then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and **I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over.**
 - 33 I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. 34 Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. 35 All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it.
- 7X Factor

360 years	Years remaining in judgement against the nation of Israel
<u>x 7</u>	The prophetic '7X' factor
2,520	Years of judgement remaining against the nation of Israel

2,250 years	Years of judgement remaining against the nation of Israel
<u>x 360 days</u>	Days / year on the Jewish calendar
907,200 days	Days of judgement remaining against the nation of Israel after the Babylonian captivity
907,200 days	Days of judgement remaining against the nation of Israel after the Babylonian captivity
<u>/ 365.25 days</u>	Convert to the Julian calendar (the .25 adjusts for the leap years)
2,483.78 years	Years of God's judgement remaining against the nation of Israel

606 BC	Israel taken into Babylonian captivity – first time (Israel no longer a sovereign nation)
<u>- 70 years</u>	
536 BC	End of the 1 st 70 years of judgement (-536 in math for BC)
+ 2,483	Years remaining of God's judgement
<u>+ 1 year</u>	There is no "0" BC or AD
1948 AD	Israel restored as a sovereign nation

586.62 BC	Israel taken into Babylonian captivity – last time (Jerusalem and Temple destroyed)
	In the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the month
	August 14, 586 B.C. (226 th day of the year) = 586.62
<u>- 70 years</u>	
516.62 BC	End of the 1 st 70 years of judgement (-516.62 in math for BC)
+ 2,483	Years remaining of God's judgement
<u>+ 1 year</u>	There is no "0" BC or AD
1967.38 AD	Restoration of Jerusalem



Hebrew Language Revived

Prior to the restoration of Israel, the Hebrew language was on the brink of extinction. Once, again, just as God promised, the Hebrew language was restored.

Zep 3:9 "Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

Jer 31:23 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity, the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'The LORD bless you, O righteous dwelling, O sacred mountain.'

Europe → Hebrew + German = Yiddish

Mediterranean Basin → Hebrew + Spanish = Ladino

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda – The driving spirit behind the revival of the Hebrew language in the modern era.

- In 1881 Ben-Yehuda immigrated to Palestine, then ruled by the Ottoman Empire, and settled in Jerusalem. He found a job teaching at the Alliance Israelite Universelle school. Motivated by the surrounding ideals of renovation and rejection of the diaspora lifestyle, Ben-Yehuda set out to develop a new language that could replace Yiddish and other regional dialects as a means of everyday communication between Jews who made aliyah from various regions of the world. Ben-Yehuda regarded Hebrew and Zionism as symbiotic: "The Hebrew language can live only if we revive the nation and return it to the fatherland," he wrote.

Reclamation of the land – Wasteland to a thriving nation

Israel would be transformed from a wasteland to a thriving nation

For nearly 1900 years, Israel became a nearly uninhabited, desolate wasteland.

- Mark Twain visited Israel in 1867, and published his impressions in *Innocents Abroad*. He described a desolate country – devoid of both vegetation and human population:
“..... A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds... a silent mournful expanse.... a desolation.... we never saw a human being on the whole route.... hardly a tree or shrub anywhere. Even the olive tree and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country.”
He was amazed by the smallness of the city of Jerusalem:
“A fast walker could go outside the walls of Jerusalem and walk entirely around the city in an hour. I do not know how else to make one understand how small it is.”
And he described the Temple Mount thus:
“The mighty Mosque of Omar, and the paved court around it, occupy a fourth part of Jerusalem. They are upon Mount Moriah, where King Solomon’s Temple stood. This Mosque is the holiest place the Mohammedan knows, outside of Mecca. Up to within a year or two past, no christian could gain admission to it or its court for love or money. But the prohibition has been removed, and we entered freely for bucksheesh.”
- ❖ Dt 29:23 The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur—nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in fierce anger. 24 All the nations will ask: "Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?" 25 And the answer will be: "It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt. 26 They went off and worshiped other gods and bowed down to them, gods they did not know, gods he had not given them. 27 Therefore the LORD's anger burned against this land, so that he brought on it all the curses written in this book. 28 In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now."

Today the land flourishes far beyond any of her surround neighbors.

- ❖ Ez 36:8 " 'But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. 9 I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, 10 and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the

ruins rebuilt. 11 I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

- ❖ Ez 36:28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.
- ❖ Ez 36:34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. 35 They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." 36 Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.'

The Bible predicted that Israel would blossom in the last days and export produce to the world.

With God's blessing, Israel's increased rainfall and irrigation technology have caused the land to blossom.

- Israel exports \$800 million of produce each year and over \$200 million in ornamental plants and flowers.
 - 80% of Europe's citrus imports come from Israel
- Israel exported \$42 billion worth of goods in 2006
 - Jordan (her neighbor) exported \$5 billion worth of goods in 2006
- ❖ Is 27:6 In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.
- ❖ Is 35:1 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

Conflict in the Middle East

Israel is a very small country – about the size of Connecticut – with:

- No great climate
- No natural resources
- No strategic location
- Insignificant manufacturing and industrial capabilities and capacities

The Lord warned Israel that it would be hated and persecuted because of Him

- ❖ Mt 24:9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

Ezekiel told us over 2500 years ago that in the last days, the Arab people will claim the land of Israel which God gave to the Jews

- Gaza Strip and West Bank have been partitioned off for the Palestinians
- Golan Heights partitioned off for Syria
- East Jerusalem partitioned off as the Palestinian capital
- ❖ Ez 35:10 " 'Because you have said, "These two nations and countries will be ours and we will take possession of them," even though I the LORD was there

- ❖ Ez 36:2 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The enemy said of you, "Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession." '...5 this is what the Sovereign LORD says: In my burning zeal I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, for with glee and with malice in their hearts they made my land their own possession so that they might plunder its pastureland.'

The entire world is attempting to divide God's covenant land Israel in half (via the "Two-State Solution"), which is the event that the Bible describes as the catalyst for God's coming judgement on all the nations (Joel 3:2).

- ❖ Joel 3:2 I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.

This division of land is supported by all major nations and the United Nations itself - literally all the nations are attempting to sever Israel from Judah, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan Heights. Amazingly, the Bible takes this prophecy a step further and indicates that the "boundary stone" the nations try to move will include Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:3).

- ❖ Zechariah 12:3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.

Pope Francis used part of his 2017 Christmas message to the world as a call for a "two-state" solution regarding Israel and the Palestinians.

Surrounded by enemies

Israel will lose all of it's friends and be surrounded by enemies

- The alignment of nations against Israel found in Ps 83 and Ez 38 has occurred exactly as described
- ❖ Jer 30:14 All your allies have forgotten you; they care nothing for you. I have struck you as an enemy would and punished you as would the cruel, because your guilt is so great and your sins so many.
- ❖ Ps 83
- ❖ Ez 38



Resurgence of military strength

In the last days, Israel will be invincible

- Since 1948, Israel has been attacked in at least 3 major wars and several lesser wars
- Despite being vastly outnumbered, they have defeated all attacking foes.
- An invincible Israel makes no sense unless you believe God's words.
- ❖ Jeremiah 1:10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."
- ❖ Isaiah 60:12 For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined.

- ❖ Micah 4:11 But now many nations are gathered against you. They say, “Let her be defiled, let our eyes gloat over Zion!” 12 But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord; they do not understand his plan, that he has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor. 13 “Rise and thresh, Daughter Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hooves of bronze, and you will break to pieces many nations.” You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the Lord, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.
- ❖ Zec 12:2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. ... 6 "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

Israel remains blind to their Messiah

Even though Israel will be the focus of many fulfilled prophecies in the last days, most Jews will remain blind to the fact that Jesus is their Messiah until the very end

- ❖ Lk 19:41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42 and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.
- ❖ Lk 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 35 Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"
- ❖ Rom 11: 25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

Israel's friends gone

- ❖ Jer 30:14 All your allies have forgotten you; they care nothing for you. I have struck you as an enemy would and punished you as would the cruel, because your guilt is so great and your sins so many..

Hated by all nations because of Jesus

- ❖ Mt 24:9 “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

World politics would focus on Israel

- ❖ Zec 12:3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.

Peace Treaty

- ❖ Dan 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.

Prophecies about the Revival of Israel

Is 11 – The Reign of Jesse’s Offspring

11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time
To recover the remnant of His people who are left,
From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.

12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

13 Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

14 But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west;
Together they shall plunder the people of the East; They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab;
And the people of Ammon shall obey them.

Is 35 – The Future Glory of Zion

1 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;

2 It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, The excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees.

4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear!

Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you.”

Jer 23 – The Branch of Righteousness

3 “But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the Lord.

5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely;

Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7 “Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ 8 but, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ And they shall dwell in their own land.”

Amos 9 – Israel Will Be Restored

14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel;

They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them;

They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;

They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.

15 I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them,”

Says the Lord your God.

Zec 8 – Jerusalem, Holy City of the Future

1 Again the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying,
2 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.’
3 “Thus says the Lord: ‘I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the Lord of hosts, The Holy Mountain.’
4 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Old men and old women shall again sit In the streets of Jerusalem,
Each one with his staff in his hand Because of great age.
5 The streets of the city Shall be full of boys and girls Playing in its streets.’
6 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days,
Will it also be marvelous in My eyes?’ Says the Lord of hosts.
7 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east And from the land of the west;
8 I will bring them back, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.’
9 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Let your hands be strong,
You who have been hearing in these days These words by the mouth of the prophets,
Who spoke in the day the foundation was laid For the house of the Lord of hosts, That the temple might be built.
10 For before these days There were no wages for man nor any hire for beast;
There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in;
For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor.
11 But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,’ says the Lord of hosts.
12 ‘For the seed shall be prosperous, The vine shall give its fruit, The ground shall give her increase,
And the heavens shall give their dew— I will cause the remnant of this people To possess all these.
13 And it shall come to pass That just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel,
So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, Let your hands be strong.’
14 “For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Just as I determined to punish you When your fathers provoked Me to wrath,’
Says the Lord of hosts, ‘And I would not relent,
15 So again in these days I am determined to do good To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear.
16 These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor;
Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace;
17 Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; And do not love a false oath.
For all these are things that I hate,’ Says the Lord.”
18 Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying,
19 “Thus says the Lord of hosts:
‘The fast of the fourth month, The fast of the fifth, The fast of the seventh, And the fast of the tenth,
Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts For the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.’
20 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Peoples shall yet come, Inhabitants of many cities;
21 The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying,
“Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord, And seek the Lord of hosts. I myself will go also.”
22 Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem,
And to pray before the Lord.’
23 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a
Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” ’ ”

June 7, 1967 Jerusalem in Possession of Israel

The Lord claims Jerusalem as His own for all eternity (First Song of Moses)

- ❖ Ex 15: 17 You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance— the place, O LORD, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established. 18 The LORD will reign for ever and ever."

Possession of Israel

Jerusalem will be in the possession of Israel

The Bible predicted that Jerusalem would be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled

- From 70 AD until the 6-Day Arab-Israeli War, Jerusalem was under Gentile control.
- ❖ Lk 21:24 ... Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Bible says that in the end times, Jerusalem will be in the possession of Israel.

- This happened on June 7, 1967 as the result of the 6-Day Arab-Israeli War
- Many references to the 3rd Temple

Rebuilt on its old ruins

Jerusalem would be rebuilt in the last days on its old ruins

The Bible predicted that Jerusalem would be rebuilt in the last days on its old ruins, which is exactly what happened

- ❖ Jer 30:18 "This is what the LORD says: " 'I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's tents and have compassion on his dwellings; the city will be rebuilt on her ruins, and the palace will stand in its proper place.
- ❖ Zec 12:6 "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

Source of conflict

Jerusalem will be a major source of conflict in the last days

- Jerusalem is a very small city with:
 - No natural resources
 - No ports
 - Insignificant manufacturing and industrial capabilities
- Prior to 1948, diplomatic leaders seldom mentioned Jerusalem
 - In the last days, Israel will be embroiled in peace talks that will include many nations
- ❖ Dan 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing *of the temple* he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Jerusalem will be a cup of trembling and an immovable stone

- ❖ Zec 12: 2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.

Eastern Gate

Ezekiel prophesized that Jerusalem's Eastern Gate would remain sealed until the Messiah returns. Today, as prophesized, the Eastern Gate remains sealed

The Eastern Gate of Jerusalem is also called the Golden Gate or the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:2). In Hebrew, it is *Sha'ar Harahamim*, the "Gate of Mercy." It is currently the oldest gate in the Old City, having been constructed in the 6th or 7th century AD. Also, it is the gate that gives the most direct access to the temple mount—if a person could pass through the arches of the Eastern Gate, he would be very close to where the Jewish temple used to stand. When Jesus entered Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives in Matthew 21, He used a gate in the same location as the current Eastern or Golden Gate.

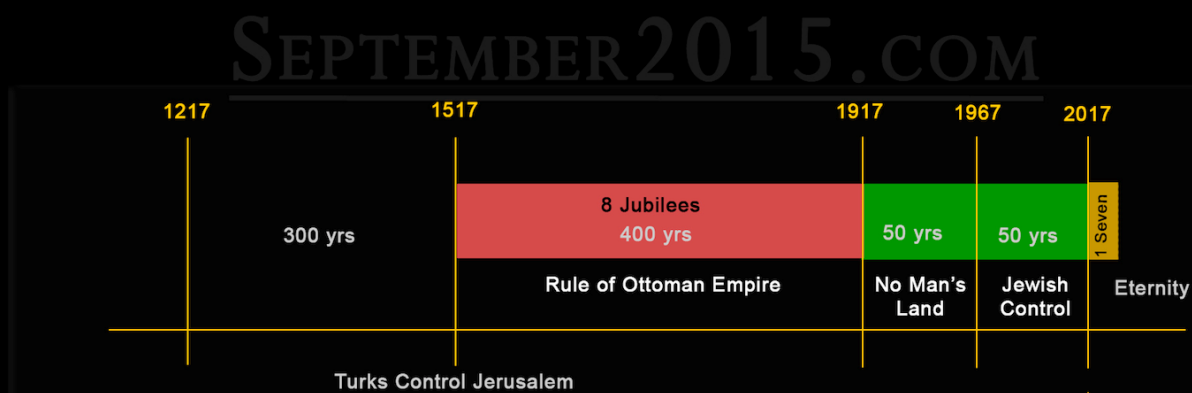
The Eastern Gate was sealed shut in AD 1540–41 by order of Suleiman the Magnificent, a sultan of the Ottoman Empire. It's believed that the reason for the closing of the Eastern Gate was to prevent the Jewish Messiah from gaining entrance to Jerusalem. Jewish tradition states that the Messiah will pass through the Eastern Gate when He comes to rule. The Muslim Suleiman was attempting to thwart the Messiah's plans with sixteen feet of cement. The Eastern Gate has remained sealed for nearly the past 500 years.

It's the sealing of Jerusalem's Eastern Gate that has caused many students of prophecy to sit up and take notice. The book of Ezekiel contains several references to a gate that faces east. In Ezekiel 10:18–19, the prophet sees the glory of the Lord leave the temple through "the entrance of the east gate of the Lord's house"; the glory then moves east of the city to the Mount of Olives (Ezekiel 11:23). Later, Ezekiel sees the glory of the Lord return to the temple via "the gate facing east" (Ezekiel 43:1–5).

Then, in Ezekiel 44:1–2, we read of the gate being closed: "The man brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, the one facing east, and it was shut. The Lord said to me, 'This gate is to remain shut. It must not be opened; no one may enter through it. It is to remain shut because the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered through it.'" Finally, in Ezekiel 46:12 we read that there is one person, a "prince," who may enter via the eastern gate: "When the prince provides a freewill offering to the LORD . . . the gate facing east is to be opened for him. . . . Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out, the gate will be shut."

4. The Prophecy of 10 Jubilees of Judah Ben Samuel concerning Jerusalem

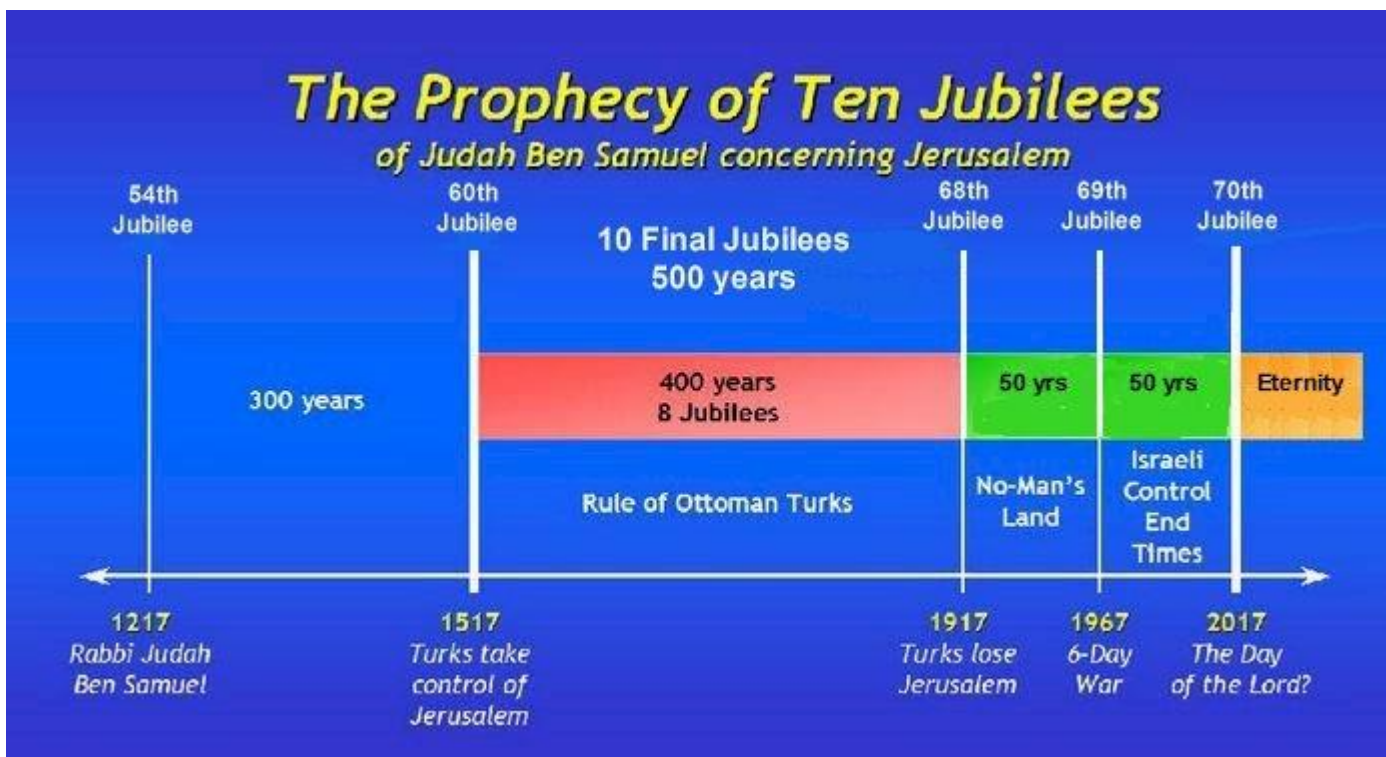
Rabbi Judah ben Samuel - "When the Ottomans conquer Jerusalem they will rule over Jerusalem for eight jubilees. Afterwards Jerusalem will become no-man's land for one jubilee, and then in the ninth jubilee it will once again come back into the possession of the Jewish nation – which would signify the beginning of the Messianic end time."



"When **the Ottomans (Turks)** – who were already a power to be reckoned with on the Bosphorus in the time of Judah Ben Samuel – conquer Jerusalem they **will rule over Jerusalem for eight jubilees**. Afterwards Jerusalem will become **no-man's land for one jubilee**, and then in the ninth jubilee it will once again come back into the possession of the Jewish nation – which would signify the beginning of the Messianic end time."

- Prophet
 - Dt 18 ²¹ And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'— ²² when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.
 - Was Rabbi Judah Ben Samuel one of God's real prophets? Have his words come to pass?
- Jubilee = 50 years
 - Lev 25 ¹⁰ And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you;
- **Turks will rule over Jerusalem for eight jubilees**
 - **8 x 50 = 400 years**
 - **1517 – Turks take control of Jerusalem**
 - **1917 – Turks lose control of Jerusalem (exactly 400 years later)**
 - **In the year Judah Ben Samuel died, 1217, he prophesied that the Ottoman Turks would rule over the holy city of Jerusalem for eight Jubilees. Now, keep in mind, he made this prediction 300 years before the Turks seized control of Jerusalem in 1517. In fact, the Ottoman Empire, as it would become to be known, did not even really exist yet in 1217. Exactly 400 years after the Ottoman Turks took control of Jerusalem in 1517, they were driven out of the city and the Holy Land in 1917 by the Allied forces under the command of Gen. George Allenby – on Hanukkah, by the way. 1917 was a Jubilee year.**
- **Afterwards Jerusalem will become no-man's land for one jubilee**
 - **Israel under the British Mandate 1917-1947 (30 years)**
 - **Israel under the Jordanian Rule 1947-1967 (20 years)**

- The rabbi also prophesied that Jerusalem would be a “no-man’s land.” This is exactly what happened from 1917 to 1967, due to the fact that the Holy Land was placed under British Mandate in 1917 by the League of Nations and literally “belonged” to no nation. Even after Israel’s war of independence in 1948-49, Jerusalem was still divided by a strip of land running right through the heart of the city, with Jordan controlling the eastern part of the city and Israel controlling the western part. That strip of land was considered and even called “no-man’s land” by both the Israelis and the Jordanians.
- In the ninth jubilee it will once again come back into the possession of the Jewish nation
 - After the 6-day War in 1967, the Israelis regained control of Jerusalem
 - It was not until the Six Day War in 1967 when the entire “west bank” of the holy land was conquered by the Israeli army that the whole city of Jerusalem passed back into the possession of Israel. So once again the prophecy made by the rabbi 750 years previously was fulfilled to the letter. 1967 was a Jubilee year.
 - Luke 21 ²⁴ ... And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
- Signify the beginning of the Messianic end time
 - Judah Ben Samuel also prophesied that during the 10th Jubilee Jerusalem would be under the control of the Jews and the Messianic "end times" would begin. If he's right, the 10th Jubilee began in 1967 and will be concluded in 2017.
 - Sept 23, 2017 – The Great Sign of Rev 12
 - Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.



Burdensome Stone / cup of trembling (Zechariah 12:2-9)

Jerusalem has become a "burdensome stone" and "cup of trembling" (Zechariah 12:2-9).

On December 21, 2017, the United Nations united as one to stand against one city on the planet: Jerusalem. Twenty-five centuries earlier, the prophet Zechariah wrote these words from the Lord, "I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for battle" (Zech. 14:2).

The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution condemning US President Donald Trump's decision to name Jerusalem the capital of Israel. A total of 128 countries voted in favor of the measure, nine voted against it and 35 countries abstained.

1. The vote confirms international hostility towards a Jewish Jerusalem.
2. The vote reminds us that the biblical authors were inspired when predicting that an end-time coalition of nations would come against a Jewish Jerusalem.
3. The vote tells us that, just as Scripture indicates, the city of Jerusalem alone is the whole world's business.

The entire world is attempting to divide God's covenant land Israel in half (via the "Two-State Solution"), which is the event that the Bible describes as the catalyst for God's coming judgement on all the nations (Joel 3:2).

- Joel 3:2 I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.

This division of land is supported by all major nations and the United Nations itself - literally all the nations are attempting to sever Israel from Judah, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan Heights. Amazingly, the Bible takes this prophecy a step further and indicates that the "boundary stone" the nations try to move will include Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:3).

- Zechariah 12:3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.

Pope Francis used part of his 2017 Christmas message to the world as a call for a "two-state" solution regarding Israel and the Palestinians.

Trump recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital

2014/15 Blood Moon Tetrads

What is a Blood Moon?

A lunar eclipse occurs when the earth passes between the sun and the moon. This blocks the sun's rays from reflecting off the moon as normal. However, some of the sun's rays curve around the earth causing the moon to appear red during a total eclipse. Because of its vivid color, a total lunar eclipse is often referred to by NASA as a Blood Red Moon. The occurrence of blood moons is quite common, normally happening at least twice per year. Most of us have seen the moon when its appearance has changed to red. When four blood moons happen in close succession, NASA refers to this as a tetrad. Tetrads are rather rare, only taking place fifty-five times since 1 AD.

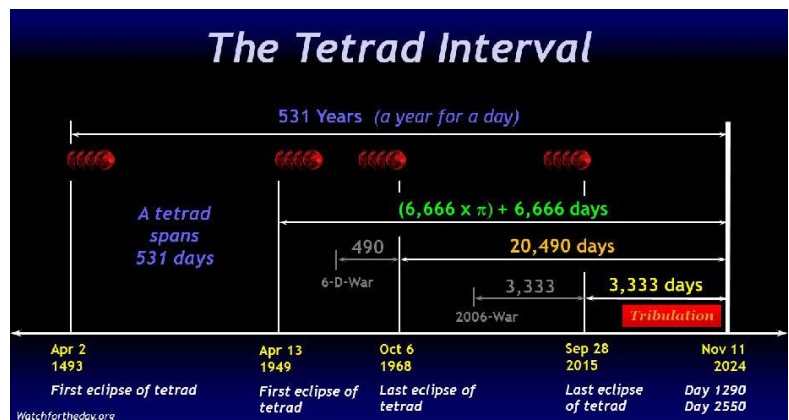
The Teaching of the 4 Blood Moons

The teaching of the four blood moons has recently captivated the attention of the religious world. This teaching states that, when four consecutive blood moons fall on Jewish feast days, a major event affecting the Jewish people will occur in close proximity to that time.

This phenomenon of four consecutive blood moons coinciding with Jewish feast days has only occurred ten times since 1 AD and only three times since 1492 AD. The three times since 1492 are as follows:

- Tetrad of 1493-1494
- Tetrad of 1949-1950
- Tetrad of 1967-1968

Major events affecting the Jewish people have occurred in close proximity to all three of these tetrads.



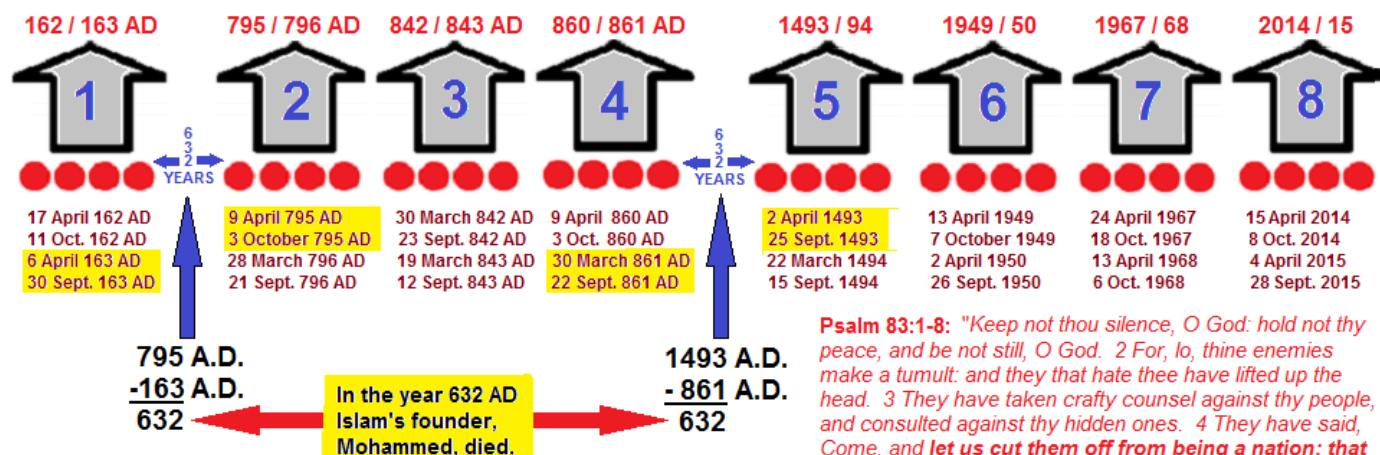
The historical trends for these BLOOD MOONS each begin with tears, tragedy, sadness, darkness, and death for the Jewish people and they all end in victory and joy. Regarding Solar Eclipses, history has revealed judgement on the nations who attempt to harm Israel. (Genesis 12:3)





THE NUMBER 632 FOUND TWICE BETWEEN THE 1ST & 5TH OF EIGHT TETRADS FALLING ON THE FEASTS SINCE CHRIST

Genesis 1:14: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."



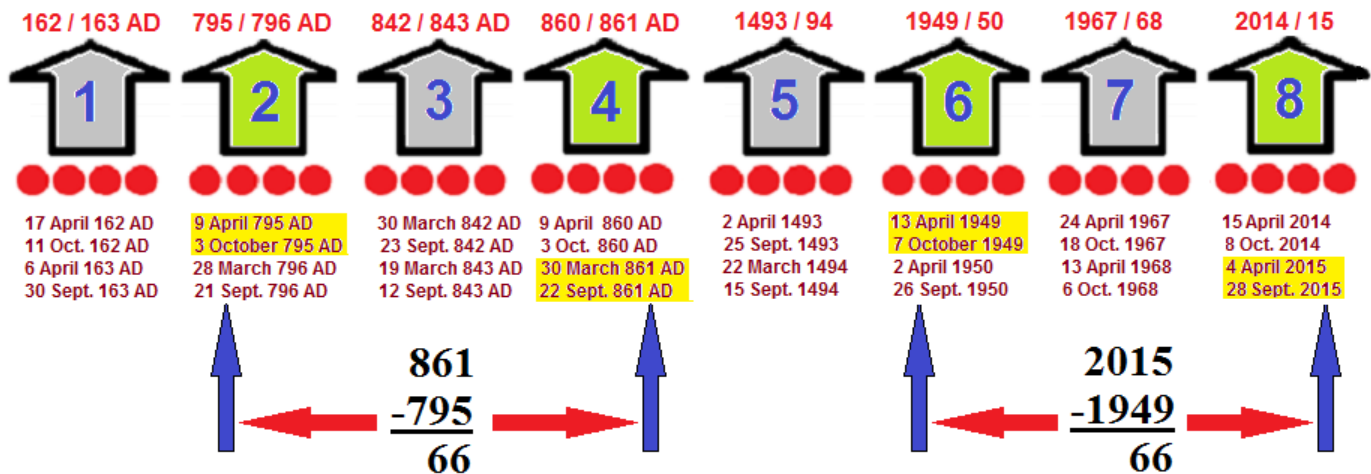
Psalm 83:1-8: "Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. 2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. 3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. 4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that

the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. 5 For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee: 6 The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; 8 Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah."

THE NUMBER 66 IS FOUND TWICE WITHIN THE 8 TETRADS

ONCE BY SUBTRACTING THE 1ST YEAR OF THE 2ND SET
FROM THE LAST YEAR OF THE 4TH SET; AND AGAIN
BY DOING THE SAME THING WITH THE 6TH & 8TH SETS

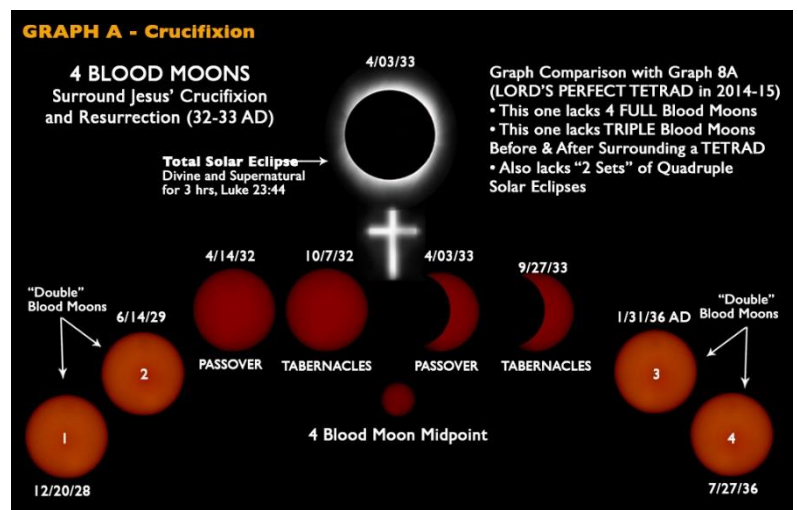
Genesis 1:14: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."



"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: a ll the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." (Genesis 46:26-27)

This may have to do with the custodianship for God's word being transferred back from the church to Israel for the last 7 years of the Dispensation of Law which has not yet been completed (Daniel 9:27). This period is the 7 year Tribulation (Egypt) which is soon to come. There are 66 books in God's word!

Tetrad 32-33 – Crucifixion of Jesus (Incomplete)

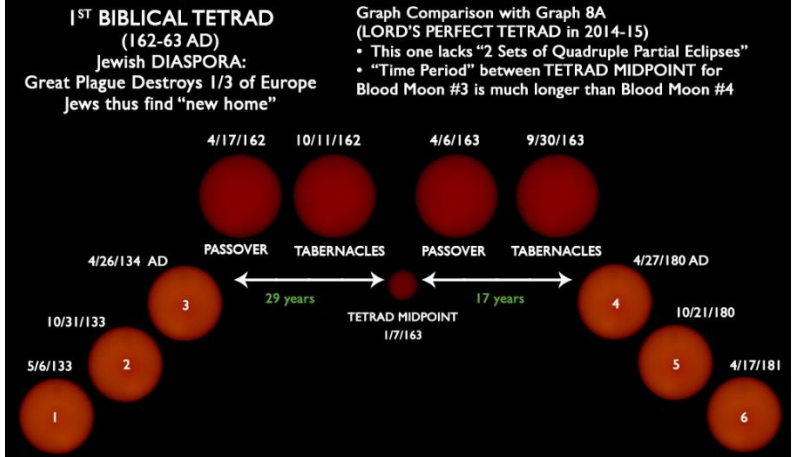


1. Tetrad 162-163 – Martyrdom, Diaspora, Great Plague

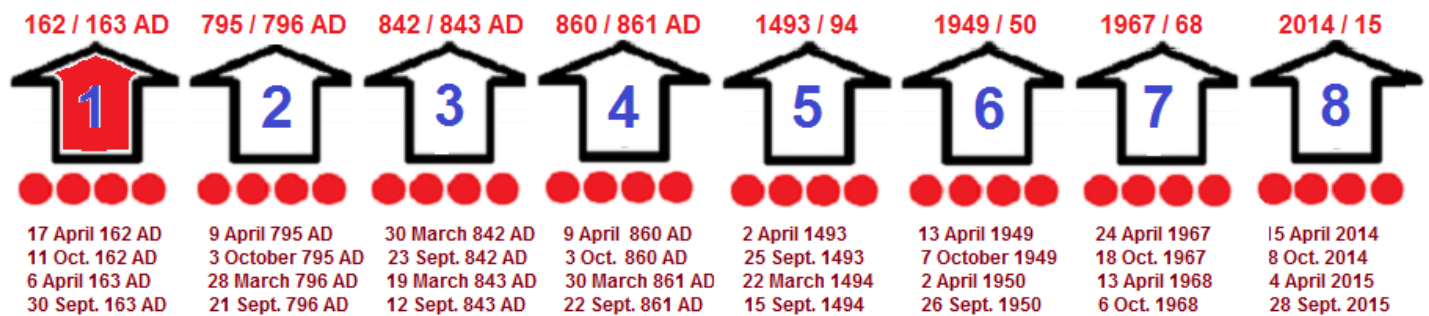
162 AD - 163 AD Jewish Eclipses - Famine - Plague Timeline



GRAPH 1 - Martyrdom, Diaspora, and Great Plague



TETRAD 1 OF 8 SINCE THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT FELL ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD



THE TETRAD OF 162 - 163 AD

This was the first of 56 tetrads after Jesus Christ's day to 2014. Only 8 of these 56 would fall on the first and last of the 7 feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23). This first one occurred during the height of the Roman Empire. It was at a time of great Christian persecution and events beginning in 162 AD resulted in the Antonine Plague which killed 2 Roman emperors and an estimated 5 million others.

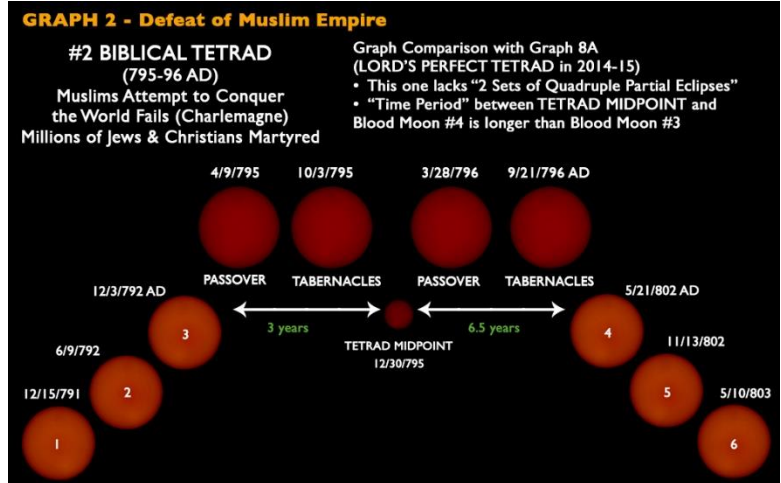
Foxe's Book of Martyrs places the beginning of the 4th of ten great early Christian persecutions in 162 AD under the Roman Emperor Marcus Antoninus (161 - 180 AD). Foxe writes: "The fourth persecution, under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, A.D. 162 ..., a man of nature more stern and severe; and, ... toward the Christians sharp and fierce; by whom was moved the fourth persecution. The cruelties used in this persecution were such that many of the spectators shuddered with horror at the sight, and were astonished at the intrepidity of the sufferers. Some of the martyrs were ... scourged until their sinews and veins lay bare, and after suffering the most excruciating tortures that could be devised, they were destroyed by the most terrible deaths."

In the Spring of 162 AD the Tiber flooded over its banks destroying much of Rome, drowning many animals and leaving the city in famine.

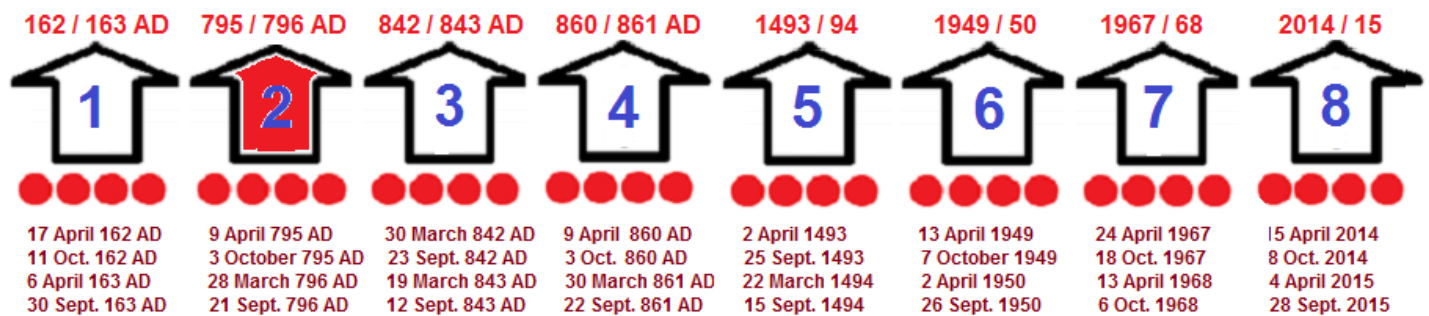
Marcus Antoninus was co-emperor with Lucius Verus from 161 to 169 AD. In 161 AD the Parthians ousted the king of Armenia who was a Roman ally and launched an attack on Syria. That winter the Roman senate gave its assent to send Verus to direct the Parthian war in person while Antoninus remained in Rome. Verus arrived in Antioch, Syria in 162 AD. His generals captured Seleucia and Ctesiphon in 165 AD bringing the campaign to an end. Verus returned to Rome in triumph, but the returning army carried with them a plague which spread through the Roman Empire between 165 and 180 AD. The disease ultimately claim the lives of the two co-emperors, Lucius Verus, who died in 169 AD, and Marcus Aurelius who died from it in 180 AD. The epidemic was named, The Antonine Plague. The disease broke out again nine years later and caused up to 2,000 deaths a day at Rome, one-quarter of those infected. Total deaths have been estimated at five million. The epidemic devastated the Roman Empire from Asia Minor to as far as the Rhine.

2. Tetrad 795-796 – Defeat of the Muslim Empire

795 AD - 796 AD Jewish Holiday Eclipse Timeline



TETRAD 2 OF 8 SINCE THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT FELL ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD



THE TETRAD OF 795 - 796 AD

In 795 AD Charlemagne established a defensive barrier between France and Spain to wall-out Islamic invaders. Charlemagne was the king of the Franks. His kingdom was the largest united territory since the fall of the Roman Empire. It included the territories of modern-day Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and western Germany. The buffer zone was called the Marca Hispanica (Spanish March). The Marca Hispanica buffer consisted of conquered Visigoth states which had been captured by the Muslims. It was a buffer between the Umayyad Moors of Al-Andalus and Charlemagne's Frankish Kingdom. The Marca Hispanica permanently halted the expansion of Islam into Europe.

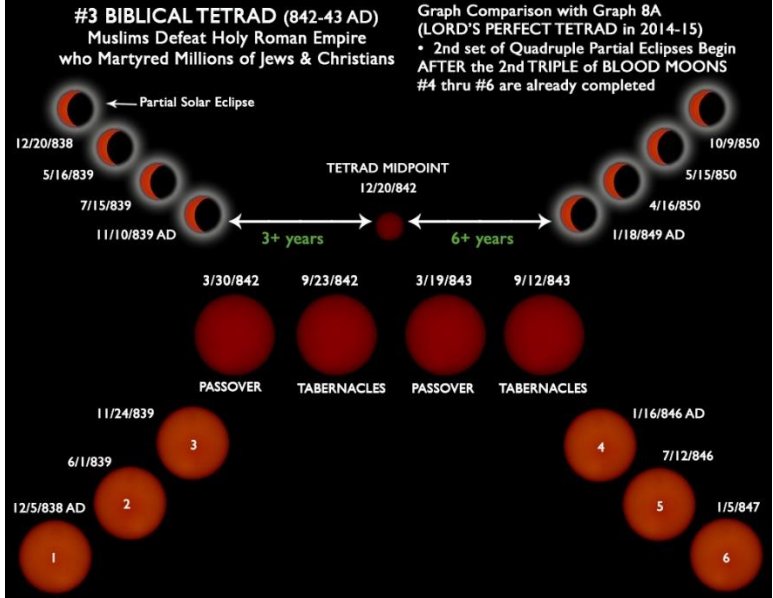
The Jews had relative freedom under Charlemagne. They had complete freedom with regard to their commercial transactions, and a few occupied prominent places at his court. A Hebrew named Isaac was a member of an embassy sent by Charlemagne to Harun al-Rashid. After Charlemagne's death Catholicism took over his empire, robbing the Jews of many rights.

3. Tetrad 842-843 – Fall of the Holy Roman Empire

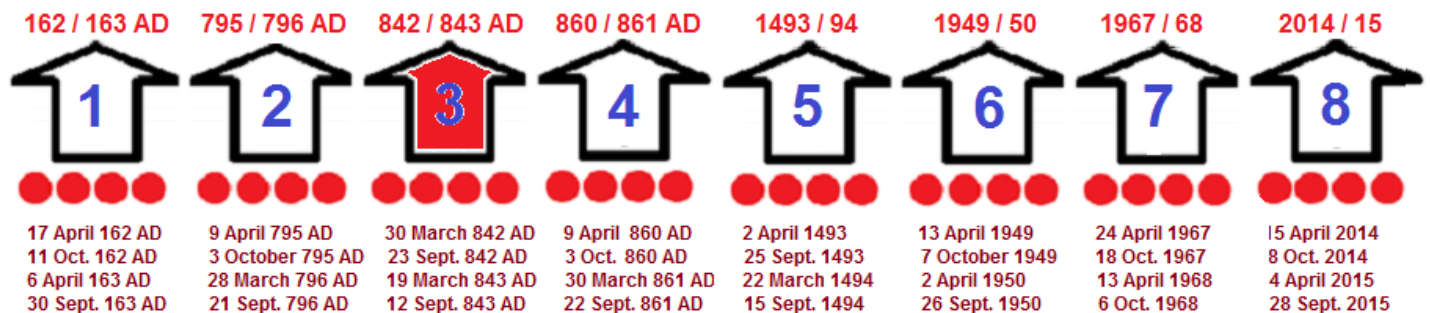
842 - 843 AD Jewish Holiday Eclipse Timeline



GRAPH 3 - Fall of Holy Roman Empire



TETRAD 3 OF 8 SINCE THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT FELL ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD



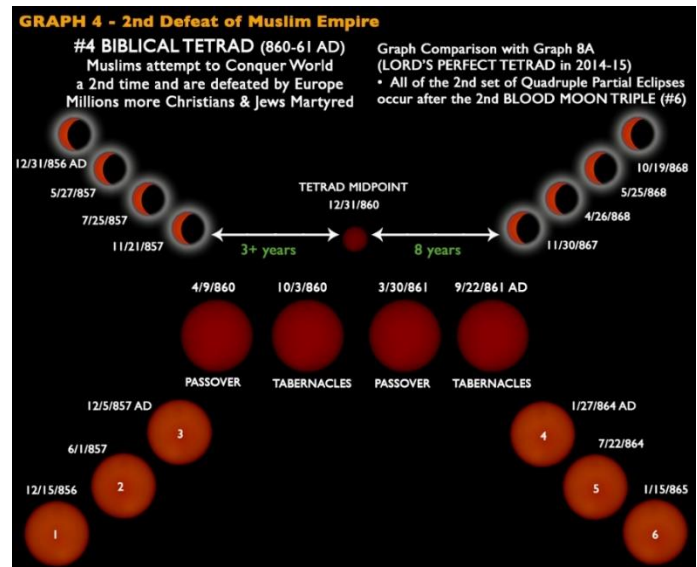
THE TETRAD OF 842 - 843 AD

al-Mu'tasim bi-'llah (795 - 842 AD) was the eighth Abbasid caliph, ruling from 833 to his death in 842. A son of Harun al-Rashid, he succeeded his half-brother al-Ma'mun, under whom he served as a military commander and governor. His reign was marked by the introduction of the Turkish slave-soldiers, and the establishment for them of a new capital at Samarra (78 miles north of Baghdad). This was a turning point in the Caliphate's history, as the Turks would soon come to dominate the Abbasid government. Mu'tasim was notable as a warrior caliph, waging almost continuous war against the Byzantine Empire, where he personally led the celebrated Sack of Amorium in mid-August 838 AD. The Sack of Amorium was one of the major events in the long history of the Arab-Byzantine Wars. Anatolia was the birthplace of the ruling Byzantine dynasty.

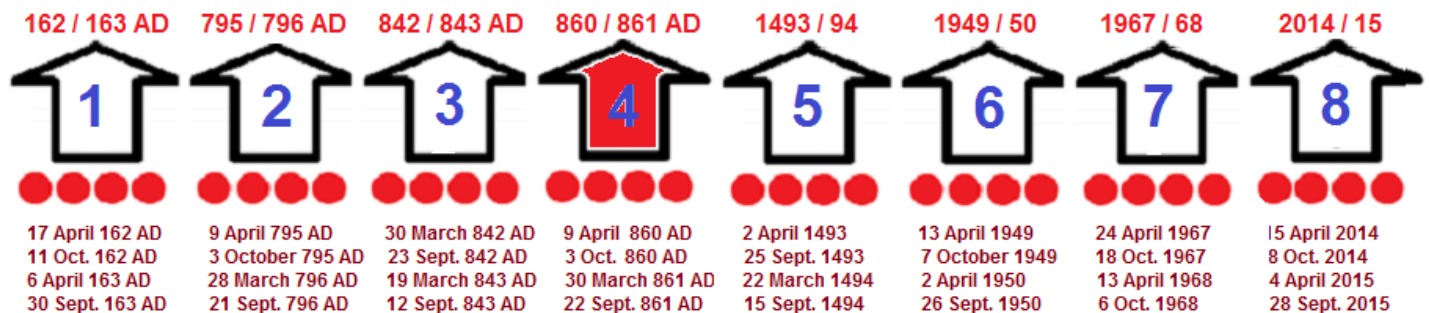
The Byzantine Emperor Theophilos (813 - 842 AD) reigned from 829 until his death in 842. Theophilos personally led the armies beginning in 831 AD during the war with the Islamic Arabs invaders. Theophilos reigned during the time hostilities between the Pravoslavs (Greek Orthodox) and Muslims were renewed. The Muslims invaded Cappadocia and Theophilos was forced to concentrate all his military efforts on the war against them. The consequence was that he could no longer support the campaign in Sicily and in 842 AD Sicily was lost to the Muslims. Meanwhile the war with the Muslims in the east raged on and neither side was able to gain advantage.

Theophilos' was the last Byzantine emperor to reject idolatry, but his wife, Empress Theodora, was an idolater. The Council of Nicea (787 AD) had decided to worship sham pictures and icons, but Theophilos and others rejected idolatry. They were called the iconoclast. When Theophilos died in 842 AD the government was passed on to a council of regents on behalf of his four year old son, Michael III. At the head of the regency council was Michael's mother, the Empress Theodora. The Empress reversed her late husband's iconoclast policies. In no time she began to persecute the iconoclasts. In 842 AD another Council was held in Constantinople by Michael and his mother. This Council decided that worshipping icons, statues and pictures was one of the Christian principles of belief, and the iconoclasts were anathematized.

4. Tetrad 860-861 – 2nd Defeat of the Muslim Empire



TETRAD 4 OF 8 SINCE THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT FELL ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD



THE TETRAD OF 860 - 861 AD

By the year **860 AD** the Greek Byzantine Empire had already been confined by the Muslims to parts of Italy, the southern coasts of the Balkans and Asia Minor. A major wake up call for the Byzantium to the continued threat posed by Islam came **that year**. There were three emirates, namely, 1) the emirate of Melitene under Umar al-Aqta, 2) the emirate of Tarsus under Ali ibn Yahya and 3) the emirate of Qalqala (Theodosiopolis). Umar, in particular, was a major threat to Byzantium when he raided and plundered deep into Asia Minor in **860 AD**. Shortly thereafter another raid followed by the forces of Tarsus under Ali, and also a naval attack from Syria sacked the major Byzantine naval base at Attaleia. It was a year of great disaster for Byzantium. In the summer of 863 AD, Umar struck again, joining forces with the Abbasid general Ja'far ibn Dinar al-Khayyat for a successful raid into Cappadocia. The Arabs crossed the Cilician Gates into Byzantine territory, plundering as they went. Umar's forces represented the bulk of his emirate's strength. On the Byzantine side, Emperor Michael III had assembled his army to counter the Arab raid, and met them at a battle in an area called Marj al-Usqf (Bishop's Meadow) near Malakopeia, north of Nazianzus. The battle was bloody with many casualties on both sides; according to the Persian historian al-Tabari, only a thousand of Umar's army survived. The Byzantines moved quickly to take advantage of their victory: a Byzantine army invaded Arab-held Armenia, and sometime in October or November, defeated and killed the emir Ali ibn Yahya. Thus, within a single campaigning season, the Byzantines had eliminated the three most dangerous opponents on their eastern border. These successes proved decisive, as the battle permanently destroyed the power of Melitene. The Byzantine victory altered the strategic balance in the region and halted the advance of Islam into eastern Europe. The Greek success against the Arabs culminated at the Battle of Lalakaon River.

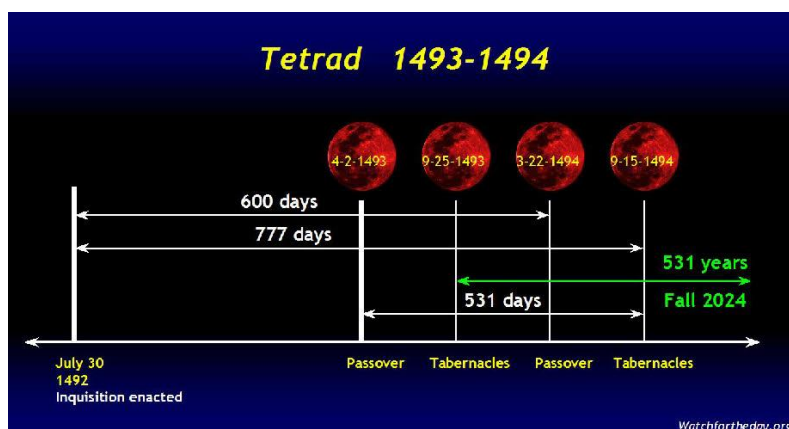
Also in **860 AD** Emperor Michael III, at age 22, invited Pope Nicholas I to send legates to a council at Constantinople to further clarify Catholic doctrine on icons. Controversy had broken out that year in the Greek eastern churches concerning Patriarch Ignatius of Constantinople and idolatry. Empress Theodora had appointed Ignatios, a staunch opponent of iconoclasm (anti-icon worship), to succeed Methodios I as patriarch of Constantinople in 847 AD. Ignatios became embroiled in the conflict to depose clergymen who had cooperated with iconoclast policies under Emperor Theophilos in the past. Ignatios took the anti-iconoclast side and deposed the archbishop of Syracuse, Gregory Asbestos. Asbestos appealed to Pope Leo IV and thus inaugurated a period of friction in relations between the Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics which ended in a schism between the two in 869 AD. This schism between the Latin and Greek Catholics insured the preservation of many Koine Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (The ancient Received & Majority texts of the New Testament).

5. Tetrad 1493-1494 – Spanish Inquisition / Columbus finds America

The Spanish Inquisition Took Place in 1492 Just Before the Tetrad of 1493-1494



In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain gave the Jewish population a mere four months to convert to Catholicism or leave the country. It is estimated that between 165,000 and 400,000 Jews fled the country at this time. As many as 50,000 decided to stay, converting to Roman Catholicism.



The Spanish Inquisition sought to punish Jews who had converted to Christianity but were not really “sincere” in their conversions. Torture was used to elicit confessions from these “false converts”. After confessing, many of them were then burned at the stake.

The Inquisition was cruel beyond belief. First you tell people they have to convert or die. When they do convert, you place them under severe torture to test the sincerity of their conversions. Once they confess under duress, then you burn them at the stake because they are not true Catholics. These are the types of inhumane horrors that were inflicted upon thousands of Jews during the Spanish Inquisition.

Was Christopher Columbus Jewish?

Many historians now believe that Christopher Columbus was secretly Jewish. They believe his voyage to the west in 1492 was his way of escaping the Spanish Inquisition of that year and therefore resulted in his discovery of America.

















In Simon Weisenthal’s book, “Sails of Hope”, he argues that Columbus’ voyage was motivated by a desire to find a safe haven for the Jews in light of their expulsion from Spain.

The studies of Carol Delaney of Stanford University led her to believe that Columbus was a deeply religious man whose purpose was to sail to Asia to obtain gold in order to finance a crusade to take back Jerusalem and rebuild the Jews’ holy temple.

Columbus’ voyage was not, as is commonly believed, funded by the deep pockets of Queen Isabella, but rather by two Jews who converted to Catholicism to avoid death. Louis de Santangel and Gabriel Sanchez advanced an interest free loan of 17,000 ducats from their own pockets to help pay for the voyage. Another prominent Jew, Don Isaac Abrabanel, who was a rabbi and Jewish statesman, also donated towards the voyages of Christopher Columbus.

Is it any surprise that the United States has the largest Jewish population on earth, standing at 6.6 million? Israel presently has 6.1 million Jews living within her borders.

TETRAD 5 OF 8 SINCE THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT FELL ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

162 / 163 AD	795 / 796 AD	842 / 843 AD	860 / 861 AD	1493 / 94	1949 / 50	1967 / 68	2014 / 15
							
							
17 April 162 AD 11 Oct. 162 AD 6 April 163 AD 30 Sept. 163 AD	9 April 795 AD 3 October 795 AD 28 March 796 AD 21 Sept. 796 AD	30 March 842 AD 23 Sept. 842 AD 19 March 843 AD 12 Sept. 843 AD	9 April 860 AD 3 Oct. 860 AD 30 March 861 AD 22 Sept. 861 AD	2 April 1493 25 Sept. 1493 22 March 1494 15 Sept. 1494	13 April 1949 7 October 1949 2 April 1950 26 Sept. 1950	24 April 1967 18 Oct. 1967 13 April 1968 6 Oct. 1968	15 April 2014 8 Oct. 2014 4 April 2015 28 Sept. 2015

THE TETRAD OF 1493 - 1494

During the Catholic Inquisitions on March 31, 1492 King Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain sign the Alhambra decree, expelling all Jews from Spain unless they convert to Roman Catholicism. On July 31 (9th of Av) about 200,000 Jews were expelled from Spain. Many of them were robbed and murdered. Many others settled in the cities of Thessalonica (Acts 17:1, 13) and Smyrna (Revelation 1:11, 2:8). On the last day of 1492 about 100,000 Jews were expelled from Sicily by Ferdinand II the Catholic.

On August 3, 1492 Christopher Columbus began his first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, intending to reach Asia. He returned to Spain from his first voyage of discovery on **March 15, 1493** (2 days after Purim). He departed on his second voyage on **September 24, 1493** (2 days after Trumpets) and returned to Spain on **August 20, 1494**.

On May 4 and **September 26, 1493** Pope Alexander VI decreed in papal bulls that all lands discovered west of the Azores Islands belonged to Roman Catholic monarchs.

William Tyndale was born in **1494**. In 2002, Tyndale was placed at number 26 ($2 + 6 = 8$) in the BBC's poll of the 100 Greatest Britons. In 1536 Tyndale was convicted of heresy for his Bible translation work. He was executed by strangulation and then burned at the stake. Tyndale's last words were, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes." This prayer was fulfilled by two kings: Just two years later by Henry VIII's authorization of **The Great Bible** for the Church of England, and 75 years later by godly King James. The King James Bible is about 80% Tyndale's work. Tyndale's Bible was the first printed Bible in English. The Tyndale Bible continues to play a key role in getting God's word to the English-speaking world. The Tyndale Bible was the first of seven translations that culminated in the "pure words" of **The King James Bible**.

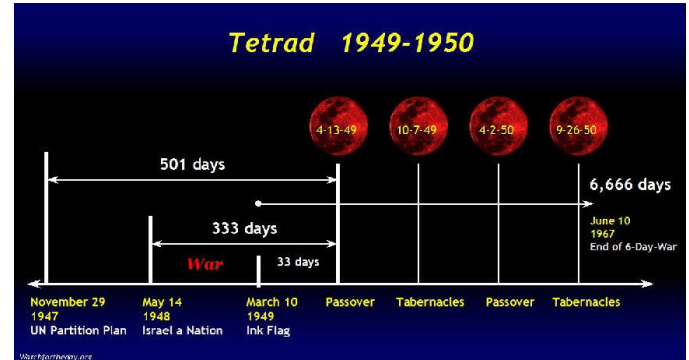
Psalm 12:6-7: "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

6. Tetrad 1949-1950 – Israel Reborn May 14, 1948

The Nation of Israel Reborn on May 14, 1948 Just Before the Tetrad of 1949-1950

After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, Jews were driven into exile. For the next 1,878 years, the Jewish people were sifted through the nations of the earth. Yet, they retained their identity.

After Hitler's horrible holocaust during World War II, the Jews were finally granted a homeland by the nations of the world. On May 14, 1948, the modern state of Israel was born.

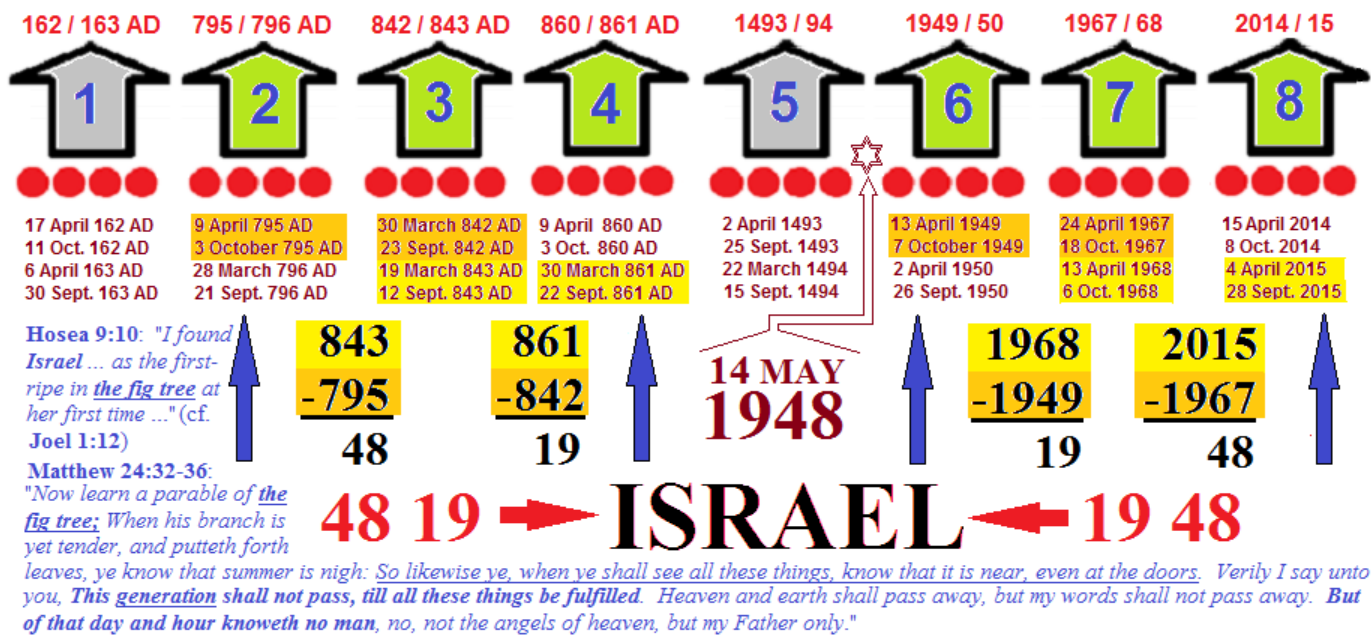


ISRAEL REESTABLISHED AS A NATION

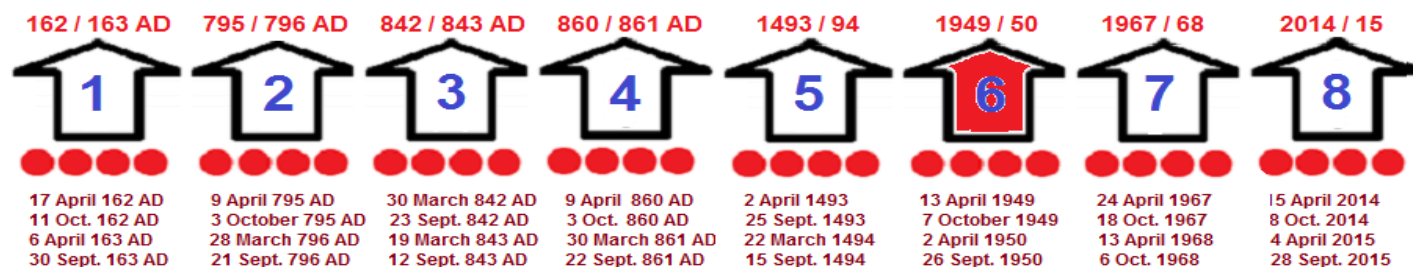
After 1878 years of exile Israel declared independance on May 14, 1948

The United States was the first to recognized Israel on that day,
and the next day the United Nations followed suit.

Genesis 1:14: "And God said, *Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.*"



TETRAD 6 OF 8 SINCE THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT FELL ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD



THE TETRAD OF 1949 - 1950

The 1949 -1950 Tetrad was preceded by two additional lunar eclipses in 1948 that fell on **Passover** (April 23, 1948) and **Tabernacles** (October 18, 1948). Twenty-one days ($7 + 7 + 7 = 21$) before Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948 there was a partial eclipse on Passover and a total penumbral eclipse (see note at bottom) on Tabernacles. The following is an AP news article that appeared in 1948 on the Feast of Tabernacles concerning the War of Independence:

"ISRAEL ACCEPTS U.N. OFFER ON NEW PEACE TALKS- Tel Aviv, Israel, Oct. 18 - (AP) - Israel accepted tonight a United Nations offer to arrange peace talks with Egypt on the fighting in the Negev. However, she rejected a cease fire proposal. The foreign office said no cease fire proposal would be accepted until Israel is assured the Egyptians will behave. In actions last night, Jewish troops stormed and captured heights dominating the road through the Negev, Palestine's southern desert. A dispatch from Carter L. Davidson, Associated Press correspondent at the front, said the Jews had succeeded blasting open their supply route to the desert. (The United Nations security council has been called into special session tomorrow morning in Paris to consider the new outburst of fighting in the Holy Land.) An Israeli foreign office spokesman said the United Nations had proposed a four-day truce in fighting "to settle peacefully the basic differences between the Egyptians and Israel in the Negev" and suggested peace talks in Jerusalem."

On May 14, 1948 (5 Iyar, 5708), the Israeli Declaration of Independence was made. It was officially announced that the new Jewish state named **the State of Israel** had been formally established in parts of what was known as the British Mandate of Palestine and on land where, in antiquity, the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah had once been. As leader of the Yishuv, David Ben-Gurion proceeded to read out the declaration, taking 16 minutes, ending with the words Let us accept the Foundation Scroll of the Jewish State by rising. Ben-Gurion was the first person to sign The Declaration of Independence. After Moshe Shertok, the last of the signatories, had put his name to paper, the audience again stood and sung Hatikvah, accompanied by the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra. Ben-Gurion concluded the event with the words, "The State of Israel is established." The United States was the first to recognize the new State of Israel on the same day.

On May 15, 1948 the 1917 British Mandate of Palestine had officially terminated. The same day forces from Egypt, Transjordan, Syria and Iraq invade Israel and clash with Israeli forces.

On **January 25, 1949** in the first Israeli election, David Ben-Gurion was elected Prime Minister.

On **May 11, 1949** Israel was admitted to the United Nations as its 59th member.

The 1949 Armistice Agreements officially ended the hostilities that began on May 15, 1948 when the Arab nations surrounding Israel attacked her. They consisted of agreements signed between Israel and neighbouring Egypt (on **February 23, 1949**), Lebanon (on **March 23, 1949**), Jordan (on **April 3, 1949**) and Syria (on **July 20, 1949**). By the signing of the last agreement with Syria ending the 19 month war, Israel had retained her independence and increased her land area by almost 50% as compared to the 1947 UN Partition Plan. **Israel is now a full fledged battle tested independent sovereign nation.**

A future Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, was born on **October 21, 1949**.

On **January 23, 1950** the Israeli Knesset passed a resolution stating **Jerusalem is the capital of Israel**.

On **July 5, 1950** the Knesset passed **the Law of Return**, which gives Jews, those of Jewish ancestry, and their spouses the right to migrate to and settle in Israel and obtain citizenship.

Dead Sea Scrolls: On April 11, 1948, Millar Burrows, head of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), announced the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in a general press release. Seven scrolls had been discovered by 3 Bedouin shepherds between November 1946 and February 1947, but the location of the cave where they were found was lost. By the end of 1948 scholars had yet to locate the cave where the fragments had been found. With the on going War of Independence being waged a large-scale search could not be undertaken safely. On **January 28, 1949** Cave 1 was rediscovered by Belgian United Nations observer Captain Phillipe Lippens and Arab Legion Captain Akkash el-Zebn. To the original 7 scrolls were added 965 manuscripts (MSS). These include the earliest known surviving MSS of the Biblical Hebrew canon ranging between 408 BC and 318 AD. There were 204 Biblical texts found including, Psalms, 39; Deuteronomy, 33; Genesis, 24; Isaiah, 22; Exodus, 18; Leviticus, 17; Numbers, 11; Minor Prophets, 10; Daniel, 8; Jeremiah, 6; Ezekiel, 6; Job, 6; and 1 & 2 Samuel, 4. Non-canonical books found included 1 Enoch, Jubilees and Sirach. The Biblical MSS from the Qumran Cave include at least fragments from every book of the Old Testament, except perhaps Esther. Some MSS of Exodus and Samuel found in Cave 4 were corrupted and other MSS may also be corrupt. The Qumran MSS support the Hebrew **Masoretic Text** use in translating the **King James Bible**.

NOTE: Types of Lunar Eclipses:

Total - Moon traverses Earth's penumbral (lighter) and umbral (darkest) shadows (Moon passes completely into Earth's umbra).

Partial - Moon traverses Earth's penumbral and umbral shadows (Moon does not pass completely into Earth's umbra).

Penumbral - Moon traverses Earth's penumbral shadow (Moon misses Earth's umbral shadow).

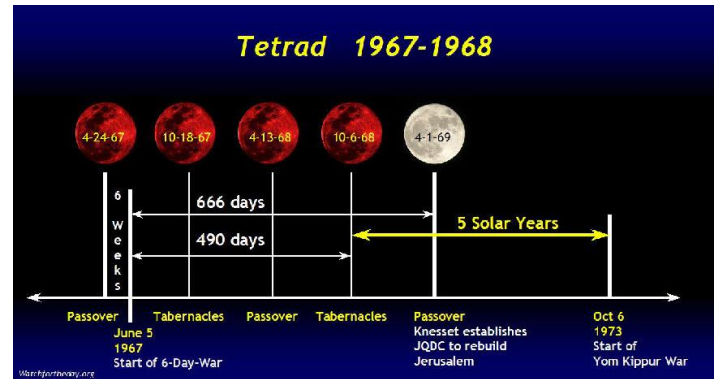
7. Tetrad 1967-1968 – Jerusalem Recaptured June 7, 1967

The City of Jerusalem was Reunited During Tetrad of 1967-1968









1967 - 1968 Jewish Holiday Eclipse Schedule

				
24 Apr 1967	7 June 1967	18 Oct 1967	13 Apr 1968	06 Oct 1968
Jewish Passover	Jerusalem Captured	Feast of Tabernacle	Jewish Passover	Feast of Tabernacle

God said many times in the Old Testament that He would place His name in Jerusalem. During their 2,000 years of exile, the Jewish people turned their faces toward Jerusalem three times each day praying for the restoration of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of their temple. On June 7, 1967 the Jordanians launched an attack against Israel and west Jerusalem. Israel counter-attacked driving Jordan out of east Jerusalem, out of Judea-Samaria, and back into its own land across the Jordan River. Jerusalem was undivided and under Jewish control for the first time since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD.



TETRAD 7 OF 8 SINCE THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT FELL ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

162 / 163 AD	795 / 796 AD	842 / 843 AD	860 / 861 AD	1493 / 94	1949 / 50	1967 / 68	2014 / 15
							
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17 April 162 AD 11 Oct. 162 AD 6 April 163 AD 30 Sept. 163 AD	9 April 795 AD 3 October 795 AD 28 March 796 AD 21 Sept. 796 AD	30 March 842 AD 23 Sept. 842 AD 19 March 843 AD 12 Sept. 843 AD	9 April 860 AD 3 Oct. 860 AD 30 March 861 AD 22 Sept. 861 AD	2 April 1493 25 Sept. 1493 22 March 1494 15 Sept. 1494	13 April 1949 7 October 1949 2 April 1950 26 Sept. 1950	24 April 1967 18 Oct. 1967 13 April 1968 6 Oct. 1968	15 April 2014 8 Oct. 2014 4 April 2015 28 Sept. 2015

THE TETRAD OF 1967 - 1968

PRELUDE TO THE SIX DAY WAR AND ISRAEL REGAINING JERUSALEN AFTER 1897 YEARS

On April 7, 1967 a minor Israeli-Syrian border incident escalated into a full-scale aerial battle over the Golan Heights between the Israeli and Syrian air forces. Israel downed 6 Syrian MiG-21s in three dogfights with no plane losses. Syria claimed it downed 5 Israel Mirages and killed at least 70 Israelis.

On May 15, 1967 In the midst of Israel's Independence Day celebrations, Egyptian ground forces cross the Suez Canal and enter the Sinai peninsula. This move led Israel to an emergency state, known as the "waiting period".

On May 22, 1967 Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser demands that the UN forces evacuate the Sinai peninsula and the Gaza Strip who were stationed there to prevent renewed armed conflict between Israel and Egypt.

On May 23, 1967 President Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, blockading Israel's southern port of Eilat, and Israel's entire Red Sea coastline.

On June 3, 1967 Egypt's Commander-in-Chief issues an order for the day to his troops in Sinai which referenced the importance of "Holy War" and the reconquest of "the plundered soil of Palestine."

THE SIX-DAY WAR

The 1967 Six-Day War was the third ArabIsraeli war. It was fought between June 5 and 10, 1967, by Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

On June 5, 1967 Israel launches what is widely described as a preemptive strike on Egyptian airfields and armored columns in Gaza and Sinai.

On June 6, 1967 the Gaza Strip was occupied by Israel, and the Battle of Ammunition Hill in the northern part of Jordanian-occupied East Jerusalem took place.

On June 7, 1967 The Old City of Jerusalem was captured by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).

On June 8, 1967 the IDF took Sharm el-Sheikh on the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula and Al Qantarah El Sharqiyya on the eastern side of the Suez Canal 160 kilometers northeast of Cairo.

On June 9, 1967 the fighting in the Golan Heights began.

On June 10, 1967 the Six Day War ended and a cease fire was signed the following day. **The territories held now by Israel expanded significantly** ("The Purple Line") and included: the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula and Gaza, which had been held by Jordan, Syria and Egypt, respectively. The results of the war still affect the geopolitics of the region.

ISRAEL REGAINS HER CAPITAL, JERUSALEM

On June 10, 1967 the Israeli government demolished the Moroccan Quarter in the southeast corner of the Old City of Jerusalem creating a plaza in front of the **Western Wall** in order to make public access to the **Western Wall** easier.

On June 17, 1967 the Israeli government transfers day-to-day control of the **Temple Mount** site to the Islamic Waqf.

On June 28, 1967 Israel declared the annexation of East Jerusalem. Arab residents of East Jerusalem are given a permanent resident status in Israel.

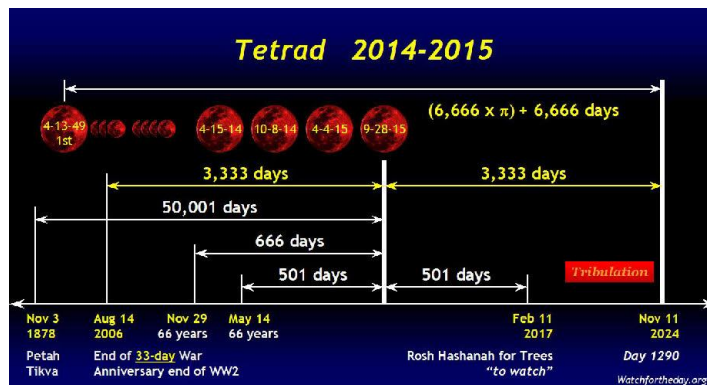
On June 29, 1967 Jerusalem was reunified as Israel removed all barriers separating the Old City from the Israeli sector.

ISLAMIC HATRED CONTINUES

On September 1, 1967 the Khartoum Resolution, issued at the conclusion of an Arab League summit in Khartoum, Sudan, adopts the "Three No's" "no peace with Israel; no recognition of Israel; no negotiations with Israel."

8. Tetrad 2014-2015 – ??

Joel 2:30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.



And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

—Joel 2:30-31, NKJV

The number eight is of great importance as it symbolizes **new life, resurrection, a new covenant, and new beginnings.**

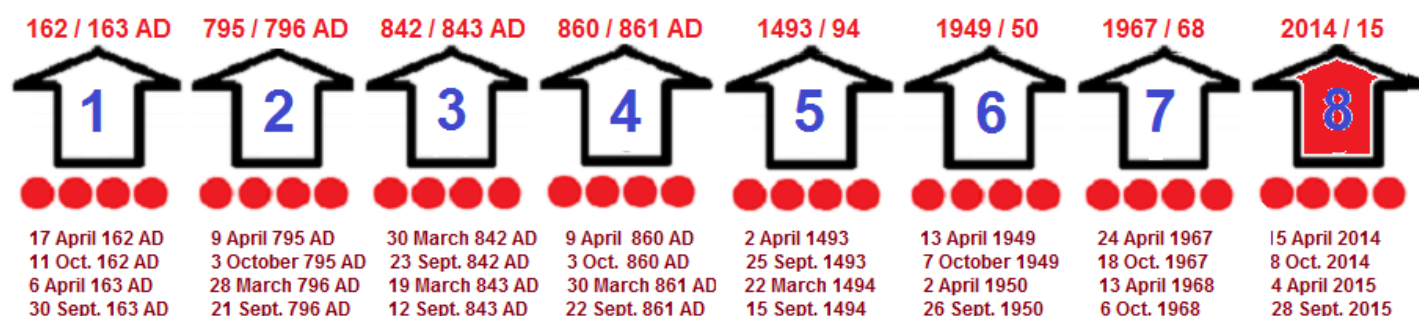
- God spoke 8 words to bring forth creation (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26).
- Jesus rose on the 8th day—the first day of the week (Sun. Apr. 5, 33 AD).
- Eight people were resurrected besides Jesus's own resurrection.
- If you take the numerical value of Jesus's name, it comes to 888.

There have been 7 tetrads since Christ's 1st coming that fell on "*the feasts of the LORD*" (Leviticus 23:2, 4, 37, 44). The 8th occurs in 2014/15, and then there are no more for 549 years. This Tetrad will also be accompanied by 2 solar eclipses.

Here is the breakdown for the upcoming Tetrad of 2014/15 and the solar eclipses:

- April 15, 2014 -- Feast 1: Passover -- Total Lunar Eclipse (Nisan 14, 5774)
- October 8, 2014 -- Feast 7: Tabernacles -- Total Lunar Eclipse (Tishrei 14, 5775)
- March 20, 2015 -- New Year for Feast Days -- Total Solar Eclipse (Nisan 1, 5775)
- April 4, 2015 -- Feast 1: Passover -- Total Lunar Eclipse (Nisan 14, 5775)
- September 13, 2015 -- Feast 5: Trumpets (Civil New Year) -- Partial Solar Eclipse (5775 ends & 5776 begins on Tishri 1)
- September 28, 2015 -- Feast 7: Tabernacles -- Total Lunar Eclipse (Tishrei 14, 5776)

TETRAD 8 OF 8 SINCE THE DAY OF CHRIST THAT FELL ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD



THE TETRAD OF 2014 – 2015

The Tetrad of 1949 – 1950 saw Israel fully established after her War of Independence after 1,879 years, and the Tetrad of 1967 – 1968 saw Israel regain her Capitol, Jerusalem, after 1,897 years.

Another important item that is required for the future fulfilment of Bible Prophecy is a place on the Temple Mount for the third Temple. That is what the eight-day festival of Hanukkah is about. Remember that Comet ISON came out of nowhere and reached it's closes point to the sun on the first day of Hanukkah on November 28, 2013 and slowly vanished over the next few days afterwards. Work on the Temple could begin before the Rapture.

We also know that the Rapture of all Church Age believers is very near too because the Bible says the following:

Matthew 24:32-36: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree [*"I found Israel like ... the firstripe in the fig tree ..."* – Hosea 9:10]; *When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*" (cf. Joel 1:7)

Psalm 90:4, 10: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. ... The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."



Genesis 6:3: "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

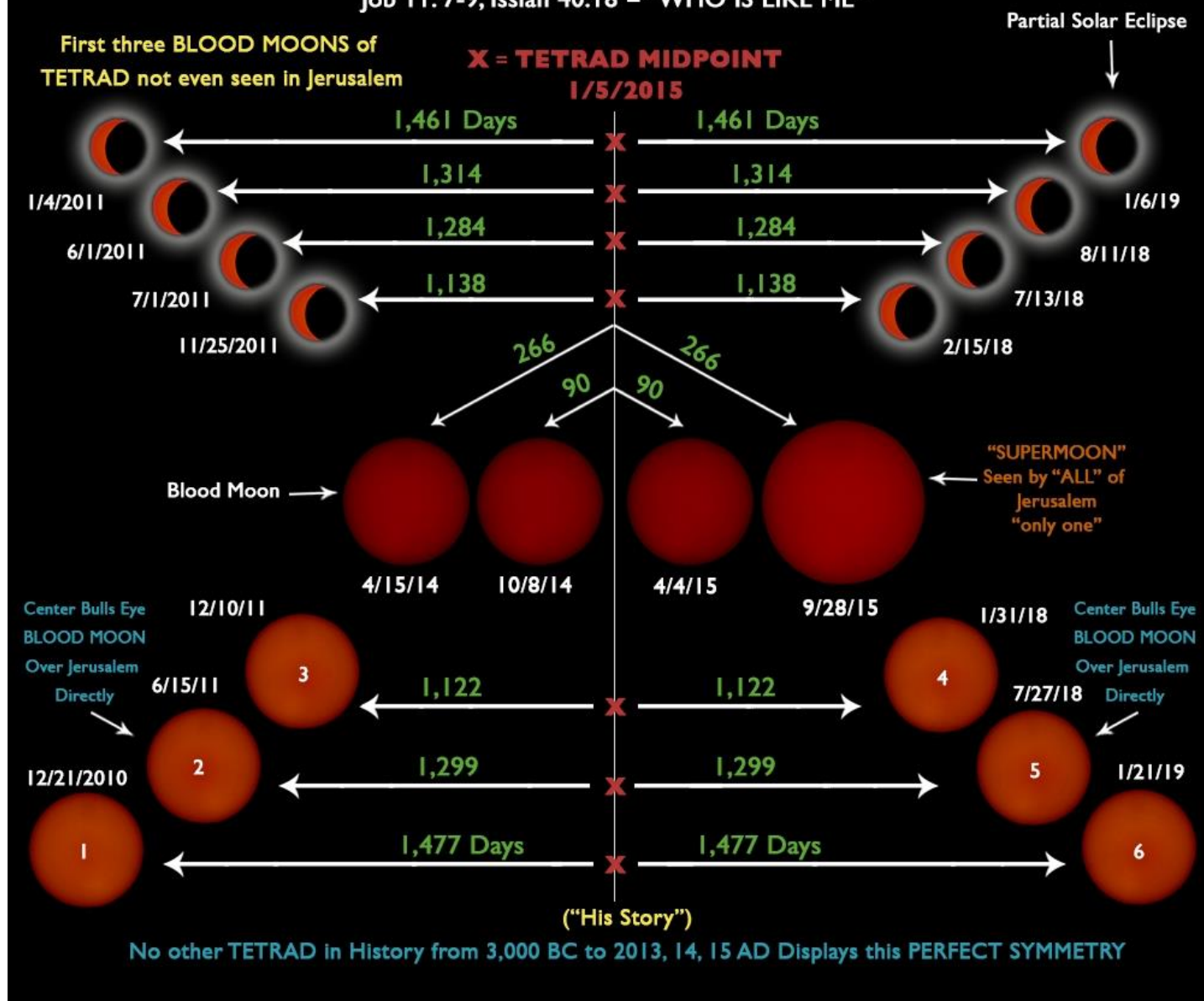
2 Peter 3:8-9: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	7000
THE FIRST DAYS			MIDDLE DAY	1st day	2nd day	3rd day
<i>"After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." (Hosea 6:2)</i>				CHURCH AGE		KINGDOM
				THE LAST DAYS		

GRAPH 8A

LORD'S “PERFECT” SIGN

Job 11:7-9, Issiah 40:18 = “WHO IS LIKE ME”



Could this signify the end of the church age dispensation?

January 21, 2019 = 15th of Shevat = Tu Bishvat

The 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar—celebrated this year on Monday, January 21, 2019—is the day that marks the beginning of a “new year” for trees. Commonly known as Tu Bishvat, this day marks the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.

The Man Among the Myrtle Trees

Zec 1:7 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo.

8 During the night I had a vision, and there before me was a man mounted on a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown and white horses.

9 I asked, "What are these, my lord?"

The angel who was talking with me answered, "I will show you what they are."

10 Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, "They are the ones the Lord has sent to go throughout the earth."

11 And they reported to the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, "We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace."

12 Then the angel of the Lord said, "Lord Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?" 13 So the Lord spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me.

14 Then the angel who was speaking to me said, "Proclaim this word: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, 15 and I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they went too far with the punishment.'

16 "Therefore this is what the Lord says: 'I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,' declares the Lord Almighty.

17 "Proclaim further: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.'"

From 444ProphecyNews.com – A vision

<https://444prophecynews.com/the-lords-perfect-sign-ends-january-21-2019-holy-spirit-wind/>

The sign that I have given started on Dec. 21st 2010, on your calendar and it will be completed Jan. 21st 2019 on your calendar, at 12:12 am EST. The time of its ending significant, this number means total completeness of the warning time that I have given before the greater judgments begin: earthquakes, the fiery kick off event, economic collapse, famine, disease, and then the great war begins. This warning alone has lasted 8 years and one month; some would like more time but what would be done with more time if I gave it? I have been warning the world through My servants the prophets for over 100 years that you are in the last days. There are very few hearing My warnings right now. My chosen few have heard plenty of My warnings and they grow weary of them. Let it not be said that I am not merciful and longsuffering. The time of the end of the age has truly come!

My little flock, I also want to tell you about the "Super-Blood-Wolf Moon Eclipse" which will happen soon. First, "super" means that this will be even more significant than some similar signs in the past. "Blood" signifies that there will be blood spilled and judgment across the land where it is visible. "Wolf" is symbolic of the son of perdition, Barack Obama who will return as America's leader after the fiery kick-off event. The people will look to him as their savior after this but he will reveal who he really is after a short time.

THEN HE WILL BEGIN THE PERSECUTION AND SLAUGHTER OF MY SHEEP WHO ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE DECEIVED BY HIM AND EVEN THOSE WHO DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT HE IS WHO I HAVE SAID HE IS. THOSE WHO HAVE SIN IN THEIR LIVES WILL BE PURIFIED BY THE FIRE PERSECUTION. MY SHEEP WILL CRY OUT TO ME IN TRUE REPENTANCE, WITH ALL OF THEIR HEARTS. THE GOOD SHEPHERD WILL SAVE THEM FROM ETERNAL DEATH! UNDERSTAND, THE REASON THAT THINGS MUST HAPPEN IN THIS WAY IS BECAUSE MOST OF MY SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY. THE REMNANT/BRIDE WHO HAVE BEEN PURIFIED; REMAINED HOLY AND SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD AND ALL OF ITS SIN AND CLEANSED BY MY BLOOD WILL BE PROTECTED AND HIDDEN IF I HAVE WORK FOR THEM TO DO OR BE TAKEN HOME. MY PRECIOUS ONES WHO ARE CLOSE TO MY HEART, YOU WILL BE STRENGTHENED, HEALED, DELIVERED, TRANSFORMED, COMPLETELY

INFUSED WITH MY SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE AND FILLED TO OVERFLOWING WITH MY SUPERNATURAL, UNCONDITIONAL LOVE THAT WILL POUR OUT OF YOU AND TOUCH EVEN YOUR ENEMIES. YOU WILL WALK IN POWER, HUMILITY, URGENCY, IN MY PERFECT WILL AND LOVE AS YOU SEEK AND SAVE THE LOST. AFTER THIS WORK IS DONE WE CELEBRATE OUR MARRIAGE FEAST!

MY CHILDREN, BE READY! AS I HAVE SAID BEFORE THERE IS NO MORE TIME! ALL OF THE END TIME SIGNS, INCLUDING THE SIGN OF THE WOMAN IN THE HEAVENS, HAVE SIGNIFICANCE. ALL THE SIGNS I HAVE TOLD YOU TO LOOK FOR ARE OCCURRING AND THEY HAVE CONVERGED INTO THE TIME THAT YOU ARE IN. SOON THERE WILL BE NO MORE TIME BUT WITH THE TIME YOU HAVE LEFT SEEK ME LIKE NEVER BEFORE! DRAW CLOSE TO ME AND I WILL DRAW CLOSE TO YOU AND COVER YOU WITH MY FEATHERS. THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL BE YOUR DWELLING PLACE AND THE SHADOW OF MY WINGS SHALL BE YOUR REFUGE UNTIL YOU ARISE AND SHINE.

THE END COMES NOT BY THE WILL OF MAN BUT BY THE WILL OF MY FATHER ONLY! NONE WILL STOP IT!

JESUS CHRIST

YAHUSHUA HA MASHIACH

Psalm 83 War

❖ Ps 83: 1 O God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still. 2 See how your enemies are astir, how your foes rear heads. 3 With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish.

4 "Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more." 5 With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you- 6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, 7 Gebal, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. 8 Even Assyria has joined them to lend strength to the descendants of Lot. Selah

9 Do to them as you did to Midian, as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, 10 who perished at Endor and became like refuse on the ground. 11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, 12 who said, "Let us take possession of the pasturelands of God." 13 Make them like tumbleweed, O my God, like chaff before the wind. 14 As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze, 15 so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. 16 Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O LORD. 17 May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace. 18 Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.

May have already been fulfilled

- When Israel first became a nation, there were several wars with the immediate neighboring countries
- Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria
 - 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 – Wars that Israel fought with its immediate neighbors
 - Today these nations are no longer threatening Israel – most have alliances with them
 - Syria – The threat is not from the Syrians, it is from the Iranians, Russians and Turks

Was Psalm 83 fulfilled in 1948?

Some people believe that the Psalm 83 prophetic war was fulfilled during the 1948 Arab-Israeli “War of Independence.” This view was recently shared on the September 19, 2015, Understanding the Times radio show hosted by Jan Markell. Jan’s guests on the program were Pastor Jack Hibbs and Amir Tsarfati. You can listen to this show by clicking [HERE](#). *(The discussion occurs around the 32 minute mark within the show).*

Upon hearing the show one of its listeners contacted me and asked for my thoughts on this subject. Below are my comments to this listener.

The Problems with Psalm 83:1-8 having been fulfilled in 1948

Some have posited the possibility that Ps. 83:1-8 was fulfilled during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove that Psalm 83:9-18 was accomplished at that time. This view that Psalm 83:1-8 was fulfilled in 1948 is currently held, I believe somewhat loosely, by Bible prophecy expert Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum of Ariel Ministries. He informed me in a friendly face to face conversation in Dallas, Texas, on December, 2014 that this was what he believed. He did not always believe this and I explain why at the end of this article.

As much as I greatly respect my friend Dr. Fruchtenbaum, I disagree with his current interpretation because the main instigator, which is listed in the first primary position in Psalm 83:6, is the “tents of Edom” (Palestinian Refugees). They didn’t technically even become refugees until the aftermath of the 1948 war. **The logical question is; since the tents of Edom didn’t exist until after the war of 1948, how could this war be the fulfillment of the prophecy?** I explain the connection between the ancient tents of Edom and today’s Palestinian refugees in my Psalm 83, The Missing Prophecy Revealed book.

Therefore, only Psalm 83:1-5 could have potentially found fulfillment in 1948, but probably not Psalm 83:6-8, which identifies the tents of Edom along with their Arab cohorts. Since neither Psalm 83:6-8 or Psalm 83:9-18 appears to have found fulfillment in the war of 1948, then the possibility that the prophecy was fulfilled at that time diminishes dramatically.

Also, an important side note is that more countries were involved in 1948 than just the Psalm 83 countries. Volunteers were sent to fight from Yemen, Morocco, Sudan and Pakistan. The fact that more nations than the Psalm 83 countries were involved in the war of 1948 also reduces the possibility that the 1948 war was the fulfillment

of the prophecy. The details of the prophecy have to align perfectly and these additional countries are not included in Psalm 83.

Psalm 83 and the Plight of the Palestinian Refugees

It is important to note that the Palestinian refugees (tents of Edom) are listed first among the ten Arab populations, which essentially highlights their refugee plight. The Palestinian plight remains a thorny issue in the Middle East. The Arab populations of Psalm 83, which are identified in the map, refuse to recognize Israel's right to exist as the Jewish state for the primary reason that they still banner the plight of the tents of Edom. If Israel becomes the official Jewish state, the Palestinian refugees will not be able to return into Israel proper. These refugees believe that they rightfully belong in downtown Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and all of the major cities in Israel. This is why they want a Palestinian state and the right to return into Israel proper.



Psalm 83:6 identifies the tents of Edom existing in a habitation condition as refugees, which I believe is a primary clue as to the timing of the prophecy. The prophecy specifies that there has to be Israelis (Ps. 83:3), Israeli Defense Forces (Ps. 83:9-11), Palestinian refugees (Ps. 83:6), a nation of Israel (Ps. 83:4), an Arab confederacy (Ps. 83:6-8), and an Arab hatred of the Jews that drives them to want to eradicate the Jewish state and confiscate the Promised Land (Ps. 83:4, 12). This entire criterion still exists.

The Problems with Psalm 83:9-18 having been fulfilled in 1948

Psalm 83:9-11 contains the petition of Asaph to empower the IDF like was done in Judges Chapters 4-8 with Gideon against the Midianites and Deborah and her general Barak against the Canaanites. The Midianites and Canaanites were soundly defeated, and as Judges 8:28 says, the Midianite oppression of the Israelites was over forever. This was also the case with the Canaanites upon their defeat. I have yet to find any biblical or historical evidence that either the Midianites or the Canaanites ever oppressed the Israelis subsequent to these defeats.

Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon. (Judges 8:28, NKJV).

The Arabs of Psalm 83 today still don't recognize Israel's right to exist and still oppress Israel. Ps. 83:9-18 are descriptive verses that call for the total end of the Psalm 83 confederate aggression. Since these Psalm 83 beligerents still oppress Israel, it is safe to presume that these relevant verses remain unfulfilled.

The Fate of the Peace Treaties between Israel with Egypt and Jordan

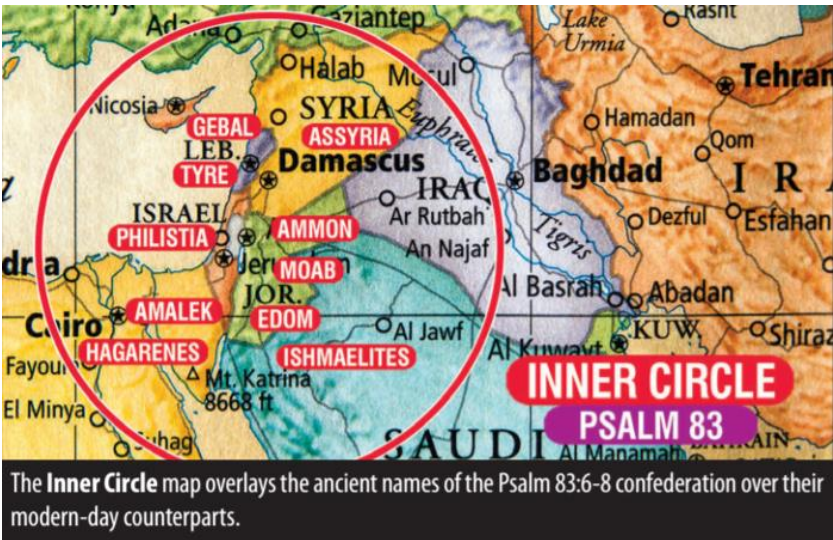
Some argue that the peace treaties between Israel and Egypt and Israel and Jordan suggest that Psalm 83 has already been fulfilled, because these two Psalm 83 participants no longer want to destroy Israel. These agreements are paper thin and I don't expect them to endure much longer. Remember, even Egypt and Jordan refuse to recognize Israel as the Jewish state. Egypt and Jordan fought alongside each other in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1967 and 1973. Moreover, Jordan has threatened in the past to break its treaty with Israel when it comes to concerns about sovereign control over the Temple Mount. Jordan maintains this control presently through the Waqf. Because of this controversial matter, Jordan withdrew its ambassador to Israel between November, 2014, and February, 2015. This political move was enacted because at the time Israel was considering taking control of the Temple Mount away from the Waqf. When push comes to shove in the fulfillment of Psalm 83, their true pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel colors will surface.

Confederation of Arab States (CAS)

- The Confederation of Arab States (CAS) is a political entity that unites the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire establish in 1920, immediately after the end of the Arab Revolt and World War I.
- The CAS covers the lands of Levant, Mesopotamia and the majority of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by Turkey to the north, Iran and Kuwait to the east, Egypt, and the mandates of Palestine and Levant to the west, in

the South and South West of the Arabic Peninsula it borders with several protectorates and colonies of the Imperial Commonwealth Federation (Bahrain, Qatar, Muscat, Trucial States and Oman and Eden Colony)

- Once Israel defeats the attack by the CAS, their borders will almost exactly match what was promised to Abraham
- Damascus is the capital of CAS. Once Israel destroys it according to Is 17, CAS will likely attack Israel and Israel will be victorious and claim all their land that will match what was promised to Abram in Ge 15. Then Israel will live in peace, as described in Ez 38.
 - ❖ Ez 38:10 " This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. 11 You will say, "I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars.

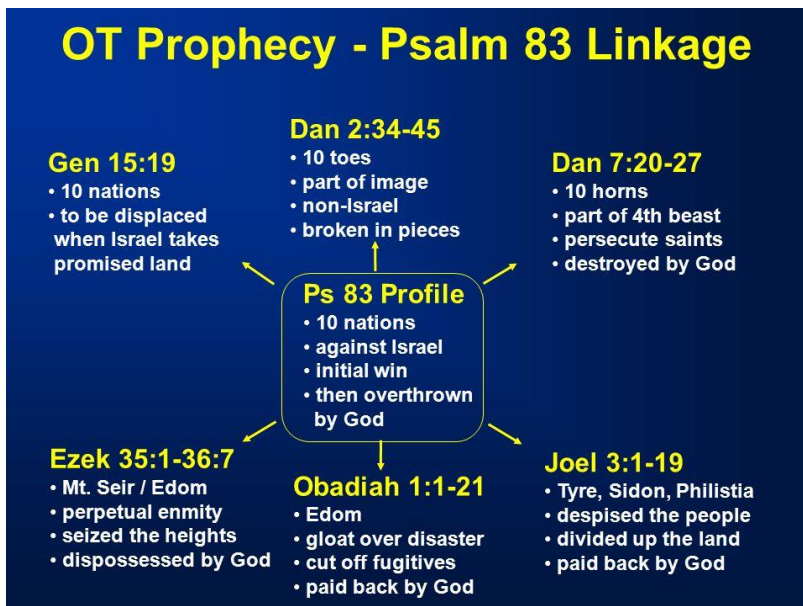


The tents of Edom	S Jordan
the Ishmaelites	Saudi Arabia and portions of Jordan
Moab	Central Jordan
The Hagrites	NE Jordan
Gebal	Lebanon
Ammon	NW Jordan
Amalek	S Israel
Philistia	Gaza
people of Tyre	Lebanon
Assyria	SE Turkey, NW Syria, NE Iraq
The children of Lot (Ammon & Edom)	Jordan

❖ Ge 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates- 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."



OT Prophecy - Psalm 83 Linkage



Destruction of Damascus (Is 17)

Damascus is the capital of the Confederation of Arab States (CAS), which expected to fulfill the Psalm 83 prophecy

❖ Is 17: An Oracle Against Damascus

1 An oracle concerning Damascus: "See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. 2 The cities of Aroer will be deserted and left to flocks, which will lie down, with no one to make them afraid.

3 The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and royal power from Damascus; the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites," declares the LORD Almighty.

4 "In that day the glory of Jacob will fade; the fat of his body will waste away.

5 It will be as when a reaper gathers the standing grain and harvests the grain with his arm— as when a man gleans heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim.

6 Yet some gleanings will remain, as when an olive tree is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches, four or five on the fruitful boughs," declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

6. Israel continued pounding targets (around Damascus) in Syria, foreshadowing the day when she will carry out the prophetic verse in Isaiah 17:1 - the destruction of Damascus. The Times of Israel reported the warning Benjamin Netanyahu gave to Syrian President Bashar Assad. He said that if Assad allows Iran to set up a permanent military presence near Damascus, Israel will intervene militarily in the Syrian civil war. Netanyahu will attack if Iran continues to build up its forces so close to his nation's border. Satellite images confirm that Iran is setting up a large military camp near Damascus, just thirty miles from the Israeli border.

Gog Magog War (Ez 38-39)

- ❖ Ez 38: 1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him 3 and say: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. 4 I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. 5 Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and

helmets, 6 also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops—the many nations with you.

- The reason these nations attack is to take a plunder
 - Israel only found natural gas/oil about 5 years ago – before then, there was nothing to plunder
 - Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages – Saudia Arabia
 - Criticizes the attack – Saudia Arabia is now an ally of Israel
- Right now Russia and Iran are bartering – Iran is providing Russia oil in exchange for goods (food, weapons, etc)
 - Neither one is doing well in world economics
 - Russia does not have money to buy/sell
 - Iran does not have the ability to but/sell
 - Russia and Iran will remain allies with one another
- Russia is rising as a powerful nation and an enemy of Israel
 - Preparation for the Gog/Magog War
 - Political alliances are all in place – and they are all sitting at the doorstep of Israel in Syria
- The rise of a military power in the Orient that can field an army of 200 million
 - Red China alone boasts that she has this number of troops!
- Ez 39:15 As they go through the land and one of them sees a human bone, he will set up a marker beside it until the gravediggers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. 16 (Also a town called Hamonah will be there.) And so they will cleanse the land.'
 - Speaks of contaminated bodies that can't be touched – from nuclear or chemical or biological warfare
 - These things were unheard of thousands of years ago
- Zec 12 – A prophecy: The word of the Lord concerning Israel.
 - The Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the human spirit within a person, declares: 2 “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. 4 On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares the Lord. “I will keep a watchful eye over Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. 5 Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the Lord Almighty is their God.’
6 “On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples right and left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.
7 “The Lord will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem’s inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. 8 On that day the Lord will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord going beforethem. 9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.
- Nebuchadenzzar’s invasion of Judah may be a prophetic type of the end-time invasion by Russia portrayed in Ez 38-39
 - Jer 1:14-19
 - Jer 4:5-9
 - Jer 6:22-26
 - Joel 1-2



The Gog-Magog alliance - Iran, Turkey, and Russia

The Gog-Magog alliance went on fast-forward in 2017. Iran, Turkey, and Russia are uniting with a primary goal in mind - coming against Israel as foreshadowed in Ez 38-39.

Turkey's Erdogan threatened to "wipe out all Jews" after Trump's Jerusalem capital announcement.

Putin is setting up bases in Syria and patrolling nuclear subs in the Mediterranean at a rate not seen since the cold war.

Iran is aligning with Turkey and Russia.

The Alliance of Russia, Iran, and Turkey. Ezekiel 38 predicts a latter-day invasion of Israel led by a coalition of Russia, Iran, and Turkey. On November 22, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, and Turkish President Erdogan met together at the Russian Black Sea resort town of Sochi to discuss the future of Syria, where all three have a significant military presence. They have no intent of leaving, only that of increasing their power in the nation. This public display of harmony between all three nations is exactly what we would expect ahead of the battle of Gog and Magog in light of Ezekiel 38-39. Such unity signifies, for example, that if Israel attacks Iran the other countries would respond as well. Russia made that clear a couple weeks ago, and now Turkey is also a part of this alliance. It is likely that this alliance indicates that the assault against Israel predicted by Ezekiel could become a reality in the coming months or years.

The Times of Israel reported the warning Benjamin Netanyahu gave to Syrian President Bashar Assad. He said that if he allows Iran to set up a permanent military presence near Damascus, Israel will intervene militarily in the Syrian civil war. Netanyahu will attack if Iran continues to build up its forces so close to his nation's border. Satellite images confirm that Iran is setting up a large military camp near Damascus, just thirty miles from the Israeli border. The warning by Netanyahu is just one of many he has made regarding the expanding Iranian presence so close to Israel. Do you see how this could lead to a much greater conflict? With Russia and Turkey now so closely aligned with Iran, they would certainly join in responding to the attack along with the other Muslim nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38 who seize the opportunity to take part in destroying Israel.

The prophet says that God will lure Gog, the head of Russia, into the battle because of the spoil he could gain from the invasion (Ezek. 38:12). Until recent years, Israel has never possessed the type of wealth that would interest her enemies. Now they do. Israel possesses a large deposit of natural gas just off her shore and a massive reservoir of oil under the Golan Heights. These are exactly the two things Putin desires and needs to help his flailing economy. Furthermore, possession of Israel's oil would greatly enhance his standing as the world's new "energy czar," a title Putin recently appropriated for himself. Do you see the preciseness of Ezekiel's prophecy in these events?

Nuclear Showdown with Iran (Jer 49)

Jer 49:34 This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning Elam, early in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah: 35 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

- "See, I will **break the bow** of Elam, the mainstay of their might.
- 36 I will bring against Elam the four winds from the four quarters of the heavens; I will **scatter them to the four winds**, and there will not be a nation where Elam's exiles do not go.
- 37 I will **shatter Elam before their foes**, before those who seek their lives;
- I will **bring disaster upon them**, even my fierce anger," declares the LORD.
- "I will **pursue them with the sword** until I have made an end of them.
- 38 I will **set my throne in Elam** and **destroy her king and officials**," declares the LORD.
- 39 "Yet I will **restore the fortunes of Elam** in days to come," declares the LORD.

The Elamites were warlike people and expert archers, according to Genesis 14:1–9 and Isaiah 22:6. Jeremiah predicts that Iran will suffer the fate of a broken bow, which might imply that the IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) will be unable to launch scores of its missiles at its enemies. Additionally, he declares that Iran will be struck at the foremost place of its might, which today could infer an attack upon its nuclear program. One of Iran's most strategic and vulnerable nuclear targets is the Bushehr nuclear reactor, located in the heart of ancient Elam.

- Written in 596 BC

3rd Temple

Ezekiel 40-47 – Blueprints for a 3rd Jewish Temple

Talk of building of the Jewish Third Temple (Tribulation Temple) escalated after Donald Trump's announcement concerning Jerusalem being Israel's capital.

David Lau, the chief rabbi of Israel, is calling for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. "It's time to build" - a new tagline being employed by the Temple Institute - encapsulates the group's controversial mission to rally Jews to reconstruct the Temple that was the heart of their religion until its destruction 2,000 years ago. Everything is ready for rebuilding the Temple and re-instituting sacrifices except for the order to rebuild the temple itself. Israel is ready to build the Third Temple with just a moment's notice and it has taken many, many years to get to this point. The architectural plans are finished, actual descendants of Aaron have been identified for priestly service and trained, a temple service training school has already been established, the temple's altar has been rebuilt, the temple's cornerstone has been cut and is ready for installation, and the priestly garments and artifacts are ready for use. In order to provide the olive oil needed for certain grain offerings needed for service in the Third Temple, the recently reconstituted Sanhedrin is now planting olive trees near the Old City, including on the Mount of Olives. The re-budding of Israel continues in full force. Jacob Sheep, the actual breed of sheep from ancient Israel that went extinct from the land, are now back as of December 2016. The modern nation of Israel is quickly resembling ancient Israel, even down to its trees and sheep. The movement to restore Jewish rights to pray and worship on the Temple Mount is building. The Temple Mount Institute has a modular altar that could be assembled on the Mount in two hours, once given the green light. They performed a Passover sacrifice in full regalia offsite this past Pesach. Sometime in the first half of the 70th week, maybe at the onset, Jewish rights will be restored, thus setting up the stop to sacrifices in the "middle of the week" mentioned in Daniel. God does not bring to the very point of delivery and then not deliver (Isaiah 66:9)



- ❖ Jer 30:18 "This is what the LORD says: " 'I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's tents and have compassion on his dwellings; the city will be rebuilt on her ruins, and the palace will stand in its proper place.
- ❖ Dan 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing *of the temple* he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."
- ❖ Mt 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
- ❖ 2Th 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.
- ❖ Rev 11:1 I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. 2 But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.

The Sanhedrin has minted a coin with images of Trump and Cyrus to promote rebuilding the Temple
Does the Antichrist enable the rebuilding?

10 European Nations – European defense coalition

<https://www.theweek.co.uk/97636/emmanuel-macron-unveils-european-defence-coalition>

Emmanuel Macron unveils European defence coalition - Ten countries sign up following French president's call for a 'real European army'

France
Finland
Germany
Belgium
Britain
Denmark
Estonia
the Netherlands
Spain
Portugal

Finland has joined Germany, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal in the French-led initiative, which will see members collaborate on planning, on the analysis of new military and humanitarian crises, and on eventual military responses to those crises.

Proponents say the coalition would not conflict with the almost 70-year-old, US-dominated Nato alliance, but reflects in part concerns about a more isolationist United States under President Donald Trump.

Reuters reports that the European Intervention Initiative took official shape in Paris "after months of negotiations with Germany, who France wants at the centre of the force".

The imminent departure from the EU of Britain, long opposed to EU military collaboration outside Nato, has revived talk of defence cooperation - as have concerns that Trump might prove less willing than his predecessors to come to Europe's defence in the face of a newly assertive Russia.

Macron's push to bring together a core 10-nation coalition of the willing "was born out of French impatience with the EU's efforts at defence co-operation", known as Permanent Structured Co-operation (PESCO) says The Economist.

The magazine says “Germany has been keen on this mechanism, which keeps efforts at joint European defence within existing EU structures. Its critics, though, regard Pesco as a low-ambition pact that ropes in too many countries [25 in total], including those with little interest in sending troops abroad, to be operationally useful.”

Coming just days after Macron called for a “real European army” to reduce dependence on the United States, and with the vocal support of senior figures in Brussels, the coalition agreement will once again raising the spectre of a European Army.

Long the bete noire of conservative Eurosceptics, Politico says part of the reason for the coalition is “to bind Britain into military cooperation as it leaves the EU”.

The news site reports that Theresa May “quietly endorsed the initiative at a Franco-British summit at the Sandhurst Military Academy in January but did not publicise the step to avoid antagonizing hard-line Brexiteers in her Conservative Party, to whom any idea of an 'EU army' is anathema”.

Nevertheless, a senior French source said: “It’s really important to have the British on board, not just because they have the most capable, rapidly deployable armed forces along with our own, but also because we share the same strategic culture and history of projecting force outside Europe”.

Debating whether the UK should continue to defend its Western European allies, as it did throughout the 20th century, or take a more detached position, RT Howard in the Daily Telegraph argues “there is one compelling reason why our strategic ties with Western Europe now deserve to be closer than ever before”.

“The reason is not that Western Europe is today confronted by threats any greater than before” Howard writes, but rather “because of the increasingly fragile, fractious state of the European Union.”

Lawlessness – Rise of wickedness

Is 5:18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, And sin as if with a cart rope;
 19 That say, “Let Him make speed and hasten His work, That we may see it;
 And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, That we may know it.”
**20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
 Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!**
 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!
 22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink,
 23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away justice from the righteous man!
 24 Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, And the flame consumes the chaff,
 So their root will be as rottenness, And their blossom will ascend like dust;
 Because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.
**25 Therefore the anger of the Lord is aroused against His people;
 He has stretched out His hand against them And stricken them, And the hills trembled.**

2Pe 2:7 ...he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)

Ro 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness ... 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ... 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator ... 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Ro 1:28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness,

evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Mt 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

2Ti 3 – Perilous Times and Perilous Men

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

- Mankind's character will decline – It will be given over to a depraved mind
- Evil will wax worse and worse
- Self and money will be all that matters
- As it was in the days of Noah – All hearts were wicked; mankind united with the Nephilim
- Clergy has blessed a late-term abortion clinic as holy
- Homosexuals
- Transgenders
- Adultery, material greed, and the killing of innocent life will be commonplace (Revelation 17-18);
- Salacious sexual scandals followed one after another in 2017, most were publicized within Hollywood, Government and the Media. These scandals are but a part that reveal man's evil character and now reflects the end-time warnings of (Roman 1 and 2 Timothy 3).
- The Justice Department has launched a federal investigation into Planned Parenthood's practices and the sale of fetal tissue. Over two years ago, citizen journalists at The Center for Medical Progress first caught Planned Parenthood's top abortion doctors in a series of undercover videos callously and flippantly negotiating the sale of tiny baby hearts, lungs, livers, and brains,"<https://plam.org/planned-parenthood-harvests-baby-parts/>.
- Iceland Goes For 'Nazi-Era Eugenics' To Wipe Out Children With Down Syndrome - The Daily Signal and others reported that Down syndrome is virtually disappearing in Iceland. "More accurately, people with Down syndrome are being eliminated in Iceland through abortion," the report said. "As prenatal testing becomes more and more widespread across the world, the number of babies born with Down syndrome and other conditions has decreased because when parents opt for screening that reveals an abnormality, many opt to end the pregnancy." However, in Iceland, "more than four out of five women have a prenatal screening test and close to 100 percent of women who received a positive test for Down syndrome chose to abort their child." "This is a trend closely followed by other Western nations including Denmark, France and even the United States. We should all be deeply sorrowful and outraged".
- The wealthiest 1 percent of the world's population now owns more than half of the world's wealth in 2017, according to a new report. The total wealth in the world grew by 6 percent over the past 12 months (2017) to \$280 trillion, marking the fastest wealth creation since 2012, according to a Credit Suisse report. But that wealth around the world is increasingly concentrated among those at the top. The top 1 percent now owns 50.1 percent of the world's wealth, up from 45.5 percent in 2001. The world's millionaires are expected to do the best in the coming years. There are now 36 million millionaires in the world, and their numbers are expected to grow to 44 million by 2022. Planned

Parenthood: We Did 321,384 Abortions; Got \$543.7 Million in Tax Dollars. (CNSNews.com) - Planned Parenthood says its affiliates did 321,384 abortions in the fiscal year that ended on Sept. 30, 2017, according to its newly released 2016-2017 annual report. In the same report, Planned Parenthood says its affiliates received \$543.7 million in payments from government-"Government Health Services Reimbursements & Grants," the report calls them-in the year that ended on June 30, 2017. If Planned Parenthood had done its abortions non-stop 24-hours-a-day for the full year, they would have needed to abort approximately 37 babies every hour--or one baby every 98 seconds--to reach 321,384 abortions for the year.

- Lawlessness; Mexico; Raging cartel violence spreading throughout the country has marked 2017 as the bloodiest year since 1997 when the government began documenting such murders. The official figures, however, pale in comparison to reality since they do not account for the number of victims "disappeared" by cartel gunmen-including those who were incinerated or buried in clandestine graves. The new statistics released by Mexico's National Public Security System (SESNSP) revealed that for the year, the country suffered a total of 26,573 murders; 1,275 kidnappings; and 5,357 extortion cases. The 2017 murder total surpassed all previously recorded years since initial recording in 1997. While alarming, the statistics compiled by the SESNSP only take into account the crimes recorded by attorney general offices in Mexico's 32 states. The figures do not include the victims found in cartel killing fields and mass incineration operations like found in Coahuila. As Breitbart Texas reported, activists discovered thousands of human bone fragments in one of the killing fields. One of the issues in recording kidnapping and extortion cases is the general distrust among residents for state and local law enforcement. In Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Nuevo Leon, Chihuahua, Michoacan, and Guerrero, state officials have a history of being infiltrated by the same cartels they are expected to fight. Despite modest improvements against corruption, the public's trust is still lacking. In Chicago, year-to-date, there have been 620 people shot & killed; 2,913 shot and wounded, or 3,533 total shot. A person is shot ever 2:26 minutes, a person is murdered ever 12:52 hours. 92.4% of all homicides are caused by gunshots. Baltimore just recorded 342 homicides in 2017, a new per capita record. Looking at homicides per capita in 2017, Baltimore is clearly the most dangerous large city in the U.S. with a murder rate that is more than 4x the average of other large cities and some 40% higher than the second most dangerous city of Detroit. To put things in perspective, the murder rate in Baltimore is now exactly tied with Venezuela at 57.2 murders per 100,000 residents. Both Baltimore and Chicago have experienced devastating spikes in homicides over the past two years. In 2017, there have been 307 mass shootings throughout the United States. 26 people were killed at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Spring, Texas. The worst mass shooting incident ever to happen in the U.S. occurred at a country music concert in Las Vegas, killing 58 people and injuring 515 more during 2017. London, British Parliament went into lockdown after a man drove an SUV into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge and then stormed the Westminster Palace grounds on foot, armed with two knives. The attacker, a 52-year-old Muslim convert named Khalid Masood, stabbed and killed a police officer outside Parliament before a security guard shot him dead. In all, Masood's rampage killed five people and injured about 50. In an earlier text message, Masood reportedly said he was waging jihad against the West. Manchester, Fourteen thousand fans, many of them teenage girls, had gathered at a stadium to hear American singer Ariana Grande when a blast erupted in the foyer, killing 22 concertgoers and injuring hundreds of others. The attacker, identified as 22-year-old Salman Abedi, was the British-born son of Libyan parents. Abedi had returned to Libya with his father and two brothers in 2011 to support the uprising there against leader Muammar Qaddafi. Abedi later came in contact with members of an Islamic State cell in Libya, who may have inspired him to carry out the concert attack. New York City, With Halloween this year-also the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation-came a stark reminder that the days are evil: A man with a rented Home Depot truck drove onto a bike path in lower Manhattan, mowing down bikers and pedestrians, killing eight and injuring 12. The suspect, 29-year-old Uzbek national Sayfullo Saipov, had written Arabic notes pledging allegiance to ISIS, investigators said. Saipov was shot by police but survived the attack and is facing trial.
- Wickedness will be rampant as it was in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-38); CRISPR and genetic manipulation. The past several decades have witnessed the advent of the genetic revolution and great good has come from it, but mankind continues to demonstrate its innate affinity for evil. Throwing aside moral and ethical restraints left and right, geneticists are now combining species against God's created order and are even developing three-parent babies, and babies resulting from two fathers or two mothers. If human/animal hybrids are not created yet, they are on the very, very near horizon. How long will God allow this to continue considering the very real possibility these children and hybrids may not have souls? Are they made in God's image or man's image? God intervened when angels began interbreeding with the human population. Hybrids seem to be another point of no return where judgment must ensue

very quickly (see Genesis 6). The ethical dilemma also highlights the debate regarding the morality of 'designer babies', which would allow parents to pick the sex of their child and special features, attributes.

The revival of the dark occultic practices of ancient Babylon

- Replicas of the Temple of Baal in New York and London
 - Reconstruction to the Alter of Satan and Child Sacrifices

21. Revival of Paganism (False Gods); Major pagan god of Bible honored by world government; It was unveiled in London. It was displayed in New York, just steps away from Ground Zero. And now, the harbinger of the pagan god Baal has been used to welcome participants to a summit dedicated to "world government." The World Government Summit recently held a meeting in Dubai, bringing together some of the most important leaders in government and business to discuss international problems. This year (2017), it featured a reconstruction of the Arch of Palmyra, the Roman triumphal arch that once welcomed travelers to the ancient Temple of Baal in the Syrian outpost of the empire. Baal worship featured rites of child sacrifice and sexual immorality. The same group that recreated the Roman triumphal arch that once welcomed travelers to the Temple of Baal is now honoring another pagan deity. The United Arab Emirates, the Italian mission to the United Nations and the Institute for Digital Archeology have re-created a statue of the goddess Athena which once stood in Palmyra, according to Breaking Israel News. The exhibit, titled "The Spirit In the Stone," is being hosted at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. It's another move by globalist organizations to honor pagan deities, months after the reconstructed "Arch of Baal" went on a world tour, including being placed outside the G7 meeting of the world's industrialized nations. Joseph Farah, author of "The Restitution of All Things: Israel, Christians and the End of the Age." States, "In fact, the gods of paganism are actually demons, according to the Bible. It's not something to be played with. "The question confronting us right now is: Why would the United Nations be involved in resurrecting these occult images and icons of the past? Do they not understand what this represents - the false gods of child sacrifice and all kinds of abominations and perversions?" Rabbi Elad Dokow, the head rabbi and lecturer at Israel's Technion Institute of Technology, was not surprised that the United Nations would feature a display of pagan symbols. "There is currently an unmistakable rise of paganism and idol worship in the world, more than any other religion, and it is naive to believe this display is disconnected from this phenomenon," Rabbi Dokow told Breaking Israel News. "Paganism creates the ability for each man to create his own truth, as opposed to Judaism and Christianity, which state that there is an objective truth man must abide by. The UN, like paganism, is a place of subjective reality created by a vote." "What we are seeing in the world today is that every place Christianity grows weak, paganism and idolatry grow stronger, and where Christianity disappears, horrible things happen." Joe Kovacs, author of "Shocked By The Bible 2," says the whole sad spectacle is part of an old story. "The promotion of pagan gods is certainly nothing new, and it again shows we're all living in what I call 'Opposite World,'" he explained. "It's a world where most people do the very opposite action of what God has instructed. Our Creator tells us to have no other gods but Him, but folks do the opposite, honoring false gods. At CERN, the European Center for Research in Particle Physics in Geneva - a 2m tall statue of the Indian deity Shiva Nataraja, the Lord of Dance. The statue, symbolizing Shiva's cosmic dance of creation and destruction, was given to CERN by the Indian government. In choosing the image of Shiva Nataraja, the Indian government acknowledged the profound significance of the metaphor of Shiva's dance for the cosmic dance of subatomic particles, which is observed and analyzed by CERN's physicists. Paganism at the Washington Mall; The Catharsis on the Mall, titled a Vigil for Healing, was held as a politically motivated incarnation of the desert Burning Man Festival from which it evolved. The event featured a 70-foot long seven headed red metal dragon on wheels. The dragon, named for the ancient Egyptian god Abraxas, was clearly intended to reference Satan as described in the Christian Book of Revelations. The dragon, like many elements of the event, was previously used at Burning Man, a yearly festival held in the Nevada desert that attracts tens of thousands from around the world. Other pagan elements of the event included a 30-foot tall "non-denominational" wooden temple that was built and then burned to the ground. At the focal point, directly facing the Washington Monument, was a paper-mache sculpture of "Lord Shiva Natarja", a Hindu god described as "the cosmic ecstatic dancer". Though these could all be regarded as cultural or artistic elements, the religious connotations were intentional. "There's a deeply spiritual side to what we're trying to do," said Adam Eiding, a local activist and organizer of the Catharsis events. "Having sacred fire on the mall is a very religious thing. At the basis of idol worship is man's desire to replace god, to be free of the constraints of morality imposed on him by God. It is a desire to be God. Controversy surrounded Catharsis on the Mall even in the planning stages. Organizers were issued a permit to erect a 45-foot tall, 16,000 pound, steel sculpture of a naked woman titled "R-evolution" in front of the Washington Monument, deliberately facing the White House. The

organizers initially intended for the massive piece to stand for four months but the permit was later revoked by the National Parks Service on the grounds that the crane required to erect the statue might damage the grass and concrete in the Mall. Burning Man Festival (Nevada); is held for one week every year in late August. The Nevada festival attracted around 70,000 people this year, self-dubbed 'Burners', from around the world. The festival has a strongly spiritual basis with many alternative forms of worship being represented in micro-temples and altars. The week-long festival culminates in the eponymous ceremony in which a large wooden effigy of a man is burned. This ceremony, referred to among Druids as the 'wicker man', is almost universal amongst pagan cults and evolved as a replacement for human sacrifice. But the festival isn't free. Tickets in 2017 started at \$425 per person. UNESCO funded yet a third project that replicated the Lion of al-Lat which is an ancient statue that stands almost 11 feet tall and weighing 15 tons. Early pagans believed the lion was the consort of the goddess al-Lat. It is believed al-Lat was the continuation of the earlier Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar Inanna; the goddess of sex and, in particular, extra marital relations.

Drugs

There has been an unprecedented return to drug use

Family

The decline of the family unit

Antisemitism

- Jer 29:15 You may say, "The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon," 16 but this is what the LORD says about the king who sits on David's throne and all the people who remain in this city, your countrymen who did not go with you into exile- 17 yes, this is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will send the sword, famine and plague against them and I will make them like poor figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten. **18 I will pursue them with the sword, famine and plague and will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth and an object of cursing and horror, of scorn and reproach, among all the nations where I drive them.** 19 For they have not listened to my words," declares the LORD, "words that I sent to them again and again by my servants the prophets. And you exiles have not listened either," declares the LORD.
- Dt 28 – Curses for disobedience – 36 The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. 37 You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the LORD will drive you.

Apostasy – Falling away from the church (False Teachers)

The departure of many Christian churches from the historic truth of Christianity and the Bible
Many believers will fall away (1 Timothy 4:1-3) / Spiritual apostasy (Revelation 3:14-22)

- 2Pe 2:1
- 2Co 11:13
- Jude 17-18

Mt 24:4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

Mt: 24:23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Amos 8:11 "The days are coming," declares the Sovereign LORD, "when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a **famine of hearing the words of the LORD**. 12 Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it.

1Ti 4 The Great Apostasy

4:1 Now **the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

2Ti 4:1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**

- 2 Thessalonians 2 The Great Apostasy

2:1 Now, brethren, **concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him**, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for **that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.** 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 **And now you know what is restraining**, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.** 8 **And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.** 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- 2Pe 2 – Destructive Doctrines

1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

Doom of False Teachers

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)— 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

Depravity of False Teachers

12 But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. 15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. 17 These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Deceptions of False Teachers

18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

- Revelation 3:14-22 A Letter to the Church in Laodicea

14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' "

Secular Europe

Once the very cradle of Christian civilization, Europe has embraced a secular future, and the residual memory of the Christian tradition is fading fast. The statistics documenting European secularization are now impossible to ignore. Ireland, still one of the least secular nations in Western Europe, has seen church attendance fall by at least 25 percent over the last three decades. Ireland is predominantly Roman Catholic, of course, but the paper reports, "Not one priest will be ordained this year in Dublin." On the Protestant side, the picture is not much better. Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands, once the cradles of the Reformation, are now prime examples of Europe's secular shape. Throughout the European continent, Islam is the only religion growing in the number of adherents. According to the Center for the Study on Global Christianity, at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in suburban Boston, the decline in Christian influence "is most evident in France, Sweden and the Netherlands, where church attendance is less than ten percent in some areas." USA Today's cover story on the decline of Christianity in Western Europe raises the question of America's future. In many ways, America seems to be following the European example, though several years behind. Yet the pace of moral transformation in the United States may indicate that America is fast catching up with the European model of secularization. In what the Orthodox Christian Network calls an "alarming trend," The Wall Street Journal featured a page one article - Europe's Empty Churches Go on Sale, as the number of attendees has diminished over many years. "The closing of Europe's churches reflects the rapid weakening of the (Christian) faith in Europe, a phenomenon that is painful to both worshipers and others who see religion as a unifying factor in a disparate society." By example, the Netherlands is projected to close 2/3 of its Roman Catholic churches in the next decade. The closing of Europe's churches is a result of flagging faith and empty pews, but it is mostly Christians who are losing their faith. Several other religions have not

experienced the same decline. Orthodox Judaism has remained relatively steady and primarily because of immigration, Islam has actually grown. European countries in general have seen substantial declines, but it is the Netherlands leading the way. The Catholic Church predicts that two-thirds of its churches will be retired from holy service within a decade and 700 Protestant churches are expected to be decommissioned within four years. In the United States, Americans who answer "none" when asked for their religious affiliation are the fastest growing "religious" group in the United States. About two-thirds of them say they are former believers. Americans raised in Christian households are turning away from the religion of their parents. Every denomination in the U.S. is losing both affiliation and church attendance. In some ways the country is a half-generation behind the declining rate of Christianity in other western countries like the U.K., Australia, Germany, Sweden, Norway, France, and the Netherlands. In those what were once churches are now art galleries, cafes and pubs.

The fact that we can also see the clear distinctions in the church today (dead, faithful, apostate) should motivate the believing remnant because these are the stages Jesus told us we would go through. The United States is following Europe's lead in becoming post-Christian very rapidly. As we see more frequently, supposed priests, priestesses, pastors, and other "clergy" are now openly endorsing homosexuality, transgenderism, abortion, pedophilia, open-borders, anti-Semitism, etc. and other anti-Biblical positions with no reprisal. They can only do so because they think they are now in the majority. Meanwhile, their ecumenical lukewarmness has opened the floodgates of other apostate teachings and doctrines of demons.

Counterfeit Christian Denominations

- Postmodernism
- Social Gospel – Religious left
- Seeker Sensitive – Water everything down – Joel Olsteen
- New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)
- So-called "prophets" for profit
- Holy laughter
- Contemplative Mysticism – Contemplative prayer – Let's be like the Buddhists
- Dominionism – Kingdom Now – The church is going to make the world perfect so Jesus can return
- Latter Rain
- Amillennialism – Allegorizes everything – Nothing is taken literally
- Postmillennialism
- Protestants are moving towards Catholicism
- No to Bible Prophecy
- Moving away from Israel support
- Replacement Theology – The church is the new Israel
- Christian Palestinianism – Jesus was a Palestinian
- Christ Alignment

Lk 18:6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Christ asked this rhetorical question at the end of the *parable of the unjust judge* while He was physically on the earth. So He was not addressing the day He was in then, nor of the time surrounding His Second Coming. We already know that Christ will not return at the Second Coming until the Jewish people cry out "blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" ([Matt. 23:39](#)). The Jewish people will not do this until this veil of blindness is lifted from their eyes and they realize that Jesus of Nazareth, was, in fact, their Messiah whom they pierced ([Zechariah 12:10](#); [Romans 11:25](#)). As for the rest of the majority of the world, they are already committed to destruction who are not written in *the Lamb's Book of Life* ([Rev. 13:8](#)).

He was speaking about the conditions of the world when He returns for His Church. Will He find faith on the earth when He returns for His bride the Church? Yes. However, the conditions in the world at that time marries up with the last three churches from those out of the Seven Letters.

- Church In Name Only: The dead church
- The Post Christian Church: The nauseating, lukewarm church
- Remnant Believers: The true church with little strength in a world satanically rigged to oppose them.

Therefore, it would seem that Christ's question then rings true. The overwhelming majority in the world have rejected Him and His word. Only a small remnant is true to His name. These have little strength and influence in the world at the time of the Rapture.

Birthpains

- Is 26 ¹⁶ LORD, in trouble they have visited You, They poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening *was* upon them.
¹⁷ As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs,
When she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.
¹⁸ We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind;
We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.
¹⁹ Your dead shall live; *Together with my dead body* they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.
²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you;
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.
²¹ For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.
- Is 66 ⁷ “Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child.
⁸ Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? *Or* shall a nation be born at once?
For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.
⁹ Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?” says the LORD.
“Shall I who cause delivery shut up *the womb*?” says your God.
¹⁰ “Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her;
Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;
¹¹ That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom,
That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory.”
- Jer 4 ³¹ “For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, The anguish as of her who brings forth her first child,
The voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself;
She spreads her hands, *saying*, ‘Woe *is* me now, for my soul is weary Because of murderers!’
- Jer 49 ²⁰ Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD that He has taken against Edom,
And His purposes that He has proposed against the inhabitants of Teman:
Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out; Surely He shall make their dwelling places desolate with them.
²¹ The earth shakes at the noise of their fall; At the cry its noise is heard at the Red Sea.
²² Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle, And spread His wings over Bozrah;
The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.
- Hos 13 ¹² “The iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up; His sin *is* stored up.
¹³ The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him.
He *is* an unwise son, For he should not stay long where children are born.
- Micah 3 ³ Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time *that* she who is in labor has given birth;
Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel.

- Mt 24 ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.
- Jn 16 ²⁰ Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. ²¹ A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²² Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.
- Ro 8 ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.
- 1Th 5 ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.
- Gal 4 ¹⁹ My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.
- Rev 12 ¹ Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. ³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Business as usual

Luke 17:26 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

People will be enjoying life as the world around them is falling apart

Christian persecution – affliction and martyrdom

17. Christian affliction and martyrdom (Matthew 24:9); According to OpenDoors, each month, 322 Christians are killed for their faith, 214 churches and Christian properties are destroyed and 772 forms of violence (beatings, abductions, rape, arrests and forced marriage) are committed against Christians. According to United States Department of State, Christians in more than 60 countries face persecution from their governments simply because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Christians today face worse persecution than at any time in history, yet the UN and the international community are largely ignoring them. Persecution of Christians has reached a new high between 2015 and 2017 as groups such as ISIS and Boko Haram stepped up their attacks. Researchers focused on 13 countries, providing an overview of the state of religious freedom for the country's various denominations. In China, for example, Christians have come under increasing pressure as authorities try to force their religion to conform to Communist ideals. More than 2,000 churches have been demolished in the coastal province of Zhejiang, and police are still routinely detaining clergy. Christians have also been disproportionately affected

by Islamist violence in the Middle East. In Iraq, more than half of the country's Christian population became internal refugees, while Syria's second city of Aleppo, which until 2011 was home to the largest Christian community, saw numbers dropping from 150,000 to barely 35,000 by spring 2017 - a fall of more than 75%. A report from the Italian-based Center for Studies on New Religions, determined that 90,000 Christians were killed for their beliefs worldwide last year (2016) and nearly a third were at the hands of Islamic extremists like ISIS. Others were killed by state and non-state persecution, including in places like North Korea. The study also found that as many as 600 million Christians were prevented from practicing their faith in 2016. Christianity Today reports the Russian parliament and Vladimir Putin approved a new law that includes the criminalization of sharing your faith. Christians in Russia won't be allowed to email their friends an invitation to church or to evangelize in their own homes if Russia's newest set of surveillance and anti-terrorism laws are enacted. The proposed laws, considered the country's most restrictive measures in post-Soviet history, place broad limitations on missionary work, including preaching, teaching, and engaging in any activity designed to recruit people into a religious group. To share their faith, citizens must secure a government permit through a registered religious organization, and they cannot evangelize anywhere besides churches and other religious sites. The restrictions even apply to activity in private residences and online. The Christian Post has compiled a list of major deadly attacks that occurred elsewhere around the world, illustrating the pain and tragedy that has befallen people simply for their faith in Jesus. Examples of these attacks;

- 48 Christians killed in 9 days in Nigeria. The Fulani attacks on believers continued throughout 2017, though one particular nine-day period in October saw as many as 48 Christians massacred in separate incidents. Church elder Dauda Samuel Kadiya of the Evangelical Church Winning All in Zanwrua explained how the Fulani broke through doors and destroyed houses and churches in the village. "Every one of us ran to save his life," Kadiya recalled. "I was shot at, but the bullet only bruised my hand." "Having set fire on my house, they went to the next house and did the same. They continued burning houses until they were done, he said.
- Al-Shabaab beheads 9 in Kenya. Al-Shabaab, the Somali-based terror group that has been attacking Christians and security forces in neighboring Kenya for years, beheaded at least nine Christians in Jima village in Lamu County on July 8. Around 15 of the radical extremists seized the nine men before beheading them, with a police source describing at the time that the believers were "slaughtered like chickens using knives." The terrorists were reportedly looking specifically for "non-Muslims" to kill, with the Kenya Red Cross helping civilians in the region flee as fears of the group's growing presence spread. Security officials pointed out that the beheading method of execution is something new for al-Shabaab, as for the past few years it has been associated mostly with IS.
- ISIS gunmen massacre 29 on way to monastery. Coptic Christians suffered another shocking attack at the hands of IS in May, when masked gunmen attacked two buses and a small truck in Minya province in Egypt as they were driving to a monastery. The radicals shot at believers and tried to force a number of them to renounce their religion, killing 29 people in the process. Some survivors, including children, later described how their fathers refused to abandon their faith in Jesus Christ despite being held at gunpoint, which cost them their lives.
- ISIS slaughters 47 on Palm Sunday. The most deadly attack on churches in 2017 occurred on Palm Sunday in Egypt, where the Islamic State terror group carried out bombings on two churches filled with worshipers. The bombing of St. George's Church in the northern city of Tanta killed 29 believers and injured another 78, where an explosive device was planted close to the altar, going off while the congregation was singing hymns. A suicide blast killed 18 and injured another 48 at St. Mark's Orthodox Coptic Cathedral in Alexandria soon after. IS, which increasingly turned its focus toward Egypt this past year, issued a chilling warning at the time stating that "a river of blood" from Christians is coming.

[Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List](#)

The Christian persecution we read about in Scripture and history books is not a thing of the past. It still exists. Today, in the 21st century, we are living in a time when persecution against Christian believers is the highest in modern history. According to Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List—an in-depth investigative report focusing on global Christian persecution—persecution is increasing at an alarming rate. Research for the List indicates that each day, a staggering 11 Christians are killed for their faith in the top 50 countries ranked on the World Watch List. Below, we look at the world's 10 most dangerous places to be a Christian—countries where saying "yes" to following Jesus is truly a life-or-death decision.

- **North Korea**
In North Korea, Christians are considered hostile elements to be eradicated. For three generations, everything in this isolated country has focused on idolizing the leading Kim family. Christians are seen as hostile elements in society that must be eradicated. There was hope that new diplomatic efforts in 2018—including the 2018 Winter Olympics—would mean a lessening of pressure and violence against Christians. But so far that has not been the case. In fact, reports indicate that local authorities are increasing incentives for anyone who exposes a Christian in their community. If Christians are discovered, not only are they deported to labor camps or even killed on the spot, their families to the fourth generation share their fate as well. Communal worship is non-existent. Daring to meet other Christians for worship is a risky feat that must be done in utmost secrecy. Yet Open Doors estimates the number of Christians in North Korea to be 300,000 strong—believers who are defying the unjust regime and following Jesus.
- **Afghanistan**
Afghanistan—Where Christianity is not permitted to exist. Afghanistan is once again a close second behind North Korea on the 2019 World Watch List. An Islamic state by constitution, the country does not permit any faith other than Islam to exist. To convert to a faith outside Islam is tantamount to treason because it's seen as a betrayal of family, tribe and country. Very often, there is only one possible outcome for exposed and caught Christians: death. In Afghanistan converts are considered literally insane to leave Islam. As a result, some may end up in a psychiatric hospital and have their homes destroyed. In addition to communal pressure, the security situation continues to deteriorate due to the influx of foreign militants who have pledged allegiance to ISIS. And the radical Islamic Taliban have also increased in strength; at least half of Afghanistan's 34 provinces are either ruled or contested by the Taliban. Afghan Christians (mostly those with a Muslim background) are in hiding as much as possible.
- **Somalia**
In Somalia, Christians are high-value targets. Estimates suggest that 99 percent of Somalis are Muslims, and any minority religions are heavily persecuted. The Christian community is small and under constant threat of attack. In fact, persecution of Christians almost always involves violence. Additionally, in many rural areas, Islamic militant groups like al-Shabab are *de facto* rulers who regard Christians with a Muslim background as high-value targets—often killed on the spot when discovered. In recent years, the situation appears to have worsened. Islamic militants have intensified their hunt for people who are Christian and in a position of leadership. An attempt to reopen a church in Hargeisa, Somaliland, failed; the government was forced to shut it down due to pressure from the local Islamic population. In the World Watch List 2019 reporting period, Christians in Somalia remained so vulnerable to attacks by Islamic militants that in the interests of security, Open Doors could publish no specific examples of persecution.
- **Libya**
Believers in Libya face abuse and deadly violence. After the ouster of former dictator Muammar Gaddafi, Libya plunged into chaos and anarchy, which has enabled various Islamic militant groups to control parts of the country. Libyan converts to Christianity face abuse and violence for their decision to follow Christ. The country is also home to many migrant workers who have been attacked, sexually assaulted and detained, which can be even worse if your Christian faith is discovered. Libyan Christians with a Muslim background face extremely violent and intense pressure from their family and the wider community to renounce their faith. Believers from other parts of the continent are also targeted by various Islamic militant groups and organized criminal groups. Few will forget the horrifying video of Egyptian workers martyred by ISIS militants on the coast of Libya. The level of violence against Christians in Libya is very high, and Christians in Libya are subjected to violent, inhumane and degrading treatment.
- **Pakistan**
Christians in Pakistan live with constant threat of mob attacks. Under Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws, Christians continue to live in daily fear they will be accused of blasphemy—which can carry a death sentence. The most well-known example of these laws is the case of Asia Bibi. After sitting on death row for more than 10 years, the Christian wife and mother was acquitted of blasphemy charges in October however her life is still in grave danger from radical Islamists that have gained increasing political power in the world's sixth-largest

country. For that reason, the new ruling government must maintain good diplomatic relationships with some radical groups. Christians are largely regarded as second-class citizens, and conversion to Christianity from Islam carries a great deal of risk. An estimated 700 girls and women abducted each year are often raped and then forcefully married to Muslim men in the community, usually resulting in forced conversions. While traditional, historical churches have relative freedom for worship, they are heavily monitored and have regularly been targeted for bomb attacks (for example, the Quetta attack in December 2017 on Bethel Memorial Methodist Church). In Pakistan, all Christians suffer from institutionalized discrimination. Occupations seen as low, dirty and derogatory are officially reserved for Christians. Many Christians are very poor, and some are victims of bonded labor. On the other hand, many Christians belong to Pakistan's middle class; however, this does not save them from being marginalized or persecuted.

- Sudan

Christian converts in Sudan targeted for persecution. Sudan has been ruled as an Islamic state by the authoritarian government of President al-Bashir since 1989. Under his charge, the country offers limited rights for religious minorities and places heavy restrictions on freedom of speech or press. The last year has been difficult for Christians in many ways. There have been arrests; many churches have been demolished and others are on an official list awaiting demolition. And many Christians are attacked indiscriminately in areas like the Nuba Mountains where there is an ongoing conflict between government forces and rebel groups. Christian converts from Islam are especially targeted for persecution. So to keep from being discovered, converts will often refrain from raising their children as Christians because this might attract the attention of the government and community leaders (since children might inadvertently reveal their parents' faith).

- Eritrea

Christians imprisoned and dying in shipping containers in Eritrea. Since 1993, President Afwerki has overseen an authoritarian brutal regime that rests on massive human rights violations. During the 2019 World Watch List reporting period, government security forces conducted many house-to-house raids and imprisoned hundreds of Christians in inhumane conditions, including small shipping containers in scorching heat. Protestants, in particular, face serious problems in accessing community resources, especially social services provided by the State. Christians from non-traditional church groups, such as evangelicals, face the harshest persecution. In 2018, Eritrea embraced an end to hostility with both Ethiopia and Somalia. How that agreement will play out for the situation of Christians remains to be seen. This extreme pressure and state-sanctioned violence are forcing some Christians to flee Eritrea—often called “Africa's North Korea”—and seek asylum.

- Yemen

Believers in Yemen especially vulnerable in civil war and famine. An ongoing civil war in Yemen has created one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent memory, making an already difficult nation for Christians to live in even harder. The chaos of war has enabled radical groups to take control over some regions of Yemen, and they have increased persecution of Christians. Even private worship is risky in some parts of the country. Christians are suffering from the general humanitarian crisis in the country, but Yemeni Christians are additionally vulnerable since emergency relief is mostly distributed through Islamic organizations and local mosques, which are allegedly discriminating against all who are not considered to be pious Muslims. Converts to Christianity from Islam face additional persecution from family and society. In Yemen, the small church is composed mostly of Yemeni Christians with a Muslim background who must live their faith in secret. They face persecution from the authorities (including detention and interrogation), their families, and radical Islamic groups who threaten converts with death if they don't denounce Christ and re-convert.

- Iran

Illegal to convert, illegal to preach in Iran. In this gateway to the Middle East, Christians are forbidden from sharing their faith with non-Christians. Therefore, church services in Persian, the national language, are not allowed. Converts from Islam undergo persecution from the government; if they attend an underground house church, they face the constant threat of arrest. Iranian society is governed by Islamic law, which means the rights and job possibilities for Christians are heavily restricted. The government sees them as an attempt by Western countries to undermine Islam and the Islamic regime of Iran. Leaders of groups of Christian converts have been arrested, prosecuted and have received long prison sentences for “crimes against the national security.” In

December, to crack down on Christians sharing their faith, Iranian police arrested 100 Christians in one week, making a blatant statement to both Christians and Muslims. Iran is also infamous for its prisons and inhumane treatment of Christians in places like Evin Prison where well-known house church pastor Yousef Nardarkhani is serving a 10-year sentence.

- India

Unprecedented violence against Christians in India. In the world's second most populous country, Christians saw unprecedented persecution on numerous fronts from both the State and general Hindu society. For the first time, India enters the top 10 on the World Watch List, jumping one spot from No. 11 in 2017. Home to more than a billion people, even an incremental rise in persecution yields an exponential impact. Since the current ruling party took power in 2014, Hindu extremists have fueled a crackdown on Christian house churches and have attacked believers with impunity—believing that to be Indian is to be Hindu. So any other faith is viewed as non-Indian. In rural areas, Christians were told that one church would be closed down every week because they have been “destroying” local tradition and culture by “luring” others to convert to Christianity. And it is common for Christians to be cut off from local water supplies and be denied access to government-subsidized groceries. In India, saying “yes” to Jesus has become a risky decision that costs you and your family greatly.

Open Doors' 2020 World Watch List

	<u>Source of Persecution</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Main Religion</u>
1. North Korea	Communist and post-communist oppression	Asia	Agnosticism
2. Afghanistan	Clan oppression	Central	
3. Somalia	Clan oppression	Asia	Islam
4. Libya	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
5. Pakistan	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
6. Eritrea	Denominational protectionism	Asia	Islam
7. Yemen	Clan oppression	Africa	Islam
8. Iran	Islamic oppression	Middle	
9. Nigeria	Islamic oppression	East	Islam
10. India	Religious nationalism	Middle	Islam, Christianity
11. Iraq	Islamic oppression	East	Hinduism
12. Syria	Islamic oppression	Middle	
13. Sudan	Islamic oppression	East	Islam
14. Saudi Arabia	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
15. Maldives	Islamic oppression	East	Islam
16. Egypt	Dictatorial paranoia	Asia	Islam
17. China	Communist and post-communist oppression	Africa	Islam
18. Myanmar	Religious nationalism	East	Agnosticism
19. Vietnam	Communist and post-communist oppression	Asia	Buddhism
20. Mauritania	Islamic oppression	Asia	Buddhism

21. Uzbekistan	Dictatorial paranoia	Central Asia	Islam
22. Laos	Communist and post-communist oppression	Asia	Buddhism
23. Turkmenistan	Dictatorial paranoia	Central Asia	Islam
24. Algeria	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
25. Turkey	Islamic oppression	Middle East	Islam
26. Tunisia	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
27. Morocco	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
28. Mali	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
29. Qatar	Clan oppression	Middle East	Islam
30. Colombia	Organized crime and corruption	Latin America	Christianity
31. Bangladesh	Islamic oppression	Asia	Islam
32. Burkina Faso	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
33. Tajikistan	Dictatorial paranoia	Central Asia	Islam
34. Nepal	Clan oppression	Asia	Hinduism
35. Central African Republic	Islamic oppression	Africa	Christianity
36. Ethiopia	Denominational protectionism	Africa	Christianity
37. Mexico	Organized crime and corruption	Latin America	Christianity
38. Jordan	Islamic oppression	Middle East	Islam
39. Brunei	Dictatorial paranoia	East Asia	Islam
40. Democratic Republic of the Congo	Islamic oppression	Africa	Christianity
41. Kazakhstan	Dictatorial paranoia	Central Asia	Islam
42. Cameroon	Islamic oppression	Africa	Christianity
43. Bhutan	Religious nationalism	Asia	Buddhism
44. Oman	Clan oppression	Middle East	Islam
45. Mozambique	Islamic oppression	East Africa	Christianity
46. Malaysia	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam
47. Indonesia	Islamic oppression	Asia	Islam
48. Kuwait	Islamic oppression	Middle East	Islam
49. Kenya	Islamic oppression	East Africa	Christianity
50. Comoros	Islamic oppression	Africa	Islam

Deception / Strong delusion

Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

The only weapon the devil has at his disposal is deception

In reality, the only weapon the devil has at his disposal is deception. The world, the universe, are all constructs that God created. For Satan to convince people to reject their Creator, he has to construct false narratives about who we are, where we came from, and where we are going after we die. If you think about it, the devil has to work far harder to keep the truth from bleeding through; then we do exposing it. However, this does not seem very easy at present.

2Th 2:9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Strong delusions now:

- Global warming
- Transgender – Children can now be removed from parents in Canada and US if the parents do now accept a child's desire to be transgender

The Bible is clear that once Adam and Eve fell, man surrendered the title deed of the earth over to the fallen angel Lucifer (albeit temporarily). This is how Lucifer (titled *Satan the Accuser*) could legitimately offer Christ all the kingdoms of the world, because (according to Satan) *this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish (Luke 4:5-7)*. Jesus did not dispute this point when being offered the world. Instead, He rebuked Satan using Scripture...*Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'* (vs. 8)

Jesus acknowledges at present, the *ruler of this world* is coming. Paul calls him the 'god of this age,' who deceives and blinds the whole world. Peter calls him the "roaring lion" who walks about seeking whom he can destroy. John calls him the Antichrist but also acknowledges that 'many' antichrists have and will come as well. This is acknowledging, not only confirms, the physical manifestation of the coming Antichrist but also the power behind him (Satan), who leads the fallen armies of angelic principalities and powers in this world.

- Jn 14:30 I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, 31 but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.
- 2Co 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- Ep 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.
- Ep 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
- 1Pe 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
- 1Jn 2:18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. ... 22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.
- 2 Jn 1:7 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

What we are witnessing now in these final moments, is the hardening and quickening of this deception. It is being cemented into the minds of the unbelievers that anything and everything but the truth, is believable ([Romans 1:18-32](#)). While it is increasingly uncomfortable living in a world that is becoming more and more hostile to the truth of the Gospel, Jesus forewarned His disciples (and by extension us) that the world would come to view killing us as doing God's work ([John 16:2](#)). Jesus later explains that the final three churches addressed in *the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches* (Revelation 3), come to three different situations based on this demonic deception.

- Sardis Church: called the ‘dead’ church for their dead faith. They are rebuked for this and exhorted to “watch,” or they will be caught unaware of His coming. **Revelation 3:1-6**
- Philadelphian Church: refuses to give into the world, and as a result, has little strength. They have not denied His name and remain true to God’s word. For this, they receive no condemnation and will be delivered before the global hour of testing. **Revelation 3:7-13**
- Laodicean Church: given over to the world, acquires abundant luxuries, and claim they need nothing. In reality, they are poor, blind, and naked. They neither confirm nor deny anything that would cause them discomfort. Their lukewarmness makes Jesus nauseous. **Revelation 3:14-22**

Because the Laodicean church seemingly becomes the final, dominant face of Christendom on the earth, their refusal to stand up for the truth (i.e., lukewarmness) results in an explosion of apostasy. Countless false teachers, false prophets, and false *messiahs* arise due to the churches inability or unwillingness to stand for the truth, and millions are led astray.

- Mt 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
- Mt 24:4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.
- Mt 11:24 But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."
- 2Pe 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.
- Jude 1:4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Nephilim

One of the strong possibilities for the ‘strong delusion’ is the return of the Nephilim

- There has been a lot of alien activity lately
 - Uri Geller, the famous Israeli psychic, told us that the New Age would be ushered in through a crucible of change during which the entire world would experience unprecedented conflict and disaster. An advanced alien he called “IS” (Intelligence in the Sky) from a planet called “Hoova”, informed him that they had experienced the same crucible of change themselves and that they had been watching the human struggle for centuries. They would not interfere until, in a single night, at the peak of the conflict, they would remove millions of humans who resist this initiation into a higher spiritual consciousness and “re-educate” them before returning them to Earth a few years later.
 - Bringers of the Dawn: Teachings from the Pleiadians by Barbara Marciniak – The people who leave the planet during the time of Earth changes do not fit in here any longer, and they are stopping the harmony of Earth. When the time comes that perhaps 20 million people leave the planet at one time there will be a tremendous shift in consciousness for those who are remaining.
- This is what God had to say about them

Ge 6:1 When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. 3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

- The Nephilim descendants remain throughout Scripture as the giants

- Philistines (Goliath)
- Those in the promised land

Why is God going to send a strong delusion?

Answer: The Bible makes it clear why God is sending a strong delusion in the end times: “They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Simply put, God sends a strong delusion to those who chose not to believe the gospel of Christ. Those who take delight in mocking and rejecting Him, He will condemn.

It is man’s choice whether to accept and believe the truth of Jesus Christ as presented in the Scriptures. To receive the truth and the love God offers is in keeping with its teachings, “This is love for God: to obey His commands” (1 John 5:3). Conversely, to know the truth and not obey it is to face the wrath of God: “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness” (Romans 1:18). Frankly speaking, there is no more dangerous condition for man than to know the truth and refuse to obey it. To do so is to harden the heart and make God’s condemnation sure.

When one knows the truth and refuses to obey it, he is subject to any lie, any deception, any untruth that man can conjure up. “For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:21-22). Paul goes on in the next few verses to describe the mindset and behaviors of those who disbelieve (see Romans 1:29-31). As a result of man’s foolishness and his arrogant disdain of the things of God, “God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done” (Romans 1:28). And correspondingly, “Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them” (Romans 1:32).

Isaiah puts it succinctly: “They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations; so I [God] also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in My sight and chose what displeases Me” (Isaiah 66:3-4).

When men know the truth and refuse to receive it, when they refuse to obey it and hold it in unrighteousness, “they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:12 NLT).

“God is love” (1 John 4:16). He is not some cruel monster who deliberately and inwardly delights in preparing people for everlasting condemnation. But He earnestly and lovingly proclaims the gospel of Christ, “not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Throughout the Scriptures, God urges people to accept the truth. But when people reject Him and spurn His message, then—and not until then—God hardens them and turns them over to a deluded mind to wallow in their wickedness to their eternal damnation. This is what the Lord says about those who choose to reject the truth: “They greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the Lord does not accept them; He will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins” (Jeremiah 14:10).

Generation

- ❖ Luke 21:7 "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?" ...

29 He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. 30 When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. 31 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 "I tell you the truth, **this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.** 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

4 Possible definitions of a generation

- 40 years
 - 40 is a significant number in the Bible generally representing a generation
 - Nu 32: 13 So the Lord's anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them **wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation** that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone.
 - Many kings ruled for forty years and were considered a generation
- 70-80 years
 - Ps 90: 7 For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified.
8 You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.
9 For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh.
10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years,
Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
11 Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.
12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.
 - Joel 2:2 {The Day of the Lord} ...**A people come, great and strong,** The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations.
- 100 years
 - Ge 15:12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and **they will afflict them four hundred years.** 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But **in the fourth generation** they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."
- 120 years
 - Ge 6:3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."
 - It has been 120 Jubilees since Adam and Eve

Good will be evil and evil will be called good

- Is 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.
- 2Ti 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- Homosexuality is openly celebrated
- Islam proposes itself a 'religion of peace'
 - Despite very many well publicized articles of attacks & killings made around the world in the name of Islam
- Leftists Push 'Drag Queen Story Hour' For Public Schools, Libraries
 - "Can everyone say, 'When I grow up, I want to be a drag queen'?" -Drag Queen Lil Miss Hot Mess
 - Sick and tired of little boys rejecting tutus and little girls embracing Barbie, left-wing activists are pushing for American children to engage with drag queens in publicly funded schools and libraries.
 - San Francisco-based RADAR Productions and New York-based Feminist Press have teamed up to bring "Drag Queen Story Hour" to life, hoping to "defy rigid gender restrictions" while providing "unabashedly queer role models." As the campaign notes, Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) is exactly what it sounds like: local drag queens-decked out in over-the-top, loud clothing and glitter-reading feminist-inspired fairy tales to young children.
- Transgender Gives Birth - Now Womb Transplants For Men Are Next

- Trystan Reese, a transgender man living in Portland, Oregon, has given birth to a boy with his partner of seven years, Biff Chaplow. Their son, Leo Murray Chaplow, was born July 14. Reese, who was born female at birth, posted a video in March explaining his decision to carry a baby as a transgender man. "I'm OK with my body being a trans body," he said. "I'm OK being a man who has a uterus and has the capacity and capability of carrying a baby."
- However many transgender activists want to take the next step with womb transplants to enable anyone to have the ability to carry a baby. If a womb transplant is possible into a woman's body, medical science now knows of no reason why such a transplant should not be possible into a man's body as well.
- An expert on cutting edge reproduction procedures, Dr. Alghrani of Liverpool University's Health Law & Regulation Unit explained, in a recent interview, other ways in which the womb transplant procedure could stand reproductive science on its head. Not simply men who want to become women, but also gay men who want to experience childbirth, single men who receive donor eggs and then reproduce alone and even married heterosexual couples who want to share child-bearing roles, alternating between husbands and wives giving birth, perhaps with the same uterus.
- The concept of motherhood itself is under assault, a sentiment now being echoed by many all over the world. One such woman, Laura Perrins, a co-editor of *The Conservative Woman*, stated bluntly that male womb implantation "Will impinge on the meaning of motherhood and womanhood." The entire concept of gender is under attack through shifting pronouns, cosmetic surgeries and now the act of childbearing.

Homosexuality

20. Homosexuality will be rampant (Luke 17:28-29), Unprecedented moral decay (Romans 1:24); Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Lofven has announced he will force all Swedish clergy to endorse and perform gay marriages. Australia's Parliament voted overwhelmingly to legalize same-sex marriage in December, overcoming years of conservative resistance to enact change that the public had made clear that it wanted. The final approval in the House of Representatives, with just four votes against the bill, came three weeks after a national referendum showed strong public support for gay marriage. The new law expands on earlier legislation that provided equality to same-sex couples in areas like government benefits, employment and taxes, and it changes the definition of marriage from "the union of a man and a woman" to "the union of two people." It automatically recognizes same-sex marriages from other countries. Gay rights advocates praised the landmark vote even as they said it was long overdue. Gay sex in Vatican 'never been worse' than under Francis; ROME, July 11, 2017 (LifeSiteNews) -- Not only are gay-orgies happening in the Vatican, but the extent of homosexual activity in the Vatican under Pope Francis' watch has "never been worse," a reliable senior member of the Curia told National Catholic Register's Ed Pentin. Pentin wrote earlier this week that this Vatican Curia member confirmed to him that "multiple sources" within the Vatican, including another senior curial figure, say that the report of a drug-fueled gay orgy right next to St. Peter's is true. "He said the extent of homosexual practice in the Vatican has 'never been worse,' despite efforts begun by Benedict XVI to root out sexual deviancy from the curia after the Vatileaks scandal of 2012," Pentin wrote in his report. News recently broke of a high-ranking monsignor, Luigi Capozzi, who was allegedly arrested some two months ago in the act of hosting a cocaine-fueled homosexual orgy in an apartment of the Holy Office, the same building in which the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith operates. At the same time of the 2012 Vatileaks scandal - where leaked confidential Vatican correspondence allegedly revealed power struggles and intrigue at the highest levels of the Catholic church - a Polish priest released a paper in which he highlighted his discovery of what he called a "huge homosexual underground in the Church." Fr. Dariusz Oko said he first began to do research about external threats to Christianity, but then gradually discovered that the "enemy is not only outside the Church, but within it, as well." Oko said he uncovered homosexual cliques of clergy, even at the highest levels, that are formed by fear of exposure, lust for power, and money. "They know well, however, that they may be exposed and embarrassed, so they shield one another by offering mutual support. They build informal relationships reminding [one] of a 'clique' or even 'mafia,' [and] aim at holding particularly those positions which offer power and money," he wrote. "When they achieve a decision-making position, they try to promote and advance mostly those whose nature is similar to theirs, or at least who are known to be too weak to oppose them. This way, leading positions in the Church may be held by people suffering from deep internal wounds," he added. Oko said that once homosexual clergy achieve a "dominating position" in the Church's hierarchy, they become a "backroom elite" with "tremendous power in deciding about important nominations and the whole life of the Church." Among the rumors put forward at the time of Pope Benedict's decision to resign in 2013 was the revelation of the existence of an entrenched "gay network" that orchestrated "sexual encounters" and shady financial machinations within the Vatican. The Pope reportedly decided to resign the day he received a 300-page dossier compiled by three cardinals detailing the workings and sexual activities of a network of homosexual curial officials.

- Supporting scriptures
 - Ephesians 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.
 - Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - 1 John 3:7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. 10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.
 - Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Love for one another will grow cold

Matthew 24:12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

- GOP Baseball Game Shooting; House Republican Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., was among four wounded when a gunman opened fire on a House Republican charity baseball team as players practiced in Alexandria, Va.. Police killed the shooter, James Hodgkinson, 66, in a shootout following the attack. Hodgkinson had been a volunteer for Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders during the 2016 campaign and according to a witness had asked before the shooting whether the team practicing was the Republican team or the Democratic team. He fired 60 shots at the Republican players. Scalise was taken to a hospital in critical condition and, after a long recovery, returned to work on Sept. 28. Charlottesville Racial Tensions;
- White supremacists and neo-Nazis marching against the removal of a Confederate statue at a park clashed with antifa counterprotesters at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Va. A white supremacist killed one woman and injured 19 people when he drove his car into a crowd. Florida Drowning Video; A group of teenagers laughed and watched as a man struggled in the water of a pond. The man drowned, and his body was not found for days. The five teenagers did nothing to help him, not even call 911. The low-quality, 2.5-minute cellphone video was provided to The New York Times and also obtained by Florida Today. It shows a man flailing in the middle of a body of water as the teenagers describe his struggle and laugh at him from the shore. The teenagers are not visible. One of them, using an expletive, calls Mr. Dunn a junkie. Someone tells him not to expect any assistance: "Ain't nobody going to help you, you dumb bitch. You shouldn't have got in there," he says. Later, one of the teenagers appears to suggest that they call the police, only to be rejected by another. The police identified and met with all five, who ranged in age from 14 to 18. None appeared to show much emotion and were not remorseful. A 9-year-old autistic boy was left with a nail embedded into his skull after a group of bullies allegedly threw a wooden plank at him, his parents say. Romeo Smith's family told BBC News that the boy had been the target of older bullies for about a week before it escalated to the attack that left him injured on August 6. "As Romeo was walking away one of the lads came running up behind him and threw a bit of wood with a nail in it," said father Craig Smith, of Nottinghamshire, England. "I saw it just stuck there, in the back of his head and then Romeo started screaming and running towards me." About a one-inch

section of the nail embedded itself in the back of the boy's head with the wood still attached, the Daily Mail reported. The boy was rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors gave him morphine and removed the nail. His mother told the Daily Mail that the nail had bent slightly when it hit his skull.

Mocking and scoffing

- 2Pe 3:3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."
- Jude 1:17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 18 They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." 19 These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

One-World

Rev 13:7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. ... 16 He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, 17so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

One-World Government

- World without borders – Rush to Globalism
- Goes back to the tower of Babel
- The move, largely by the UN, toward a one-world government
- The decline of the US as a major world power
- Donald Trump is a Nationalist and has thrown a monkey-wrench into the plans of the Globalists
 - For a one-world government to succeed, they need the backing of the US
- Emmanuel Bonaparte: Macron declares that he will govern like a Roman God
- Paul Henry Spaak (Belgian Prime Minister) – What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the alliances of all people and lift us out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Be he god or devil, we will receive him. (NATO 1957)

Nimrod

- The one world idea was started by Nimrod – the great grandson of Noah – and the tower of Babel
- Nimrod's name means 'to rebel'
- Babel means 'the gateway of the gods'

Semiramis and Tammuz In the legend of Nimrod and his wife Semiramis, Nimrod was torn to pieces and although they found most of his body and cremated it only his reproductive organ was preserved. Following his death, Semiramis found she was pregnant. The child she bore was named Tammuz. Semiramis said Nimrod was the sun god and Tammuz was actually Nimrod reborn. Semiramis herself became known as Queen of Heaven and both she and Tammuz became the originators of the mother and child cult. The legend of Nimrod and Semiramis his wife and their son Tammuz moved across the Middle East and came to Egypt where they became the Egyptian sun god Osiris and his wife Isis; their son was named Horus. The legends of Nimrod, Semiramis and Tammuz are almost identical to Osiris, Isis and Horus. Both husbands died and the wife had a son following the husband's death, which they said was the husband Nimrod in Babylon and Osiris in Egypt. Both gods and both reborn in their son. Hence, the obelisks we see in Egypt and elsewhere are representations of Nimrod's/Osiris; the god's phallus.

10 Nations

Dan 2 & 7 – The revival of the Old Roman Empire in the form of a 10-nation confederacy

These 10 kings do not have a literal fulfillment in historic Rome

- The only way to say this has been fulfilled is to spiritualize these prophecies. Many, like Calvin, merely spiritualize.
 - Calvin insists that what happens in this chapter was fulfilled in history up into the time of Jesus' 1st advent
 - Supposes that the 10 horns merely represent a multiplicity of kings under the Roman emperor and
 - Believes that the conspicuous horn is Julius Caesar and the other Caesars who succeeded after him.
 - The books were opened (verse 10) refers to the preaching of the gospel
 - "We need not be too anxious about the number as we have already explained it" as merely denoting multiplicity
 - But who are we to spiritualize what God has said in at least 4 different places!
 - 10 kings are associated with the rule of this final world ruler
 - 10 toes (Dan 2)
 - 10 horns (Dan 7, Rev 13, Rev 17)
 - The same "spiritualizing" problems apply if one believes that this is fulfilled in the early church and the passing of the Roman Empire
 - Unlike Calvin, who saw fulfillment before the 1st advent of Jesus
- If they are literal, they are still in the future
 - The conspicuous horn must be the antichrist – arising out of a confederation of 10 nations which is in some way a revival of the Roman Empire

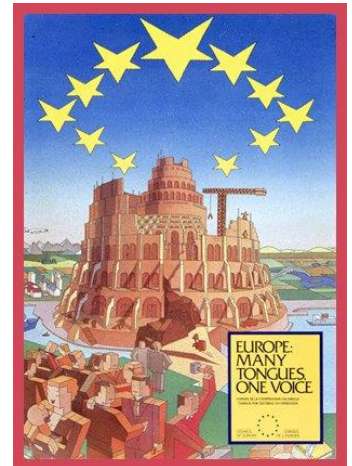
European Union



Tower of Babel (Peter Bruegel)



EU Building



EU Poster

BIBLICAL MODEL: The founders of the European Union (EU) used this picture of the Tower of Babel by renaissance painter Peter Bruegel on some of its posters over the years with the phrase in French "Many tongues, one voice." David Hathaway was told by a journalist that members of the European Parliament knew what the Tower of Babel was and what it meant.



WIDELY SYMBOLIC: The Women on the Beast sculpture is outside the front of the building of the Council of Ministers in Europe. It has also appeared on European bank notes and currency, but at national and European level and pieces of art featuring this image can be found on the Berlin Wall and in the parliaments of Brussels and Strasbourg.

IS there a spiritual side to the vigorous UK European Referendum debate that has been ignored due to it being a proverbial “elephant in the room”?

If it was the German empires who destroyed the Roman empire in the 5th Century in Europe, physically part of Babylon came to Germany. Is there a restored Roman empire as allegedly given to the prophet Daniel in the Biblical Old Testament? Surely this is a book for a Pixie in the sky and Aesop’s Fables, right?

‘EU uses biblical symbols’

If the EU meant to have a secular state, why would it openly used symbols based on an ancient biblical model which according to the scriptural text, are spiritually dark and end up being destroyed.

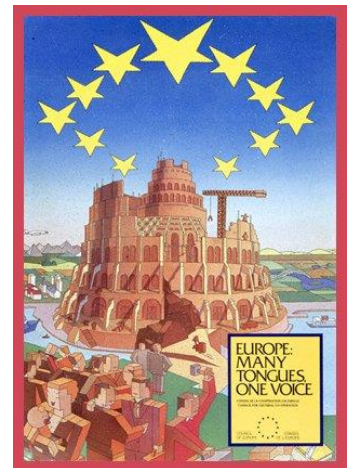
In a video called The Rape of Europa, David Hathaway explains the story of how Europe took his name and why there is a sculpture outside the Council of Ministers building in Brussels that has its symbol on coins and bank notes. Why is the building in Strasbourg meant to represent an unfinished building? This building is based on the painting of renaissance painter Peter Bruegel showing the Tower of Babel that shows an unfinished building. The Parliament Building looks like it is unfinished and has an uncanny resemblance to Bruegel’s masterpiece. It cost £8B and was finished in December 2000.

‘Many tongues, one voice’

They advertised based on the Peter Breughel painting of the Tower of Babel in 1563. On the slogan on the poster it says in French “many tongues, one voice” The 12 stars on the European flag are meant to signify the ‘Crown of Mary’, ‘Queen of Heaven’ but in Babylonian culture the title ‘Queen of Heaven’ was given the title of the earthly mother of Nimrod, builder of Babylon.

Jeremiah 7:18: The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes of bread for the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger.

Queen of Heaven was a title given to a number of ancient sky goddesses worshipped throughout the ancient Mediterranean and Near East during ancient times. Goddesses known to have been referred to by the title include Inanna, Anat, Isis, Astarte, and possibly Asherah.



Stars? Upside down. Not stars – pentagrams – demonic

‘Will EU get destroyed like blueprint?’

Did a previous Roman empire collapse because of its obsession with civil servants and dependence on its laws, structures and bureaucracy?

Was it destroyed by an accumulation of bureaucracy but the physical destruction of this empire came via the Germanic tribes of Europe but this happened in Europe, not Babylon, where all previous world empires crashed including the Greek and Mido-Persian empires?

In the Hathaway video whilst he was filming it, he says he asked a Strasbourg-born journalist if she understood the meaning of the tower. She said she did and she also confirmed that the members of the European Parliament also understood that it represented Babel from the Bible, and that the purpose of the European Union was to finish what Nimrud and the people together had failed to do some 3,500 years ago.

‘Do Parliament chiefs believe in Babel?’

So is the fictitious Bible is actually tacitly being acknowledged if members of the European Parliament are actually admitting that the Strasbourg Parliament is based on the Tower of Babel? In this debate, are we in denial there is a spiritual link when it is tacitly admitted?

Secondly there is a sculpture of “The Woman on the Beast” which is the main feature on the outside of the building of the Council of Europe in Brussels. It represents the Greek myth of the “Rape of Europa”, it is from this myth about the woman that the continent of Europe got its name from.

The ‘Woman On the Beast’ is mentioned twice in the Bible, in Revelation chapters 13 and 17 and the vision of the Beast is shown the vision of Daniel in the Old Testament in Daniel chapter 7.

‘Tower of Babel painting in EU Parliament’

The Parliaments of Strasbourg and Brussels also contain paintings of the “Woman on the Beast”. This symbol is openly used by member states of the European Union. This image can be found on Euro currency. There is an image of this symbol as a painting on the Berlin Wall done in 1979, and in 1984 the woman appeared on a British stamp commemorating the second set of European elections and she is on a painting in the airport lounge in Brussels.

The forehead of the name of this sculpture also has a second name “Mystery Babylon”. What was revealed in Revelation was a vision given to the writer of that book, John, but is this prophecy being fulfilled in Europe today? What does the powerful beast with horns represent?

‘Who is the bull with crescent-shaped horns?’

In Greek mythology the woman clung to the Father of the Gods, who had disguised himself as a bull with crescent-shaped horns. The symbol for the Middle-East god Baal as we know him today from archaeology and from scripture. Zeus or Jupiter, as we know him from Greek or Roman culture was – a bull with great, crescent-shaped horns. And the ruling God of ancient Babylon and the Middle East was the Moon God, again depicted as a bull with crescent horns.”

European Common Market

- The European Common Market may ultimately be this power



Confederation of Arab States (CAS)

- The Confederation of Arab States (CAS) is a political entity that unites the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire established in 1920, immediately after the end of the Arab Revolt and World War I.

One-World Religion

- The move, largely by the Pope, toward a one-world religion
 - See section under [Roman Catholicism: One-World Religion](#)
- Pope Francis – Very unconventional and popular – may be the False Prophet
 - Social justice
 - Charismatic and unconventional
 - Erdogan (Turkey) and Pope Francis have formed an unholy, anti-Trump alliance to control Jerusalem
- Rome very well may be mystery Babylon (though some think that it's Mecca, New York, Iraq, USA)
 - Rev 17
 - Catholic church has been the cause of much martyrdom in history (blood of the saints)
 - An official from the Columbia Catholic Church has stated that Pope Francis is 'paving the way for antichrist'

Ecumenism

- The term "ecumenism" refers to efforts by Christians of different church traditions to develop closer relationships and better understandings. The term is also often used to refer to efforts towards the visible and organic unity of different Christian denominations in some form.
- The adjective ecumenical can also be applied to any interdenominational initiative that encourages greater cooperation among Christians and their churches, whether or not the specific aim of that effort is full, visible unity. It can also be applied in the same way to other religions or to refer to unity between religions or between people in general - in this sense it means non-sectarian, non-denominational.
- The terms ecumenism and ecumenical come from the Greek οἰκουμένη (oikoumene), which means "the whole inhabited world", and was historically used with specific reference to the Roman Empire. The ecumenical vision comprises both the search for the visible unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:3) and the "whole inhabited earth" (Matthew 24:14) as the concern of all Christians.
- Right now there is a great move to wipe the word "protestant" out of Christianity.
 - The current thought is we should be one body with acceptance for all teaching and doctrine.
 - One of the biggest "coming together" promoters is TV evangelism.
 - The man in charge of one of the largest networks said he is wiping the word "protestant" out of his dictionary. We are all just one.
 - Another of these TV preachers traveled to a supposed viewing site of the Virgin Mary. He is of protestant denomination yet he indulged in Catholic Communion (by participating he committed heresy). On national Christian television he told the owner of the Christian network, "You know, I felt such a presence of God when I ate that bread". The owner replied, "I knew it. There is no difference. We are all one and I am knocking the word "protestant" out of my language." In other words, "I am getting into bed with the harlot".
- What will happen to him or anyone like him? The Bible tells us they are going to be cast into Great Tribulation. They will not be taken in the Rapture. They will be in bed with this harlot during the great tribulation. When we get to Revelation 17 and 18 we will see how she suffers. She will be raped and murdered by the ten kings. Her city is destroyed in a single day. You do not want to play around with Rome. The only way to escape this fate is to repent of Rome's deeds.

Coexist

Signify the capability or desire of humans to live together in peace.

C – Islamic crescent moon
O – Peace sign
E – Hindu Om symbol
X – Star of David
I – Pentagram for the dot of the "I"
S – Yin-yang symbol
T – Christian cross



One-World Economy – Mark of the Beast

Rev 13:16 He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, 17so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

- Expanding Worldwide Trend - National Biometric Database.
 - Russia is to start a biometric database for financial services starting next summer, the Central Bank of Russia said in a statement. The biometric database will incorporate images of faces, voice samples and, eventually, irises and fingerprints. Russia isn't the only country planning to implement a biometric database.
 - China has also turned its nation into George Orwell's nightmare. China's Ministry of Public Security, which oversees the database, has amassed biometric information for more than 40 million people it was reported in 2015. The Communist country has the world's biggest database of DNA information according to a report published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) just this year. For comparison, in the US, the FBI's national DNA index has 12.7 million offender profiles. "Mass DNA collection by the powerful Chinese police absent effective privacy protections or an independent judicial system is a perfect storm for abuses," Sophie Richardson, China director at HRW said. "China is moving its Orwellian system to the genetic level." A follow-up report published earlier this month by the human rights watchdog group revealed that there was even a program which has gathered biometric data--including fingerprints, iris scans, blood-type, and DNA--on millions of residents in six regions in Xinjiang in 2017 under the guise of a free public health program providing physical examinations.
 - Here in the U.S. the DHS is planning a biometric facial recognition database for border checkpoints and to create the Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology (HART) to store 500 million people, including many US citizens' identities within its system. HART will no doubt link into the FBI's NGI (Next Generation Identification System.) The Electronic Frontier Foundation is currently working with allied organizations to oppose mandatory national ID cards and biometric databases.
 - According to EFF's website, there is an expanding list of countries that have introduced biometric ID databases including Argentina, Belgium, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Peru, and Spain. That list will soon include Russia, the U.S., and other countries within the European Union. Privacy will cease to exist and it will be a thing of the past.
- Three Square Market, Wisconsin - A highly publicized article in 2017 illustrated how some companies are offering their employees an implantable chip the size of a grain of rice (micro-chipping) to be placed in their hand. This is to enable the employee building access and to make purchases in the cafeteria. The company promises to not use the chip for employee geo-locating purposes outside of the work environment. These technological developments have profound implications for a one-world government and economic system. The idea of micro-chipping was so acceptable that people will soon be eager to micro-chipped, as if the device were as cool as new smart phone. It is forecasted that many people around the world will think nothing of accepting this technology into their bodies to enable global commerce.
- INDIA'S BIOMETRIC ID PROGRAM – Nearly three years ago Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced his "Digital India" initiative, pitched as a program to modernize this country of more than 1 billion people. Undergirding the initiative is Aadhaar, an identification program that aims to collect each Indian citizen's information. But the program has become increasingly troublesome, posing privacy issues and preventing thousands of people from receiving basic entitlements, such as food rations, pensions and fuel subsidies.
- Facial recognition CCTV cameras in China's biggest city, Beijing, illustrates how effective a surveillance network is at identifying, tracking, and interdicting any targeted or wanted individual within minutes. All the more unnerving is China's progress in developing a system of ranking individuals based on a citizen score linking social media and big data to create a digital caste system for human beings. Something akin to a credit score showing your loyalty to the state.

- China Assigns Every Citizen A ‘Social Credit Score’ To Identify Who Is And Isn’t Trustworthy – A fluctuating rating based on a range of behaviors. It’s believed that community service and buying Chinese-made products can raise your score. Fraud, tax evasion and smoking in non-smoking areas can drop it. They use data to monitor and rank the behavior of its citizens, rewarding those that score high and punishing those that score low. Under the system, the elite will gain access to better social privileges and those who rank closer to the bottom will effectively be second-class citizens. By 2020, the scheme is set to become mandatory for all 1.4 billion of China’s citizens.

Millennial Kingdom

Descriptions of the millennium

- ❖ Is 65:20 "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. 21 They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands.
- ❖ Is 11:6 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. 9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.
- ❖ Rev 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.
- ❖ Rev 20 Satan's Doom - 7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. 9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.
- ❖ Rev 20 The Dead Are Judged – 11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

7000 year plan of God

Creation (4000BC) to 2000BC = Time of the Fathers (2000 years)
 Abraham (2000BC) to 2BC = Time of the Jews (2000 years)
 Christ Jesus (2BC) to 2000AD = Time of Christ and the Church (2000 years)
 Second Coming (2000?) = Start of Millennium Rest (1000 years)

7 = completion

1 Day = 1000 Years

- ❖ 2Pe 3:8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.
- ❖ Ps 90:4 For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.
- ❖ Hos 6:1 "Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. 2 After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.
 - Jews are now poised, 2000 years after Christ, to be restored

The Rest

The millennium is referred to as 'the rest' - 7th Day rest

- ❖ Ge 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Ge 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.
- ❖ Ez 37:21 ... "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. 22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. 23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

Peace and bounty

The 3rd prophecy of Baalam gives us a brief glimpse of the redeemed Jews dwelling in peace and bounty as the exalted nation of the Millennium

- ❖ Nu 24:5 "How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel! 6 "Like valleys they spread out like gardens beside a river, like aloes planted by the LORD, like cedars beside the waters. 7 Water will flow from their buckets; their seed will have abundant water. "Their king will be greater than Agag; their kingdom will be exalted.

Ezekiel's temple

Ezekiel was born into the priestly line (Ezekiel 1:3), but he served God as a prophet. In Ezekiel 40–48 Ezekiel sees a detailed vision of a grand and glorious temple. This lengthy vision has been the subject of much speculation and various interpretations through the years.

Ezekiel began his prophetic ministry before Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC. Prior to the destruction, many false prophets assured the people that God was with them and that nothing would happen to them (Ezekiel 13:8–16). True prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel warned the people that God's judgment was coming (Ezekiel 2:3–8). In Ezekiel 8–11, the prophet sees the glory of God leaving the temple.

Ezekiel was taken into exile to Babylon, probably in the second deportation of Jews, in 597 BC. In exile, he encouraged Israel that judgment would not last forever, but that God would restore Israel and once again live among them. In Ezekiel 37 he relates the vision of "The Valley of Dry Bones," in which he describes the reunification and reanimation of a dead

Israel. In chapters 38–39, Ezekiel predicts a battle with Gog and Magog, in which Israel’s enemies are defeated. Then, in chapters 40–48, in the twenty-fifth year of Israel’s captivity, Ezekiel describes an enormous new temple (chapters 40–42). The glory of God returns (chapter 43), sacrifices are resumed (chapters 44–46), and the land is restored to the people of Israel (47–48). The hearts of the people will have been changed (Ezekiel 36:26–27), and even Gentiles have a place in the restored kingdom (Ezekiel 47:22). The land will be ruled by a Davidic Prince (Ezekiel 44:3; see also 37:24–25; 34:23–24).

In his vision of the temple, Ezekiel is taken to Israel where he sees a mountain and a city. He is met by “a man whose appearance was like bronze; he was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand” (Ezekiel 40:3). The man tells Ezekiel to pay careful attention to everything he sees and hears and to relate all the details to God’s people (verse 4). The measuring of the layout of the temple complex fills the next three chapters of Ezekiel.

The question is when and how will the vision of Ezekiel’s temple be fulfilled? Should we look for a literal fulfillment? Or is this vision symbolic of the future perfection God’s presence among His people? Has it already been fulfilled? Or is the fulfillment still future? If Ezekiel’s temple is future, will it be fulfilled in the church age, the millennium, or in the eternal state? The answers to these questions will be determined, most likely, by the interpreter’s presuppositions regarding the literal or symbolic nature of prophecy and fulfillment.

Arguing for a literal fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel’s temple are the numerous details of Ezekiel’s vision and the specific dimensions of the temple. If the vision is to be literally fulfilled, then the fulfillment must be future, for nothing like what is described in Ezekiel 40–48 has taken place up to this point. The dimensions of Ezekiel’s temple are far larger than the temple in Jesus’ day, and that temple was a grand structure.

Most who expect a literal fulfillment of Ezekiel’s temple expect it to be erected in the millennial kingdom, a 1000-year reign of Christ upon the earth. During the millennium, glorified saints from the present age will live in contact with natural human beings who will still need to make a decision for Christ in order to be saved—and many will choose not to trust Him. The sacrificial system described in Ezekiel cannot be for the forgiveness of sins, for Christ has accomplished that once and for all (Hebrews 10:1–4, 11–14). In this interpretive approach, the sacrifices are seen as memorials of Christ’s death or as rites for the ceremonial cleansing of the temple, but not as a means to forgive sins.

In the figurative view of Ezekiel’s temple, the prophet’s vision simply reiterates that God will once again dwell with His people in a perfect relationship. This relationship is described in the language that the people of the day (and especially for Ezekiel as a priest) would have understood—a Jewish temple of magnificent proportions, with regular, perfect sacrifices, with the Messiah presiding, and with the glory of God visibly evident. In later visions to other prophets, God revealed more about how He would accomplish this with the Messiah Himself replacing the temple, the sacrifices, and the land. The presence of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would be more immediately evident than ever before. The fulfillment of Ezekiel’s temple could thus be realized in the church age to some degree and, in the age to come, to perfection.

Regardless of which approach is taken, the vision of Ezekiel’s temple says that God has not forsaken His people and that His relationship with them will be restored and elevated to a new, never-before-conceived glory and intimacy. Present circumstances should never cause one to doubt the promises of God.

Nile and Euphrates will dry up

The Nile And The Euphrates Are Drying Up – An Inevitable Famine Is Plaguing The Muslim World

The Nile and the Euphrates, both are in the news and both are in the Bible:

- Nile drying in Egypt
- Euphrates drying up in Iraq
- The Euphrates River and the Nile, both on the news and both are predicted in the Bible to dry up causing cataclysmic events on the nations that depend on them. The Bible predicts that the Euphrates will stop the flow of water so that 200 million man army enters to make its way to invade Jerusalem and how the Aswan Dam in Egypt will be completely destroyed.

- It becomes clear then that a major drought while it effects the world, it concentrates primarily the Muslim world.
- In this month's issue of the Journal of the AWWA (3/23/15), US water management expert Roger Patrick assesses the state of the scientific literature on water scarcity in all the world's main regions, finding that local water shortages are now having "more globalised impacts".

Tigris-Euphrates basin

- Tigris-Euphrates basin comprises Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and western Iran
- Experts tell us that the Tigris-Euphrates basin comprising Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and western Iran is in great threat.
- Between 2003 and 2009, the Tigris-Euphrates basin "lost groundwater faster than any other place in the world except northern India".

The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, originating in Turkey and cutting through both Syria and Iraq, have experienced drastic reductions in water flows in recent years due, primarily, to Turkish hydro-engineering and regional droughts. This is of significance for Iraq, which has historically prospered because of the rich agricultural harvests based on water supplies sourced from these waterways. Turkish initiatives aimed at massively expanding their exploitation of the water from the two rivers have coincided with severe droughts in the region and resulted in a burgeoning water-shortage crisis in Iraq. This problem threatens an environmental catastrophe. Political negotiations between the three countries have so far fallen short of reaching agreement on providing the necessary increases in flow rates to address the deteriorating situation in Iraq.

Approximately 90% of the water flow in the Euphrates and 50% in the Tigris originate in Turkey. Since 1975, Turkey's extensive dam and hydropower construction has reportedly reduced water flows into Iraq (by 80%) and Syria (by 40%). Low flow rates in Iraq have allowed salt water to infiltrate nearly 150km inland from the Persian Gulf. Lack of international agreement is hampering progress on a deal between Turkey, Iraq and Syria. Turkey has accused Iraq of poor water management practices, which, it says, are exacerbating Iraq's water crisis. Tensions between these countries remain high because of the issue of water management.

Saddam Hussein's government water-control projects drained the inhabited marsh areas east of An Nasiriyah by drying up or diverting streams and rivers. In 1994, 60 percent of the wetlands were destroyed by Hussein's regime – drained to permit military access and greater political control of the native Marsh Arabs. Canals, dykes and dams were built routing the water of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers around the marshes, instead of allowing water to move slowly through the marshland. After part of the Euphrates was dried up due to re-routing its water to the sea, a dam was built so water could not back up from the Tigris and sustain the former marshland.

The Nile – Egypt

Egypt has long worried – with good reason – that upstream water development in Ethiopia would cut off some of its lifeline. Egyptian leaders from Anwar Sadat to Mohammed Morsi have warned of going to war over water if the nation's supplies became threatened.

A stumbling block to equitable water-sharing in the basin is a 1959 treaty between Muslim Egypt and Muslim Sudan that allocated the entire flow of the Nile to just those two Muslim countries, even though 84 percent of the river's flow originates in Christian Ethiopia. Not surprisingly, Ethiopia never recognized the legitimacy of that agreement. But for decades it had neither the political stability nor the financial means to undertake the kind of large-scale water development that would challenge Egypt's historic claims to the river

That situation changed in 2011 when Egypt was preoccupied with the Arab Spring and the fall of the Mubarak government, Christian Ethiopia announced that it would begin construction of a massive dam on the Blue Nile near the border with Sudan.

Egypt is dependent on continued flow, but Ethiopia's dam would give the country the ability to all but cut off the flow of the Blue Nile, which supplies 85 percent of water to the Nile Valley. This will starve all of Egypt's 82 million population.

Ez 30:12 I will dry up the streams of the Nile and sell the land to evil men; by the hand of foreigners I will lay waste the land and everything in it. I the LORD have spoken.

Is 19 - A Prophecy About Egypt

1 An oracle concerning Egypt: See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. 2 "I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian— brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. ... 4 I will hand the Egyptians over to the power of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them," declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty. 5 The waters of the river will dry up, and the riverbed will be parched and dry. 6 The canals will stink; the streams of Egypt will dwindle and dry up. The reeds and rushes will wither, 7 also the plants along the Nile, at the mouth of the river. Every sown field along the Nile will become parched, will blow away and be no more. 8 The fishermen will groan and lament, all who cast hooks into the Nile; those who throw nets on the water will pine away.

- Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
 - Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi signed agreement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will be a burden on Egypt.
 - Controlling the Nile has dire consequences on agriculture and experts predict famine is on the horizon.
- The Bible also predicted that a war will erupt where Muslim nations will invade Israel, not just over the issue of Jerusalem but over the issue of food (Ezekiel 38:13) and that the price of wheat will skyrocket "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius ..." (Revelation 6:6)

Peace and Safety

1Th 5:1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

- The United Nations came into being in 1945, following the devastation of the Second World War, with one central mission: the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN does this by working to prevent conflict; helping parties in conflict make peace; peacekeeping; and creating the conditions to allow peace to hold and flourish.
- Trump: And we have laid out a pathway toward peace and security in our world

Prepping

What does the Bible say about preparing?

- Mt 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"
- Ge 6:21 You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

There are Biblical arguments both for and against. Bottom line – prep if you want to, but share what you have when the time is needed.

Mt 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Promises to the church

- ❖ Mt 16:18 (TPT) I give you the name Peter, a stone. And this truth of who I am will be the bedrock foundation on which I will build my church—my legislative assembly, and the power of death will not be able to overpower it! 19 I will give you the keys of heaven's kingdom realm to forbid on earth that which is forbidden in heaven, and to release on earth that which is released in heaven." 20 He then gave his disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was God's Anointed One.

- We can not lose our salvation – the gates of hell will not prevail against us (the church)

- ❖ Ep 1:17 (NKJV) I pray that the Father of glory, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, would impart to you the riches of the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of revelation to know him through your deepening intimacy with him.

18 I pray that the light of God will illuminate the eyes of your imagination, flooding you with light, until you experience the full revelation of the hope of his calling—that is, the wealth of God's glorious inheritances that he finds in us, his holy ones!

19 I pray that you will continually experience the immeasurable greatness of God's power made available to you through faith. Then your lives will be an advertisement of this immense power as it works through you! This is the mighty power 20 that was released when God raised Christ from the dead and exalted him to the place of highest honor and supreme authority in the heavenly realm! 21 And now he is exalted as first above every ruler, authority, government, and realm of power in existence! He is gloriously enthroned over every name that is ever praised, not only in this age, but in the age that is coming!

22 And he alone is the leader and source of everything needed in the church. God has put everything beneath the authority of Jesus Christ[ac]and has given him the highest rank above all others. 23 And now we, his church, are his body on the earth and that which fills him who is being filled by it!

- God brought us back, not as servants, but as sons (prodigal son)

- ❖ Jn 8:47 (NKJV) He who is of God hears God's words;
- ❖ Jn 8:51 (NKJV) Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.
- ❖ Jn 16:27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.
- ❖ Jn 14:17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.
- ❖ Jn 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.

Visual – Marriage

- ❖ Ep 5:21 submitting to one another in the fear of [f]God.
 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.
 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 **“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”** 32 **This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.** 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
- ❖ Mt 9:15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.
- ❖ Rev 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

Signs in Nature

Isiah foretold of the destruction of the earth: Isiah 24: The LORD's Devastation of the Earth

Signs in the Sun, Moon and Stars

Genesis 1 ¹⁴ Then God said, “Let there be **lights in the firmament of the heavens** to divide the day from the night; and **let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;** ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. ¹⁶ Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made the stars also.*

The Meanings of The Words "SEASONS" & "SIGNS" in The Bible:

- The basic meaning of the Hebrew word translated “*seasons*” in Genesis 1:14 and Leviticus 23:4 is “*set time*” or “*time appointed*” and it is translated as such. In Leviticus 23:4 it is translated both as “*feasts*” and “*seasons*” in the same verse.
 - Lev 23:4 ‘These *are* the *feasts* of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their *appointed times*.
 - Psalms 104:19 He appointed the moon for *seasons*; The sun knows its going down.
 - Daniel 11:35 And *some* of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify *them*, and make *them* white, *until* the time of the end; because *it is* still for the *appointed time*.
 - Psalms 102:13 You will arise *and* have mercy on Zion; For the time to favor her, Yes, *the set time*, has come.

- The Hebrew word translated "*signs*" in Genesis 1:14 (see top left of page) is found in 77 verses of the Old Testament. It can be a man made banner or ensign, natural phenomenon such as a rainbow or miraculous signs. **It is a signal, a distinguishing mark, a warning, or proof of something; it is one thing that points to or signifies something else.**
 - Genesis 9:13 I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the *sign* of the covenant between Me and the earth.
 - Genesis 17:11 This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a *sign* of the covenant between Me and you.
 - Exodus 4:8 "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first *sign* [a rod that turned to a serpent], that they may believe the message of the latter *sign*. [Moses' hand that turned white] 9 And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two *signs*, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour *it* on the dry *land*. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry *land*."
 - Exodus 7:3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My *signs* and My wonders in the land of Egypt.
 - Exodus 12:13 Now the blood shall be a *sign* for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.
 - Jeremiah 10:2 Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the *signs* of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.
 - Ps 65:8 They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of Your *signs*;

Lk 21 ²⁵ "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶ men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Revelation 12 sign – September 23, 2017

The sun, moon and stars were given to us to be signs (Ge 1:14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,).

Revelation 12 details a very specific celestial event that occurs on September 23, 2017. Revelation 12 also describes one of the rapture scenarios (child is caught up to God) and 7 year tribulation when Satan will have full dominion over the earth (after the war in heaven, Satan and his angels are hurled down to the earth where they make war against it's inhabitants). Read Revelation 12.

This information has been sealed up until the time of the end (Dan 12:9). Only now do we have the technology (computer software) to know when this will happen. Since she will be 'clothed in the sun', we will not actually see it. Only now, in the time of the end, do we know that it is happening.

The last time that this sign appeared was 2000 years ago at the conception of Jesus in September of 3 BC (as seen from Babylon). See Star of Bethlehem <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGUIWa2r-bk&t=9s>.

This is the sign of the Son of Man - Jesus is coming back!

US total solar eclipse – August 21, 2017

Americans donned special glasses to witness the first total solar eclipse in the 48 contiguous states since 1979. The path of the total eclipse ran from Oregon southeast across the country to South Carolina. It has also been determined that the US will receive another total solar eclipse in exactly 7 years. The two eclipses will form a perfect 'X' across the US.

3 blue moons in succession (2017-2018)

The Dec. 3 full moon is the first of three consecutive supermoons, including a lunar eclipse. The other supermoons will happen on Jan. 1 and end with a super Blue Blood Moon on January 31, 2018. Supermoons occur when the moon is closer to the earth in its rotation, making it appear bigger than usual. The moon will appear up to 14 percent bigger and 30 percent brighter. The moon appears blue due to Earth's dark shadow. These unique astronomical occurrences have some religious leaders speculating that they could be prophetic signs.

Booms/trumpet sounds heard throughout the world

Reports continue to emerge of booming sounds of mysterious origin echoing from the sky, from Colorado and Alabama to the Middle East, United Kingdom and Australia, according to News Corp Australia. A recent example occurred in Alabama, when a thunderous noise shook houses and frightened residents on Nov. 20. Other booms around the world, like the one in Alabama, remain unexplained. Locals in Cairns, Australia, were shaken by a loud rumble on Oct. 10. Then two weeks later, another boom was heard over the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. Other mysterious sounds have been heard in as far reaching places as Michigan and Yorkshire, U.K. The strange sounds from the sky started back in 2008, are increasing and still being recorded today on videos by people all around the world. Some vary in intensity. Some resemble a loud engine, a rumbling, the slamming metallic door or even a lightning strike, others more like a groaning. So far scientists have not been able to give us a definitive explanation for the source of these strange noises.

Escalating Birth Pains

Mt 24: 3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" 4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ, ' and will deceive many. 6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

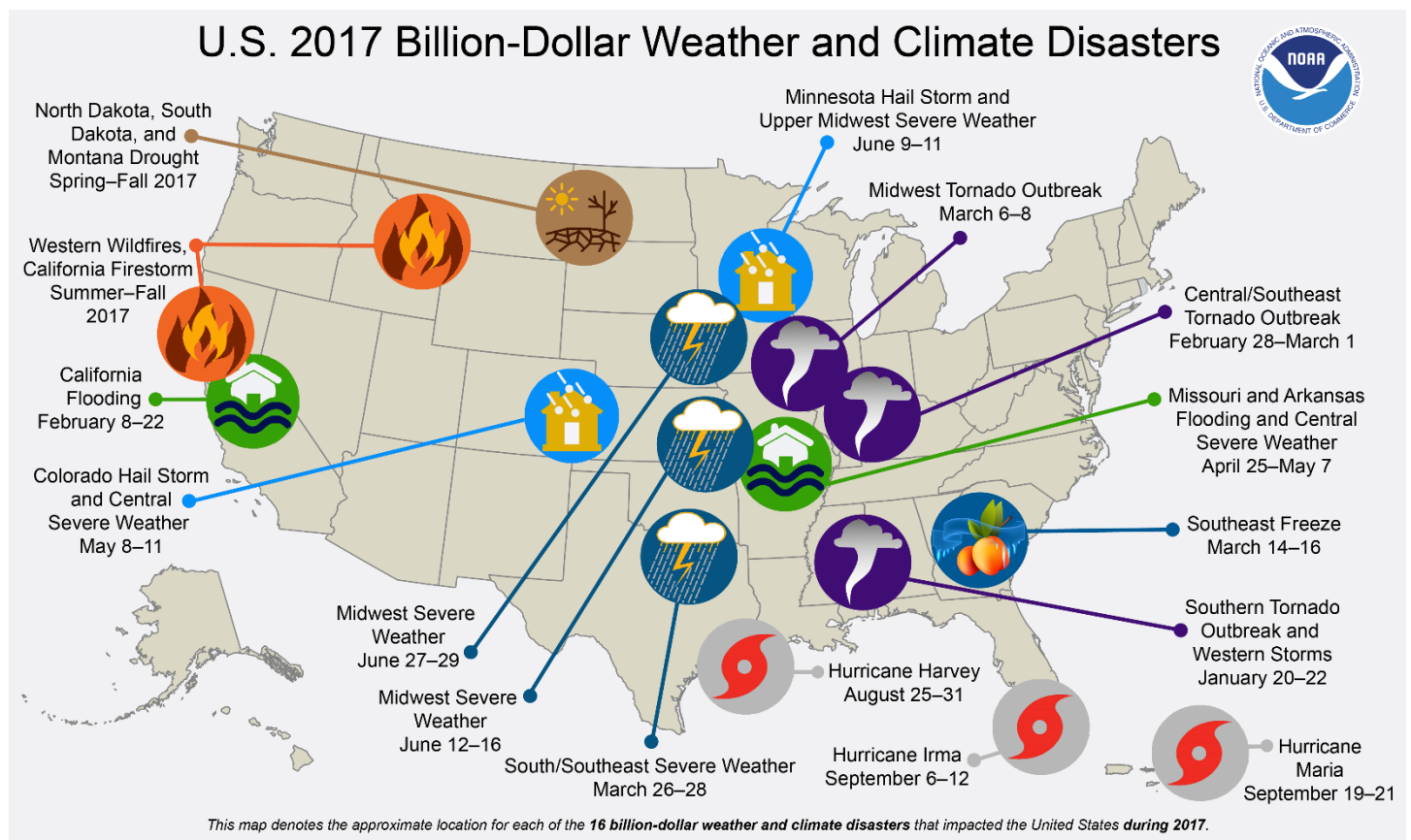
Lk 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the

heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

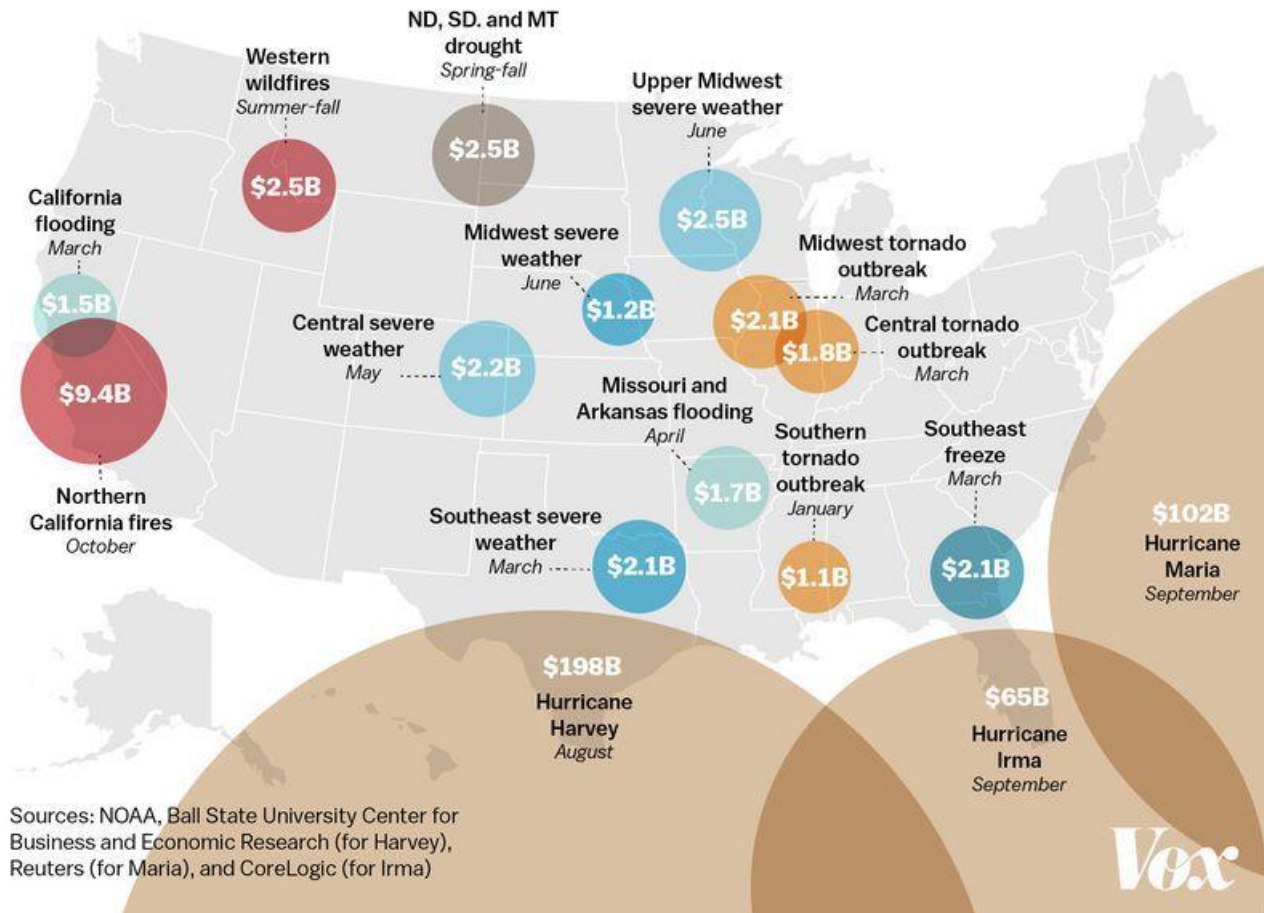
The frequency and intensity of these end-times signs are increasing rapidly.

Jesus told us that we are to watch for general indicators that will be a signal to Christians that we are, indeed, in the end times and that the rapture is near.

- Economic losses from natural disasters since 2000 are over \$2.5 trillion, a figure at least 50% higher than previous international estimates
- The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction warned in a 246-page report that economic losses from floods, earthquakes and drought will continue to escalate.
- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon launched the report saying the review of disaster losses in 56 countries clearly demonstrates "economic losses from disasters are out of control"
- A new global risk model developed by the UN office demonstrates that average losses just from earthquake and cyclonic wind damage are expected to be about \$180 billion per year throughout this century – and this figure doesn't include damage from floods, landslides, fires and storms.

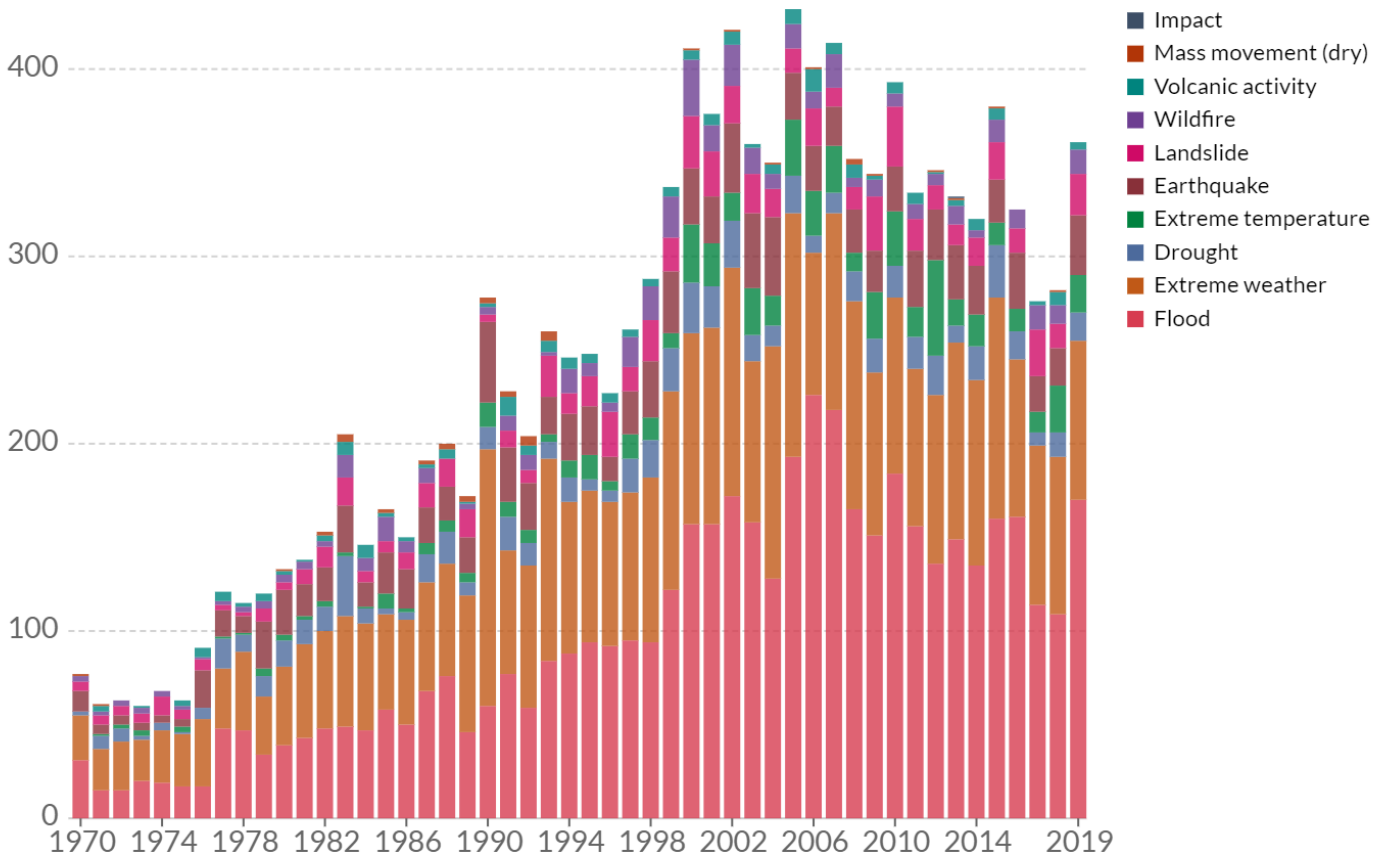


Billion-dollar disasters of 2017 in the US



Global reported natural disasters by type, 1970 to 2019

The annual reported number of natural disasters, categorised by type. This includes both weather and non-weather related disasters.



Source: EMDAT (2020): OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database, Université catholique de Louvain – Brussels – Belgium

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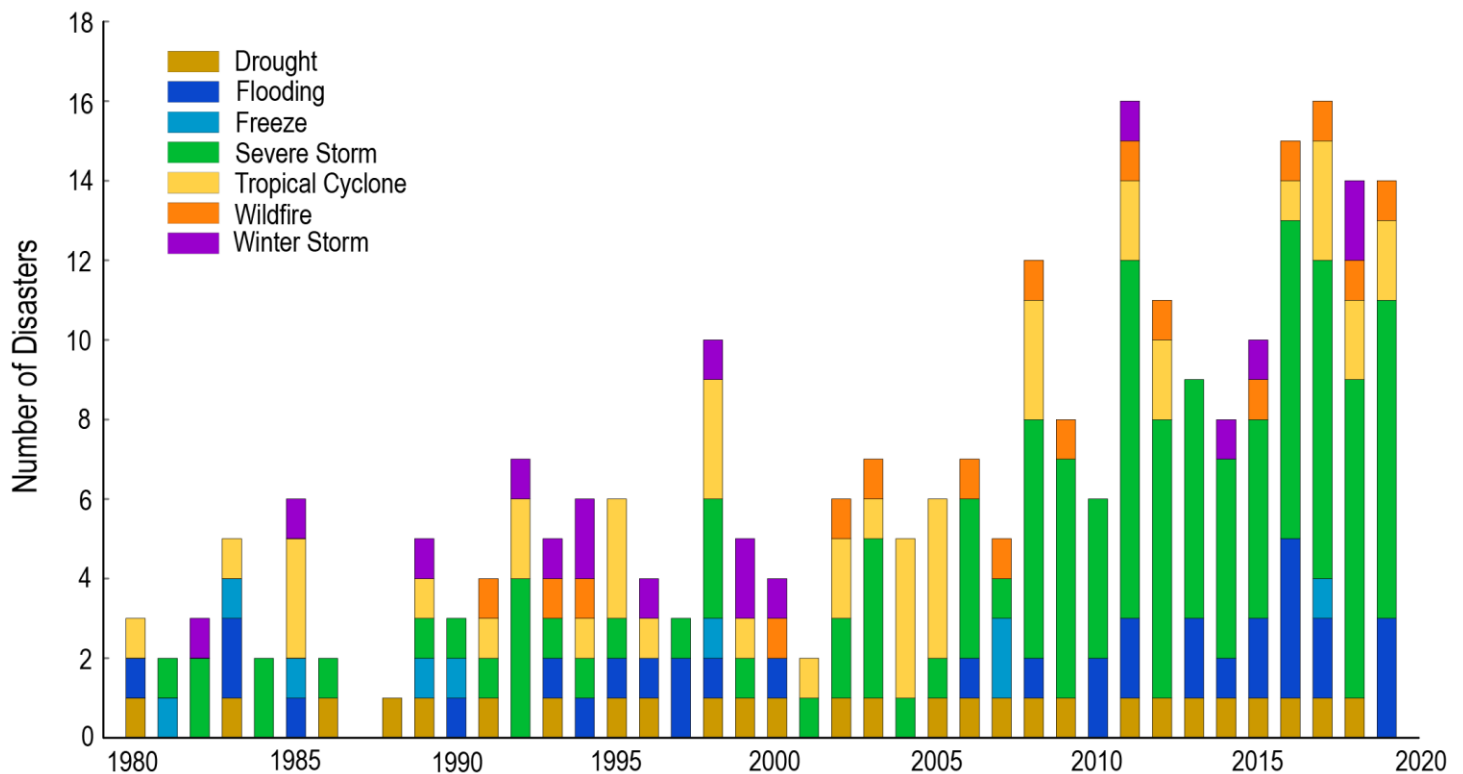
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U.S. Billion-Dollar Disaster Event Types by Year



Earthquakes

Earthquakes will increase in frequency and intensity and will be occurring globally. Since the year 2000, there has been a very clear upward trend in the number of major earthquakes.

10. Great Earthquakes in diverse places (Luke 21:11); Mexico City experienced two major earthquakes, back to back. This first earthquake registered 8.2, killed 98 people and affected more than 1.5 million people. The second earthquake was in and around Mexico City. It registered 7.1, killed 370 people and collapsed more than 40 buildings. Yellowstone, A 7.3 magnitude in Iran near the Iraq border killed more 630 people. As of November, 2017, a total of 12,527 earthquakes around the world were registered by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). 2017 earthquakes by magnitude include 1 (8.0-8.9), 6 (7.0-7.9), 106 (6.0-6.9), 1,424 (5.0-5.9), 10,990 (4.0-4.9). Combined, all these earthquakes have killed 1,232 people. The earthquake swarm at Yellowstone National Park super volcano is now one of the longest ever recorded. Almost 2,500 earthquakes have been recorded in the western part of the national park. Scientists are warning there could be a big increase in numbers of devastating earthquakes around the world in 2018. They believe variations in the speed of Earth's rotation could trigger intense seismic activity, particularly in heavily populated tropical regions. The link between Earth's rotation and seismic activity was highlighted by Roger Bilham of the University of Colorado in Boulder and Rebecca Bendick of the University of Montana in Missoula who presented their findings at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America. "The correlation between Earth's rotation and earthquake activity is strong and suggests there is going to be an increase in numbers of intense earthquakes next year".

End-time references to earthquakes:

- ❖ Isaiah 24:19-20 The earth is broken asunder, The earth is split through, The earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard And it totters like a shack, For its transgression is heavy upon it, And it will fall, never to rise again.
- ❖ Isaiah 29:6 From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, With whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.

- ❖ Ezekiel 38:19-20 "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. "The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground.
- ❖ Nahum 1:5 Mountains quake because of Him And the hills dissolve; Indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, The world and all the inhabitants in it.
- ❖ Zechariah 14:5 You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!
- ❖ Matthew 24:7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.
- ❖ Mark 13:8 "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.
- ❖ Luke 21:11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.
- ❖ Revelation 6:12 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. 14 The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.
- ❖ Revelation 8:5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.
- ❖ Revelation 11:13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.
- ❖ Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.
- ❖ Rev 16:17 The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. 19 The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. 20 Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found.

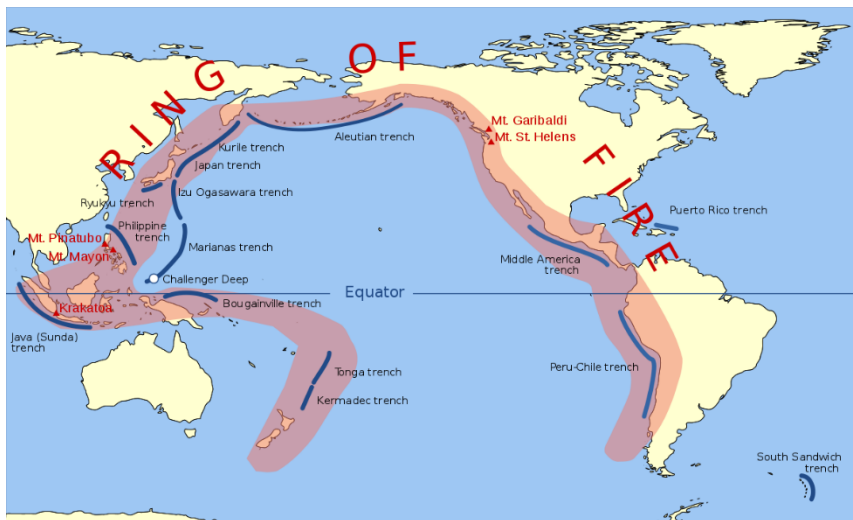
Other Biblical references to earthquakes:

- ❖ Amos 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.
- ❖ 1 Samuel 14:15 And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling.
- ❖ Acts 16:26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.
- ❖ Psalm 75:3 "The earth and all who dwell in it melt; It is I who have firmly set its pillars. Selah.
- ❖ Psalm 46:2-3 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah.
- ❖ Psalm 77:18 The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook.

- ❖ Exodus 19:18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.
- ❖ Numbers 16:31-32 As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions.
- ❖ Judges 5:5 "The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD, This Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel.
- ❖ 2 Samuel 22:8 "Then the earth shook and quaked, The foundations of heaven were trembling And were shaken, because He was angry.
- ❖ Psalm 18:7 Then the earth shook and quaked; And the foundations of the mountains were trembling And were shaken, because He was angry.
- ❖ 1 Kings 19:11-12 So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD " And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.
- ❖ Matthew 28:2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.
- ❖ Matthew 27:54 Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

- Ring of Fire

- About 90% of all earthquakes and 75% of all volcanic eruptions occur along the Ring of Fire
- The “Big One” in CA is a near 100% certainty in the near future
- Many places along this Ring of Fire have seen historic earthquakes in the past few years – Japan, Chile, Indonesia, New Zealand, Costa Rica



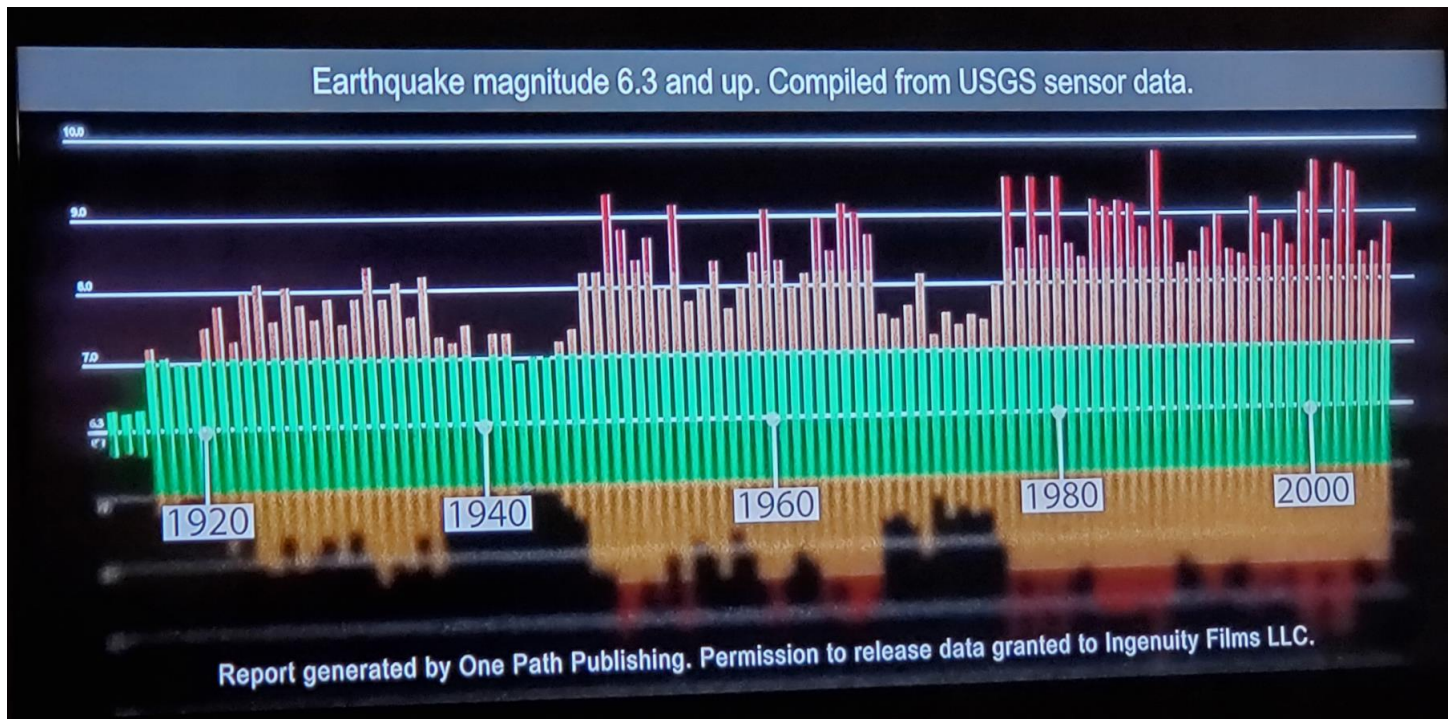
Killer Magnitude Earthquakes

Year
 1899
 1910
 1930
 1940
 1970
 1980
 1989

1994

2004

2014



Volcanic Eruptions

11. Great fearful sights in diverse places - Volcanoes (Luke 21:11):December, 2017, there are 36 continuously erupting volcanoes worldwide and 50 volcanoes that have an issued warning due to minor activity. Out of an estimated 1,500 active volcanoes, 50 or so erupt every year, spewing steam, ash, toxic gases, and lava. In 2017, erupting volcanoes included Shiveluch in Russia, Villarrica in Chile, Mount Sinabung and Mount Agung in Indonesia, Turrialba in Costa Rica, Piton de la Fournaise on Réunion Island, Kilauea on Hawaii, Popocatepetl and Volcán de Colima in Mexico, Bogoslof Volcano in Alaska, Manaro Voui in Vanuatu, Mount Etna in Sicily, and more. On the Indonesian island of Bali, a volcano called Mount Agung is spewing ash 5.5 miles into the sky, causing flight cancellations and trapping thousands of tourists and locals on the island, even as the potential for a bigger eruption looms. Bali's international airport closure stranded close to 60,000 passengers and more than 100,000 people near the volcano were told to evacuate as explosions were heard more than 7 miles away.

Joel 2:30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

- Volcanic activity has been increasing at an alarming rate in frequency and intensity.
 - The number of volcanoes that are erupting continue to rise and scientists cannot seem to explain why this is happening.
 - It is highly unusual for so many volcanoes to all be erupting at the same time
- Formerly dormant volcanoes are coming back to life
 - Russia
 - Peru
 - Hawaii
 - Reunion Island
 - Indonesia
 - Alaska
- Consequences

- Pillars of fire and smoke are closing large blocks of airspace to commercial air traffic
- Massive amounts of dust and ash in the upper atmosphere may explain why many parts of the planet are experiencing strangely cold weather
- If this trend continues, it could lead to crop failures and widespread famines all over the world

Tsunamis

- Tsu = “Harbor” Nami = “Wave”
 - A Tsunami is a set of ocean waves caused by any large, abrupt disturbance of the sea-surface.
 - If the disturbance is close to a coastline, local tsunamis can demolish coastal communities within minutes.
 - A very large disturbance can cause local devastation and export tsunami destruction thousands of miles away
- Since 1850 alone, tsunamis have been responsible for the loss of over 420,000 lives and billions of \$\$ of damage to coastal structures and habitats.
 - Dec 26, 2004 – A tsunami killed 130,000 people close to the earthquake and 58,000 people on distant shores
 - Mar 11, 2011 – Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power plant disaster
 - 9.0 Earthquake which was caused by a X1.2 solar flare
 - 18,000 dies, mostly from drowning
 - The tsunami caused a cooling system failure which resulted in a level 7 nuclear meltdown and release of radioactive materials
 - About 300 tons of radioactive water continues to leak from the plant every day into the Pacific Ocean
 - The effects of the great earthquake were felt around the world – from Norway’s fjords to Antarctica’s ice sheets. Tsunami debris continues to wash up on North American beaches after several years.
- Predicting when the next tsunami will strike is currently impossible.

Landslides

- From 2004 to 2010, there were 2,620 fatal landslides recorded worldwide, causing a total of 32,322 recorded deaths
- UK University study
 - Landslides kill 10x more people than originally thought
 - Weather patterns, deforestation, and increasingly dense population settlements all played a factor

Sinkholes

Unexplainably strange sinkholes are opening up in places all around the world

- There have always been sinkholes, but over the past few years, it seems like both the severity and the number of giant sinkholes has been increasing dramatically.
- Giant sinkholes are opening up all over the world and swallowing homes, buildings, roads, and sometimes people
 - ❖ Ro 8:20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Hurricanes

- 2017 was a record-breaking year for devastating hurricanes
 - Harvey – Houston
 - Irma – Florida keys and gulf coast
 - Maria – Puerto Rico

Sea and Waves Roaring (Hurricanes/Typhoons) - (Luke 21:25); Typhoon Tembin leaves the Philippines with severe flooding and over 200 dead. Typhoon Damrey hit Vietnam, causing more than \$1B in damage. Hurricane Harvey (Category 4) dropped a record 60 inches of rain in Nederland, Texas. Houston was flooded with more than 35 inches of

rain. It is estimated that 70% of Harris County, which includes Houston, was flooded by at least 1.5 feet of water. 136,000 building structures were flooded. 72 people were killed and \$180B in damage. Hurricane Irma (Category 4) was the most intense Atlantic storm to hit the United States in twelve years. Weeks after Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Maria delivered a second punch to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and elsewhere. 62 people were killed. Tens of thousands are without electricity. The "Bangladesh Monsoon" caused severe flooding that affected more than 40 million people across South Asia, including Bangladesh, India and Nepal. More than 24 million people were affected by some of the worst floods to hit South Asia (India) in decades. Large areas of land were completely submerged. More than 1,000 people were killed in Sierra Leone floods and landslides caused by heavy rains. Guangxi province in China had massive flooding that affected 14 million people.

Tornadoes

- May 20, 2013 – A giant F4 tornado devastated Moore, Oklahoma with winds up to 200 mph.
 - It was estimates to be at least 2 miles wide at one point
 - It stayed on the ground for 40 minutes – most only reach the ground for a couple of minutes
 - Resulted in 24 deaths and hundreds of serious injuries
 - It was far more powerful than the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima
 - Being called the “worst tornado damage-wise in the history of the world”

Wildfires

- Our freakish weather seems to be contributing to an alarming number of forest fires all around the world
 - Trees that are many hundreds of years old are now gone
 - Around the world, 75 million-820 million acres of land burn each year
 - Fires are increasingly damaging the world’s forests, destroying millions of acres of valuable timber nad other forest products every year.
- 6 of the 10 worst years for wildfires ever recorded in the US have all come since the year 2000
 - Western US wildfires have been increasing in frequency and duration since the mid-1980s
 - Occurring nearly 4x more often
 - Burning more than 6x the land area
 - Lasting almost 5x as long
- Australia just battled the worst wildfire in more than 30 years

12. Great fearful sights in diverse places - Fires (Luke 21:11); Southern Europe, western parts of Canada and California have been devastated by wildfires this year. The Thomas Fire in California is now the biggest in California's history, scorching more than 280,000 acres or 440 square miles (nearly the size of New York City). Thousands have been evacuated in northwestern Spain. 2017 was the deadliest year on record for wildfires killing people (105) in Portugal. Italy, France, Croatia, Spain and Greece were all swept by three times (3X) the average number of wildfires. Hundreds of homes were destroyed by wildfires in Siberia. Chile wildfires were unparalleled in the country's history according to President Michelle Bachelet. Even Greenland, not known for its hot, dry conditions, suffered an unprecedented blaze this summer. Scientists say wildfires are likely to become increasingly frequent and widespread (longer fire seasons, harsher, longer recovery).

Fireballs

- Significant fireballs are being seen all over the world
- Night goes to day – brighter than the sun
- They come with sonic booms that are knocking out power

Hail

- Oct 26, 2017 – Extreme hail storm drops 5’ of hail in 15 minutes in Argentina

End-time references to hail:

- ❖ Revelation 8:7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.
- ❖ Revelation 16:21 And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.
- ❖ Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

Other Biblical references to hail:

- ❖ Exodus 9:18-33 "Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. "Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die."" The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses;
- ❖ Exodus 9:23 Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt.
- ❖ Joshua 10:11 As they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.
- ❖ Job 38:22-23 "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, Which I have reserved for the time of distress, For the day of war and battle?
- ❖ Psalm 18:13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire.
- ❖ Psalm 105:32 He gave them hail for rain, And flaming fire in their land.
- ❖ Psalm 147:17-18 He casts forth His ice as fragments; Who can stand before His cold? He sends forth His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow and the waters to flow.
- ❖ Isaiah 28:2 Behold, the Lord has a strong and mighty agent; As a storm of hail, a tempest of destruction, Like a storm of mighty overflowing waters, He has cast it down to the earth with His hand.
- ❖ Ezekiel 13:11-13 so tell those who plaster it over with whitewash, that it will fall. A flooding rain will come, and you, O hailstones, will fall; and a violent wind will break out. "Behold, when the wall has fallen, will you not be asked, 'Where is the plaster with which you plastered it?'" Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "I will make a violent wind break out in My wrath. There will also be in My anger a flooding rain and hailstones to consume it in wrath.
- ❖ Haggai 2:17 'I smote you and every work of your hands with blasting wind, mildew and hail; yet you did not come back to Me,' declares the LORD.

Climate Change

- ❖ Dan 2:21 He changes times and seasons;
- In many places, the lengths of winter, summer and rainy seasons have increased, while spring has decreased. These are changes that are likely to have an adverse impact on food production.
- The daily and nightly different in temperatures worldwide are fast approaching the yearly differences between summer and winter temperatures, which could wreak havoc on the global economy and potentially affect crops, insects, malaria transmission, and confuse the migration patterns of birds and mammals worldwide (Nature World News)

Mass Animal Deaths

- ❖ Hos 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. 2 There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. 3 Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.
- New Years Eve 2010/2011 – Mass animal deaths were first reported in the news when ~5,000 red-winged blackbirds and starlings fell out of the sky in Bebe, Arkansas.
- In 2014, there were 649 reported events of mass animal deaths that occurred in 76 countries

Strange Weather

Weather patterns are becoming increasingly erratic, and the ground under our feet is becoming unstable. These 'extreme weather' events will become more numerous and deadly as atmospheric conditions across the planet become more and more unstable.

- Drought
 - The western US is experiencing the worst stretch of drought since the days of the Great Depression
 - Drought threatens the future of water and food supplies, as well as the global economy
 - Colombia, Pakistan, Somalia, Australia, Guatemala, China, and Kenya has been suffering severe drought conditions
- Sounds in the Sky
 - Strange are sounds that are being heard all over the world that have no apparent source and come from no apparent direction
- Weather extremes
 - 2017 was a year for bizarre reports of weather extremes
 - As the northern hemisphere beaked in record-breaking heat, the southern hemisphere is suffering record-breaking cold
 - South Africa experienced one of the worst storms in recorded history
 - Snow and ice have been seen in areas where it has never been seen before

Technology / Knowledge

Dan 12:4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

Pro 2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Ecc 2:26 To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God.

Dan 2:21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

- Broadband, satellites, television and live internet feeds fulfill the technological requirement for the world to be able to watch the events of Revelation 11 in regards to the prophetic ministry of the 'two witnesses' during the tribulation period.
- Brand New Way to Create Babies Without Sex – With new rules complicating male-female relationships, scientists claim they may have a solution that will allow the human race to continue - in vitro gametogenesis, the manipulation of skin cells to create a baby. IVG has been successfully tested by Japanese researchers on mice, which produced healthy babies derived from skin cells. The process begins by taking the skin cells from the mouse's tail and re-programming them to become induced pluripotent stem cells. These manipulated cells are able to grow different kinds of cells, and are then used to grow eggs and sperm, which are then fertilized in the lab. The resulting embryos are then

implanted in a womb. Although similar to in vitro fertilization, IVG eliminates the step of needing pre-existing egg and sperm, and instead creates these gametes. But many experts in the reproductive field are skeptical of its potential outcomes and ethical compromises. "It gives me an unsettled feeling because we don't know what this could lead to," said Paul Knoepfler, a stem-cell researcher at the University of California, Davis. Knoepfler noted that some of the potential repercussions of IVG could turn into "cloning" or "designer babies." Other dangers could include the "Brad Pitt scenario," in which celebrity's skin cells retrieved from random places, like hotel rooms, could be used to create a baby. Potentially anyone's skin cells could be used to create a baby, even without their knowledge or consent. In an issue of Science Translational Medicine earlier this year, a trio of academics - a Harvard Law professor, the dean of Harvard Medical School and a medical science professor at Brown - wrote that IVG "may raise the specter of 'embryo farming' on a scale currently unimagined, which might exacerbate concerns about the devaluation of human life. "Although IVG has proven successful in mice, there are still some wrinkles that need to be ironed out before it is tested on humans. It will take at least another decade of bioengineering work, researchers say. In the meantime, those who want to make a baby the old-fashioned way will need to pay attention to the ever-changing rules governing courtship.

9 Technological Signs that point to the soon return of Christ:

1.

- Sophia (robot)
- Microchipping

And, did you know that many of today's technologies were foretold in the Bible more than 2,000 years ago?

And, have you noticed with each passing advancement technology has been climbing faster and steeper up an exponential curve?

Where is all this going? Let's explore just eight of the end time signs related to technology foretold in the Bible. All this and more on this episode of The Inbox: Answers for the End Times.

Sign #1 — Knowledge

Over 2,500 years ago, the prophet Daniel was given a vision of the future. Confused, Daniel asked the messenger angel for its meaning. The angel replied:

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." (Daniel 12:4)

Daniel just couldn't possibly understand these end time prophecies because certain events and advancements in technology would have to happen first that would greatly increase our knowledge. Today, a world of information is available at our fingertips.

What technologies have helped facilitate our massive growth in knowledge?

Sign #2 — Transportation

The Bible also revealed that, besides knowledge, travel would also greatly increase (Daniel 12:4). Stop and think of where we were just a single century ago when people traveled on horseback and rarely left their hometown. Today, people travel all over the world, and beyond.

Sign #3 — The Mark of the Beast

The Bible prophesied that the entire world will eventually become integrated into a one-world system of commerce.

"He also forced everyone... to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark..." (Revelation 13:16-17)

Those loyal to the State will be allowed to eat, and those who are not, will starve. What kind of technology would make this Mark possible?

Sign #4 — Evangelism

Jesus foretold that just before He institutes His Kingdom the whole world will have heard the Gospel.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14)

The Good News of Jesus Christ has reached almost every remote place on the planet. What technologies have helped make this rapid spread possible?

Sign #5 — The Image of the Antichrist

The coming one-world ruler will command the world to worship his "living" image. His False Prophet will enforce the worship with seemingly miraculous acts involving fire.

"And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down... He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak..." (Revelation 13:13-15)

What technologies appear as fire falling down from space? And, what technologies make an image appear alive?

Sign #6 — Population Explosion

The Bible foretold of a 200 million man army marching from the east, prophesied at a time when the whole world's population was barely that number.

"The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number." (Revelation 9:16)

What technologies would allow the human population to grow into the billions and so create such a massive army?

Sign #7 — Nuclear Weapons

The Bible also describes how in the end times the world's nuclear arsenal will finally and tragically be released.

"The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place..." (Revelation 6:14-15)

While God's restraint has so far kept those weapons at bay, these verses – [Isaiah 17:14](#); [Zechariah 14:12](#); [Luke 21:26](#); [Revelation 6:14-15](#); [8:7](#); [9:18](#) – foretell a nuclear holocaust will be unleashed that will destroy much of the earth. Nuclear weapons require the most advanced levels of technology.

Sign #8 — Limitations

At the war to end all wars – Armageddon – the Bible describes how all of humanity will be gathered to fight in one place – Israel.

"All the nations of the earth are gathered against her." ([Zechariah 12:1-3](#))

To gather all people means there cannot be people living in space stations, or on the moon, or other planets, which means we've gone as far as we were meant to go in space travel. And, tied to the fact that the rare earth metals we use to construct today's technologies are running low, we've just about reached the upper limit of our technology.

Reflection

What's so remarkable about the tremendous advancement in technology and the exponential pace at which it has developed? Today's technology heralds the soon return of Jesus Christ.

The days of Noah and Lot

Lk 17:26 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

Parallels with the days of Noah

- Ge 6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence
- Worldwide flooding
- DNA being tampered with - Nephilim

Parallels with the days of Lot

- Rampant homosexuality and sexual immorality
- Ge 19:4 Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. 5 They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."
- Jude 1:7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Because the world is given over to this grand deception and currently lies under a veil of blindness, it (the world) is unable to accept the reality that our day is almost identical to the conditions of Noah and Lot's day. Think about it this way: if God and the Bible are true, (they are), then why else is it so hard for people to accept Creationism as our point of origin? Instead they believe in preposterous and completely unprovable theories like *Darwinian Evolution* or "the Big Bang." The truth is that if the world acknowledged biblical creation, then they would also have to acknowledge Noah and Lot's day.

Imagine for a moment, that we lived in a world where there was no spiritual blindness, and all the government and academic institutions actively sought to understand what the world was like before the Noahic flood. How much could we know? *A lot more than we do now!* Then we would come to understand that the conditions today (population, technology, intelligence, spirituality, etc.) are almost identical to what it was then.

Yet, the world we currently live in mocks and scoffs at the idea of biblical creation. They mock and scoff at the idea of a global flood. They mock and scoff at the idea of a place like Sodom and Gomorrah being destroyed for sexual perversity. The world is given over to an intentional, demonic spiritual blindness that refuses to accept the truth. Because of this, like righteous Lot, we too are *oppressed and tormented* by the unrighteousness that currently surrounds us.

2Pe 2:7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— 9 if this is so, *then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

Not only is this world today full of violence and sexual immorality, including homosexuality. These evils have now been turned into ENTERTAINMENT!! This world is now ENTERTAINED by the very things that God DESTROYED the old world and Sodom for in Noah's and Lot's day!

The Lord's 2nd Coming

- ❖ Jude 1:14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."
- ❖ Dt 33:2 "The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes."
- ❖ Is 63:1 Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." 2 Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood splattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. 4 For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come. 5 I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. 6 I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground."
- ❖ Hab 3:3 God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah.

His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth. 4 His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden. 5 Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps. 6 He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. His ways are eternal. 7 I saw the tents of Cushan in distress, the dwellings of Midian in anguish. 8 Were you angry with the rivers, O LORD? Was your wrath against the streams? Did you rage against the sea when you rode with your horses and your victorious chariots? 9 You uncovered your bow, you called for many arrows. Selah

You split the earth with rivers; 10 the mountains saw you and writhed. Torrents of water swept by; the deep roared and lifted its waves on high. 11 Sun and moon stood still in the heavens at the glint of your flying arrows, at the lightning of your flashing spear. 12 In wrath you strode through the earth and in anger you threshed the nations. 13 You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. Selah

14 With his own spear you pierced his head when his warriors stormed out to scatter us, gloating as though about to devour the wretched who were in hiding. 15 You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the great waters.

WATCH – Recognize the season

Matthew 24:42 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come... 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

We should be those who see, who are aware, who are watching and who are awake!

The signs are getting louder, stronger, closer together, more intense and more frequent, just like the birth pangs and contractions that were prophesied. Most within the 'Church' today are completely asleep and have no clue what's going on around them, and many who fancy they do are busy hurling rebuttals or casting doubt on the fulfillment of God's Word or mocking and disparaging those who are being obedient to the Holy Spirit by sounding the alarm. Oh, they may have a sense that the world is going-to-hell-in-a-handbasket (or soon will be). Yet, they shrug their shoulders and are not actively watching the signs for his return. This is exactly the situation that occurred among the Jews during Jesus' first appearing! They did not know the signs of the times of his coming arrival. They were caught off guard and Christ chastised them.

God is revealing these signs for a reason and the reason is because it's the season...

- No one knows the day or hour – he will come when you don't expect him
 - Mt 24:36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.
 - This verse may be the most misunderstood in all of the Bible and the cause of many to stop and look no further. Christ didn't say that you can't know anything about the time of the end. He didn't say that you can't know what will happen or what to look for and so don't try. Many in Christendom have choked by this point (if they even made it this far). Would that they study the prophets. Frustrating that they will not read, will not study and will not suffer anyone who would try to tell them what's in the book.
 - Mt 24: 42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.
 - Mt 24:44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
 - Mt 24:50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.
 - Mt 25:13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

- Rev 3:3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.
- Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

We should recognize the season

- 1Th 5 ¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.** ³ For when **they** say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon **them**, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. **And they shall not escape.** ⁴ But **you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** ⁵ **You** are all sons of light and sons of the day. **We** are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let **us** not sleep, as others *do*, but **let us watch and be sober.** ⁷ For **those** who sleep, sleep at night, and **those** who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ But let **us** who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹ **Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.**
- Hebrews 10: 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
- We would know the end is right at the door
 - Lk 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. ✓
On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ✓
26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ✓
 - 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."
 - 29 He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. 30 When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. 31 Even so, **when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.** ✓
 - 1Th 5:1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.
- Wake up - Be alert and watch
 - Mark 13:32 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.
 - Mt 24:44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
 - Mt 25:13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.
 - 1Th 5:4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

- Mk 13:36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!" "
- Rev 3:3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.
- We are to encourage one another
 - 1Th 5:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.
 - Heb 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
 - Tit 2:12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ
 - 1Jn 2: 28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.
 - 1Jn 3: 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.
- Jesus will rescue us from the coming wrath
 - 1 Th 1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

We groan under the oppressive and antagonistic system we are under currently. The fact that we see deception (spiritual, intellectual, technological, etc.) so ramped up as much as we see today, leads to one inescapable conclusion; we are in the final moments of this current age. So while we cannot say conclusively that we have X number of months or years left, we can easily see the light at the end of the tunnel.

However, the question will not go away. How much longer?

It nags at us.

It hounds us.

For those who are watching and waiting for His return, it consumes us.

As it should.

Ro 8:20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Rapture

What is the Rapture?

- Greek word harpazo (Ancient Greek: ἀρπάζω), meaning "to snatch away" or "to seize"
 - The harpazo is the catching away of those who have a personal relationship with Yeshua the Christ, those who call themselves by His title/name, Christians. The catching away to meet the Lord in the air is our blessed hope to anyone who has accepted Christ as their savior.
- The term “rapture” is more commonly used than harpazo and is not found in the Bible.
 - While you will not find that exact word through a word search, the meaning of the words that are written remains the same and conveys the same idea.
 - The term “rapture” comes from the Latin verb *rapiemur* which means “**to seize, snatch, carry away.**” This is the same meaning behind the Greek word that *is* found in the Bible, *harpazo*. It is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, which is the “harpazo” passage.
 - So while the word rapture is technically not in the Bible, the idea behind that Latin word represents the same idea of being caught up together to meet the Lord in the air as stated in scripture.
- There are 7 raptures in the Bible:
 - Enoch
 - Ge 5:24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.
 - He 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.
 - Elijah
 - 2Ki 2:1 And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. ... 11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.
 - Philip
 - Acts 8:39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.
 - Paul
 - 2Co 12: 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.
 - John
 - Rev 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.
 - Jesus
 - Mark 16:19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.
 - Acts 1: 9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”
 - Rev 12:5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.
 - Church

- 1Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- Old Testament Illusions to the rapture

- Is 26:19 Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.
20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you;
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.
21 For behold, the Lord comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.
- Zep 2:3 Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, Who have upheld His justice.
Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden In the day of the Lord's anger.
- Ps 27:5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.

The Rapture and Second Coming are different events

The Bible must see the Rapture and the Second Coming as separate events, because when the verses are compared they describe two very different scenarios:

Rapture	Second Coming
Believers meet Christ in the air	Christ returns to the Mount of Olives to meet believers on earth
Mount of Olives is unchanged	Mount of Olives is divided, forming a valley east of Jerusalem
Living believers obtain glorified bodies	Living believers remain in same bodies
Believers go to heaven	Glorified believers come from heaven, earthly believers stay on earth
World left unjudged and living in sin	World is judged and righteousness is established
Depicts deliverance of the Church from wrath	Depicts deliverance of believers who endured wrath
No signs precede it	Many signs precede it
Revealed only in New Testament	Revealed in both Old and New Testaments
Deals with only the saved	Deals with both the saved and unsaved
Satan remains free	Satan is bound and thrown into the Abyss

1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

First, notice that the Rapture involves the movement of believers from the earth to Heaven:

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

The 'dead in Christ' rise first, those believers who are 'alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds. The operative word here is 'rise'.

At the Second Coming, the Lord returns WITH His saints. That's what Jude said. That's what Paul said.

"To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." (1st Thessalonians 3:13)

At the Rapture, the Lord comes for His saints. So the Rapture is not the same event as the Second Coming. In one instance, believers rise and in the other, they descend.

Things that are different are NOT the same, and the Rapture and the Second Coming are clearly different.

What would be the point of Rapturing the Church after the Tribulation, anyway? The Lord returns to establish His kingdom on earth, so why pull out all the Christians before He can do so? If they are all changed at the end of the Tribulation, then who, exactly, is left for Him to rule over?

"And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right Hand, but the goats on the left." (Matthew 25:32-33)

If all the believers are raptured at the Second Coming, that would also include the Tribulation saints. Where would the believers in mortal bodies come from if they are raptured at the Second Coming?

Rapture

- 1Th 1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.
- 1Th 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Lk 21:36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."
- 1Th 5:1 Now, brothers, about times and dates **we do not need to write to you**, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," **destruction will come on them suddenly**, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and **they will not escape**.
- Ro 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!
- 1Co 15:51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: **We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet**. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.
- 1Th 4:13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

- Jn 14: 1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

Second Coming

- Zec 14 – The LORD Comes and Reigns
- Mt 24:29 "Immediately after the distress of those days " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' 30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.
- Mk 13:24 "But in those days, following that distress, " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' 26 "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.
- Lk 21: 25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
- Rev 19

Since the Rapture and Second Coming clearly are different events that do not occur at the same time, this would rule out a Post-Tribulation Rapture scenario.

The Rapture occurs at any time without warning

Jesus stated in Matthew 24:42,44 to “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come... So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Not only do believers in Christ not know when to expect Him, but the Father Himself seems to have left Jesus out on the exact time His Son is to return. As Jesus stated in Matthew 24:36, “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

The rapture will come when nobody expects it:

- Mt 24:36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.
 - This verse may be the most misunderstood in all of the Bible and the cause of many to stop and look no further. Christ didn't say that you can't know anything about the time of the end. He didn't say that you can't know what will happen or what to look for and so don't try. Many in Christendom have choked by this point (if they even made it this far). Would that they study the prophets. Frustrating that they will not read, will not study and will not suffer anyone who would try to tell them what's in the book.
- Mt 24: 42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.
- Mt 24:44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
- Mt 24:50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.
- Mt 25:13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

- 1Th 5:1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

The Second Coming is preceded by many events that occurring during the 7-year Tribulation:

- The rise of the Antichrist (Rev. 12:13-17; Zech; 13:7-9)
 - Rev 12:13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. 15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
 - Zec 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones. 8 In the whole land," declares the LORD, "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. 9 This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.' "
- A treaty with Israel
 - Dan 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'
- The rebuilding of the Jewish Temple
 - Ez 40-47
 - Mt 24: 15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel
 - 2Th 2: 3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.
 - Rev 11: 1 I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. 2 But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.
- Plagues and judgments and persecutions destroying most of the world's population
 - Rev. 6-18

Because the Rapture could happen at any moment and without warning and the Second Coming is preceded by so many signs, then the Rapture and Second Coming must be different events.

The Rapture has to occur before the seven years' worth of signs, because Christians are called to look for the Lord's return rather than signs such as the Antichrist's arrival. Once the signs begin, then the seven year countdown begins towards its end with Christ's return at the Second Coming.

Jesus' imminent return dismisses any of the other viewpoints related to a rapture that occur within or at the end of the Tribulation.

The Rapture is the removal of the “Restrainer”

In 2 Thessalonians, the church at Thessalonica was afraid due to a false report that they had entered the Day of the Lord (Tribulation) and had somehow missed the Rapture. The Apostle Paul assured them that the Antichrist would not be revealed until a restraining force would be taken away so that the Man of Lawlessness could be revealed.

- 2Th 2:1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Because the revealing of the Antichrist coincides with the beginning of the 7-year Tribulation starting with his peace treaty with Israel (Dan. 9:27), then the Restrainer has to be removed before the Tribulation.

- Dan 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'

As the Holy Spirit also works in salvation (Jn. 16:8-11; 1 Jn. 5:7) during the Tribulation, then it is the Church that must be the Restrainer that is removed.

- Jn 16:8 When he [Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

Therefore, the Rapture and the removal of the Church must coincide, and at the beginning of the seven years.

Fullness of the Gentiles

- Lk 21:24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
- Ro 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.
- Ep 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, [both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.
- When we examine the book of Revelation, we find similar references to the time of Gentile dominion ending with the return of Christ. In Revelation 11:2, John indicates that Jerusalem will be under Gentile rule, even though the temple has been restored.
 - Rev 11:1 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. 2 But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.
- When the time is right, God will restore the entire nation, and they will come to faith in Him once again, ending “the times of the Gentiles” (Isaiah 17:7; 62:11–12; Romans 11:26)

Timing of the rapture

- Why does your view on the timing of the rapture matter?
 - Your view on Bible prophecy and the timing of the rapture will affect the way you live out your faith
- Why the debate over timing? Misunderstandings in 3 areas:
 - The elect
 - Mt 24 ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

- People use this verse to claim that Christians will be in the tribulation
- The elect refers to 3 groups of people:
 - Christians
 - Col 3 ¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
 - Israel
 - Is 45 ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call *you* by your name, *Am* the God of Israel.
⁴ For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.
⁵ I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other; *There is* no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,
 - Tribulation saints
 - Those saved during the Tribulation
 - Mt 24 ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.
- To which of the elect does Jesus revert to in Matthew 24:22?
 - The context of the text clearly refers to Jews
 - Mt 24 ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.
 - Even to this day, transportation in Israel is shut down on the Sabbath
 - Since the Sabbath means nothing to Gentile nations, the application to Israel is clear.
- The trumpets
 - 1Co 15 ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
 - People connect this verse to the last trumpet judgement in Rev 11 to claim that the rapture will take place midway through the tribulation
 - Rev 11 ¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"
 - However, the 7th trumpet of revelation 11 is sounded by angels, whereas 1st Thessalonians 4:16 makes it clear that the last trump for the rapture is sounded by God
 - 1Th 4 ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.
 - God blows 2 Trumpets
 - God blows the 1st trumpet (shofar) at the foot of Mount Sinai for the Jews to hear the Law
 - Ex 19 ¹⁶ Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of

the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.

- God blows the last trumpet when the churches will gathered to meet the Lord in the air and be taken to heaven
 - 1Th 4 ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.
- Biblical typology
 - See [Biblical typology – Reasons why the rapture HAS to be before the 7 year tribulation](#)

Pre-Tribulation Rapture

Students of the Bible must look at all the available details and use logic to form conclusions and understand the big picture.

- Precept – Principle, rule, tenant, doctrine, decree
- Is 28:9 “Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?
10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.”
- The outline of the book of Revelation demands a pre-tribulation view
 - Any other view twists your understanding of Revelation like a pretzel
 - Chapters 4 and 5 would go after chapter 11 if you hold to a mid-tribulation stance
 - Chapters 4 and 5 would go after chapter 19 if you take a post-tribulation point of view
 - Only a pre tribulation placement of the rapture allows for a consistent flow of the book of revelation
- Only the pre-tribulation rapture allows for the conditional aspect of the great tribulation
 - To the church at Thyatira, Jesus said if you don't repent you will experience tribulation
 - **Rev 2 ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**
 - If the rapture won't occur until after the tribulation, what would be the reason for this warning?
- Didn't Jesus say in this world we would have tribulation? Tribulation vs great tribulation
 - Tribulation that the believer goes through in this world is from Satan
 - The great tribulation (Rev 6 – 19) is from God as he pours out his wrath on a Christ-rejecting world
 - **Great tribulation** - This exact phrase occurs only 3x - [Mt 24:21](#), [Rev 2:22](#), and [Rev 7:14](#). In [Rev 7:14](#) the Greek literally reads "**the tribulation, the great one.**"
 - **Mt 24 ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.**
 - **Rev 2 ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**
 - **Rev 7 ¹⁴ And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

- God will not allow anyone to get hit from both sides
 - If we experience tribulation in the world because of our faith, we will not experience the great tribulation of those who do not have faith
- Immanency – unknown time of the Lord's return
 - Only the pre-tribulation rapture allows for the unknown time of the Lord's return
 - Tribulation starts with the confirming of a peace plan for 7 years
 - **Dan 9²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.**
 - If believers were on Earth during the tribulation, they would be able to predict the exact time of the 2nd coming - 3½ Biblical years or 42 months or 1260 days after antichrist enters the temple
 - The problem is that no one knows the hour of his coming. Therefore it follows that believers must be absent at this time
- Daniel 9 – 70 weeks prophecy
 - The first 69 weeks refer to the time between the commandment to rebuild the temple given in for 45BC by Arctic Xerxes and the coming of the Messiah – fulfilled perfectly on Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey
 - Daniel was told that 70 weeks are determined upon Israel
 - The 70th week of Daniel refers to the tribulation
 - The church is not part of this prophecy
 - The church was not present for the 1st 69 weeks
 - If the church was not present in the 1st 69 weeks, why would she be present in the last week?
 - The 70th week doesn't begin until the church is raptured in other words
- A pre-tribulation rapture viewpoint makes one seek first the Kingdom of God
 - We are to be watching for Christ, not antichrist
 - **Mt 24⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.**
 - Who is the one who will have authority and purpose in eternity? He who is watching for Jesus' coming
 - But this is impossible for those who believe the tribulation precedes the rapture, because they must first watch for antichrist, then the rebuilding of the temple, and finally the abomination of desolation when antichrist demands to be worshiped as God
 - 2 factors kept the early church on fire – the empowering of the Holy Spirit and the belief that Jesus would return during their lifetime
 - They chose to do what Jesus says to do in every generation – to watch, to be ready, to live for His coming
 - Whether or not you believe in a pre-tribulation rapture will not effect where you'll ultimately end up – If you're a believer, you'll be in heaven no matter what position you hold.
 - But your viewpoint concerning the rapture very definitely affects how you live your life this side of eternity
 - If you do not believe in a pre-tribulation rapture, you cannot look for Jesus Christ because according to your eschatological viewpoint, Anti-Christ must 1st appear therefore you find yourself scanning the news checking out current events watching the global scene for Anti-Christ rather than Jesus and this puts believers in a survivalist mentality we're going through the tribulation they say we better get ready is that what Jesus meant does he want us storing gold and guns or does he want us living every day and hopeful anticipation that to day could be the day we go to heaven I want you looking for Jesus every day John said because he who has the hope of the eminent sudden appearing of christ and the rapture of the church purifies himself that is why I believe your view on the rapture is of utmost importance live in constant expectancy of Jesus return be watching and be ready

We are not appointed to God's wrath

The Tribulation is a time when GOD's wrath will be poured out on the unrighteous. The wrath that should have been hurled at you and poured out on me was absorbed by our hero, our Lord, our savior on the cross of Calgary.

- Ep 5:5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.**
- Col 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 **Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.** 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.
- 1Th 5:1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.** 3 For **when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them,** as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. **And they shall not escape.** 4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, **but let us watch and be sober.** 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 **Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.**
- Rev 3:10 Because you {Church of Philadelphia} have kept My command to persevere, **I also will keep you from the hour of trial** which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
- 1Th 1:9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even **Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**
- Ro 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from wrath** through Him.
- 2Pe 2 ⁴For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— ⁹**then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,**
 - The word translated **temptations** is the same word translated **tribulation**
- Ps 37 ³⁹But the salvation of the righteous *is* from the LORD; *He is* their strength in the time of trouble. ⁴⁰And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.

God will save the righteous from destruction

- 2Pe 2 ⁴For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— ⁹**then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,**
 - The word translated temptations is the same word translated tribulation
- Ps 37:39 But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble.
40 And the Lord shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked,
And save them, Because they trust in Him.
- 1Th 4 ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸**Therefore comfort one another with these words.**
 - The belief that the rapture happens after, or in the middle of, the tribulation is anything but comforting because it means believers must endure unbelievable agony before they are taken to heaven.
- Lk 21 ³⁴“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Watch therefore, and **pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.**”
 - We are worthy only because of what Jesus did for us on the cross of Calvary.

Purpose of the Tribulation (Jacob's Trouble)

The tribulation is a time of God's wrath on mankind

- Zep 1:14 The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.
15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

What is the tribulation (Day of the Lord)

- See section on [Tribulation \(Day of the Lord\)](#)

The Tribulation is for Israel's redemption, not the church

The tribulation is for the salvation of the Jewish nation – Christians have nothing to do with it

John (head of the church) is raptured to heaven and the church is not heard of again until they return with Jesus at the Second Coming

- Rev 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”
- Rev 19: 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.
 - Church (those who confess Jesus as their Lord) is always described as fine, white linens
 - Tribulation saints (those who give up their lives for Christ) are described as having white robes

The tribulation is a time of Jacob's trouble

- Jer 30: 5 "For thus says the Lord: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace.
6 Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child?
So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale?
7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it;
And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.
- Dt 4 ²⁹ But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice ³¹ (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.
 - God will work with Israel in the days of the tribulation. He will make Himself known to them and they shall indeed be saved.

These texts and others show that the Tribulation is meant for the redemption of the Jewish people:

- In the Book of Matthew, whose primary audience is the Jews, Jesus explains to his Jewish followers what life will be like during the Tribulation.
- Revelation 12 describes picturesquely a woman who gives birth and has to flee due to persecution during the Tribulation. The context shows the woman is Israel.
- The Battle of Armageddon is the world against Israel. Two-thirds of the Jewish people will be killed from these battles.
- Rev 7 – Only describes Jewish descendants that are sealed for protection during the tribulation

Why are the Jews the object of persecution during the Tribulation?

- Satan hates the Jewish people for giving the world the Scriptures and the Messiah, as well as he wishes to thwart God's promises to the Jews (see Bedrock #4).
- The Jews have to be so desperately brought low that they finally call out to their Messiah "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Mt 23:39; Lk 13:35).

The Tribulation, then, is used for Israel's redemption which also results in the punishment of the wicked.

The Church does not fit into this scenario, and are left out of the purposes of the Tribulation. They would need to be removed — caught up — before the Tribulation begins.

The Tribulation is not for the Church.

The Tribulation is God's wrath upon the unbelieving world, and not for those who are saved from Christ's resurrection to the Rapture — called the Church. Yes believers have suffered all throughout human history, but there is a special time (just like the Flood) set apart called the Day of the Lord for God's wrath. Christians suffering and the Tribulation/Day of the Lord are different.

- Revelation 3:10 "Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth."
- 1 Thessalonians 1:10 "and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."
- 1 Thessalonians 5:9 "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Romans 5:9 "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"
- Ephesians 5:6 "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient."
- Colossians 3:4 "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

Again and again, Scripture states the Church is not meant to endure God's wrath.

Biblical typology – Reasons why the rapture HAS to be before the 7 year tribulation

Does God care about Biblical typology?

Ask Moses about that!

Nu 20 ² Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. ³ And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: “If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! ⁴ Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? ⁵ And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink.” ⁶ So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

⁷ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁸ “Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.” ⁹ So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

¹⁰ And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” ¹¹ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

¹² Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”

- The Israelites are complaining again about not having water
- The Lord instructs Moses to SPEAK to the rock in front of the people
 - Why? The rock is Jesus, and He was only struck once. Now we can speak to Him.
- In his anger, Moses struck the rock
 - Moses broke the Biblical typology and it cost him entrance into the Holy Land

Sacrifice of Isaac

In Genesis 22, Abraham left the donkey and the two young men at the foot of the hill as he and Isaac went up to the top of Moriah for the famous offering of his son. After the episode concludes with the substitution of the ram, it lists those that then returned to Beersheba:

Ge 22 ¹⁹ So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

Where's Isaac? Obviously, Isaac also returned with Abraham and the two young men. But we are fascinated that the Holy Spirit appears to have edited the person of Isaac out of the record from the time he was offered until he is united with his bride two chapters later! We believe this was deliberate to have the narrative fully conform to the type.

Joseph took a Gentile bride before the 7 year famine

Ge 41 ⁴⁵ And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt. ⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. ... ⁵³ Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, ⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

As in the days of Noah

Lk 17 ²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. ³⁰ Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

- Worldwide flooding
- Earth was corrupt and filled with violence
 - Ge 6 ⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ... Ge 6 ¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.
- DNA being tampered with – Nephilim
 - Ge 6 ¹ Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. ³ And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” ⁴ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.
 - yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”
 - 2Pe 3 ⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
 - It has been 120 jubilees since the creation (120*50=6000 years)
 - Jude 1 ⁶ And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;
- Noah is not a picture of the church, but of the Jewish remnant that will indeed go through the tribulation. They will be refined with fire and at last come to Jesus as a result.
 - Enoch is the picture of the church, raptured before the flood
- God will save the righteous from destruction
 - 2Pe 2 ⁴ For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but *saved Noah, one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷ and *delivered righteous Lot, who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— ⁹ *then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,*
 - The word translated *temptations* is the same word translated *tribulation*
 - Ps 37 ³⁹ But the salvation of the righteous *is* from the LORD; *He is* their strength in the time of trouble. ⁴⁰ And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.

Enoch was raptured before the flood (at Pentecost)

- Enoch was caught up before the flood (Ge 6)
 - Ge 5 ²⁴ And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him.
 - He 11 ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith *it* is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- There are several provocative Jewish traditions regarding Enoch.
 - He is regarded as having been born on the day the Jews observe *Hag Shavout*, the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost.
 - By tradition, he is also believed to have been "translated" (or "raptured") on his birthday.
 - Since the Church was "born" on this day, one wonders if we, too, will be "raptured" on its birthday!

ENOCH AND NOAH	THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS
The wickedness of man was great on the earth. Genesis 6:5.	We are in a time of great wickedness on the earth.
Very few people were following God’s ways. 1 Peter 3:20.	The gate is narrow and very few people are walking with the Lord.
God warned His people. Genesis 6:13	God has been warning His people.
They don’t understand that judgment was going to come upon them. Matthew 24:39	They don’t understand that the tribulation is coming upon them.
They would not repent, though God gave them time. Genesis 6:3, 11,12; 1 Peter 3:20	God is seemingly slow in His coming, because He is giving man time.
There was no great revival. Genesis 6:11,12; 1 Peter 3:20	There does not seem to be revival but revenge.
They went about things as usual eating, drinking and marrying. Matthew 24:38.	People are going back to business as usual, eating, drinking, and marrying.
God set an exact day and time – FOR YET SEVEN DAYS. Genesis 7:4	God has set an exact day and time – YET FOR SEVEN YEARS, there will be tribulation.
Noah and his family go into the ark and through the great flood. Genesis 7	The Jews will go into and through the great tribulation.
Right before all of this, Enoch walked with the Lord then he was no more, God took him away. Genesis 5:24	Right before the tribulation, we who walk with the Lord won’t be here; God will take us up and away.
Some Bible scholars estimate the population of the earth in Noah’s day was approximately 6-9 billion people. (Genesis 6:1)	In 2020, as we celebrate Easter week, the world population reaches 7,777,777,777
... According to traditional sources, a new star appeared in the sky 4,100 years ago. That was the year the world was destroyed by a flood in the time of Noah. This star, apparently a comet, traveled through all the constellations in a months time. It was an omen for the people in the world to reconsider their wicked lifestyles and practices.	Comet Atlas – said to be have the same features as Nibiru, 5x the size of Jupiter – is heading towards the Earth and is starting to break apart

As in the days of Lot

Lk 17 ²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. ³⁰ Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

- Parallels
 - Rampant homosexuality and sexual immorality

- Ge 19 ⁴ Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. ⁵ And they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them *carnally*.”
- Jude 1 ⁷ as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Lot was taken out of Sodom and Gomorrah before it was destroyed

Ge 19 ¹⁵ When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶ And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. ¹⁷ So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.” ... ²² Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” ... ²³ The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

- God will save the righteous from destruction
 - 2Pe 2 ⁴ For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but **saved Noah**, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷ and **delivered righteous Lot**, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— ⁹ **then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,**
 - The word translated **temptations** is the same word translated **tribulation**
 - Ps 37 ³⁹ But the salvation of the righteous *is* from the LORD; *He is* their strength in the time of trouble. ⁴⁰ And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.

Elijah was raptured before the destruction of Israel (850ish BC)

- Bible scholars have assumed Elijah was removed during the reign of Ahaziah or perhaps that of his successor, Jehoshaphat because the writer of 2Kings recorded his account of Elijah’s departure in chapter 2, between the account of the Ahaziah’s death in 2Kings 1 and the reign of Jehoshaphat in 2Kings 3.
- Destruction of Israel – 722 BC Israel

Daniel was absent during the 7x hotter fiery furnace

- We all have enjoyed the famous confrontation between Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3. Many prophecy buffs view Nebuchadnezzar and the forced worship of his image as a "type" of the Antichrist, and the three Jewish young men as a foreshadowing of the 144,000 miraculously preserved through the "furnace" of the tribulation.
- That leaves a provocative question: Where was Daniel himself? Who might he represent as a type?
 - Dan 2 [After the dream interpretation] ⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.
- Daniel's friends represent the Jewish remnant that will be saved and purified through the flames of tribulation
 - Dan 3 ¹⁵ ... But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?" ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up. ¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace *seven times more than it was usually heated*. ²⁰ And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *and cast them* into the burning fiery furnace. ... ²⁵ "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."
 - Zac 13 ⁸ And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and die*, But *one-third* shall be left in it: ⁹ I will bring the *one-third* through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This *is* My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my God.' "

DANIEL-SHADRACH, MESHACH & ABEDNEGO	THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS
This takes place in Babylon-Pagan.	Babylon is in modern day Iraq-Islam.
King Nebuchadnezzar makes an image.	The anti-Christ will make an image.
The measurements are 6 cubits high by 6 cubits wide with 6 instruments listed.	The number of the name of the man is to be counted it will add up to "666".
The 6 instruments are played, then they are to worship the image.	Lucifer was the angel of music; it will play a part in the worship of the image of the beast.
All the rulers of every nation & tongue are united together in one religion.	The international community of united nations is all as a new-world order.
Three Jews refuse to worship the image of gold.	The Jews will reject the worship of the image of the antiChrist.
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego go into the fiery furnace.	Israel will go into the fiery hot tribulation.
The furnace is turned up 7 times hotter.	The tribulation is up in 7 years.
An angel like the Son of God protects them in the fire.	Jesus the Son of God will protect them in the tribulation.
After rejecting the false worship, they see their true and living God.	After rejecting the worship of the anti-Christ, they accept the true and living Christ Jesus.
Right before all of this, Daniel was placed up in a high position by the King.	Right before all of this happens, we will be caught up to our high position with our King.
Daniel was lavished with many gifts.	We are lavished with the gift of eternal life.

Daniel was put in charge and reigned over the entire province as a ruler.	We will rule and reign with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
Daniel remained in the royal court.	We remain in His royal court as His bride.

Jewish Wedding (Marriage covenant)

In describing a first-century Jewish wedding, D.A. Carson in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* describes the setting this way: "Normally the bridegroom with some close friends left his home to go to the bride's home, where there were various ceremonies, followed by a procession through the streets – after nightfall – to his home. The ten virgins may be bridesmaids who have been assisting the bride; and they expect to meet the groom as he comes from the bride's house...Everyone in the procession was expected to carry his or her own torch. Those without a torch would be assumed to be party crashers or even brigands. The festivities, which might last several days, would formally get under way at the groom's house."

Jewish	Christian	Scripture
The groom's father makes the match (Shiddukhin) and chooses the bride and the groom approves the choice.	The Father chooses us the bride, and Jesus approved the choice.	John 10:28, 15:16
A Ketubah (Hebrew: כְּתוּבָה) is a Jewish marriage contract. It is considered an integral part of a traditional Jewish marriage, and outlines the rights and responsibilities of the groom, in relation to the bride.	A new covenant is made in the written Word of God, for us the bride. The Old Covenant Promise is fulfilled.	2 Corinthians 3:5-6
They would then break bread and drink from the cup to seal the betrothal (Kiddushin) and new covenant.	He breaks bread and drinks from the cup at the last supper sealing His covenant.	Luke 22:14-20 Matthew 26:27-29
The groom pays a price (Mohar) showing the bride his love for her.	Jesus paid the price for us on the cross. This shows us the bride how much He loves us.	1 Corinthians 6:20
The groom makes a speech of promise to his bride that he would come for her soon.	Jesus' speech is recorded as a promise to us His bride, that He will come again for us soon.	John 14:1
The groom prepares a place for His bride and builds a room addition on his father's house.	Jesus says He goes to prepare a place for us in His Father's house where there are many rooms.	John 14:1-3
The Father is the only one who knows the day or hour of the grooms return for his bride.	Jesus said that no one but the Father knows the day or hour of His return for us His bride.	Mark 13:32-33
The groom gives the bride love gifts (Mattan).	Jesus our groom gives us His bride gifts of love, eternal life, peace, etc.	John 10:22-28 John 14:13-14, 27
The Father gives the bride gifts (Shiluhim) to equip her for her new life, as an inheritance.	We are given gift of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts for our new life in Him	John 14:16-17 2 Cor 1:21-22 Galatians 5:22
The bride's unmarried friends (bridesmaids) attend to the bride and provide light for the groom who comes at night.	We prepare the bride by letting our light shine (oil) so the bride is ready for the groom who will come as a thief in the night.	Matthew 25:1-13
The bridegroom comes, the grooms' men run ahead and shout that he is coming.	When our bridegroom comes, it will be with a shout of the trumpet that Jesus is coming.	Rev. 4:1 1 Thes. 4:16-17 1 Cor. 15:51-52
The groom snatches away and abducts his bride.	Jesus our groom will rapture us away as He abducts us His bride.	1 Thess. 4:16-17 Luke 17:34-36
The groom takes his bride to the chamber: they consummate (Nissuin), and celebrate for seven (Shavuah) days.	Jesus will take us to His bridal chamber where we will consummate and celebrate for seven (Shavuah) years/days.	Joel 2:16 Daniel 9:27
The party waits outside until the groom tells the best man that it is consummated. Then the guests rejoice for 7 days.	During the 7 day/year celebration the world goes through the 7 year tribulation.	Revelation 19:7-8
There is a big feast (the wedding feast) after the wedding celebration.	We too, will go to the Father's house for the Marriage Feast of The Lamb.	Revelation 19:9

There were three groups present at the wedding: the groom, the bride, and the invited guests.	There will also be three groups of people involved in the marriage of the Lamb: The Groom –Jesus, The Bride-Church and the Guests – those saved after the Rapture.	2 Corinthians. 11:2, Ephesians 5:23-27 Revelation 21:9-10 Matthew 25:1-10
The new home of the bride was Jerusalem and it was the bridegroom who came to the bride to dwell with her.	It is from the new Jerusalem that the believers in the Messiah during the Messianic age, or Millennium, will reign with the Messiah.	Rev. 21:1-3 Ezekiel 43:1-2,7 Isaiah 2:2-4 Micah 4:1-5

Nathan Jones (Christ in Prophecy) discussion

Frequently I am asked to explain or defend the end-time view of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church. For that topic, lots of Bible verses, readings and references rattle around in my skull. I can extract each like a Powerball out of an air machine and present it to the inquiring mind, but never in a linear, comprehensive manner in which I particularly appreciate. And so, this article is my attempt to organize my brain on the Pre-Tribulation Rapture view. You're welcome to come along on the journey!

My belief that there will be a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church stands on the bedrock of the following foundational tenets. These bedrock statements about the Bible and its interpretation provide the foundation in which to analyze the following reasons for why I believe the Bible teaches a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church.

- **The Bible is the Word of God**

The 66-book canon called the Bible is God's inerrant, infallible message to mankind, explaining His purposes and plans for the ages (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). No other document can be reliably trusted, nor remotely reach the bar for the requirements of authentication that the Bible attains to so easily.

- **The Bible is to be Interpreted Literally**

God means what He says and says what He means. God wants His creations to know His will plainly. While God does indulge in picturesque descriptions and parables, an explanation almost always follows or context is provided for explanation. Spiritualization of text, therefore, has no proper place in interpreting Scriptures. Any eschatological viewpoint must then be thrown out if it is based on the reader's desire to spiritualize the Bible into whatever ethereal meaning they desire. Take the Bible for its plain sense meaning.

- **The Church and Israel Are Separate Entities**

Israel is not the Church and the Church is not Israel. A believer in Christ becomes a member of the Church, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom. 1:16), but a member of the Church does not become a form of spiritual Israel. God's promises to Israel as a people and nation (see next tenet) are not the same as for the Bride of Christ, the Church.

- **A Literal 1000-Year Millennium**

The Bible describes a future, literal 1000-year time period. The Greek word "chilias" for "one thousand" appears six times in Revelation 20, clearly marking the time period as having 1000 literal years. The purpose of this time period is for Jesus Christ to have an earthly kingdom from which to base His rule and to fulfill His promises (Gen. 13:14-17; 15:5,18-21; 2 Sam. 7:16-19; Isa. 10:21-22; 11:1-2; Jer. 23:5-8; 30:22; 31:31-34; Ezek. 11:18-20; 34:24; 36:24-28; Mic. 7:19-20; Hos. 3:5; Rom. 11:26-29).

- **A Literal 7-Year Tribulation**

An upcoming time period has been set aside for God to pour out His wrath upon the evil of the world, to regather Israel back into its land, to force Israel to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, and for the Messiah to return and fight for His believing remnant (Deut. 4:26-31; Isa. 13:6-13; 17:4-11; Jer. 30:4-11; Ezek. 20:33-38; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; Zech. 14:1-4; Matt. 24:9-31). This time period begins with a covenant between Israel and the Antichrist (Dan. 9:27). The length of the Tribulation is seven years long, described in a variety of ways as "one seven" year block (Dan. 9:27), consisting of two "times, time and half a time" (two years + 1 year + half a year; Rev. 12:14), or two "1260 days" periods (Rev. 11:3), or two "42 month" periods (Rev. 11:2; 13:5).

- **Jesus Will Return Again to Earth**

The Bible says Jesus will physically return again to earth (Zech. 14:1-21; Matt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Lk. 21:25-27; Rev. 19). Jesus returns is to defeat His enemies, set up His throne, restore Israel, rule with “a rod of iron” and share His authority with those who overcame in Him (Mat. 19:28; 25:31; Acts 1:3-6; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21).

- **The Bible Teaches About a Rapture**

1 Thessalonians 4:17 speaks of an event called “the Rapture”, Latin “rapio,” Greek “harpazo,” which means “to catch up, to snatch away, or to take out.” “After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.” Paul states that the concept of the Rapture is meant to encourage believers during this Age (1 Thes. 4:18). Other New Testament references on the Rapture are Jn. 14:1-4; I Cor. 15:51-58; and 1 Thes. 4:13-18.

The Old Testament and Revelation leave the Church out of the Tribulation.

The focus of the Tribulation is addressed by the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation to the unbelievers and the Jewish people. Focus is:

To pour out God’s wrath on the earth just like the Flood

- Is 28:21 In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below.
- Zep 3:7 I said to the city, 'Surely you will fear me and accept correction!' Then her dwelling would not be cut off, nor all my punishments come upon her. But they were still eager to act corruptly in all they did. 8 Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD, "for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them— all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger.
- 1Th 5:3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.
- 2Th 2:11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

and to bring the Jewish people to accept Jesus as Messiah

- Mt 23:39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"
- Lk 13:35 Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

In any biblical content concerning the Tribulation/Day of the Lord, the Church cannot be found.

- The whole concept of the Church was a mystery to the Old Testament prophets. They focused on the nation of Israel.
- The Book of Matthew is written to the Jewish people, whom Jesus is addressing in Matthew 24.
- In the Book of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3 cover the Church Age, but then there is no mention of the Church until after the Tribulation/Day of the Lord chapters 6-18. In Chapter 19, the Church returns to the texts and can be found, not suffering, but celebrating with Christ at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and preparing to return with Jesus to earth.

The Church is busy elsewhere during the Tribulation.

While the 7-year Tribulation is occurring, the Bible records the Church will be busy with three events. None of the three have to do with suffering on a world being destroyed.

- The first event the raptured Church will participate in is a judgment by God — the Judgment of the Just.

- This judgment on works is not to determine eternal destiny, but to determine degrees of reward
 - 2Co 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
 - Ro 14:10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' " 12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.
- The second event is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb
 - This feast celebrates the spiritual marriage of Christ's Bride — the Church — to her Savior.
 - Revelation 19:7-9 shares this wonderful celebration, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' And he added, 'These are the true words of God.'"
 - Revelation 19:14 identifies the Church in their "fine linen, white and clean," which was given to them during the first event — the Judgment of the Just.
- The third event follows the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and is the Church's preparation to follow the King of Kings into the Battle of Armageddon at the conclusion of the Tribulation.
 - This event is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ
 - Zec 14:1-21 - The LORD Comes and Reigns
 - Mt 24:29 "Immediately after the distress of those days " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' 30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.
 - Mk 13:24 "But in those days, following that distress, " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' 26 "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.
 - Lk 21:25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
 - Rev. 19:11-21 – The Rider on the White Horse
 - The Church and angelic forces follow the King of Kings into His Second Coming to the earth, but only Jesus Himself will engage in battle and with mere words defeats the nations in siege against Jerusalem.

There needs to be sheep to separate from the goats.

If the Church is raptured at the end of the Tribulation, receives their glorified bodies, and then immediately u-turns back with Christ for the Second Coming as the Post-Tribulation Rapture view holds, then what believer in Christ will be available for the Sheep and Goats Judgment of Matthew 25? The only people left on earth would be unbelievers, called goats. No believer — sheep — would be available for God to put into the sheep category.

Since those who are in glorified bodies will be like the angels in that they aren't given in marriage or reproduce (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25), then a believing, unglorified, human remnant must make it into the sheep category and go on to produce the nations during the Millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 19:21; Isa. 65:20-22; Rev. 20:7-10). This would mean that people would need to come to Christ during the Tribulation yet after the Rapture to produce this Millennial population.

- Mt 22:30 At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.
- Mk 12:25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

The Bible shows God rescues the righteous from His wrath.

Being a Christian means having to endure suffering and trials at the hand of man ([Jn. 16:33](#); [Phil. 1:27](#); [1 Thes. 3:3](#); [1 Pet. 4:12-13](#)). But, the Bible has many examples of those who put their faith in God are exempt from God's wrath. Noah and his family were removed from the Flood waters that in God's wrath were used to judge and cleanse the earth. Lot and his wife and two daughters were made to leave Sodom and Gomorrah before God burned the towns up with fire and sulfur. Rahab's family was set apart when Joshua's army invaded Jericho.

Could believers be miraculously protected during the Tribulation, like the Israelites were during the plagues on Egypt? Yes, the 144,000 Jewish evangelists from Revelation 7 and 14, for instance, will be divinely protected. But, the slaughter of believers during the Tribulation will be so massive that they are certainly not under any special protection ([Rev. 7:9-17](#); [20:4](#)).

- Enoch was caught up before the flood
- Daniel was exalted (and therefore absent) during the 7x hotter fiery furnace
- Lot was taken out of Sodom and Gomorrah before it was destroyed

Jude 1:14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

The Pre-Tribulation Rapture view is not too new to discount.

Some will argue that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture view is just "too new" to be considered viable. Critics will point to the origin of the modern Pre-Tribulation view and credit John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) with its founding. But, is that assessment historically accurate? Indeed, it is not.

The Early Church fathers' such as Barnabas (ca. 100-105), Papias (ca. 60-130), Justin Martyr (110-195), Irenaeus (120-202), Tertullian (145-220), Hippolytus (ca. 185-236), Cyprian (200-250), and Lactantius (260-330) wrote on the imminent return of Jesus Christ, the central argument for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture view.

Biblical truth is determined by Scripture, and not how that teaching has been perceived at different times during history. When Augustine began spiritualizing the Bible, his view of a non-literal interpretation took hold of the church until the Renaissance, obliterating the Premillennial and Pre-Tribulation Rapture views in favor of Amillennialism. But, some Medieval writers such as Ephraem of Nisibis (306-373), Abbot Ceolfrid's Latin Codex Amiatinus (ca. 690-716), and Brother Dolcino wrote statements that distinguish the Rapture from the Second Coming.

When the chains of allegorical interpretation began to fall off beginning with the Reformation in the 1400 and 1500s, writers such as Joseph Mede (1586-1638), Increase Mather (1639-1723), Peter Jurieu (1687), Philip Doddridge (1738), John Gill (1748), James Macknight (1763), Thomas Scott (1792) and Morgan Edwards (1722-1795) all wrote concerning the Rapture occurring separate from the Second Coming. Even in the more modern church, those like William Witherby (1818) were precursors to John Darby in support of the view. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture view is indeed then not only biblical, but supported throughout Church history.

Closing Thoughts

I thank you for coming down this mental journey with me concerning why I believe in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church. Hopefully it has confirmed or challenged some of your eschatological ideas. Bear in mind, though, that one's end-time views have no bearing on the doctrine of salvation. What is to be celebrated is that our salvation will one day lead us upwards to be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ forever and ever.

Pre-Wrath Rapture

The view that the Rapture will occur at the mid-point of the Tribulation is based upon 1 Corinthians 15:52 which states that the Rapture will occur at the blowing of “the last trumpet.” This Mid-Tribulation Rapture view then declares this trumpet to be the last of the seven trumpets in Revelation 11 that is blown at the mid-point of the Tribulation.

Why of the 114 references to trumpets in the Bible these two are identified as one and the same only defies sound Bible study. The context clearly shows the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15 is blown for believers whereas the seven trumpets of Revelation 8, 9 and 11 are sounded for unbelievers. The Revelation trumpets therefore can have no relevance for the Church.

Proponents of the Pre-Wrath Rapture view believe the Rapture will occur about three-quarters of the way through the Tribulation, about five years or shortly thereafter, with up to four comings of Christ. According to Dr. David Reagan in his article The Pre-Wrath Rapture:

“Those who espouse this viewpoint believe that the Seal Judgments are the wrath of Man and Satan and that they continue throughout the first half of the Tribulation and into the second half, right up to the three-quarters point, or shortly thereafter. They place the Trumpet Judgments in the last quarter of the Tribulation and the Bowl Judgments in the first 30 days following the end of Daniel’s 70th Week of Years.”

But, isn’t it Jesus Himself who breaks the seals that launch each of the Revelation 6 seal judgments which occur at the beginning of the Tribulation? Also, the seven angels who blow the trumpets that initiate each of the trumpet judgments are given their trumpets at the throne of God (Revelation 8:2). And, Revelation 15:1 states that the bowl judgments at the end of the Tribulation finish the wrath of God, not begin His wrath.

Because these judgments are initiated by Jesus Himself at the beginning of the Tribulation, the whole Tribulation must be God’s wrath, which the Church is exempt from.

Judgement Seat (Bema Seat) of Christ – Believers only

The Judgment Seat of Christ

2Co 5⁹ Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. ¹¹ Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

- Judgment – The word Judgment Seat here is an entirely different word for the word Judgment or Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation.
 - Both are judgment seats, and both are translated judgment seat in English, but in the Greek they are two different words with two entirely different meanings.
 - The word for believers in the Corinthian letter is the word “bema” B-E-M-A,
 - The bema in the Corinthian passage is the Judgment seat for rewards, much like the judge at the Olympics stands before the contestants and he gives the gold, the silver, and the bronze.
 - The word for unbelievers in the Revelation letter is the word “krino”
 - The judgment seat at the Great White Throne in Revelation is like a court of law where sentence is passed.
- The judgment seat of Christ is a time of examination and reward. From Scripture we can conclude the following concerning the judgment seat of Christ, the Bema:
 - The Lord will resurrect the bodies of the saints who have died during the church age, as well as change the bodies of those still alive.
 - They will meet the Lord in the air and proceed to the judgment seat of Christ.
 - This judgment will consist of rewards for faithful service. There will be no condemning anyone.
 - Rewards will consist of crowns given to believers based upon our faithful service to Him. The rewards will be proportionate to our faithfulness.

What is the Judgment (Bema) Seat?

- Judgment Seat – The Bible speaks of a special judgment that God will hold for believers only. It is known as the judgment seat of Christ, or the judgment seat of God.
 - 2Co 5¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
- Tribunal For Rewards – The judgment seat is known as the “bema.”
 - The word is also translated court or tribunal. The platform could be either public (John 19:13) or private (Acts 25:22).
 - The bema is a tribunal for rewards. In the large Olympic arenas, there was an elevated seat on which the judge of the contest sat. After the contests were over, the successful competitors would assemble before the bema to receive their rewards or crowns. The bema was not a judicial bench where someone was condemned; it was a reward seat. Likewise, the Judgment Seat of Christ is not a judicial bench. The Christian life is a race, and the divine umpire is Jesus Christ. After the race is over for each believer, He will gather every member before the bema for the purpose of examining each one and giving the proper reward to each.
- The participants in the judgment seat of Christ are members of the New Testament church. These are people who have trusted Christ as Savior from the Day of Pentecost, until the coming of Christ for His church. It does not include the Old Testament believers. They will have a separate time of judgment and reward.
 - Heb 9²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.
- All believers will stand before God and be individually judged.

- Ro 14 ¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹ For it is written: “As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.” ¹² So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

When will this happen? After the Rapture of The Church

- At some time in the future, the Lord will come back for those who have believed upon Him. He will change their bodies from corruptible to incorruptible.
- Judgment always comes after resurrection.
- The judging of believers will occur after the rapture of the church, but before the Second Coming of Christ to the earth. In the Book of Revelation we are told.
 - Rev 19 ⁶ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.
 - We are told that the bride is clothed with righteous deeds. The church, therefore, has already been at the judgment seat of Christ because they are ready for the groom when He comes. Hence the judgment takes place sometime before the Second Coming of Christ.

What will happen at this judgment seat?

- Our Actions Will Be Judged
 - Jesus tells us that God’s keeping of records for the purpose of rewarding us is so precise, and so thorough that even the smallest act of kindness is going to be dealt with and rewarded at the judgment seat.

Mt 10 ⁴⁰ “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. ⁴¹ He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. ⁴² And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”
 - Here is a God who, when you put your faith in His Son as Lord and Savior, forgives and forgets your sins in that He will never hold them against you again. And yet He remembers every little good thing that you’ve ever done.
- Not Judged For Sin
 - The believer’s judgment, with respect to sin, is long past.
 - This is not a judgment to determine who will enter heaven – they have already been forgiven.
 - Ps 103 ¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; ¹² As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
 - Mic 7 ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.
 - With the death of Christ on the cross, the destiny of the Christian has been once-and-for-all settled. There is no condemnation for those who have believed in Christ.
 - There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).
 - Have Eternal Life
 - Those who have trusted Christ now possess eternal life.
 - I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; He has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24).

- Curse Removed – The curse against believers has been removed.
 - Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree" (Galatians 3:13).
- Price Paid – Jesus has paid the price for our sins.
 - He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed (1 Peter 2:24).
- Sin Offering – He presented Himself as a sin offering on our behalf.
 - For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Rewarded for faithful service
 - The judgment seat of Christ is not designed to punish believers, but rather to reward them for their faithful service. All of us will give an account of what we have done after trusting Christ as Savior. Therefore, the judgment seat of Christ is a judgment of believers works *after* salvation.

1Co 3 ⁹For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. ¹⁰According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. ¹¹For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Ps 62 ¹²Also to You, O Lord, *belongs* mercy; For You render to each one according to his work.

Mt 16 ²⁷For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Ep 6 ⁵Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free. ⁹And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

- Fire - The judgment will be by fire.
 - Fire is used in Scripture as a symbol of judgment.
 - If anyone's work is burned, they will suffer loss; but they themselves will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:15).
 - Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah - from the LORD out of the heavens (Genesis 19:24).
 - Jesus is described with fire
 - The Bible describes the glorified Christ in this manner: His head and His hair were white as white wool, white as snow; His eyes were like a flame of fire (Revelation 1:14).
 - Fire often symbolizes the holiness of God.
 - For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God (Deuteronomy 4:24).
- Some Suffer Loss
 - Not everyone will receive the same reward – there will be those who suffer loss.
 - Receive your full reward – Believers want to appear without shame before this seat and receive a full reward for their deeds of faith.

- 1Jn 2²⁸ And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
- 2Jn 1⁸ Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward.

- Be Careful Not To Lose Reward – Scripture warns believers about losing their reward.
 - Rev 3:11 Behold, I come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown
 - This is loss of reward, not of salvation.
 - Illustration – We can illustrate the loss of reward in the following manner: Let us say you have recently built a new two story house. While on the second floor, you smell smoke. Looking downstairs you see that the first floor is on fire. You jump out the second story window to save your life. You then watch your new house burn to the ground. Obviously you will have mixed emotions. You're thankful that you were able to jump and save your life, but you sad because your new house is destroyed. This is similar to those believers who are saved but have nothing to show for it. They squandered their opportunities to live for Christ yet they are enjoying the benefits of heaven with Jesus.
- All who experience the judgment seat of Christ will possess the privileges and honors as children of God. Jesus said He will acknowledge those who have believed in Him before His Father, and before the angels.
 - Therefore whoever confesses Me before humanity, I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven (Matthew 10:32).

5 Crowns – Christians will Receive Rewards for what they've done

There are five heavenly crowns mentioned in the New Testament that will be awarded to believers. They are the imperishable crown, the crown of rejoicing, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory, and the crown of life.

- The Greek word translated “crown” is *stephanos* (the source for the name Stephen the martyr) and means “a badge of royalty, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honor generally.”
- Used during the ancient Greek games, it referred to a wreath or garland of leaves placed on a victor's head as a reward for winning an athletic contest. As such, this word is used figuratively in the New Testament of the rewards of heaven God promises those who are faithful.

Rewards

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. Revelation 22:12

You might think, What kinds of rewards are we going to get in heaven? The Bible doesn't tell us a lot about it, but it does tell us there are some rewards for which we may qualify. And I want to just give you a few of them to whet your appetite.

But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God' (1 Corinthians 2:9,10).

- Rewards Proportionate – The rewards that the believer receives will be proportionate to the faithfulness they show in this life. The key is faithfulness to the gifts God has given.
 - Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2).
- Different Degrees Of Rewards
 - Jesus spoke of different degrees of rewards in a parable that He gave – Well done, my good servant! his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities' (Luke 19:17). To another one he said – His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities' (Luke 19:19).
- Book Of Life – Those who overcome will have their names written in the Book of Life:
 - You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (Revelation 3:4,5).

- Believers will be clothed in white garments, having their names written in the Book of Life. In addition, they will be acknowledged before the Father and the holy angels.
- The rewards believers will receive are called crowns. Paul wrote
 - I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing (2 Timothy 4:7).

5 Crowns

There are five crowns that are listed in the New Testament. These are not by any means the only rewards that will be distributed in heaven. But above all, it is important to remember that the Lord Himself is our chief reward. No crown could ever compare to the splendor of seeing our Lord and Savior face to face.

Applications of the crowns –

- Reject the Misconceptions About Rewards – We are not saved by good works, but for good works.
- Remember That the Lord Is Your Reward – No matter what we may receive in heaven, the Lord Himself remains our greatest reward.
- Resist Doing Work Outwardly for a Reward – Don't serve the Lord just for the purpose of receiving a reward. Serve Him because you love Him.
- Reflect Upon the Ultimate Goal of Rewards – One day we will give our crowns to the Lord Jesus as offerings of worship and praise. And we won't want to be emptyhanded!

Paul's passage in 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 best defines for us how these crowns are awarded.

1) Imperishable (Incorruptible) Crown

1Cor 9:24-25 “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate [disciplined] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown” (NKJV).

Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 1 Corinthians 9:25

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Paul calls the crown of victory “an imperishable crown” and compares it to the perishable wreaths for which athletes competed in the Greek games. Paul's point is that winning a race requires training, discipline, and sacrifice. And if athletes work so diligently to win a perishable crown, how much more motivated should we be as Christians to win an imperishable crown from God? If we are to win the crown of victory, we too must practice discipline and sacrifice.

- This crown is given to believers who faithfully run the race, who crucify every selfish desire in the flesh and point men to Jesus. People will receive this crown for the sacrifices they were willing to make for God to successfully complete the call and mission God had called them to do. Basically run whatever race that God has set out for you and be the best you can be for God. Be willing to make whatever sacrifices there may be to successfully complete the mission that God has set out for you.
- God calls some people to do things that will require some sacrifice in the way they will live and conduct their lives.
 - Some people may be called to be a missionary in a far off and poor country. They will literally be working for almost nothing in earthly terms. They will have to sacrifice the money, possessions and life style they could have had, if they stayed home in their own country.
- All things on this earth are subject to decay and will perish. Jesus urges us to not store our treasures on earth “**where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal**” (Matthew 6:19). This is analogous to what Paul was saying about that wreath of leaves that was soon to turn brittle and fall apart. But not so the heavenly crown; faithful endurance wins a heavenly reward which is “**an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you**” (1 Peter 1:4).

2) Crown of Rejoicing (Soul Winner's Crown)

1 Thessalonians 2:19 “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?”

Sometimes called “the soul-winner’s crown,” the crown of rejoicing is the crown that Almighty God gives to us when we reach out to others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. When Paul was talking to the Thessalonians, he said, in effect, “Thessalonians, let me tell you what the crown of rejoicing is: It’s you! Because we ministered to you. And someday, when we stand before the Lord, you’re going to be there because we had a ministry to you.” Some people in the Church are constant witnesses; they talk to people all the time about Jesus, and they’re candidates for this crown.

- This crown is given to believers who faithfully are witnesses to the saving grace of God and leads souls to Jesus.
- God will be giving a crown to those who have witnessed to others and leading people to Christ.
 - Telling others about the grace of God, telling others about Jesus, is the greatest thing that you can do for someone while here on this earth. When you help someone to be led to the Lord, you have just been used as a vessel of God.
 - “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:” 1 Thessalonians 2:10 KJV
- God will judge you by your willingness and desire to be used by Him to witness to others, not necessarily on how many actually get saved, because we are to water and He gives the increase.
 - Christians can be used by God to try to lead others to the Lord.
 - God can fit opportunities for you in your life to witness and work for Him if you allow Him to. Some could be your unsaved friends, family members or co-workers, etc.
- Philippians 4:4 “rejoice always in the Lord” for all the bountiful blessings our gracious God has showered upon us.
 - As Christians we have more in this life to rejoice about than anyone else.
 - Luke tells us there is rejoicing even now in heaven (Luke 15:7).
 - The crown of rejoicing will be our reward where “God will wipe away every tear . . . there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

3) Crown of Life

Revelation 2:10 “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

James 1¹² Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Many believers have endured and triumphed over trial and temptation and persecution, even to the point of martyrdom. And the motivation for doing so has to be love for the Lord. In the early days of heaven, those people will be walking around with the crown of life, because they endured trials and suffering and honored God in the midst of it.

- This crown is for all believers, but is especially dear to those who endure sufferings, who bravely confront persecution for Jesus, even to the point of death.
 - Jesus says that He will give this crown to those who undergo severe hardship, testing, tribulation and/or physical death on His behalf. Probably being willing to die for your faith in God would be the ultimate sacrifice. It is the greatest act of courage and love that you can show God.
 - Christians who have been martyred for their faith throughout history will not only be given this crown of life, but other rewards once they enter into heaven.
 - “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” James 1:12 KJV

- God the Father will honor each one's trials and tribulations and thus will be rewarding them accordingly.
- In Scripture the word “life” is often used to show a relationship that is right with God.
 - James tells us that this crown of life is for all those who love God (James 1:12).
 - The question then is how do we demonstrate our love for God?
 - “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). As His children we must keep His commandments, obeying Him, always remaining faithful. So, as we endure the inevitable trials, pains, heartaches, and tribulations—as long as we live—may we ever move forward, always “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2) and receive the crown of life that awaits us.
- It was Jesus who said, “I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).
 - Just as things such as air, food, and water are vital for our physical lives, Jesus provides us what is required for our spiritual lives. He is the One who provides “living water.” He is the “bread of life” (John 4:10, 6:35).
 - We know that our earthly lives will end. But we have the amazing promise that comes only to those who come to God through Jesus: “And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life” (1 John 2:25).

4) Crown of Righteousness

2 Timothy 4:8 “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8

Paul was prepared to meet the Lord, and he was certain of his own imminent death as he wrote the second letter to Timothy. Like Paul, some people have their heart set on heaven and on seeing Jesus Christ. Those are the people that will win the crown of righteousness, because they love and long for the appearing of the Lord.

- We inherit this crown through the righteousness of Christ – which is what gives us a right to it, and without which it cannot be obtained.
 - Because it is obtained and possessed in a righteous way, and not by force and deceit as earthly crowns sometimes are, it is an everlasting crown, promised to all who love the Lord and eagerly wait for His return.
 - Through our enduring discouragements, persecutions, sufferings, or even death, we know assuredly our reward is with Christ in eternity (Philippians 3:20).
 - This crown is not for those who depend upon their own sense of righteousness or of their own works. Such an attitude breeds only arrogance and pride, not a longing, a fervent desire to be with the Lord.
- This crown is given to those who have lived a good and righteous life for God while living down here on earth.
 - If you are a believer, you have been made righteous before God the Father as a result of Jesus dying on the cross for all of our sins. This means that the righteousness of Jesus has now been imputed to you.
 - It also refers to us living a good and righteous life for God the Father with what time we have left down here.
 - There are Christians who are righteous before God the Father as a result of being saved, called Justification, through the blood of Jesus Christ; but they are not living righteous lives in their actions, words and behaviors, called Sanctification.
 - There are some people that may be saved in God's eyes, but still continue to do evil works that the unsaved would do. We all have our flaws, weaknesses, and certain temptations that we may struggle with. It is not perfection but direction that God is looking for. God just wants each one of us to choose to do the right thing when faced with certain temptations or choices to do something bad.
 - When it is all said and done, these Christians will probably be receiving some of the greatest rewards that God can hand out once they enter into heaven.
 - To live a righteous life for God will really be worth your while as you will definitely be given this crown by God Himself once you enter into heaven.

- To those who love the appearing of Christ, who anxiously wait and look forward to the day when He will return for His saints.

5) Crown of Glory

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 1 Peter 5:4

1 Peter 5:1-4 “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

God has one out of the five crowns reserved for those who are in leadership and who are faithful shepherds of God’s people. And you know what? You don’t have to be a pastor or even on a church staff to earn it. Maybe you shepherd a small group—you are a facilitator and you shepherd that group and care about and pray for the people that come every week. You are in the running for “the shepherd’s crown”—the crown of glory.

- This is the pastor’s crown and will be given to the ministers who faithfully feed the flock of God.
 - This probably could also include preachers, teachers, Sunday School teachers, missionaries and all those who teach the Word of God in their respective ministries.
- This crown may signify the importance and sacrifices of bringing up others into the ways of God.
 - God wants those who are saved to grow and learn as much as they can about Him, His Son and His Holy Spirit and to do that he uses mature believers who are willing to teach others.
 - God can use you to teach and shepherd others. God shows you the extreme importance that He is placing on those who teach and preach the word. Being willing to teach and educate others after they are saved is one of the greatest things you can do for them this side of heaven.
- Though Peter is addressing the elders, we must also remember that the crown will be awarded to all those who long for or love His appearing.
 - This word “glory” is an interesting word referring to the very nature of God and His actions.
 - It entails His great splendor and brightness.
 - Recall Stephen who, while being stoned to death, was able to look into the heavens and see the glory of God (Acts 7:55-56).
 - This word also means that the praise and honor we bestow to God alone is due Him because of who He is (Isaiah 42:8, 48:11; Galatians 1:5).
 - It also recognizes that believers are incredibly blessed to enter into the kingdom, into the very likeness of Christ Himself.
 - For as Paul so eloquently put it, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18 NKJV).

Arguments for Pentecost Rapture

- The feast days and apply to the Jews and the we Gentiles are a 'pause' in the plan. Therefore, beginning and ending on the same day does hold some weight.
- Pentecost was a celebration of the wheat harvest
 - The Jew’s late spring/early summer **Fest of Shavuot** (Pentecost in Greek) was a celebration of the wheat harvest and a time to remember the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai.

Rapture Vision of 1996

January 1, 2009
Arcadia, Florida

Hello My Friend John Tng:

The first part of this letter is a little testimonial of where I am coming from. In 1994, while in my worldly ways, the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit finally got tired of my way of life and took me to the wood shed and whipped me severely. I thought they would kill me. I felt they had torn my heart out. I'm talking about mental suffering and pain. I cried and grieved so bad my heart felt like it stopped beating several times. He took one of the dearest things from me, my beloved dog. I loved that dog with a passion. She was my constant companion. Every step I took she was with me. She even slept with me. The problem was, I worshipped my dog and she worshipped me (like the Bible says, no other gods before me).

After several months went by, I was still crying daily over her mysterious death. She was very healthy according to the vet. No reason for her death. For several months before her I had a strong feeling that someone or something was controlling my life. Weird things would happen, not normal, like things fall down not up. Whoever heard of 3 or 4 flat tires on your car for 4 days in a row. It just doesn't happen. I could reach into a barrel of golden bb's and pull out the only lead one, three times in a row. I am serious. I decided that this was of a supernatural control. Then a friend of mine said, you know, it sounds like God is trying to get your attention. I said, OK, I'll get me a Bible and read it and see if this is my supernatural controller because I can't keep living like this, it's killing me. So I read my King James, and the more I read the more I craved. About 4 books into the bible, I cried and begged the Lord for forgiveness, and he did. God's Holy Spirit came into my body in May of 1994 and cleansed my heart and soul. As long as I live, I will never forget that feeling, it lasted right at 8 hours. I felt like I had swallowed a dozen tranquilizers. I did cry sorrowfully, and ashamed of my past. I know everyone has their own story.

Two years went by, reading my Bible day and night, and listening to sermons on the radio. I read where Daniel prayed three times a day. I can pray six and I did. I lived and breathed God's word. My family thought I had lost my mind, I was so obsessed. Every minute I was alone, I talked to Him, like He was standing there invisible, of course. I believed He was anyway, even though He said not a word aloud. I probably would have croaked if He actually spoke to me like He did Moses. But I knew I was just a lowly servant, not worth much, surely did not deserve any special treatment.

Well anyway, two years went by, praying day and night. At the end of each prayer, I'd lay in bed and think about Jesus and ask Him the same question every night before sleep. Lord Jesus, will I live to see the rapture? And what did you really look like? Then one night while on my knees praying, I just started, when out of nowhere, like someone flipped the TV on, a picture appeared before my eyes. Flames of fire, dancing all around me moving just like real fire. Well, I knew I hadn't done anything wrong, so this had to be Satan trying to interrupt my prayers. I said, go away Satan, you're not making me stop praying, but they did not leave, so I got scared and jumped into my bed. My wife said, my that was a short one. I said, if you had seen what I had just seen you would have made it a short one too. Well, I decided that would never happen again - wrong! The very next night, the same thing happened again, but this time I was not going to quit, and I didn't budge. Then something happened right in the middle of those flames, they opened up and revealed a road, a long road, it was like I could not go but one way, and if I got off this road, I'd get burned, or my life's road would be through flames of fire. And believe me, the last 13 years has not been a picnic.

There were a total of 15 visions, most were at night as I began to pray by my bed. I had no control. They started and stopped when they wanted. Each and every night I thought it would be the last one. There was not a sound or word spoken in these visions, just silent pictures. Well, after three visions ended, I thought maybe I had pleased the Lord for Him to give me these visions, maybe a little special. Wrong!

Within 6 months. I had to file bankruptcy, one year later, a massive heart attack, and another year later another heart attack. I don't want to receive any credit for anything. I can't handle any more mental or physical suffering. I don't want God to think I'm getting puffed up. I must get on to the rapture vision.

The Rapture Vision of 1996

The coming events or warnings to happen just before the rapture takes place.

Dearly beloved doves, and brothers and sisters in Jesus name. This is the vision given in 1996 concerning world wide events to happen from one to three weeks before the actual Rapture. This I told to many friends, and was often hurt at the disbelief, and cold shoulders of many Christian friends that I finally just put it on the back shelf, and let it sit for the last 13 years. I now feel that the Rapture is so close that it needs to be told, urgently. I agree with our Christian brother John Tng that there has been so many dreams and visions of the Rapture that probably no one will believe this one either, but that is okay. All I pray for is everyone to remember. Like our Bible says, the vision will prove itself with time and testing. By remembering these visions, it will or can save you much needless suffering. The Lord does not want to hurt his bride.

There is going to appear above the earth (in the sky) a strange object, it will be large and sphere shaped, like a ball. It will look like it's been built in sections, like a football with huge rivets at the seams. Many will call this a UFO, I don't know. It will have the color of copper or bronze. It will be on every TV around the world. People will be shocked like the World Trade Center. People will be glued to their TV's but you don't. The minute you see this, run to the closest food store and get enough canned food and bottled water for about three weeks, because between one and 24 hours after this object is seen world wide there is going to be a massive impact or collision on our sun's surface. It is going to happen on our blind side, we can't see it coming. It's going to be a super size twin asteroid hitting the sun in a vital spot, releasing a major solar storm, knocking out all of earth's electricity, all over the world. Those of you who read this will save yourself and your family much misery.

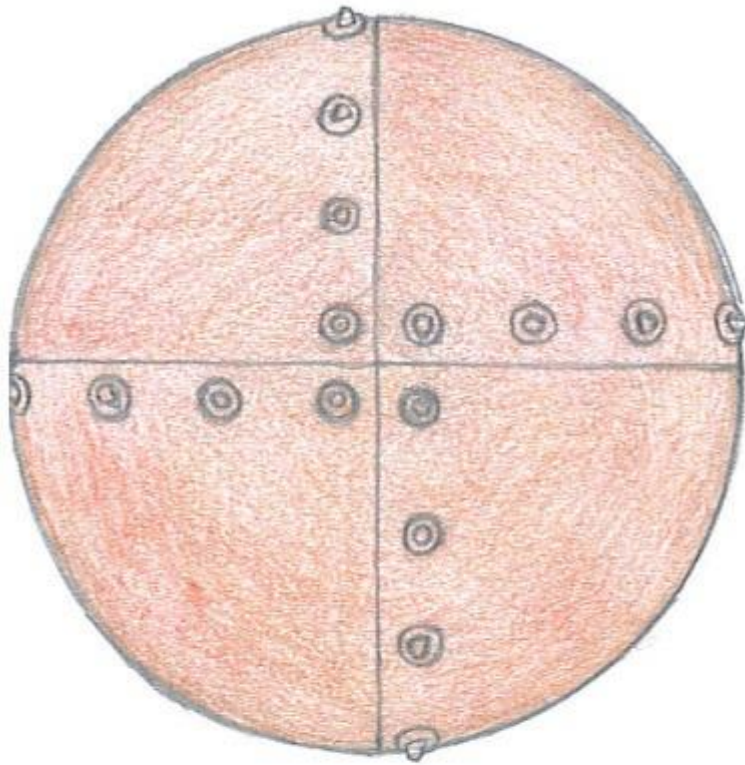
Now, this is what's going to happen in the next 2 or 3 weeks, while the electricity is off. Within a few days the whole world will start to go crazy with hunger. The banks and ATM's can't work without electricity. No gas pumps for food transportation, no refrigeration, total darkness. The robbers, rapists, and murderers will see right away that no one can call the police for help, because the solar storm has burned up all communication satellites, cell phones and telephones. The law can't even call each other. It's going to be total breakdown in large cities. There will be gun shots and screams all night long. Millions will be behind locked doors, praying and begging for God's mercy, for help and protection. He will answer millions of prayers. Millions will ask for forgiveness, and the Lord and his saints will perform millions of miracles during these three weeks.

Then after about 3 weeks of this, the Rapture will happen. Although there are different time zones around the world, the Lord showed it will be night here in Florida, USA. In this vision, I was taken in the spirit out in the woods behind my house in Florida. During the spring or early summer, it started at night. I didn't hear any trumpets or words (come up hither) but I know there's going to be, because the Bible says so. As I was standing there in the spirit of course, in the middle of some trees, a huge blue beam of light came down like a big flashlight, about a thirty foot circle around me. The blue light was identical in color to a welder's arc light at night. It was so blinding I put my hands over my eyes to see if I could see where or what this light was coming from. Then I noticed in the distant night sky, north, south, east, and west of me, blue colored stars jetting off the ground spiraling upwards traveling fast, they were heading for the bright blue object that was shining that beam of light down on me. It could have been the Lord or an open door to heaven. I really could not tell, it was so bright and blinding. Anyway, these little blue stars were going up in clusters. Different numbers depending on the size of town around me. Then all of a sudden when they reached about 9:00 high they burst into 10 times their size. Then I realized it was those alive in Christ joining those dead in Christ. I was too far away to see any new regenerated bodies or white gowns, but I'm sure they were. Then suddenly I was again taken out of my body off to the side to look at myself standing in the light. That's when I saw my own flesh glossing white as lightning, all my flesh, head and arms, my clothes remained the same. Then instantly, I vanished and my clothes fell to the ground. From what I saw in this vision, I was the last to go because all the alive in Christ had joined the risen dead.

The next afternoon, I had been reading my Bible for about an hour and then stood up in my living room to take a break, when suddenly at arm's length from my face appeared a blue cloud, the same color as the beam in the Rapture vision. In the shape of something like a football on its side, about 3 ft long and 2 ft high - white, a brilliant white 21 in the middle of it. I never did understand the meaning of the 21, maybe it was the day of the Rapture. I base no idea, your guess is as good as mine. Well, that startled me, so I sat down, shocked again because this was in the middle of the day and I wasn't even praying. Well, my son was in the kitchen making some tea and he said we were out of sugar. I said OK, I'll go down the road and get some. I began to sit up when this small newborn baby appeared before my eyes. I'm starting to come unglued now, because it hadn't been 5 minutes since the blue cloud, when this happened. I told myself, O my Lord, am I losing my mind? What, O God, does this baby have to do with the Bible? I must be losing my mind. I really started crying, it was blowing my mind. Then I noticed this newborn baby had this horrible growth on the side of it's head, almost as big as the

baby's head. It was scary ugly, that's how bad. After about 20 seconds, the vision disappeared, the baby was gone. I told myself I've got to get out of here or I'm going to start crying again. Well, I left and went after the sugar, about 2 miles away. I walked into the store, the owner and myself were the only ones there. He was on the telephone talking to some friend of his. I was at the counter waiting to him to get off the phone, when suddenly a young woman came into the store. She walked right up beside me and spoke to my friend on the phone. She said, you haven't seen my brand new baby have you and he said no ma'am. I happened to look down at the baby and nearly fainted. There was the same baby I'd seen 10 minutes earlier. My legs went like rubber and I had to lean on the counter to keep myself from falling. This action made this young woman mad, I mean angry, my reaction insulted her greatly. She yelled at me and said, the doctor says it's just a birth mark, and it will shrink and go away. She then stormed out of the store. My friend said, did you see that thing on the baby's head? I said yes, I saw it 10 minutes before I came here. That was the last one, never again in 13 years. The only thing I can figure out is, He was showing me that every vision he had shown me was going to happen. My friends, all I ask you is to remember what you read here. It's not important to believe this, but I beg you to remember.

Your brother in Christ
Unknown Servant



object in
The Sky

Resurrections

- Daniel 12:2 summarizes the two very different fates facing mankind. Everyone will be raised from the dead, but not everyone will share the same destiny.

Dan 12² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

- Jesus declared in John 5:28-29 that there would be two categories of resurrection
 - A resurrection of life – genuine believers
 - A resurrection of condemnation – those that are lost

John 5²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

- It's important to understand that His focus was on the “kind” of resurrection, not the “time” of resurrection.
- The event which divides the first and second resurrections seems to be the millennial kingdom.
 - The last of the righteous are raised to reign “with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4), but the “rest of the dead [that is, the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:5).
 - What great rejoicing will attend the first resurrection! What great anguish at the second!
 - What a responsibility we have to share the Gospel! “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire”

Jude 1²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.²² And on some have compassion, making a distinction;²³ but others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

- What kind of body will we have once resurrected?
 - Creasy likens the new body to an oak tree – Now we are a seed. Same DNA, but very different than the final product, the oak tree.

1Co 15³⁵ But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?”³⁶ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.³⁷ And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other *grain*.³⁸ But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

³⁹ All flesh *is* not the same flesh, but *there is one kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, *and* another of birds.

⁴⁰ *There are* also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another.⁴¹ *There is* one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory.

⁴² So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.⁴⁵ And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.

⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.⁴⁷ The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord from heaven.⁴⁸ As *was* the *man* of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly Man, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly.⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1st Resurrection – Believers

- Revelation 20:4-6 mentions a “first resurrection” and identifies those involved as “blessed and holy.”

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

- The first resurrection, then, is the raising of all believers.
 - At the first resurrection the bodies of the believers will be resurrected and reunited with their souls.
 - The second death (the lake of fire, Revelation 20:14) has no power over these individuals.
- This corresponds with Jesus’ teachings:
 - Lk 14 ¹⁴ And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”
 - John 5 ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Stages of the 1st Resurrection

The Apostle Paul uses a Greek term in relation to the stages of the first resurrection, “tagma,” “each in his own order”

- 1Co 15 ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption,

This is a military term frequently used to designate a division or a battalion of soldiers. Paul pictures a military battalion passing by a reviewing stand at different intervals of time and relates this to the first resurrection. These are the different stages or battalions that come under the category of the first resurrection:

Christ is “the firstfruits”

- First Battalion: Christ’s resurrection is first, “the firstfruits” of all who follow. Jesus Christ paved the way for the resurrection of all who believe in Him.
 - 1Co 15 ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ’s at His coming. ²⁴ Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

Jerusalem saints

- Second Battalion: Resurrection of the Jerusalem saints
 - Mt 27 ⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.
 - Is 26 ¹⁹ Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Rapture

- Third Battalion: The Rapture, Christians, 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51

1Th 4 ¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

 - This passage precludes the Old Testament Saints here because it's the dead in Christ.

1Co 15 ⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

 - This passage precludes the Old Testament Saints here because the personal pronoun "we" is used in the context of the Christians.
 - The imagery of the Rapture is always an imagery of the Bridegroom coming for His Bride. The Bride consists of the Church Age Saints. It doesn't include the Old Testament Saints. That's the Church Age Saints. And so I think that the Bible is very clear: the Rapture is going to be for those who are in Christ, Church Age Saints, living and dead, and not include the Old Testament Saints.

Two Witnesses

- Fourth Battalion: Two Witnesses who are martyred, Rev. 11:11-14
 - Rev 11 ¹¹ Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. ¹³ In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Tribulation saints

- Fifth Battalion: Tribulation saints martyred, Rev. 7:9-17
 - The Resurrection of the Old Testament Saints and Tribulation Saints will occur after the Second Coming of the Messiah.

- Rev 7⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ... ¹⁴“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Old Testament Saints

- Sixth Battalion: The Old Testament Saints, Dan. 12:1-3
 - The imagery of the Rapture is always an imagery of the Bridegroom coming for His Bride. The Bride consists of the Church Age Saints. It doesn't include the Old Testament Saints. That's the Church Age Saints. And so I think that the Bible is very clear: the Rapture is going to be for those who are in Christ, Church Age Saints, living and dead, and not include the Old Testament Saints.
 - The Resurrection of the Old Testament Saints will occur after the Second Coming of the Messiah.
 - **At that time** – The time of the end – **will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.**”
 - Referring to the end of the tribulation

Dan 12 Prophecy of the End Time

¹ “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever. ... ¹³ “But you, go *your way* till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

Spiritual Harvest Model

- The harvest has always been a beautiful and important part of life on earth, the time when the year's work bears fruit and the people are fed. It is symbolic of bounty, health and abundance. Israel celebrated the time of the harvest with a feast, appropriately called the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16).
 - Ex 23:14 “Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: 15 You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread ... 16 and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.
- Throughout the Bible, the harvest carries spiritual significance. It is used in parables (Luke 8:4–8) and as a metaphor for spiritual growth and health (2 Corinthians 9:10; James 3:18).
 - Lk 8:4 And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 5 “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. 8 But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”
 - 2Co 9: 10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,
 - Jam 3:18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
- Jesus spoke of a spiritual harvest waiting to be reaped. As Jesus traveled, “he saw the crowds, [and] he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’” (Matthew 9:36–38). Here, Jesus referred to the many souls needing to be brought to repentance and faith as a harvest waiting to be realized.

- Mt 9:36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”
- Jesus used the same metaphor of a spiritual harvest in Samaria. After talking to the woman at the well, Jesus told His disciples, “Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35). In the days following this statement, many of the Samaritans became believers in Christ (verse 41). Jesus saw the spiritual harvest of souls awaiting in that village.
 - Jn 4:32 But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” ... 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” 39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified,

Parable of the seed and the sower

- A spiritual harvest is the result of God’s work in the heart of man. It is clear from the parable of the seed and the sower that some people’s hearts are good soil; when the Word of God is sown there, the person accepts it and continues to mature (Luke 8:9–15).
 - Lk 8:11 “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13 But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. 14 Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.
- There is nothing we can do to change the soil—that is God’s job (Ezekiel 36:26).
 - Ez 36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them
- However, we can be faithful to sow the seed, help the plants to grow, or reap the harvest. The process of spiritual growth and maturity, from the heart’s regeneration to the recognition of faith, is often a long journey. In fact, the Bible indicates that the sower, the tender, and the reaper are likely to be different people at different times (John 4:35–38; 1 Corinthians 3:6–9).
 - Jn 4:35 Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”
 - 1Co 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
- Just like the physical growth of a field, the spiritual growth of people is a natural, organic process, overseen by God Himself. If we don’t see anyone getting saved, it can be discouraging, but we need to remember that sowing is just as important as reaping. Some of us are sowers and may never see the result of our labor. That is why our focus should be on pleasing the One who sent us into the field rather than on controlling the rate of growth or the amount we reap.

God's laborers are promised great rewards

- God's laborers in the spiritual harvest of souls are promised great reward for their faith and perseverance (James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; 2 Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 11).
 - Jam 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
 - 1Pe 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.
 - 2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- This applies to all aspects of our spiritual lives, including witnessing and seeing people saved and growing in the Lord, which is the spiritual harvest we all long to see. Sometimes we don't see it. Nonetheless, believers are exhorted with these words:
 - "Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9)
 - "A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:18)
 - "Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them" (Psalm 126:6).

Pray for more laborers

- Jesus told us to pray to the Lord of the harvest for more laborers (Matthew 9:38).
 - Mt 9:38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.
- We should pray about all aspects of the spiritual harvest process, including the preparation of the soil. We can ask God to change people's hearts. "The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:24–25). God will use us in His fields, each according to our gifts and the need of the moment, as we trust Him.
 - 2Ti 2:24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

3 Spiritual Harvests – Barley, Wheat and Grapes

Barley Harvest (First Fruits)

- See ~ *Ephesians* 5:27; ~ *1 Thessalonians* 5:23, NCV; ~ *2 Peter* 3:14, NCV
- Harvest
 - The chaff from the barley falls away very easily, so barley is said to be winnowed.
 - That is, the action of the wind itself (by means of fans) are sufficient to get rid of the chaff.
 - The Feast of First Fruits (Easter) starts the barley harvest in Israel
 - Feast of Firstfruits includes the offering of the first fruits of the barley harvest
- The Barley Harvest represents the first part of God's harvest. Those in this first harvest are referred to in Scripture as "overcomers". The gathering in of the nations is actually a part of the Barley Harvest. It is in and through the manifestation of the sons of God that all nations will come to know the Lord and serve Him. These overcomers shall come forth in the first resurrection to rule and reign on the earth under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ!
- The Barley Harvest represents the overcomers. These are the saints whose hearts are tender—the repentant on-fire believers, whose body, soul and spirit are without spot or blemish; completely sanctified unleavened lives driven by the Wind of the Holy Spirit.
- Like Christ Jesus, they too are Firstfruits; they are the Bride of Christ; they are the redeemed, resurrected, never-to-die again, glorified sons and daughters of God, and they are the FIRST PHASE of the spiritual Harvest of Souls who participate in the 1st resurrection.
 - Some of them will be the resurrected dead in Christ AND some will be the raptured alive in Christ (see *1 Corinthians* 15:51- 54; *1 Thessalonians* 4:15-17).
- More important, these overcomers have been winnowed, which means they did not need to be harvested by using a "TRIBULUM" (Latin word from which comes the English word, Tribulation). In other words, the Barley Harvest of Souls will NOT have to go through the seven-year TRIBULATION, which are going to be the time of great distress and great pressure that this world has never seen before, and will never see again.

Wheat Harvest (Main Harvest)

- See ~ *Matthew* 3:11-12; ~ *Matthew* 13:38-39; ~ *Revelation* 14:14-16, NCV
- Harvest
 - To remove the chaff from the wheat requires threshing. This is a more severe action, but it does the job.
 - It depicts the fact that the Church will be harvested by means of judgment, or tribulation.
 - The Latin word, tribulum, is a threshing instrument.
 - Pentecost (50 days after Easter) starts the wheat harvest in Israel
 - Pilgrimage festival – Required that all able-bodied Jewish males travel to Jerusalem to attend the feast and offer sacrifices
 - Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) includes the offering of the first fruits of the wheat harvest
- Mt 13 – The Parable of the Weeds – 24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 29 "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

- Mt 3:12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He [Jesus] will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”
- The Wheat Harvest represents “the church in general”. It speaks of those who were justified by faith, but either did not go through or submit to the sanctification process of the Lord. They are believers, but are in need of further correction in order to be fully sanctified and put on the divine nature and character of their Heavenly Father. There still remains iniquity (lawlessness) in their lives that must be purged by the fire (the fiery law) of God. Those who are part of the Wheat Harvest shall be brought forth in the second resurrection to be saved “yet so as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:15).
- The Wheat Harvest represents all the rest of the believers—the left behind hardhearted and/or carnal believers who were not ready when the Bride of Christ was raptured. These believers must endure the seven-year Tribulation, and for them the Great Tribulation (the last 3½ years) is a judgment that can be compared to the most severe action of Wheat threshing that is done in order to make the Wheat easier to separate (easier to winnow) away from the chaff. The Wheat Harvest, thus, represents those believers who are asleep, in the spiritual sense (see *Matthew* 13:25). Furthermore, the Firstfruits of this Wheat Harvest will be the martyred (beheaded) saints who are the SECOND PHASE of the spiritual Harvest of Souls who participate in the 1st resurrection, and the remaining mature Wheat will be those surviving Tribulation saints—the left-behind believers who have been thoroughly purged; see *Revelation* 7:13-14).
- Also mixed in with this left-behind Harvest of Wheat are many left behind evangelized unbelievers (Jews and Gentiles) who, during the seven-year Tribulation, finally will accept Jesus the Christ as their personal Savior! Together with the surviving Tribulation’s left-behind believers, these Tribulation converts will be those Tribulation survivors biblically described as “...a great multitude, which no man could number...” (*Revelation* 7:9).

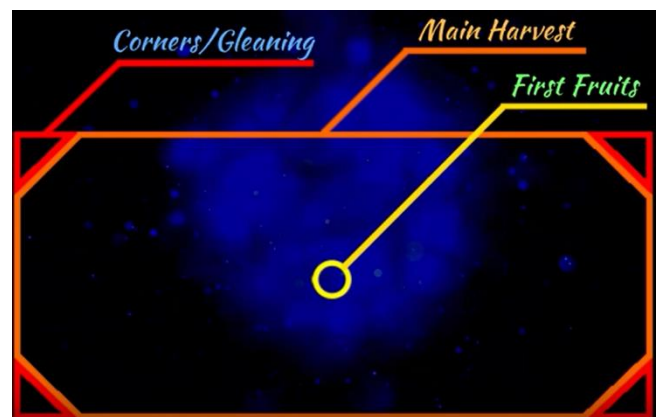
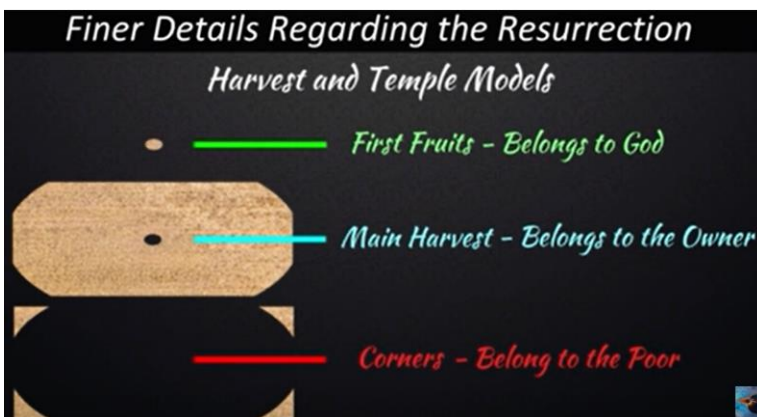
Grapes (Non-believers)

- See ~ *Revelation* 14:17-20; ~ *Revelation* 19:15
- Harvest – To obtain the juice, the grapes must be trodden under foot.
 - Grapes do not have chaff, but they do have “flesh” that must be pressed severely in order to obtain the wine.
 - This represents the most severe form of judgment upon the unbelievers. Yet the result is that God obtains wine for His communion table.”
 - Tabernacles starts the olive and grape harvests in Israel
 - Pilgrimage festival – Required that all able-bodied Jewish males travel to Jerusalem to attend the feast and offer sacrifices
 - Feast of Tabernacles involved offerings of the first fruits of the olive and grape harvests
- The Grape Harvest represents “the unbelievers”. It speaks of those who have neither been justified nor sanctified. They shall go through God’s wrath, judgment, and the lake of fire for the purpose of correction.
- The Grapes Harvest represents the unbelievers who, for the most part, will be part of the massive crop of unbelievers who are in the 2nd resurrection—those centuries of unbelievers who will be judged according to their works (see *Revelation* 20:11-13). Moreover, many of these Grapes are Tribulation unbelievers who have heard the Gospel but made a choice to not make the Gospel a part of their lives—they chose not to accept Jesus the Christ as their Lord and personal Savior. These Grapes, thus, are the Tribulation’s unspiritual Harvest of Souls who have been thrown in the great winepress of God’s wrath, which thoroughly extracts juice (life) from “crushed” Grapes (see *Revelation* 14:19). Put differently, the Grapes and their seeds are UTTERLY and TOTALLY CRUSHED!
- In contrast, the Firstfruits of the Grapes Harvest are the 144,000 last days’ redeemed unmarried translated/raptured Messianic Jews (see *Revelation* 14:3-4). These blameless, undefiled, and faithful followers of Jesus the Christ are the THIRD PHASE of the spiritual Harvest of Souls who participate in the 1st resurrection, because just like the alive Bride of Christ these 144,000 saints will be raptured (redeemed or resurrected; raised up) alive!
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Rapture using the Harvest Model

- 1st Fruits (green)
- Main harvest (blue)
- Corners (red)
- Unsaved (purple)





First Fruits – Belongs to God – Jesus Christ

- Jesus was resurrection through an act of God alone
- Jesus' resurrection was the first collective event
 - Mt 27:51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, 52 and the **graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised**; 53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.
- Jesus was resurrected in a glorified body
 - Lk 24:36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." 37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."
- Jesus' resurrection was followed by His ascension into Heaven
- Jesus was received into a cloud
 - Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
- Ex 23:19 The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God.
- Ro 11:16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.
- 1Co 15:20 But now **Christ is risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming**. 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

Main Harvest – Belongs to the Owner – Rapture?

- 1Co 15:20 But now **Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.** 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.** 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.
- Mt 27:51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, 52 and the **graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;** 53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.
- Jn 10:15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.
- 1Co 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: **We shall not all sleep,** but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised** incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this **corruptible must put on incorruption,** and this mortal must put on immortality.
- 1Th 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so **God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.** 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the **dead in Christ will rise first.** 17 Then **we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together** with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.
- Lk 18:7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"
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Corners – Belongs to the Poor – Tribulation Saints

- The Hebrew word for “glean” is laqat, and it means “to collect, gather up, pick up.” Gleaning is the gathering of grain or other harvested material left behind by reapers. In the Bible, the Israelites were commanded to allow the poor to follow behind reapers and pick up leftover spears of grain and fallen grapes. In this way, the Law of Moses provided food for the poor, orphans, widows, and resident aliens. The law specified that land owners must leave some of the harvest for gleaners: “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:9–10).

Gleaning is important in the story of Ruth, the Moabite widowed daughter-in-law of the widow Naomi in Bethlehem. To stave off complete destitution, Ruth gleaned grain in the fields of Boaz: “And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, ‘Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.’ Naomi said to her, ‘Go ahead, my daughter’” (Ruth 2:2).

The landowner Boaz was so moved by Ruth's concern for her elderly and grieving mother-in-law that he instructed his harvesters to go beyond what the law required to help her: “As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, ‘Let her gather among the sheaves and don't reprimand her. Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her’” (Ruth 2:15–16). The harvesters' dropping “handfuls of purpose” (KJV) for Ruth to glean is a wonderful illustration of God's grace.

Gleaning is also used figuratively in the Bible to describe the slaying of men who fled from battle: “And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them” (Judges 20:45, KJV).

The prophets often used gleaning figuratively in the Bible. In the book of Jeremiah, gleaning takes on the imagery of complete devastation and destruction. Israel had been utterly stripped of its possessions, like grapes that had been completely plucked from the vine: “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Let them glean the remnant of Israel as thoroughly as a vine; pass your hand over the branches again, like one gathering grapes’” (Jeremiah 6:9).

Again, in Jeremiah, God’s judgment on the Edomites was going to be more thorough than a grape-gatherer in a vineyard. Grape pickers at least left some gleanings: “If grape pickers came to you, would they not leave a few grapes? If thieves came during the night, would they not steal only as much as they wanted? But I will strip [Edom] bare” (Jeremiah 49:9–10).

The prophet Micah described the world as a gleaned vineyard, with the godly having been entirely plucked from the land: “What misery is mine! I am like one who gathers summer fruit at the gleaning of the vineyard; there is no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave. The faithful have been swept from the land; not one upright person remains. Everyone lies in wait to shed blood; they hunt each other with nets” (Micah 7:1–2).

The prophet Isaiah applied gleaning symbolically in a message about the ultimate day of judgment and salvation for all the people of God: “In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the LORD will thresh out the grain, and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel” (Isaiah 27:12, ESV).

Gleaning in the Bible is an important concept that believers ought to take to heart. We should remember to cheerfully and generously allow others in need to glean from the blessings we have received. In turn, we do well to realize that our blessings have been gleaned through God’s goodness and grace from His abundant fields. And finally, as God’s people we ought to live in readiness for a great gleaning in the future harvest when the Lord returns to thresh out the grain, gather up His people, and dispense with the chaff.

- Lev 23:22 ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God.’ ”
- Rev 20: 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. **Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.** And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 **But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.** This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.



Unsaved

- Lev 27:28 'Nevertheless no devoted offering that a man may devote to the Lord of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the Lord. 29 No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death.
- Mic 7:1 Woe is me!
For I am like those who gather summer fruits, Like those who glean vintage grapes;
There is no cluster to eat Of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires.
2 The faithful man has perished from the earth, And there is no one upright among men.
They all lie in wait for blood; Every man hunts his brother with a net.

2nd Resurrection – Unbelievers

- Revelation 20:12-13 identifies those comprising the second resurrection as the wicked judged by God at the great white throne judgment prior to being cast into the lake of fire.

Rev 20 ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

- The second resurrection, then, is the raising of all unbelievers
 - The second resurrection is connected to the second death.
- It corresponds with Jesus' teaching of the "resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29).
John 5 ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

- Right at the end of the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ, when it's all wrapped up, then everyone who has ever died outside of a faith relationship with the Lord will be resurrected and judged at that time.
 - So the second resurrection, the resurrection of the unjust occurs all at one time.

Resurrection of the 2 Witnesses

- Mt 12:40 For as Jonah was **three days and three nights** in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth.
- Rev 11:11 Now after the **three-and-a-half days** the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." **And they ascended to heaven in a cloud**, and their enemies saw them. 13 In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.





Resurrections and Judgements – David Reagan

- **Dr. Reagan:** It's a good illustration. All right, another question: When and where will the lost be judged, and what will they be judged of? So far we've been talking primarily about saved people, and when their judgments are going to take place. And what that judgment is going to be all about. But what about those who are lost? When will they be judged, and what will they be judged of?
- **Dennis Pollock:** Well, John describes it beautifully in Revelation. I mean it's a very clear description, and he starts out saying, "I saw the dead," which is quite a statement, "small and great, standing before God, and books were opened." And what he's seeing is this great, incredible judgment of all the lost people that have ever lived, standing before God. He says, "Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life, and they were judged according to their works." Well, why would they be judged according to their works? Well, there was no grace at work in their lives. They didn't have their sins forgiven, so their works will be a condemnation. Why does God need to do that? Well, He chooses to do that to show the justness of His sentence. And He will go over their lives very carefully. You know, that will be the ultimate horror story. You know, people, Hollywood tries to outdo itself with horror stories. The ultimate horror story would be to stand before a Holy God, have all your sins exposed, all your lies, all your sexual immorality, and you're standing before the One with the "eyes like a flame of fire." And then He declares, "I never knew you, you are sentenced to eternal destruction."
- **Dr. Reagan:** So that Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Millennial Reign of Jesus, called the Great White Throne Judgment, is a judgment of the damned. It's a judgment of those who have died throughout all of history outside of a faith relationship with God. They're judged of their works, and since no man can be justified by his works, every one of them will be condemned to Hell.
- **Don McGee:** Who wants to meet God based upon his own ability?
- **Dr. Reagan:** Well, there are people who think they can.
- **Don McGee:** They think so, but at that moment it'll seen for the—
- **Dr. Reagan:** And you know what they do? They do it primarily by judging themselves in accordance to somebody else. "Well, I am so much better than the guy who lives down the street from me. I mean, hey, he cheats on his wife. I don't cheat on my wife." But God doesn't grade on the curve, He grades on the Cross.
- **Dennis Pollock:** Yeah, absolutely.
- **Dr. Reagan:** And that's what people usually—
- **Don McGee:** They're using the wrong standard.
- **Dennis Pollock:** People who compare themselves with someone else, it's like one ant saying, "I'm a lot taller than this other ant." Well, you may think you are, but compared to everybody else, you're a little shorty, and so it is morally. None of us are any better than anybody else apart from the grace of Christ.
- **Dr. Reagan:** What would you say Dennis, to a person who is watching right now, who does not have the hope of life everlasting with God, who, if Jesus were to appear during this program would be left behind, if the Rapture occurred? A person who has no hope, but wants hope, who wants the hope of resurrection, and wants the hope of a glorified body, wants the hope of living with God forever on a New Earth? What would you say to such a person?
- **Dennis Pollock:** Well, I would say this: Friends, there is hope for you, and the answer is found in the scriptures that tell us what Jesus did. The Bible says, "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God." And we receive Him by faith, believing that on His Cross He took all our sins upon Himself. Believing that He shed His blood that we might be forgiven, that we might be accepted with God, believing that He rose again the third day. And if you will believe that and receive Him as your Lord and Savior, by faith, He will instantly do two things for you. He will forgive every sin you have ever committed. And He will give you His Holy Spirit, to live on the inside of you. You will be a child of God, just like that, courtesy of the Cross and resurrection of Jesus."
- **Dr. Reagan:** Thank you Dennis. I want to summarize now what we have covered in this program, but I want to do it visually. I want to step over to the illustration board for a moment, and once again give people a visual illustration of what we've been talking about. Because I believe that this will help us to better remember it and understand it.
- Let me illustrate it this way. This is the Cross of Jesus Christ. Here is the current period that we are living in, which I'm going to refer to as the Church Age. And I put a little zigzag in the line here to indicate that this line is not drawn to scale, because if it was drawn to scale it would be longer than this room. So here's the Church Age.
- Then the Church Age, according to the Scriptures, is followed by a period called the Tribulation, and it is divided into two periods of three and a half years each, when the Antichrist goes into the Temple in Jerusalem and declares himself to be God and begins his great persecution of the Jewish people during the last part of this Tribulation.

- Then, according to the Bible, the Tribulation is going to be followed by another period of time that I will abbreviate in length, and that is called, the Millennium, which is a period of one thousand years.
- So what we have then is, we have three periods of time. The first period of time, the Church Age, is approximately two thousand years plus. We don't know how long it will continue, but I believe we are right there at the end of it, according to the signs of the times. The Tribulation is seven years in length. And the Millennium is a thousand years. And then, following that will be the New Heavens and the New Earth, where we're going to live forever with God.
- Now, what about these different resurrections? Incidentally, let me just say that here, we believe Jesus will appear, and the Rapture will take place and that we will be in Heaven with Him during the Tribulation, and will return with Him at the end of the Tribulation.
- Two things will happen while we are in Heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ. One is that we will be judged of our works, to determine our degrees of reward, not our eternal destiny. And we will have a celebration after that judgment with the Lord Jesus Christ, celebrating our union with Him in what is called the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.
- Now, where the resurrections and judgments fit in? The first resurrection has already occurred. That is here. This is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that occurred two thousand years ago. The next resurrection will occur at the time of the Rapture, and this will be the Church Age Saints, which will be taken up to meet the Lord in the air. And then at the end of the Tribulation, the Tribulation Martyrs and the Old Testament Saints will be resurrected. These three resurrections constitute the first resurrection. As Don said, there are two resurrections in kind, not two resurrections in number.
- The first resurrection in kind is in three stages: Jesus the first fruits, the Church as the general harvest, the Tribulation Martyrs and Old Testament Saints are the gleanings. The second resurrection will occur here at the end of the Millennial Reign of Jesus. All those who have ever died outside a faith relationship with God will be resurrected, they will be judged, and all of them will be condemned because no man can be justified by his works, and they will be cast into Hell. The saved will go to live with God forever on a New Earth.
- So I hope that will help you to better visualize what we've been talking about. The first resurrection in three stages. The second resurrection at the end of the Millennial Reign. Fellows, we don't have much time left, but just a few brief comments in about a minute's time about degrees of reward and punishment. Anything to say about that?
- **Dennis Pollock:** Absolutely. The Bible teaches that there will be degrees of reward in Heaven. There will be degrees of punishment in Hell. In Hell, for example, Jesus said, "The servant who knew his master's will, and didn't prepare himself, but did things worthy of punishment will be beaten with many stripes." But He said, "The one who did not know his master's will and did things that were wrong will be beaten with few." He said, "Everyone to whom much is given, to him much will be required." So Jesus indicates that the more you know, the worse your suffering in Hell will be, because you had far more knowledge available. Therefore, people who live in America and don't get born again are going to be judged much stricter and have a much harder time in Hell than people from countries where the Gospel is not preached.
- **Dr. Reagan:** Don, we have about 20 seconds.
- **Don McGee:** I just agree completely with what Dennis said. Now the message for us today is this: We will be held to a higher degree of accountability than that man who never heard the Gospel.
- **Dr. Reagan:** Amen, thank you fellows. I want to thank you for tuning in this week. I hope the program has been a blessing to you and I hope you will be back with us next week when we will discuss questions concerning the Rapture. Questions like: Where can you find the Rapture in the Bible? What is the purpose of the Rapture? Will children be taken in the Rapture?" And when is the Rapture most likely to occur? Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."
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Remonstrants

The Remonstrants are Dutch Protestants who, after the death of Jacobus Arminius, maintained the views associated with his name. In 1610, they presented to the States of Holland and Friesland a remonstrance in five articles formulating their points of disagreement with Calvinism.

"The Five Articles" of the Remonstrants.

- **Point 1:** God had simply decreed to save all who would believe in Christ.
 - **Point 2:** Christ died for all men and for every man.
 - **Point 3:** Man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, insomuch as he, in the state of apostasy and sin, can of and by himself neither think, will, nor do anything that is truly good; but it is needful that he be born again-and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers.
 - **Point 4:** Speaking of the absolute need of divine grace, adds: "But as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, insomuch as it is written concerning many, that they have resisted the Holy Ghost. "
 - **Point 5:** Perseverance, resistance in temptation are through the assistance of the Holy Spirit and by the help of Christ; they are not, however, the result of an absolute decree. Believers, therefore, can fall into grievous sins and persevere in these. They can only hope that they may persevere and be confident that divine grace will always be at hand and sufficient.
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Point 1: God had simply decreed to save all who would believe in Christ.

This the author claims to be unbiblical? Where is it stated in the Scriptures that anyone was ever saved by *fate? predestination? or even by decree?* Wow! talk about holding a position without Biblical support! The Scriptures *everywhere* state that those that believe are saved through faith.

"For God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the *world through him might be saved*. He that *believeth on him is not condemned*: (You would think that God was clear on His Calvinism and would have said, "He that is predestined is not condemned." I guess God missed that!) but *he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*. "(So, according to Calvinism, God is confused about His Gospel, since they teach that those He is pleased to save are predestined from all eternity. But God says that they are *condemned* if they do not believe, (predestined or not!). So, salvation is clearly based upon *faith* and not some fictitious decree of Calvinism!)

The book of Ephesians, which is addressed to believers says, "He hath chosen us (believers) in him (in Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. " Who were chosen"? **Believers**. When? Before the foundation of the world! The writer continues, "Having predestinated us (believers) unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." The Calvinist chimes in and says, "There it is! Salvation is predestined!" Well, let's hold on and take a look at the passage! The only thing that is predestined here is the plan of God for salvation! *The passage never says that anybody was ever predestined to salvation!* It just says that God's plan is that people are chosen in Christ on the basis of belief before the foundation of the world, and this purpose is that they would be holy and blameless before Him in love. What is predestined is that believers be sanctified! God has predestined from all eternity that *believers* are to be adopted children through the work of Christ unto Himself. **No passage concerning predestination in all of Scripture says that any individual has been predestined to salvation!** (Once again, the Calvinists have their *theories*, but they do not have *Scripture* on their side.)

Paul writes, "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*." No Calvinistic "must call upon the name" or any salvation preceding belief. The Gospel is good news for *all*. It is available to "*whosoever will*," and not just an "elect few" of Calvinism.

Salvation by fate, and salvation through faith are two different Gospels.

Point 2: Christ died for all men and for every man.

While Calvinism emphasizes that Jesus died "for" the sheep, Arminianism does not deny that fact; it only asserts that He died for the whole world also.

The application of the atonement is in a way only good as long as someone is affected by it. The atonement is truly a provision for every single person that has ever lived. It can be equally true to say that the atonement is only for the sheep because it only affects the sheep. This statement does not deny that the atonement is available to all; it only asserts that only some believe and are affected by its results.

Jesus died for all, not just some small sliver of Calvinian "elect." "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 Jn. 2:2. **This passage is so clear on its own that it must take a pretty good theologian to get you to disbelieve it!** To say that Christ did not die for each and every person in the entire world throughout history is to deny that God, "is not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9. Does God love the *world*, or just the elect "few"? Why would God insist that we "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." ? According to the Calvinistic "gospel," salvation comes by God's decree and not by any preaching or assent to Calvinistic fatalism. A person would be equally saved with or without any Gospel according to this logic. It would make the "Good News" to be "Horrible News" if they weren't elect, which makes the Gospel not "Good News" at all for the majority of mankind. To limit the availability of the Gospel to a lucky few is to paint a picture of a God who dangles the promise of eternal bliss before all mankind, and leads them to believe the promise can be theirs, while He knows that He never intended to give it to them in the first place! In essence, it makes the "Good News" a horrendous and cruel lie. He bids us to preach to all, while He has no intent on saving all.

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have *all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom *for all*, to be testified in due time. 1 Tim. 2:3-6.

Point 3: Man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, insomuch as he, in the state of apostasy and sin, can of and by himself neither think, will, nor do anything that is truly good; but it is needful that he be born again- and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers.

This truly denies the accusations of many Calvinists that say that Arminians teach that we can "will" our own way into salvation. The real issue is whether all grace is "saving grace. " Or whether there is grace that precedes the offer of salvation that enables men to respond to the gracious offer of the Gospel. If regeneration must come before belief as Calvinism teaches, then we must ask what sense it makes for the words of Jesus to Nicodemus. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now, what hope is there in an answer like that if one cannot believe unto salvation, and must wait for some mysterious zap that regenerates them so they can receive the new-birth? Nicodemus' misconception that one must somehow get back into their mother's womb makes just as much sense as the Calvinistic interpretation. Neither offer any hope of possibility. Both would be taunts of impossibilities, especially when Jesus clarified that the Gospel was for "whosoever will" and "he that believeth" just a few moments later.

The Philippian jailor was moved by the praying and singing of Paul and Silas. When the earthquake came and found all of the prisoners safe in their cells, he knelt at the feet of Paul and Silas and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30. According to Calvinistic imagination, Paul and Silas should have said "Glory to God! Another elect brother has been regenerated!" But no, they did not see him as regenerated and saved. There was something that he must do in response to the gracious offer of grace, he must, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

Point 4: Speaking of the absolute need of divine grace, adds: "But as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, insomuch as it is written concerning many, that they have resisted the Holy Ghost. "

Calvinism asserts that the grace of God cannot be resisted. What God wills, He decrees. What He decrees, will come to pass. Thus, all actions of all individuals were predestined before the beginning of time. This supposed inability to go against, or resist the will of God is clearly not so. If we are not free in our actions, then we are not responsible. If God wills the action, then He becomes the Author of all sin. If He damns us for doing that which He for-ordained, then He is a hypocrite, and an unfair Ruler. Arminianism does not impugn the Creator with such unjust charges. To say that man is free means that he is responsible for his actions, and therefore responsible for his own damnation. While God may foreknow future actions of free moral agents, that does not mean that He causes the action in any way.

Can God's will be resisted? Stephen's charge to his persecutors was, "You always resist the Holy Spirit!" (Acts 7:51). How can this be true if Calvinism is correct? Paul said, "I do not frustrate the grace of God" (Gal. 2:21), which would be a theological impossibility if Paul were a Calvinist! Hebrews 10:29, warns us about, "doing despite the Spirit of grace." Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings, **and ye would not!**" (Matt. 23:37.)

Isaiah reveals the message from God, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." If all were set in stone from eternity, how could man's response to God in reasoning effect a single thing? God must desire to reason with us for a purpose, for if Calvinistic predestination, foreordination, and fatalism were true, God would be speaking nonsense. Grace is resistible, and no one's fate is set but by that individual themselves who rejects the grace of God.

Point 5: Perseverance, resistance in temptation are through the assistance of the Holy Spirit and by the help of Christ; they are not, however, the result of an absolute decree. Believers, therefore, can fall into grievous sins and persevere in these. They can only hope that they may persevere and be confident that divine grace will always be at hand and sufficient.

This statement was in response to the fifth point of the Calvinistic charge at the kangaroo court of Dort. Arminians answer that there is no such thing as a decree to final perseverance and salvation. God no more perseveres and remains faithful for us than He believes for us. We as believers are warned, encouraged and exhorted to stay in the faith, continue, remain, endure, and etc. These are all things addressed to believers, and not to God! To the charge that Arminians do not have any Biblical Evidence for their belief, I respectfully disagree with that position and consider it partisan folly. For the Arminian Biblical basis for Point 5, I refer you to the article **HOLD ON!**

My friend, you may disagree with Arminianism if you **WILL**. You do not have to respond to this with a defense of Calvinism, ***I just cannot help but to think this way..... God must have been predestined it to be so!*** But seriously, if your doctrine be true, it would make no difference to the salvation of a single soul. Right belief and genuine faith have nothing to do with salvation if the fatalism of Calvinism is true. If Calvinism is true, leave me in my Arminian belief. I would rather die with a hope of heaven instead of the torture of never really knowing if I were one of the lucky ones that Jesus died for!

Replacement Theology

Ez 33:6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'

Titus 1:9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught [in the Bible], so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

2Pe 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, ... 2 Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.

Replacement theology (also known as supersessionism) essentially teaches that the Christian Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Thus, adherents of Replacement theology believe the Jews are no longer God's chosen people, and that God's covenants with them have been cancelled. In other words, according to Replacement theology, the Jewish people today no longer have any unique part to play in God's plans – they are just like any other nation on the earth (English, Spanish, Chinese, etc.). All the stuff God wanted to do with the Jews in the Old Testament, He is now doing instead with Christians. Since the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah, God rejected them. He poured out His wrath upon them,

scattered them all over the earth, and transferred the promises made to them to ‘Spiritual Israel,’ the Church. God has no purpose left for the Jews. The re-establishment of modern day Israel is, therefore, merely an accident of history with no spiritual meaning.

Among the different views of the relationship between the church and Israel are:

- Replacement theology – The church has replaced Israel
- Covenant theology – The church is an expansion of Israel
- Dispensationalism/premillennialism – The church is completely different and distinct from Israel

Replacement theology

Replacement theology teaches that the church is the replacement for Israel and that the many promises made to Israel in the Bible are fulfilled in the Christian church, not in Israel. The prophecies in Scripture concerning the blessing and restoration of Israel to the Promised Land are spiritualized or allegorized into promises of God’s blessing for the church. Major problems exist with this view, such as the continuing existence of the Jewish people throughout the centuries and especially with the revival of the modern state of Israel. If Israel has been condemned by God and there is no future for the Jewish nation, how do we explain the supernatural survival of the Jewish people over the past 2,000 years despite the many attempts to destroy them? How do we explain why and how Israel reappeared as a nation in the 20th century after not existing for 1,900 years?

Here, in point form, are the main tenets of Replacement Theology:

1. Israel (the Jewish people and the land) has been replaced by the Christian Church in the purposes of God, or, more precisely, the Church is the historic continuation of Israel to the exclusion of the former.
2. The Jewish people are now no longer a "chosen people." In fact, they are no different from any other group, such as the English, Spanish, Chinese or Egyptians.
3. Since Pentecost of Acts 2, the term "Israel," as found in the Bible, now refers to the Church.
4. The promises, covenants and blessings ascribed to Israel in the Bible have been taken away from the Jews and given to the Church, which has superseded them. However, the Jews are subject to the curses found in the Bible, as a result of their rejection of Christ.

As a result of these beliefs, Replacement theology is forced to interpret the many prophecies in Scripture about Israel in allegorical and ‘spiritualized’ ways; they have to find ways of reading the Christian Church into all of those prophecies about the future instead of the literal nation of Israel and the Jewish people, since the Church has replaced the Jews in God’s plan for the world.

This viewpoint is held by most of the old mainline, liberal denominations like the Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. It is also held by some conservative groups like the Churches of Christ and the Church of God of Anderson, Indiana. Advocates of the view can even be found among Southern Baptists, although most Baptists would reject it.

Replacement theology is so deceptive because it rests on half-truths. For instance, the Church is the “Israel of God” but not in a replacement sense (Galatians 6:14-16). The view that Israel and the church are different is clearly taught in the New Testament.

Dispensationalism

Contrary to replacement theology, dispensationalism teaches that, after the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18), God will restore Israel as the primary focus of His plan.

- The first event at this time is the tribulation (Revelation chapters 6–19). The world will be judged for rejecting Christ, while Israel is prepared through the trials of the great tribulation for the second coming of the Messiah.
- Then, when Christ does return to the earth at the end of the tribulation, Israel will be ready to receive Him.
- The remnant of Israel who survive the tribulation will be saved, and the Lord will establish His kingdom on this earth with Jerusalem as its capital.

- With Christ reigning as King, Israel will be the leading nation, and representatives from all nations will come to Jerusalem to honor and worship the King—Jesus Christ. The church will return with Christ and will reign with Him for a literal thousand years (Revelation 20:1–5).

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament support a premillennial/dispensational understanding of God's plan for Israel. The strongest support for premillennialism is found in the clear teaching of Revelation 20:1–7, where it says six times that Christ's kingdom will last 1,000 years. After the tribulation the Lord will return and establish His kingdom with the nation of Israel, Christ will reign over the whole earth, and Israel will be the leader of the nations. The church will reign with Him for a literal thousand years.

The church has not replaced Israel in God's plan. While God may be focusing His attention primarily on the church in this dispensation of grace, God has not forgotten Israel and will one day restore Israel to His intended role as the nation He has chosen (Romans 11).

History of Replacement Theology

Preterism

Christian eschatological view that interprets some (partial preterism) or all (full preterism) prophecies of the Bible as events which have already happened.

NT warnings against false teachers

Mt 16:11 The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees – How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Acts 20:30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

2Pe 3:16 He [Paul] writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. 17 Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

1Jn 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2Pe 2:20 If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. 21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

7 Traits of False Teachers

“There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.” (2 Peter 2:1)

There are no “ifs, ands, or buts” in Peter's words. It's a clear and definite statement. There were false prophets among the people (of Israel in the Old Testament). That's a matter of history. False prophets were a constant problem in the Old Testament, and those who falsely claimed to be prophets of God were to be stoned. The people rarely had the will to deal with them, so they multiplied, causing disaster to the spiritual life of God's people.

In the same way Peter says, “There *will be* false teachers among you.” Notice the words “among you.” Peter is writing to the church and says, “There will be false prophets *among you*.” So he is not talking about New Age people on television. He is talking about people in the local church, members of a local congregation.

There is no such thing as a pure church this side of heaven. You will never find it. The wheat and the tares grow together. Warren Wiersbe writes:

Satan is the counterfeiter. . . . He has a false gospel (Galatians 1:6-9), preached by false ministers (2 Corinthians 11:13-12), producing false Christians (2 Corinthians 11:26). . . . Satan plants his counterfeits wherever God plants true believers (Matthew 13:38).

Authentic or Counterfeit?

How would you recognize counterfeit Christianity?

In 2 Peter 1 we read about genuine believers. And in 2 Peter 2 we read about counterfeit believers. If you put these chapters side by side you will see the difference between authentic and counterfeit believers.

1. *Different Source*—Where does the message come from?

Peter says, “We did not follow *cleverly invented stories* when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:16). And then he says the false teachers exploit you “with stories they have made up” (2:3). So the true teacher sources what he says from the Bible. The false teacher relies on his own creativity. He makes up his own message.

2. *Different Message*—What is the substance of the message?

For the true teacher, Jesus Christ is central. “We have everything we need for life and godliness in Him” (1:3). For the false teacher, Jesus is at the margins: “They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them” (2:1).

Notice the word *secretly*. It's rare for someone in church to openly deny Jesus. Movement away from the centrality of Christ is subtle. The false teacher will speak about how other people can help change your life, but if you listen carefully to what he is saying, you will see that Jesus Christ is not essential to his message.

3. *Different Position*—In what position will the message leave you?

The true Christian “escapes the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (1:4). Listen to how Peter describes the counterfeit Christian: “They promise . . . freedom, while they themselves are *slaves of depravity*, for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him” (2:19). The true believer is escaping corruption, while the counterfeit believer is mastered by it.

4. *Different Character*—What kind of people does the message produce?

The true believer pursues goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brother kindness, and love (1:5). The counterfeit Christian is marked by arrogance and slander (2:10). They are “experts in greed” and “their eyes are full of adultery” (2:14). They also “despise authority” (2:10). This is a general characteristic of a counterfeit believer.

5. *Different Appeal*—Why should you listen to the message?

The true teacher appeals to Scripture. “We have the word of the prophets made more certain and you will do well to pay attention to it” (1:19). God has spoken, and the true teacher appeals to his Word. The false teacher makes a rather different appeal: “By appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error” (2:18). So the true teacher asks, “What has God said in his Word?” The false teacher asks, “What do people want to hear? What will appeal to their flesh?”

6. *Different Fruit*—What result does the message have in people's lives?

The true believer is effective and productive in his or her knowledge of Jesus Christ (1:8). The counterfeit is “like a spring without water” (2:17). This is an extraordinary picture! They promise much but produce little.

7. *Different End*—Where does the message ultimately lead you?

Here we find the most disturbing contrast of all. The true believer will receive “a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:11). The false believer will experience “swift destruction” (2:1). “Their condemnation has long been hanging over them and their destruction has not been sleeping” (2:3).

Jesus tells us that there will be *many* who have been involved in ministry in his name, to whom he will say, “Depart from me; I never knew you” (Matthew 7:21). Who are these people? Surely Peter is describing them in this passage.

Don't Be Naïve

We must not be ignorant: “There will be false teachers among you” (2:1). So how do we apply this warning?

First, Peter's plain statement reminds us that the church needs to be protected. Among the many wonderful people who come to through the doors of the church each year, some would do more harm than good.

They may seem the nicest of people, but they do not believe in the authority of the Bible or the exclusivity of salvation in Christ. We welcome such people, because they need Christ as much as we do, but we must not allow them to have influence in the church.

Second, skeptics will always be able to point to hypocrisy and inconsistency in the church. They've always done it, and they always will. One of the strangest reasons for not following Christ goes like this: “I've seen people in the church who are hypocrites.” So you will not follow Christ because some people who claim to do so are hypocrites?

The existence of the counterfeit is never a good reason for rejecting the genuine. Peter essentially tells us, “Of course there are counterfeit Christians. Of course there are teachers who do the church more harm than good. What else would you expect in this fallen world? Grow up! Don't be naïve! Don't miss what's real simply because you have seen the counterfeit.”

Paul warned about the idea of replacement theology in the NT (Ro 11)

The truth is that Replacement Theology was already spreading its tentacles even during the Apostle Paul's lifetime. Paul strongly refuted this doctrine in Romans chapter 11. Arrogance and false teaching against the Jews was taking root among the new Gentile Christians and Paul warned them against this evil.

Paul made it clear that God has not deserted the Jews, and it was incumbent upon the Gentiles (i.e. the nations) not to boast nor be puffed up against the Jewish people even though most had not accepted Yeshua as their Messiah:

- Ro 11:1 I ask then: Did God reject his people [Jews]? By no means! 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.
- Ro 11:17 If some of the [Jewish] branches have been broken off, and you [Gentiles], though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, **18 do not boast over those branches.** If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. **Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.** 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And **if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.** 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may **not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.** 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins." [Is 59:20]

Evolution of Replacement Theology and Anti-Semitism

<http://christinprophecy.org/articles/the-evil-of-replacement-theology/>

This is an overview of the sad and sordid history of Christian anti-Semitism rooted in Replacement Theology and continuing to this day under the guise of anti-Zionism.

Now, as the Church began to spread beyond its Judean origin, and as it embraced more and more Gentiles, it quickly lost touch with its Jewish roots. This process was accelerated by the destruction of the mother church in Jerusalem during the Second Jewish Revolt against the Romans that ended in 136 AD.

Another key to the Gentilizing of the Church was the development of an allegorical hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures that enabled the Church to appropriate Israel's promises for itself. Thus Tertullian, writing in the 3rd Century, was able to argue that the promise of Genesis 25:21-25 that "the older will serve the younger" (speaking, of course of Esau and Jacob), was really a prophecy that Israel would become subservient to the Church!

As a result of these historical developments, Christian apologists, starting as early as the Second Century, began to turn against the Jews, characterizing them as "Christ Killers." Consider the following examples:

- **The Epistle of Barnabas** (100 AD) — This writing was a contender for inclusion in the Bible. It is a good demonstration of how profoundly Greek methods of interpretation had already impacted Christians. The writer *insisted that the Old Testament was never meant to be read literally, but was to be interpreted allegorically.* The writer argued that "only the Christian could make sense of the Bible." The "carnal Jews," with their "earthly mind-set," had failed to recognize the hidden message of their own Scriptures, and as a result, had eternally forfeited their entitlement to the covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- **Ignatius of Antioch** (c. 50-117) — He said that "those who partake of the Passover are partakers with those who killed Jesus."
- **Justin Martyr** (100-165) — He *claimed God's covenant with Israel was no longer valid and that the Gentiles had replaced the Jews.* Additionally, *he was the first to identify the Church as "the true spiritual Israel."* And he declared

that the plight of the Jews — their exile and persecution — had happened “in fairness and justice” because they had “slain the Just One.”

- **Melito of Sardis** (died c. 180) — Also focused on deicide when he proclaimed, “The King of Israel slain with Israel’s right hand! Alas for the new wickedness of the new murder.”
- **Irenaeus** (130-202) — He was a student of Polycarp who, in turn, was a disciple of the Apostle John. He *declared that “the house of Jacob and the people of Israel are disinherited from the grace of God.”* And he argued this because they “have rejected the Son of God ” and “they slew Him.”
- **Clement of Alexandria** (c. 150 – c. 215) — Claimed that *Israel “denied the Lord” and thus “forfeited the place of the true Israel.”*
- **Hippolytus of Rome** (170-235) — He is considered by many to be the most important theologian of the 3rd Century. He was a student of Irenaeus. He declared that the Jews had been darkened in the eyes of their souls “with a darkness utter and everlasting.” He further stated that they were destined to be “slaves to the nations, not for four hundred years as in Egypt, nor seventy as in Babylon, but... always.”
- **Tertullian of Carthage** (155-230) — He blamed the Jews for the death of Jesus and argued they had been rejected by God.
- **Cyprian of Carthage** (c. 200-258) — He was a student of Tertullian. He wrote: I have endeavored to show that the Jews...departed from God and lost God’s favor... while the Christians succeeded to their place, deserving well of the Lord by faith, and coming out of all nations and from the whole world. He added: We Christians when we pray, say “Our Father” because He has begun to be ours, and has *ceased to be the Father of the Jews, who have forsaken Him.*
- **Origen of Alexandria** (185-254) — He was *responsible for much Anti-Semitism*, all of which was based on his assertion that the Jews were responsible for killing Jesus. In one of his treatises he wrote: We say with confidence that they [the Jews] will never be restored to their former condition. For they committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind, in conspiring against the Savior of the human race... It accordingly behoved that city where Jesus underwent these sufferings to perish utterly, and the Jewish nation to be overthrown, and the invitation of happiness offered them by God to pass to others — the Christians...
- **The Council of Elvira** (305) — This was an ecclesiastical synod of Spanish clerics that was held in what is now known as the city of Granada, located in southern Spain. The *council voted to prohibit Christians from sharing a meal with a Jew, marrying a Jew, blessing a Jew or observing the Sabbath.*

The Turning Point for Christianity

We come now to a great turning point in the history of Christianity — namely, Constantine’s conversion to Christianity in 306 AD and his ultimate adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire in 321 AD. As we have seen, **by the beginning of the 4th Century, Replacement Theology and its virulent anti-Semitism had become entrenched in Christian thought.** And when Christianity was given the approval of the Empire overnight, the emperors began to enact into law the concepts and claims of the Christian theologians against the Jews and Judaism.²¹

- In the **Edict of Milan (313 AD)**, *favor was granted to Christianity while synagogues were outlawed.*
 - Another edict, issued in 315 AD, *authorized the burning of Jews if they were convicted of breaking the laws.*
 - As the Church became increasingly dominant, further laws were passed that severely curtailed rabbinical jurisdiction, prohibited conversion to Judaism, and excluded Jews from holding high office or serving in the military. As Clarence Wagner has summed it up, “Instead of the Church taking this opportunity to spread its Gospel message in love, it truly became the Church Triumphant, ready to vanquish its foes.”
- The **Council of Nicea (325 AD)** — The first ecumenical council of the Church. It was held in what is modern day Turkey, and it was convened and presided over by Emperor Constantine. This is the historic Council that settled the Christological issue of the nature of the Son of God and his relationship to God the Father.
 - Regarding the Jews, the Council changed the celebration of the Resurrection from the Jewish Feast of First Fruits to Easter in an attempt to disassociate it from Jewish feasts. The Council stated:

For it is unbecoming beyond measure that on this holiest of festivals we should follow the customs of the Jews. Henceforth let us have nothing in common with this odious people...

- In addition to *calling them "odious people," the Council also referred to the Jews as "polluted wretches," "a most hostile rabble," and "parricides."*
- **Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 265-339)** — He taught that the *promises of Scripture were meant for the Gentiles and the curses were for the Jews*. He asserted that the Church was the "true Israel."
- **Hilary of Poitiers (c. 300-c. 368)** — This French bishop was granted sainthood by the Church. He wrote, "*Jews are a perverse people accursed by God forever.*"
- **John Chrysostom (349-407)** — He was the Archbishop of Constantinople. He was nicknamed "The Golden Tongue" for his powerful preaching. He *presented eight sermons against the Jews*. Here is some of what he had to say: The synagogue is not only a brothel and a theater, it is also a den of robbers and a lodging place for wild beasts...Jews are inveterate murderers possessed by the Devil. Their debauchery and drunkenness gives them the manners of a pig... This is why I hate the Jews. He proceeded to deny that Jews could ever receive forgiveness. He *claimed it was a Christian duty to hate Jews*. And he claimed that Jews worshiped Satan. And this man was canonized as a Saint!
- **Saint Jerome (347-420)** — The renowned translator of the Bible into Latin. He *described the Jews as "...serpents, wearing the image of Judas. Their psalms and prayers are the braying of donkeys...They are incapable of understanding Scripture."*
- **Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (c. 340-397)** — He is the one who converted Saint Augustine. Regarding the Jews, he wrote: *The Jews are the most worthless of all men*. They are lecherous, greedy, rapacious. They are perfidious murderers of Christ. *They worship the Devil. Their religion is a sickness*. The Jews are the odious assassins of Christ, and for killing God there is no expiation possible, no indulgence or pardon. Christians may never cease vengeance, and the Jew must live in servitude forever. *God always hated the Jews. It is essential that all Christians hate them*.
- **Saint Augustine (354-430)** — He is considered the greatest of all the Church Fathers in terms of the overall impact of his theology on the Church. With regard to the Jews, he simply endorsed what had been written before him. His only new contribution was his answer to a frequently asked question, "*Why has God allowed the Jews to continue to exist?*" *His answer was that although the Jews deserve death, they are destined to wander the earth to witness the victory of the Church over the Synagogue*. But in terms of Replacement Theology, he provided another cornerstone with his development of Amillennialism and his *contention that the millennial kingdom had begun with the coming of Jesus and that the Roman Church was the fulfillment of the kingdom promises that were made to Israel*.

The Middle Ages (5th to 15th Centuries)

So, by the mid-5th Century, Replacement theology and Amillennialism had become entrenched as doctrines of the Church, and the Jews had been demonized, condemned, and ostracized to the point that the Church had become a Gentile organization that was off-limits to the very people who founded it!

These views were reinforced by **Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)** who was the most important medieval Catholic theologian. He argued that *because of their sin of deicide, the Jews were destined to "perpetual slavery."* He further argued that:

- Jews should be compelled to work rather than live in idleness and grow rich by usury.
- Jews should be forced to wear a distinctive badge in order to distinguish them from Christians.
- Jews and heretics could be legitimately killed after a second warning.

To illustrate how severe the rejection of Jews had become by the Middle Ages, consider the *oath* that the **Church in Constantinople** *required a Jew to take in order to become a Christian*:

I renounce all customs, rites, legalisms, unleavened breads and sacrifice of lambs of the Hebrews, and all other feasts of the Hebrews, sacrifices, prayers, aspersions, purifications, sanctifications, and propitiations, and fasts, and new moons, and Sabbaths, and superstitions, and hymns and chants and observances and synagogues, and the food and drink of the Hebrews;

In one word, I renounce absolutely everything Jewish, every law, rite and custom...And if afterwards I shall wish to deny and return to Jewish superstition, or shall be found eating with Jews . . then let the trembling of Cain and the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to me...and may I be anathema in the world to come, and may my soul be set down with Satan and the devils.

A similar **Visigoth oath** from the 7th century required a Jewish covert to “renounce every rite and observance of the Jewish religion” and contained a promise that the person would “never return to the vomit of Jewish superstition.”

Even the so-called “**friends of the Jews**” held them in low esteem. Consider, for example, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), Peter the Venerable (c.1092-1156), and Pope Innocent III (c.1160-1216). All three spoke out against murderous attacks on the Jewish people.

Yet, Bernard of Clairvaux characterized the Jews in his writings as “more than bestial,” “an evil seed,” and “a race who have not God for their father, but are of the devil...”

Peter the Venerable, a contemporary of Bernard, was known as the meekest of men and a model of Christian charity. Yet, he said of the Jews: “I doubt whether a Jew can be really human.” He further referred to them as “monstrous animals” and “brute beasts.”

And Pope Innocent III argued that the Jews should not be killed because they should be left to wander the earth “until their countenance be filled with shame.”

Again, by the beginning of the Middle Ages in the 5th Century, two erroneous concepts about the Jews had become firmly established in Church doctrine:

- The Jews should be considered “Christ Killers” and should be mistreated accordingly.
- The Church has replaced Israel, and God has no future purpose for the Jews.

These concepts were reinforced throughout the Middle Ages by:

- The Crusades
- Artistic Expressions
- Blood libels
- Black Plague myths
- Distinguishing marks
- Relegation to ghettos
- Pogroms
- The Inquisition

Let me comment briefly on each of these.

- **Crusades (11th – 13th Centuries)**

- Although their major purpose was to free the Holy Land of its Muslim rulers, the hatred of the Jews that had been instilled in the people of Europe by the Church encouraged the Crusaders to slaughter Jews along the way. Further, Pope Urban had given the Crusaders a guarantee of absolution for crimes committed in the Crusader cause. The Crusader shout, “God wills it!” soon became transmuted into “Kill a Jew and save your soul!” The atrocities committed in the name of Jesus were beyond imagination. For example, after the Crusaders captured Jerusalem on July 15, 1099, Jews were herded into their synagogues, exits were blocked, and the synagogues were surrounded by soldiers who sang “Fairest Lord Jesus” while they burned the buildings to the ground.

- **Artistic Expressions**

- Since the literacy rate in the Middle Ages was probably only around 25%, the most important mode of communication to the common people was through various forms of art. These took the form of dehumanized portrayals of Jews in paintings, picture books, picture Bibles, sculptures, and dramas.

- Jewish Snow – One of the most vivid, abominable and obscene pictures was one called “The Jewish Sow.” It appeared throughout Europe in the Middle Ages in many different forms. It depicted Jews nursing on pigs and eating their excrement. This horrid scene was painted on church walls, featured in stained glass windows and portrayed in statuary.
- “Ecclesia versus Synagoga,” – A more sophisticated portrayal of Replacement Theology was to be found in a very popular image called “Ecclesia versus Synagoga,” or the Church versus the Synagogue. It personified the Church and the Synagogue as rival queens. The Jewish queen was shown blindfolded, bareheaded and downcast. In one hand she holds a broken staff. In the other she clutches the tablets of the law which are about to slip from her hand. The Church queen is depicted as triumphant, wearing a crown, with a cross in one hand and a chalice in the other. These statues were often found at the portals of cathedrals. They clearly communicated the idea that the Jews had been cast aside to make way for a new people of God.
- Another type of artistic expression that was very popular was the drama. Miracle plays and passion plays abounded during the Middle Ages, and they were used to cultivate hatred toward the Jewish people. Jews were depicted as demons who knew full well that Christ was the Son of God. In each play, as Christ carried the cross, he was tortured by bloodthirsty, cursing devils with hooked noses, horns and tails. The Jews were made to seem as evil as Christ was divine.
- Bible story books and picture Bibles, like the Holkham Bible produced in London in the 14th Century always portrayed the Jews as evil agents of the Devil.
- **Blood Libels**
 - Throughout the Middle Ages, professing Christians spread myths which helped to heighten popular hatred and fear of the Jewish people. As a result, it became commonplace among Christian groups to think of Jews as agents of Satan. One of the most popular anti- Jewish myths that gained widespread acceptance was the notion that Jews murdered Christians each year around the time of Passover in order to get blood needed to perform satanic rites. This became known as the charge of ritual murder or “blood libel.” Another common myth that circulated during these years was that Jews would steal the wafers used in communion and stab them with knives, thus killing Christ once again!
 - The most notorious blood libel of the Middle Ages occurred in 1493 when a two year old boy named Simon disappeared in Trento, Italy. His father blamed the Jewish community and 15 Jews were charged with ritual murder and burned at the stake. This emotional story spread quickly throughout Europe and inspired many charges of ritual murder against Jews.
- **Black Plague Myths**
 - The Black Plague in the middle of the fourteenth century killed approximately one-third of the population of Europe. At the time, it was not known how the illness spread, but stories and rumors circulated that Jews had poisoned the wells. Although the accusation was totally unfounded, many Christians believed the myth. One reason it was easy to believe is because the Jews were not impacted by the plague as much as were the Gentiles. But this was due to the sanitary laws of the Bible which the Jews carefully followed. This accusation led to severe consequences for Jews. More than sixty Jewish communities were burned to the ground with all their occupants killed, and in some places, Jews were tortured and burned to death in bonfires.
- **Distinguishing Marks (1215)**
 - The Fourth Lateran Council headed by Pope Innocent III ruled in 1215 that Jews must wear distinguishable dress and a colored badge of identification. This became common practice throughout Europe.
- **Relegation to Ghettos (11th Century)**
 - In the 11th Century large cities throughout Europe began to herd Jews into designated areas within the cities called ghettos. This action was motivated, of course, by hatred of the Jews. Considering them to be “vermin,” it was decided that they should be cut off from the rest of the population.
- **Pogroms (11th – 12th Centuries)**
 - Massive violent attacks against Jewish communities broke out in the 11th and 12th Centuries in France, Germany and England. The Black Plague in the 14th Century provoked additional pogroms throughout Europe. During these pogroms, Jews were murdered, synagogues were destroyed and Torah scrolls were burned.⁵¹
- **The Inquisition (12th – 14th Centuries)**
 - It started in 12th Century France and persisted into the 14th Century. It was originally launched to counter heresy within the Catholic Church, but in 1242 it veered off course by condemning the Talmud, resulting in

the burning of thousands of Jewish books. In 1288, the Inquisition produced the first mass burning of Jews at the stake in France.⁵²

The Impact of the Reformation (Martin Luther)

Unfortunately, the Reformation produced no changes in attitudes toward the Jews. Replacement Theology is contained throughout the reference notes of the Geneva Bible, published in 1557, and it is reflected in the chapter headings of the King James Bible, published in 1611. For example, in Isaiah 43 God addresses His promises to “O Jacob” and “O Israel,” but the King James chapter heading reads: “God comforteth the Church with His promises.”

Actually, the Reformation seemed to get off to a good start regarding attitudes toward the Jews. That’s because **Martin Luther interjected a breath of fresh air when he took a firm stand against the Church’s mistreatment of the Jewish people.** In an essay he wrote in 1523 entitled, “That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew,” he surveyed medieval anti-Semitism and proclaimed: “If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian.” He sincerely believed that the Jewish people would convert en masse to Christianity once they were presented with a Gospel that was free of “papal paganism.” He concluded his treatise with these words:

Therefore, I would request and advise that one deal gently with them and instruct them from Scripture; then some of them may come along. Instead of this we are trying only to drive them by force, slandering them... So long as we thus treat them like dogs, how can we expect to work any good among them? Again, when we forbid them to labor and do business and have any human fellowship with us, thereby forcing them into usury, how is that supposed to do them any good? If we really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them not by papal law but by the law of Christian love... If some of them should prove stiff-necked, what of it? After all, we ourselves are not all good Christians either.

Unfortunately this biblical attitude did not last long. Luther became disillusioned and irritated with the Jews when they continued to resist his reformed Gospel. In 1526 he complained of the Jews’ stubbornness, and by the 1530s he was endorsing the common medieval stereotypes of the Jews, referring to them as “iron-hearted” and “stubborn as the Devil.”

By the end of his life, Luther had turned against the Jews with a vengeance. In 1543 he wrote a pamphlet entitled “Concerning the Jews and Their Lies.” The document was an anti-Semitic diatribe that served to summarize the Jewish hatred that had been accumulating for the past thousand years. In it, he referred to the Jews as:

- “A miserable and accursed people”
- “Stupid fools”
- “Miserable, blind and senseless”
- “Thieves and robbers”
- “The great vermin of humanity”
- “Lazy rogues”
- “Blind and venomous”

Having dehumanized and demonized them, Luther then proceeded to make some startling proposals for dealing with them:

- Their synagogues and schools be burned.
- Their houses should be destroyed.
- Their Talmudic writings should be confiscated.
- Their Rabbis should be forbidden to teach.
- Their money should be taken from them.
- They should be compelled into forced labor.

Martin Luther in his sermon: “On the Jews and Their Lies.”

“For such ruthless wrath of God is sufficient evidence that they [i.e., the Jewish people] assuredly have erred and gone astray. Even a child can comprehend this. For one dare not regard God as so cruel that he would punish his own people so long, so terrible, so unmercifully ... Therefore this work of wrath is proof that the Jews, surely rejected by God, are no longer his people, and neither is he any longer their God. (“On the Jews and Their Lies,” Trans. Martin H. Bertram, in Luther’s Works [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], p. 265).

How could a man used of God as was Martin Luther come to such a conclusion about the Jews? It is written that later in his life, Luther was convinced that he was called of God to save the Jews. When his efforts failed, he became enraged. In one night, in response to his anti-Semitic sermon, synagogues were burned to the ground and over 2000 Jews were slaughtered. Martin Luther was used by God in a mighty way in the Great Reformation, but alas he was merely a man. His teachings about Jews had a dramatic impact on the church in Germany for many years to come. Hitler was a great fan of Luther. He carried the sermon: “On the Jews and Their Lies” to every SS meeting.

The Impact on Nazism (Adolf Hitler)

Needless to say, the Nazis gleefully quoted Luther as they rose to power and launched the Holocaust. In fact, Hitler referred to Luther in his book, *Mein Kampf*, as a “great warrior, a true statesman, and a great reformer.”

In 1924 at a Christian gathering in Berlin, **Hitler** spoke to thousands and received a standing ovation when he made the following proclamation: **“I believe that today I am acting in accordance with the will of Almighty God as I announce the most important work that Christians could undertake — and that is to be against the Jews and get rid of them once and for all.”**

Hitler then proceeded to talk about the influence of Luther on his life:

Martin Luther has been the greatest encouragement of my life. Luther was a great man. He was a giant. With one blow he heralded the coming of the new dawn and the new age. He saw clearly that the Jews need to be destroyed, and we’re only beginning to see that we need to carry this work on.

At the Nuremberg trials after World War II, the Nazi leader, Julius Streicher, defended himself by saying, “I have never said anything that Martin Luther did not say.”

The terrible truth that Christians do not like to face, and which many are unaware of, is that **the Holocaust was the product of 1,900 years of virulent Christian anti-Semitism.**

And the Jews are fully aware of this fact. Thus, Eliezer Berkovits, a renowned Orthodox rabbi wrote in 1984 that the Holocaust was due to the “moral bankruptcy of Christian civilization and the spiritual bankruptcy of the Christian religion.” He further observed that “a straight line leads from the first act of oppression against the Jews and Judaism in the Fourth Century to the Holocaust in the 20th.”

Anti-Zionism – The New Anti-Semitism (New Nazis)

Speaking of the Holocaust, the horror of it tended to mute virulent anti-Semitism among Christian leaders after World War II. But in reality, it continues in a new form called “Anti-Zionism.”

Anti-Zionism is just anti-Semitism in new, sophisticated clothes.

- Anti-Semitism sought to drive out the Jews from the lands where they lived
- Anti-Zionism refuses to accept their right to live in their own land. They are anti-Semitic, but refuse to be called such.

A good example of the new form of anti-Semitism can be found in a document issued by James Kennedy's Knox Theological Seminary in 2002. It was entitled, "An Open Letter to Evangelicals Concerning Israel." It has since been endorsed by hundreds of theologians and pastors, including such luminaries as R. C. Sproul. This document:

- Denounces those who teach that the Bible's promises concerning the land of Israel are being fulfilled today "in a special region or 'Holy Land,' perpetually set apart by God for one ethnic group alone."
- Proclaims that the promises made to Abraham "do not apply to any particular ethnic group, but to the Church of Jesus Christ, the true Israel"
- Specifically denies the Jew's claim on any land in the Middle East by asserting: "The entitlement of any one ethnic or religious group to territory in the Middle East called the 'Holy Land' cannot be supported by Scripture."
 - "In fact, the land promises specific to Israel in the Old Testament were fulfilled under Joshua."
- The present secular state of Israel...is not an authentic or prophetic realization of the Messianic kingdom of Jesus Christ.
- A day should not be anticipated in which Christ's kingdom will manifest Jewish distinctives, whether by its location in 'the land,' by its constituency, or by its ceremonial institutions and practices.

Despite these statements, **when the anti-Zionists are accused of being anti-Semitic, they deny the accusation vehemently.** Here's how Dennis Prager, radio host and political commentator, has replied to their denials in his book, *Why the Jews?*:

The contention that anti-Zionists are not enemies of Jews, despite the advocacy of policies that would lead to the mass murder of Jews, is, to put it as generously as possible, **disingenuous**. If anti-Zionism realized its goal, another Jewish holocaust would take place...Therefore attempts to draw distinctions between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are simply meant to fool the naive.

Christian Palestinianism Movement

In recent years a new form of this anti-Zionism has raised its ugly head in the form of the Christian Palestinian Movement that Dr. Paul Wilkinson has spoken about several times.

James Showers, Director of The Friends of Israel, has defined the movement in the following words:

Christian Palestinianism claims modern Israel has no biblical connection with or justification for owning the Promised Land; therefore, it concludes, Israel has become an apartheid state, occupying territory belonging to the Palestinian Arabs.

The Movement's most prominent leaders over the past few years are the following:

- **Stephen Sizer** — Anglican vicar of Christ Church in Surrey, England.
- **Gary Burge** — Ordained Presbyterian minister and professor of New Testament at Wheaton College.
- **Donald E. Wagner** — Ordained Presbyterian minister and director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at North Park University in Chicago, Illinois.
- **John Stott** — The late theologian and rector emeritus of All Souls Church in London.
- **Hank Hanegraaff** — President of the Christian Research Institute and host of the "Bible Answer Man" radio program.
- **Tony Campolo** — Baptist minister, author, and professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern University in Pennsylvania.
- **Lynne Hybels** — Wife of Willow Creek Church senior pastor and founder, Bill Hybels.
- **Naim Ateek** — Founder of Sabeel, the Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology center in Jerusalem.
- **Mitri Raheb** — Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem.

Stephen Sizer is the recognized champion of the Christian Palestinian Movement. He has denounced Israel as an “apartheid state” which he claims is guilty of ethnic cleansing, and he has demonized Christians who support Israel as “heretical Armageddonites” whose interpretation of the Bible “provides a theological endorsement for racial segregation, apartheid and war.”

One of the movement’s greatest propaganda tools is the Kairos Palestine Document adopted in 2009.

- “the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a sin against God and humanity...”
- “any theology, seemingly based on the Bible or on faith or on history, that legitimizes the occupation, is far from Christian teachings, because it calls for violence and holy war in the name of God Almighty...” That’s a mouthful when you consider the fact that it is Muslims, not Christians, who are calling for Holy War in the name of God.

The proponents of the movement hold Christian Zionists in open contempt.

- John Stott denounced Christian Zionism as “biblically anathema to the Christian faith.”
- Hank Hanegraaff wrote, “Christian Zionist beliefs and behaviors are the antithesis of biblical Christianity.”

One British journalist, Alan Hart, who supports the Christian Palestinian Movement, went so far as to state on his website:

It’s time to give Israel’s hardcore Zionists their real name. They are the New Nazis...If Europeans and Americans don’t stop the New Nazis, it’s likely their endgame will be the extermination of millions of Palestinians.

And so you have it — an overview of the sad and sordid history of Christian anti-Semitism rooted in Replacement Theology and continuing to this day under the guise of anti-Zionism.

The Perseverance of Anti-Semitism

There can be no doubt that a perversion of Christianity called Replacement Theology has been the source of most anti-Semitism in the Western world. Throughout northern Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia, anti-Semitism has been promoted by Islam. The Qu’ran calls Jews “the children of monkeys and pigs.”

But there are anti-Semites in this world who are neither Christian or Muslim and who have never even met a Jew. For example, a few years ago several of the top ten best selling books in Japan were virulently anti-Semitic, blaming all the problems of Japan on an “international Jewish conspiracy.”

Why is anti-Semitism so widespread, so persistent, so virulent, and so irrational? It’s because, as I asserted at the beginning, it is fundamentally a supernatural phenomenon.

I want to end as I began, emphasizing that Satan hates the Jews with a passion. He hates them because God provided both the Bible and the Messiah through them. He hates them because God called them to be His Chosen People. He hates them because God has promised to save a great remnant of them. He hates them because God loves them.

The result is that he works overtime to plant seeds of hatred in people’s hearts toward the Jews. He is determined to destroy every Jew on planet earth so that God cannot keep His promise to save a great remnant. He tried to annihilate them in the Holocaust. He failed. He will try to destroy them once again during the last half of the Tribulation. He will fail again.

The Jewish Attitude

I hope now you can understand why it is so difficult to share the Gospel with Jews. Because Jews have been persecuted and killed throughout history in the name of Jesus, the Jewish people look upon Christianity as their mortal enemy.

Any Jew who converts to Christianity is considered a traitor, for he is viewed as one who has joined the enemy. That's the reason that Orthodox Jews react so strongly to a child who becomes a Christian. They will sometimes declare the child to be dead and will even conduct a funeral service.

This is the reason that the Messianic Jewish Movement today is such a miracle. Beginning only in 1971, it has successfully shared the Gospel with over a million Jews worldwide and has established over 500 Messianic congregations. In the next issue of this magazine, the Lord willing, we will take an in-depth look at this remarkable movement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Replacement Theology is an abomination. It is unbiblical, and it has resulted in virulent anti-Semitism that has in turn resulted in the deaths of millions of Jews.

There is no reason for the Church to be covetous of the promises that God has made to the Jewish people. He has also made some glorious promises to the Church, one of which is the Rapture. Additionally we have been promised that we will reign with him over all the nations of the world during his Millennial kingdom. And we have been promised that we will live with Him eternally on a New Earth in a New Jerusalem in new, Glorified Bodies.

It is no wonder that Paul wrote: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has the mind of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

God's Sovereignty

One of the fundamental underlying messages of this presentation is that God is in control. He is on His throne. He is sovereign. And He has the wisdom and the power to orchestrate all the evil of Man and Satan to the triumph of His Son in history.

God has already proved this point with His response to the Cross. He took the most dastardly act in the history of Mankind and transformed it into the most glorious through the resurrection of His Son.

Satan's Frustration

Satan has got to be the most frustrated character in all the universe. And just as he was frustrated in murdering God's Son, He will be frustrated in murdering God's Chosen People.

For a great remnant of the Jewish people is going to live to the end of the Tribulation. They will be brought to the end of themselves.

Israel's Salvation

And when Jesus appears in His Second Coming,

"...they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn"(Zechariah 12:10)

They will receive Yeshua as their Messiah, and they will cry out "Baruch Haba B'Shem Adonai." (Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!) What a glorious day that will be. What glory it will bring to the name of God.

Meanwhile, as we await that day, let us meet each new day with the cry of "Maranatha! Maranatha! Come quickly Lord Jesus!"

OT evidence – Jews are the recipients of the promises

Is 43:10 **"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen,** so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior. 12 I have revealed and saved and proclaimed— I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God. 13 Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"

Ro 11:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

God's covenant with the Jews is eternal

The Bible explicitly promises that **God's covenant with the Jews would be eternal (ie. unbreakable).**

- Jeremiah 31:35 This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar — the LORD Almighty is his name: 36 "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me." 37 This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.
 - Have you seen the sun, moon or stars today? If so, you can know that the nation Israel still has a place in God's plan because this passage clearly states that so long as the sun keeps coming up God will never reject the Jewish people ('descendants of Israel') – no matter what they do
- The Old Testament repeatedly states that God's promises to the Jewish people of the land of Israel were everlasting promises which could never be broken. **'Everlasting' means permanently and forever.** Even though God has twice temporarily removed the Jews from the land of Israel as punishment for their sins, He has always and at all times considered the land of Israel to be their rightful inheritance because of His covenant with them.
 - Genesis 17:3 ...God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. **7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come,** to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."
 - Psalm 105:8 **He remembers his covenant forever,** the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, 9 the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac.10 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: 11 "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."
 - 1 Chronicles 16:15 **He remembers his covenant forever,** the word he commanded, for a thousand generations,16 the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. 17 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: 18 "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."
 - Rom 11:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.
- Objection – God punished the Israelites and drove them out of the land
 - God always promised to bring them back before He drove them out – it was always a temporary disciplinary arrangement
 - Ex. Jer 30 Restoration of Israel

God will bring the Jewish people back to Israel and they will prosper

Old Testament clearly states repeatedly that **at the end of the Age God will bring the Jewish people back into the land of Israel (this has already happened) and raise them to a position of tremendous blessing and honor and prosperity among the nations (this has not yet happened), as His special possession on the earth forever.**

- Replacement theology says that God no longer has a covenant with the Jewish people and that Israel no longer has a unique part to play in God's future plans for the earth; but the Old Testament clearly teaches the opposite – it states repeatedly that at the end of the Age God will bring the Jewish people back into the land of Israel (this has already happened) and raise them to a position of tremendous blessing and honor and prosperity among the nations (this has not yet happened), as His special possession on the earth forever.
- Here are just some examples (out of many):
 - Deuteronomy 30:1-6: Israel would experience dispersion because of disobedience but would one day be saved as a nation and experience restoration to its land.
 - Is 54:7 "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back.
 - Is 11:11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.
 - Jeremiah 30, 31, and 33: This prediction of the New Covenant promises a restoration of the Jews in the land of Israel that includes spiritual blessings and physical blessings which will never end once started.
 - Note that the New Covenant that God promises in these passages is a covenant with the Jewish people, not the Gentile nations, something the apostle Paul was anxious that Gentile Christians not forget (Romans 11) – it is God's amazing mercy to now 'graft' Gentiles into this salvation promised to the Jews, but Gentile Christians do not replace the Jews!
 - Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.
 - Romans 11:1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.
 - Romans 11:28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.
 - Ezekiel 36-39: This passage promises the future salvation and restoration of the nation Israel to its land, as well as God's personal involvement in fighting for the Jewish people against the nations of the world in a gigantic End-Time battle. Afterwards, the Jewish people will live with God's presence, blessing and protection in the land of Israel forever (39:21-29).
 - Amos 9:11-15: God promises to someday restore the Jewish people to the land of Israel, and to bless and protect them there forever.
 - Zephaniah 3:14-20: God promises to someday live among the Jewish people in Israel, and to bless and protect them there forever. This passage also predicts that at that time the Jewish nation will be lifted up above all the other nations (v. 20).
 - Zechariah 12-14: God promises that when Jesus returns all the Jewish people who are then alive will see Him and repent and be saved (12:10-13:2). Afterward, God will call them 'my people' (13:9) and will fight against the other nations of the world on their behalf (14:3, 12); then He will make Jerusalem His home and the capital city of the world, and will protect the Jewish people and the land of Israel forever (14:11).
 - Isaiah 60: God promises to one day make Jerusalem the capital city of the world, and the Jewish nation the most blessed nation of all the nations of the world.

- Micah 2:12 "I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people.
- Is 27:12 In that day the LORD will thresh from the flowing Euphrates [c] to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, O Israelites, will be gathered up one by one.
- Ps 147 ¹ Praise the LORD! For *it is* good to sing praises to our God; For *it is* pleasant, *and* praise is beautiful. ² The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.
- Is 56 ⁸ The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him *Others* besides those who are gathered to him."
- Ez 39 ²⁵ "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name— ²⁶ after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their *own* land and no one made *them* afraid. ²⁷ When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, ²⁸ then they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer.
- Ps 107 ¹ Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good! For His mercy *endures* forever. ² Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, ³ And gathered out of the lands, From the east and from the west, From the north and from the south.
- Jer 29 ¹³ And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.
- Jer 32 ³⁷ Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely.
- Ez 11 ¹⁷ Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." '
- Ez 20 ³⁴ I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out.
- Ez 20 ³⁴ I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. ... ⁴⁰ For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things. ⁴¹ I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. ⁴² Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country *for* which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers.
- Ez 28 ²⁵ 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then **they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob.** ²⁶ And they will dwell safely there, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God." ' "
- Ez 34:13
- Ez 36:24
- Zec 10:10
- Is 43:5
- Jer 31:8

- Does God know the future? Yes. Could God ever be wrong about a prediction He makes? Of course not! How then does Replacement theology explain the above passages? The above passages are just a small sampling of the many passages in the Old Testament where God clearly stated that He will one day permanently restore the Jewish people to the land of Israel and bless and protect them there forever. Will God be wrong about this?
- Objection: The above prophecies are all figurative, and that those promises no longer apply to the actual Jewish people, but rather to Christians. But this leads to many problems – namely, all the end-time prophecies that are occurring being fulfilled:
 - Israel was reborn on May 14, 1948 – miraculously and against all odds
 - It was reborn *on the exact day* in history when the Bible said it would be. The date of Israel's rebirth was predicted to the day by Bible prophecy just like the date Christ's entry into Jerusalem was predicted to the day by Bible prophecy.
 - Ezekiel's 2520 Prophecy
 - It marked the first time since AD 70 that the people of Israel had a nation to call their own
 - It marked the first time since 605 BC that Israel had its own sovereign nation, which was not under the control of another world power
 - It marked the 1st time in history, an extinct nation has come back into existence. After almost 1900 years, Israel was again declared a nation and officially reestablished in the promised land, exactly as God had promised. (Joel 3:1-2; Amos 9; Jeremiah 31; Ezekial 36)
 - Aliyah - return of the Jewish people to Israel
 - Is 66:8 Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.
 - Is 11:10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. 12 He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.
 - Ez 36:24 " 'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.
 - June 7, 1967 Jerusalem in Possession of Israel
 - The Bible predicted that Jerusalem would be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. From 70 AD until the 6-Day Arab-Israeli War, Jerusalem was under Gentile control.
 - Lk 21:24 ... Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
 - Prophecy of 10 Jubilees – Rabbi Judah Ben Samuel (1217 AD)
 - Israel flourishes far beyond any of her surround neighbors
 - Mark Twain visited Israel in 1867, and published his impressions in *Innocents Abroad*. He described a desolate country – devoid of both vegetation and human population: “..... A desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds... a silent mournful expanse.... a desolation....

we never saw a human being on the whole route.... hardly a tree or shrub anywhere. Even the olive tree and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country."

- Dt 29:23 The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur—nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in fierce anger. 24 All the nations will ask: "Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?" 25 And the answer will be: "It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt. 26 They went off and worshiped other gods and bowed down to them, gods they did not know, gods he had not given them. 27 Therefore the LORD's anger burned against this land, so that he brought on it all the curses written in this book. 28 In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now."
 - Today the land flourishes far beyond any of her surround neighbors.
 - Ez 36:8 " 'But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. 9 I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, 10 and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11 I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD.
 - Ez 36:28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.
 - Ez 36:34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. 35 They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." 36 Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.'
 - The Bible predicted that Israel would blossom in the last days and export produce to the world. With God's blessing, Israel's increased rainfall and irrigation technology have caused the land to blossom.
 - Israel exports \$800 million of produce each year and over \$200 million in ornamental plants and flowers.
 - 80% of Europe's citrus imports come from Israel
 - Israel exported \$42 billion worth of goods in 2006
 - Jordan (her neighbor) exported \$5 billion worth of goods in 2006
 - Is 27:6 In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.
 - Is 35:1 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.
- Replacement theology is at a loss to explain this momentous historical event and the Old Testament prophecies which so clearly predicted it, since Replacement theology has for centuries taught that these prophecies do not literally apply to the literal Jewish people.
 - Interpreting all of the Old Testament predictions and promises about the restoration of Israel in allegorical and 'spiritualized' ways reduces the prophecies to absurdities. Even a cursory read through the passages above reveals **detailed predictions involving the Jewish people and specific places and things** – if the prophecies are all supposed to be read allegorically what do all the details mean? And **if the Christian Church is**

replacing the Jewish people in all of these prophecies, does that mean the Christian Church is going to physically inherit the land of Israel?

- **What kind of a God is the God of the Bible if He makes specific, detailed promises to the Jewish people, which He then deliberately breaks by using the excuse of ‘My predictions were only allegorical?’**

Imagine a father who promises to take his son on a fishing trip, but when the big day arrives tells his devastated son that his promise was only ‘allegorical’ and that when he had originally made the promise, the word ‘son’ was just a symbol for ‘daughter,’ and the phrase ‘fishing trip’ was just an allegory for ‘shopping trip.’ What kind of a God is that? Can He be trusted?

- Prophet after prophet asserted that in the end times, a great remnant of the Jews will be saved when they accept Jesus as their Messiah
 - Isaiah 10:20-22
 - Jeremiah 31:1-7, 31-34
 - Ezekiel 6:8-10
 - Daniel 12:1
 - Hosea 2:14-20
 - Joel 2:31-32
 - Micah 7:18-20
 - Zephaniah 3:12-13
 - Zechariah 12:10

NT evidence – Jews are still the recipients of the promises

Romans 9-11

Do Jews have any advantage with God?

- Historically the Church has answered the first question with a “No!”
- Paul answers it by saying, **Romans 1 ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**
- **Romans 3 ¹What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? ²Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. ³For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? ⁴Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar.**

Has Jewish unbelief nullified the faithfulness of God?

- The Church has consistently answered with a resounding “Yes!” arguing that God has “washed His hands of the Jews” because of their unbelief.
- However, God’s promises to the Jews are not contingent on their obedience, but rather the eternal promises of God based on God’s character
 - Romans 3:3 What if some did not have faith? **Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? ⁴Not at all!** Let God be true, and every man a liar.
 - Romans 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit— ²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴**the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.** ⁵Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.
 - Here Paul declares – present tense! – that the covenants and the promises still belong to Israel. Paul said this during the Church Age! Thus, based on this passage alone Replacement Theology is refuted – God has not cut the Jewish people out of the covenant He made with them, nor is He planning to give the blessings He promised to the Jews to the Church instead (though, of course, the Church will certainly share in many of the blessings that God will give the Jews).

- Galatians 3:15 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. 17 What I mean is this: **The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.** 18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

The New Testament repeatedly reaffirms the Old Testament expectation of a future salvation and restoration of Israel.

- The Old Testament explicitly teaches a future restoration and salvation of the Jewish people in the land of Israel. Replacement theologians have to interpret all of those passages allegorically since their theology teaches that God no longer has a covenant(s) with the Jewish people (since the Jews have been replaced by the Church). But Replacement theology here runs into another huge obstacle – the New Testament repeatedly reaffirms the Old Testament expectation of a future salvation and restoration of Israel. Clearly the New Testament writers believed that God’s covenant with the Jews was still intact, and did not see the promises to the Jewish people in that covenant as being allegorical.
- Here are just a few examples of passages where the **New Testament teaches a future, literal restoration and salvation of the Jewish people:**
 - Acts 1:6-7: In this passage the disciples ask Jesus, who is just about to ascend back into heaven, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?” Clearly the apostles all believed in a future, literal restoration of the nation of Israel and the Jewish people! And this was after forty days of kingdom instruction from Jesus after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). As Scot McKnight states in his book about Jesus’ vision for national Israel, "Since Jesus was such a good teacher, we have every right to think that the impulsive hopes of his audience were on target. This is not to say that they, at times, drew incorrect references or came to inaccurate conclusions about time or about content, but it is to admit that Jesus believed in an imminent realization of the kingdom to restore Israel and that he taught this with clarity.”
 - Luke 21:24: In this passage Jesus predicts that the Jewish people will be trampled on until the ‘times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,’ referring to the time just before Jesus’ 2nd Coming. But this implies that there is an ongoing distinction between the Jewish people and the Gentiles, and that after the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, that Israel will be restored again. None of this would be possible if Replacement theology is correct.
 - Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30: In these passages Jesus clearly teaches that at His Return His disciples will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But this means that the nation of Israel will be restored and in existence at Jesus’ Return, and that the Jewish people will continue to be a distinct and unique nationality into eternity. According to E. P. Sanders, Matt 19:28 "confirms the view that Jesus looked for the restoration of Israel."
 - Matthew 23:37-39/Luke 13:34-35: In these passages Jesus prophesies that Israel will one day accept Him as her Messiah. As Donald Senior states in his commentary on Matthew, "In Matthew’s perspective, the rejection of Jesus by the leaders is indeed a grave sin, one that brings divine judgment. Yet the story of God’s relationship to Israel is not concluded, and the day will come when Jerusalem will again receive its Messiah with shouts of praise." (underline added for emphasis)
 - Romans 11:26-29: In this passage Paul clearly states that at the end of this Age “all Israel” will be saved, and he directly ties this fact to the New Covenant promises given to Israel in the Old Testament (Paul quotes Isaiah 59 and 27 to prove his point). In other words, this passage teaches that when Jesus Returns the Jewish people who are alive will all turn to Him and be saved – every last one. And, according to Paul, God will ensure that this happens because of the covenant He made with the Jewish people back in the Old Testament. Where, then, is Replacement theology left!?! God makes no such promise (of total salvation) to any other nation on earth. Clearly the Jews have not been replaced by the Church.
- Here are some quotes from other respected theologians confirming this point:

- C.E.B. Cranfield: "It is only where the Church persists in refusing to learn this message, where it secretly perhaps quite unconsciously-believes that its own existence is based on human achievement, and so fails to understand God's mercy to itself, that it is unable to believe in God's mercy for still unbelieving Israel, and so entertains the ugly and scriptural notion that God has cast off His people Israel and simply replaced it by the Christian Church. These three chapters [Rom. 9-11] emphatically forbid us to speak of the Church as having once and for all taken the place of the Jewish people."
- Jonathan Edwards: "Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews in Romans 11."
- In his comments on Rom 11:26-27, Ernst Kasemann rightly states that "Christianity is already living in the new covenant" while "Israel will begin to do so only at the parousia (technical term for Jesus' 2nd Coming)."

Christians and Jews are distinct people groups

Nowhere in the entire Bible are Christians said to have replaced the Jewish people

- Replacement theologians call the Church the 'new Israel,' because in their theology the Church has replaced the Jewish people. The New Testament, however, never once uses the term 'Israel' to refer to someone who is not an ethnic Jew. Thus by very definition, calling the Church the 'new Israel' is unbiblical since it's not actually in the Bible. Let me repeat this: **nowhere in the entire Bible is it ever stated that the Church is the 'new Israel,' and nowhere in the entire Bible are Christians said to have replaced the Jewish people.**

The view that Israel and the church are different is clearly taught in the New Testament. Biblically speaking, the church is distinct from Israel, and the terms church and Israel are never to be confused or used interchangeably.

- We are taught from Scripture that the church is an entirely new creation that came into being on the day of Pentecost and will continue until it is taken to heaven at the rapture.
 - Ep 1:9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. 11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,
 - Ep 3:2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6 ***This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.***
 - 1Th 4:13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.
- The church has no relationship to the curses and blessings for Israel. The covenants, promises, and warnings of the Mosaic Covenant were valid only for Israel.
- Israel has been temporarily set aside in God's program during these past 2,000 years of dispersion (see Romans 11).
- The NT distinguishes between Jews and Christians
 - Mt 19:28 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - Ro 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

- Ro 11: 25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved,
- Replacing the words ‘the Church’ wherever Israel is mentioned in the NT makes things become silly and nonsensical
 - The term ‘Israel’ is used seventy-three times in the New Testament and always refers to ethnic Jews. The vast majority of these refer to national, ethnic Israel while a few refer specifically to Jewish believers, rather than all Jews in general (for example, Gal 6:16). Try replacing the words ‘the Church’ wherever Israel is mentioned in the New Testament and things become silly and nonsensical.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:18 says “Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?” If you put ‘the Church’ where Israel is mentioned in this passage, the whole thing becomes nonsensical: have sacrifices ever been a part of Church practice? Are there altars for offering sacrifices in churches? Of course not! Paul is clearly here talking about the Jewish people when he says ‘Israel,’ and the same is true everywhere else in the New Testament wherever the word ‘Israel’ is used.
 - Rom. 10:1, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." If you put "the Church" where Israel is mentioned, then it is redundant. The Church is the body of saved believers, so how could Paul's prayer be for the Church to be saved?
 - In the Book of Acts, both Peter and Paul keep referring to their fellow Jewish people as “Israelites” and admonishes them to accept Jesus. But if the Church is the “new Israel” calling “Israelites” to repentance is redundant.
 - In Acts 2:22 Paul calls for his hearers to repent and accept Jesus. Listen to how he addresses them, “his fellow Israelites.” Is he speaking to Jewish people or Church people? Acts 2:29 presents the same dilemma. In Acts 3:12 Peter speaks to his “fellow Jewish countrymen”. But if the Israel is now the Church, why would he call unbelieving Jewish people, “fellow Israelites”?
 - Replacement theologians have no answer for this, the fact that the New Testament still consistently refers to national Israel as ‘Israel’ even after the establishment of the church (Acts 3:12; 4:10; 5:21, 31, 35; 21:28), while all the time maintaining a distinction between Israel and the Church. In Acts, both Israel and the Church exist simultaneously – ‘Israel’ is used twenty times and ekklesia (church) nineteen times, yet the two groups are always kept distinct.
 - Acts 13:26 "Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent.

- Ephesians 2:11–18 is the summation of the relationship that must exist between the Jewish people and the Gentiles.

Ep 2:11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)— 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

The Gentile Church, “the Uncircumcision”—who “*have now been brought near by the blood of Christ*”(v.13)—**does not replace “what is called the Circumcision”** (v.11). Messiah, our peace, has made the Jew and the Gentile one. He has broken down the middle wall of separation to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, that He might reconcile them both to Himself in one body through the cross. Through Yeshua, we both have access by one Spirit to the Father (vv.14–18).

The Church’s identity with God must not cause us to overlook His continuing plan for Israel. The existence of the Church does not negate the existence and purpose of Israel. The Church’s identity does not depend on a denial of original Israel, but it is established in Messiah and is intertwined with Israel. The Church does not replace Israel; they are joined to Israel and the two become one.

The Jewish people can only be restored and redeemed—not replaced. There are promises in the New Testament to the Jewish people that are not equaled by any other nation or people. “And so all Israel will be saved as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins’” (Rom. 11:26–27).

Jews are Jews, Israel is still Israel, and the Church is the Church. The Jewish people are forever God’s covenant people, and through them, all nations have been blessed. Has Israel been replaced? “*Certainly not!...God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew...Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace...And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins’...For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable...Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*” (Rom. 11:1a, 2a, 5, 26, 29, 33).

- **Objections:** Two passages Replacement theologians try to use in order to build their doctrine that Christians have replaced Jews in God’s plan, and the Church is the ‘new Israel.’
 - Ro 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 *the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.* 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. 6 It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” 8 In other words, *it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.*
 - Replacement theologians take the statement ‘it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring’ to mean that Christians have now replaced the Jews in God’s covenants.
 - But context is everything – several verses earlier Paul clearly stated that the covenants and promises do still belong to the Jewish people (verses 1-4)! A simple read through chapter 9 confirms that Paul’s point here is not that believing Gentiles are now considered Israelites, but rather, that not everyone who is physically a Jew will share in the promises made to the Jewish people. Only believing Jews will inherit the promises made to the Jewish people. That is the point of this passage, not that Gentile believers have now somehow mystically becoming the new Jews of God’s covenants, thereby replacing ethnic Jews.
 - As William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam so succinctly put it in their commentary about this passage: “But St. Paul does not mean here to distinguish a spiritual Israel (i.e. the Christian Church) from the fleshly Israel, but to state that the promises made to Israel might be fulfilled even if some of his descendants were shut out from them. What he states is that not all the

physical descendants of Jacob are necessarily inheritors of the Divine promises implied in the sacred name Israel.”

- Galatians 6:16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.
 - Replacement theologians take the phrase ‘Israel of God’ in this passage to refer to the Church, so that the Church has somehow replaced ethnic Jews as the new Israel in God’s plan. But nowhere does this passage state that the ‘Israel of God’ refers to Gentile Christians! It is purely an assumption made by those who believe in Replacement theology. In fact, the ‘Israel of God’ here simply refers to Jewish believers, who are thereby distinguished from their unbelieving Jewish kinsmen.
 - As Ronald E. Diprose in his book entitled ‘Israel and the Church,’ “Galatians 6:16 is insufficient grounds on which to base an innovative theological concept such as understanding the Church to be the new and/or true Israel.”

Has God rejected the Jews? The Response of Scripture

- **Rejection** — Concerning the claim that the Jews have been rejected by God, there are a couple of biblical principles that need to be kept in mind. The Bible affirms that the Jews were called as God’s Chosen People to be witnesses of what it means to have a relationship with Him (Isaiah 43:10-12). And the Bible makes it clear that this calling is “irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). God has NOT “washed His hands of the Jews” because of their unbelief.
 - Is 43:10 "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior. 12 I have revealed and saved and proclaimed— I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God. 13 Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"
 - Ro 3:1 **What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew**, or what value is there in circumcision? 2 **Much in every way!** First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. 3 What if some did not have faith? **Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness?** 4 **Not at all!** Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."
 - Romans 11:1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! ...2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. ... 29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.
- **God’s promises to the Jews are not contingent on their obedience, but rather the eternal promises of God based on God’s character.**
 - Dt 4:31 For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath.
 - Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: **first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.**
 - Romans 3:3 What if some did not have faith? **Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness?** 4 **Not at all!** Let God be true, and every man a liar.
 - Romans 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 **the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.** 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.
 - Here Paul declares – present tense! – that the covenants and the promises still belong to Israel. Paul said this during the Church Age! Thus, based on this passage alone Replacement Theology is refuted – God has not cut the Jewish people out of the covenant He made with them, nor is He planning to

give the blessings He promised to the Jews to the Church instead (though, of course, the Church will certainly share in many of the blessings that God will give the Jews).

- Galatians 3:15 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. 17 What I mean is this: **The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.** 18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

Christians HAVE NOT replaced the Jews

Replacement — The truth is that Replacement Theology was already spreading its tentacles even during the Apostle Paul's lifetime. Paul strongly refuted this doctrine in Romans chapter 11. Arrogance and false teaching against the Jews was taking root among the new Gentile Christians and Paul warned them against this evil. Paul made it clear that God has not deserted the Jews, and it was incumbent upon the Gentiles (i.e. the nations) not to boast nor be puffed up against the Jewish people even though most had not accepted Yeshua as their Messiah.

- Paul actually warns that a contemptuous attitude towards the Jewish people risks themselves being cut off.
 - Ro 11:17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

Strongly repudiates anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism – To begin with, it strongly repudiates anti-Semitism.

- Ps 129:5 May all who hate Zion be turned back in shame. 6 May they be like grass on the roof, which withers before it can grow; 7 with it the reaper cannot fill his hands, nor the one who gathers fill his arms. 8 May those who pass by not say, "The blessing of the LORD be upon you; we bless you in the name of the LORD."

Pro-Semitism in the NT

In the Gospels:

- Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 emphasize that Jesus was Jewish and a descendent of David
- Matthew 10:5-6 - Jesus instructs the disciples to take the Gospel to the Jews first, not the Gentiles
- Matthew 15:21-28 - Jesus tells a Gentile woman that he was sent to save the Jews first
- The Jews are far from being the only ones involved in Christ's persecution and crucifixion. Pilate let Jesus be crucified despite realizing his innocence (Mk 15:9-15) and the Roman soldiers mocked and persecuted Jesus, as well as doing the actual crucifying (Mt 27:27-31, Lk 23:11, 35-37).
- John 4:22 - "Salvation is from the Jews" (i.e. from Jesus, David's descendant)

In Acts:

- 4:27 - Herod, Pilate and the Gentiles in Jerusalem (not just the Jews) conspired against Jesus
- 11:1-18 - In the account of Peter and Cornelius, the Jews are amazed that God is merciful enough to save "even the (unclean) Gentiles."

- 14:1, 17:10-12 - Paul follows Jesus' model of going to the Jews first, and many Jews accept Jesus as the Messiah

In the Pauline Epistles:

- Romans 1:16 - Salvation is "first for the Jew, then for the Gentile"
- Romans 9:1-5 - Paul (who is Jewish) describes his desire for the Israelites to receive Christ and the honors the Israelites have received, including that Jesus' human ancestry was through them
- Romans 11:1-24 - Paul warns the Gentiles against boasting, comparing them to wild olive branches and the Jews to cultivated olive branches
- Romans 11:28 - Even those Jews who reject Christ are to be "loved on account of the patriarchs."
- Romans 15:27 - "For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings."
- Galatians 2:7-9 - At least three of the apostles had a specific ministry to the Jews
- Galatians 2:11-13 - Rather than an anti-Semitic prejudice, the early church had if anything a pro-Semitic prejudice, as evidenced by Peter and others discriminating against Gentiles

In Revelation:

- 7:2-8 - "144,000 from the tribes of Israel" are sealed with God's seal
- 21:12 - The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written on the gates of the new Jerusalem

It was not just the Jews who murdered Jesus

Deicide – With regard to the allegation that the Jews are “Christ killers,” the Word clearly identifies who murdered Jesus and makes it plain that they were not exclusively the Jews. In Acts 4:27 we are told that Jesus was killed through a conspiracy that involved “both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel.”

Notice who is listed here as those responsible for the death of Jesus: Romans, Jews and Gentiles. And someone else not named — *You and Me!* Yes, all of us are responsible for the death of Jesus, for all of us are sinners (Romans 3:23), and Jesus died for all sinners (1 Timothy 2:1).

- Acts 4:27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.
- Ro 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- 1 Timothy 2:1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

God has NOT fulfilled the land promises to the Jews during the time of Joshua

Land Promise — Regarding the idea that God has already fulfilled the land promises to the Jews during the time of Joshua, it is interesting to note that long after Joshua, David wrote in the psalms that the land promise is everlasting in nature and is yet to be fulfilled (Psalm 105:8-11). The fact of the matter is that the Jews have never occupied all the land that was promised to them in the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15:18-21). Under Joshua, they were given only the land that was promised to Moses.

- Ge 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates- 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."

- Ps 105: 8 He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, 9 the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. 10 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: 11 "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."

This promise IS however close to being fulfilled in our time – Psalm 83 War

- ❖ Ps 83: 1 O God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still. 2 See how your enemies are astir, how your foes rear heads. 3 With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish.
4 "Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more." 5 With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you- 6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, 7 Gebal, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. 8 Even Assyria has joined them to lend strength to the descendants of Lot. Selah
9 Do to them as you did to Midian, as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, 10 who perished at Endor and became like refuse on the ground. 11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, 12 who said, "Let us take possession of the pasturelands of God." 13 Make them like tumbleweed, O my God, like chaff before the wind. 14 As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze, 15 so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. 16 Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O LORD. 17 May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace. 18 Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.

Confederation of Arab States (CAS)

- The Confederation of Arab States (CAS) is a political entity that unites the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire establish in 1920, immediately after the end of the Arab Revolt and World War I.
- The CAS covers the lands of Levant, Mesopotamia and the majority of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by Turkey to the north, Iran and Kuwait to the east, Egypt, and the mandates of Palestine and Levant to the west, in the South and South West of the Arabic Peninsula it borders with several protectorates and colonies of the Imperial Commonwealth Federation (Bahrain, Qatar, Muscat, Trucial States and Oman and Eden Colony)
- Once Israel defeats the attack by the CAS, their borders will almost exactly match what was promised to Abraham
- Damascus is the capital of CAS. Once Israel destroys it according to Is 17, CAS will likely attack Israel and Israel will be victorious and claim all their land that will match what was promised to Abram in Ge 15. Then Israel will live in peace, as described in Ez 38.
- ❖ Ez 38:10 " "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. 11 You will say, "I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars.
- ❖ Ge 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates- 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."

- They will once again occupy the city of Jerusalem (Zachariah 8:7-8).
- All the nations of the world will come against them over the issue of the control of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2-3).
- The Antichrist will come to their rescue by guaranteeing them peace and allowing them to rebuild their temple (Daniel 9:27).
- But at the end of 3 1/2 years, the Antichrist will declare himself to be God, and the Jews will reject Him (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).
- The Antichrist will then attempt to annihilate the Jews, and he will succeed in killing two-thirds of them (Revelation 12:13-17 and Zechariah 13:8-9).
- At the end of the Tribulation, when the Jews have come to the end of themselves, they will turn to God and receive Jesus as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10).
- Jesus will return at this point in time, and He will regather all believing Jews to Israel where He will establish them as the prime nation in the world (Deuteronomy 30:1-9).
- The blessings of God will flow out to the nations through the Jews during the Millennium (Zechariah 8:22-23).

As you can see, the Jewish people have a very central role in end time Bible prophecy.

Jewish people are under discipline

Discipline — It is true that the Jewish people are currently under discipline because of their rejection of their Messiah. Over and over in their Scriptures the prophets said they would be disciplined if they were unfaithful, but always the promise was made that they would be preserved.

Before punishing the Jews God always promised to bring them back! In other words, whenever God punished the Jews by driving them out of the land of Israel, He always considered it to be a temporary disciplinary arrangement rather than a permanent breaking of His covenant with them.

- Jeremiah 30:1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD : 2 "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you. 3 The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity and restore them to the land I gave their forefathers to possess,' says the LORD."
- Jer 30:11 I am with you and will save you,' declares the LORD. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'

God has preserved the Jews

Preservation — God has preserved them in His grace because He loves them.

- Zec 2:8 For this is what the LORD Almighty says: "After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye- 9 I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me.

God will save the Jews

Salvation — Another reason they have been preserved is because God is determined to bring a great remnant to salvation. This promise is made repeatedly throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and is confirmed by Paul in the New Testament in Romans 9-11.

- Is 10:20 In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. 21 A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. 22 Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous.

The salvation of this remnant is described in detail in Zechariah 12:10 where it says that at the end of the Tribulation the remaining Jews will come to the end of themselves and will turn their hearts to God in repentance and accept Yeshua as their Messiah crying out “Baruch Haba B’Shem Adonai.” (Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!) What a glorious day that will be. What glory it will bring to the name of God..

- Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. ”

The believing Jewish remnant will go into the Millennium

Primacy — That believing remnant will go into the Millennium in the flesh and will comprise the nation of Israel to whom God will fulfill all the promises He has made to the Jews (Isaiah 60-62). During the Millennium the nation of Israel will be the prime nation in the world through whom God will bless all the other nations (Zechariah 8:22-23).

Rebirth of Israel and Aliyah

The Jewish people will be regathered in unbelief from the four corners of the earth. This is the most prolific prophecy in the Old Testament. Incidentally, if God has no purpose left for them, why would He go to the trouble of regathering them? Their state will be re-established.

- The rebirth of Israel and regathering of the Jews IS important!
 - The Bible clearly reveals that the 20th Century regathering of the Jewish people from the four corners of the earth back to their homeland is a supernatural act of God that is the first step in bringing about the salvation of a remnant
 - Is 66:7 "Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. 8 Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.
 - Isaiah 11:10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.12 He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.
 - Jeremiah 30:10 " 'So do not fear, O Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel,' declares the LORD. 'I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid. 11 I am with you and will save you,' declares the LORD. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'
 - Zechariah 8:7 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. 8 I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God."

Jerusalem

- All the nations of the earth against them over the issue of who is going to control Jerusalem
 - The Scriptures teach that once the Jews are regathered in unbelief and their nation is re-established, God will bring all the nations of the earth against them over the issue of who is going to control Jerusalem

- Zechariah 8:7 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. 8 I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God."
- Zechariah 12:1 This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: 2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.

The Tribulation

- The tribulation period will be horrible for the Jews
 - Jeremiah 30:4 These are the words the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah: 5 "This is what the LORD says: " 'Cries of fear are heard— terror, not peace. 6 Ask and see: Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor, every face turned deathly pale 7 How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.
- Satan hates the Jews with a passion for several reasons. Satan is determined to destroy every Jew on planet earth so that God cannot keep His promises to them.
 - God chose them to be His witness to the world.
 - Through them God gave the world the Bible.
 - Through them God gave the world the Messiah.
 - God has promised that He will save a great remnant of them.
 - God has promised that through that remnant He will bless all the nations of the world during the Millennial reign of Jesus.

Peace treaty

The Antichrist will come to their rescue by guaranteeing them peace and allowing them to rebuild their temple

Daniel 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing *of the temple* he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

The Antichrist will try to annihilate the Jews

The Antichrist will then attempt to annihilate the Jews during the last half of the Tribulation, and he will succeed in killing two-thirds of them (Revelation 12:13-17 and Zechariah 13:8-9).

- The hatred of the Jews and the opposition to their state will climax during the last half of the Tribulation when the Antichrist will turn against them and attempt to annihilate them from the face of the earth
 - Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." 13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. 15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the

river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

- At the end of 3 1/2 years, the Antichrist will declare himself to be God, and the Jews will reject Him
 - Thessalonians 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.
- The Antichrist will succeed in killing two-thirds of the Jewish people
 - Zechariah 13:8 In the whole land," declares the LORD, "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. 9 This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.' "

The remnant Jew will be saved

- The incredibly good news is that those remaining will be brought to the end of themselves, and in their total desperation, they will turn their hearts toward God. At that moment, Jesus will appear in the heavens, and the Jewish remnant will be saved:
 - Jeremiah 30:8 " 'In that day,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'I will break the yoke off their necks and will tear off their bonds; no longer will foreigners enslave them. 9 Instead, they will serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.
 - Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. "
 - Joel 2:31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 32 And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.
 - They will call upon the name of the Lord (Joel 2:31-32), and they will cry out, "Baruch Haba Bashem Adonai!" meaning, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"(Matthew 23:38-39).

And so all of Israel will be saved

- Romans 11:25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so **all Israel will be saved**, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. 27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for **God's gifts and his call are irrevocable**. 30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. 32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.
- Ps 130:7 O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. 8 He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.
- Ps 14:7 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

Jesus will return at this point in time, and He will regather all believing Jews to Israel where He will establish them as the prime nation in the world. The blessings of God will flow out to the nations through the Jews during the Millennium.

- Dt 30:1 When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, 2 and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, 3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. 4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. 5 He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. 6 The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. 7 The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. 8 You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today. 9 Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, 10 if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
- Zechariah 8:22 And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him." 23 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.' "

God's Grace

God's continuing love for the Jews despite their persistent spiritual rebellion is a great demonstration of the meaning of grace — second only to the Cross itself. People often say to me, "How could God possibly be behind the worldwide regathering of the Jewish people when they are still caught up in unbelief? The only thing they deserve is death." But that is exactly the point. The only thing any of us deserve is death. But "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). We can thank God that those of us who have put our faith in Jesus will never receive what we deserve. Praise God for His amazing grace! And praise Jesus for His willingness to suffer and die so that we might be reconciled to the Father.

Why Replacement Theology must be refuted:

Replacement Theology is not a Biblical Doctrine

- The Bible explicitly promises that God's covenant with the Jews would be eternal (ie. unbreakable).
- The NT explicitly states that the OT promises and covenants to Israel are STILL the possession of Israel, even during this Church age and even while the nation is currently in a state of unbelief.
- The OT explicitly teaches the future, permanent restoration of the nation Israel
 - The NT reaffirms the Old Testament expectation of a future salvation and restoration of Israel.
- Nowhere in the entire NT is the term 'Israel' used for those who are not ethnic Jews.
 - Thus, there is no biblical basis for identifying the Church as the 'new Israel.'

Forces a twisted and 'spiritualized' interpretation of the NT

It is unbiblical and forces a twisted and 'spiritualized' interpretation onto huge chunks of prophetic Scripture

- Hundreds of passages are affected.
- In order for Replacement theology to qualify as a biblical doctrine there needs to be "positively, passages which clearly teach it and negatively, no passages which actually exclude it." On both counts, Replacement theology fails.

What Replacement Theology says	What the Bible says
Christians are God's chosen people	The Jews are God's chosen people

Christian Church will be blessed – Israel is a spiritual entity that one enters into by faith in Christ not by physical heritage through Abraham	Israel will be restored to the land
After Pentecost, the term "Israel" refers to the church	After Pentecost, the term "Israel" refers to the Jews
The Mosaic covenant is replaced by the new covenant	The Mosaic covenant (Exodus 20) is separate from the new covenant (Luke 22:20)
The Jews rejected Jesus, so God rejects the Jews – the promises to the Jews are null and void – Christians now inherit the promises	God is faithful and will fulfill His promises to the Jews
Paul is really praying for the church.	Rom 10:1 Paul recognizes that the nation of Israel needs to accept Jesus as their Messiah and accept His offer of redemption
Satan was bound at Christ's 1 st coming	Satan will be bound at the end of Revelation
Rebirth of Israel is accidental and irrelevant	Rebirth of Israel was predicted in the Bible to the day
Christ's millennial reign is already here	Christ's millennial reign will start after the tribulation
The book of Revelation has already been fulfilled	The book of Revelation has NOT been fulfilled
All the end-time prophecies have already been fulfilled	End-time prophecies have already been fulfilled

Modern day fulfillment of promises to Israel

It cannot explain the continued existence of the Jewish people, nor the miraculous rebirth of the state of Israel in 1948.

- Prophecy has proved the fallibility of Replacement Theology in history. End-time prophecies, which are being fulfilled at an ever increasing pace, continue to give overwhelming support for the complete deliverance of the Jewish people (Rom. 11:26), restoration of the Jewish people to their Land, and a restored relationship to their Lord (Isa. 11, 43, 49, 60; Jer. 16; Ezek. 35–37; and the minor prophets).
- According to Replacement theology God is finished with the Jews (as of the New Testament). Thus, people who believe Replacement theology cannot give glory to God for the many astounding miracles that have occurred in the past century with respect to the rebirth of the modern state of Israel because, according to their theology, God wouldn't do that for the Jews.
 - Who, then, is responsible for what has happened? Replacement theology can only answer, 'not God.'
 - What about the miracles? No explanation.
- Thus, Replacement theology has the effect of repudiating one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God in the world today – the miraculous rebirth of the nation of Israel.

Anti-Semitism

Jer 29:18 I will ... make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth and an object of cursing and horror, of scorn and reproach, among all the nations where I drive them.

Dt 28:37 You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the LORD will drive you.

Warnings against anti-semitism

Ps 129:5 May all who hate Zion be turned back in shame. 6 May they be like grass on the roof, which withers before it can grow; 7 with it the reaper cannot fill his hands, nor the one who gathers fill his arms. 8 May those who pass by not say, "The blessing of the LORD be upon you; we bless you in the name of the LORD."

Throughout history it has paved the way for ‘Christians’ to engage in anti-Semitic behavior.

- The Christian Church has a horrific and embarrassing history of persecuting the Jewish people, and that history of persecution would never have been possible without Replacement theology.
- Note: Replacement theology isn’t in itself racism and many of the people today who hold to Replacement theology are not racists. But, Replacement theology is the open gate through which all ‘Christian’ persecution of the Jews has had to travel throughout history.
- The dogma of Replacement Theology has probably brought more sin and evil to the world than any other Christian doctrine. Hundreds, if not thousands, of episodes rooted in historical Jew-hatred have manifested themselves under the guise of this doctrine.
 - Spanish inquisition – The infamous Spanish inquisition when 200,000 Jews were expelled from Spain by the Catholic Church. Ten’s of thousands were slaughtered, purposely drowned in the sea, or their bodies ripped open after rumors spread that Jews who were fleeing had swallowed their gold and silver items.
 - Hitler – Replacement Theology played a prominent role in Hitler’s plans to extinguish the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; he comfortably appropriated the Church’s anti-Semitism down through the ages, which rose to new heights through Martin Luther’s demonization of the Jewish people.
 - Even today, the “blood libel” fiction claims that Jews kill children to drink their blood on Passover. Internet bloggers this Passover accused Jews of killing Palestinian children to mix their blood with their matza.
 - The Crusades
 - Artistic Expressions
 - Blood libels
 - Black Plague myths
 - Distinguishing marks
 - Relegation to ghettos
 - Pogroms
 - The Inquisition
- Antisemitism would be impossible for anyone who believes that the Bible teaches that:
 - God’s covenants with the Jews are still intact,
 - That the Jews are still God’s chosen people, and
 - That God is planning to someday save the Jews and bless them above all the other nations of the earth
- It would be impossible for a person who believes that the Bible teaches such things to then turn around and persecute the Jews in the name of that Bible. In order for a person to persecute the Jews in the name of Christianity, said person must first come up with a theology that allows him to do so biblically – a theology like Replacement theology, which says that God has rejected the Jews in anger, and has no more place for them in His plans. Only then can hatred for the Jews be placed under the banner of Christianity, as has happened so frequently throughout history.

The Evolution of Replacement Theology and Anti-Semitism

Christian apologists, starting as early as the Second Century, began to turn against the Jews, characterizing them as “Christ Killers.” Consider the following examples:

- **The Epistle of Barnabas** (100 AD) — This writing was a contender for inclusion in the Bible. It is a good demonstration of how profoundly Greek methods of interpretation had already impacted Christians. The writer insisted that the Old Testament was never meant to be read literally, but was to be interpreted allegorically. The writer argued that “only the Christian could make sense of the Bible.” The “carnal Jews,” with their “earthly mind-set,” had failed to recognize the hidden message of their own Scriptures, and as a result, had eternally forfeited their entitlement to the covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.⁷

- **Ignatius of Antioch** (c. 50-117) — He said that “those who partake of the Passover are partakers with those who killed Jesus.”⁸
- **Justin Martyr** (100-165) — He claimed God’s covenant with Israel was no longer valid and that the Gentiles had replaced the Jews.⁹ Additionally, he was the first to identify the Church as “the true spiritual Israel.”¹⁰ And he declared that the plight of the Jews — their exile and persecution — had happened “in fairness and justice” because they had “slain the Just One.”¹¹
- **Melito of Sardis** (died c. 180) — Also focused on deicide when he proclaimed, “The King of Israel slain with Israel’s right hand! Alas for the new wickedness of the new murder.”¹²
- **Irenaeus** (130-202) — He was a student of Polycarp who, in turn, was a disciple of the Apostle John. He declared that “the house of Jacob and the people of Israel are disinherited from the grace of God.” And he argued this because they “have rejected the Son of God ” and “they slew Him.”¹³
- **Clement of Alexandria** (c. 150 – c. 215) — Claimed that Israel “denied the Lord” and thus “forfeited the place of the true Israel.”¹⁴
- **Hippolytus of Rome** (170-235) — He is considered by many to be the most important theologian of the 3rd Century. He was a student of Irenaeus. He declared that the Jews had been darkened in the eyes of their souls “with a darkness utter and everlasting.” He further stated that they were destined to be “slaves to the nations, not for four hundred years as in Egypt, nor seventy as in Babylon, but... always.”¹⁵
- **Tertullian of Carthage** (155-230) — He blamed the Jews for the death of Jesus and argued they had been rejected by God.¹⁶
- **Cyprian of Carthage** (c. 200-258) — He was a student of Tertullian. He wrote:¹⁷ I have endeavored to show that the Jews...departed from God and lost God’s favor... while the Christians succeeded to their place, deserving well of the Lord by faith, and coming out of all nations and from the whole world. He added:¹⁸ We Christians when we pray, say “Our Father” because He has begun to be ours, and has ceased to be the Father of the Jews, who have forsaken Him.
- **Origen of Alexandria** (185-254) — He was responsible for much Anti-Semitism, all of which was based on his assertion that the Jews were responsible for killing Jesus. In one of his treatises he wrote: ¹⁹ We say with confidence that they [the Jews] will never be restored to their former condition. For they committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind, in conspiring against the Savior of the human race... It accordingly behoved that city where Jesus underwent these sufferings to perish utterly, and the Jewish nation to be overthrown, and the invitation of happiness offered them by God to pass to others — the Christians...
- **The Council of Elvira** (305) — This was an ecclesiastical synod of Spanish clerics that was held in what is now known as the city of Granada, located in southern Spain. The council voted to prohibit Christians from sharing a meal with a Jew, marrying a Jew, blessing a Jew or observing the Sabbath.²⁰

If God could break His covenant with the Jews, then we cannot trust Him to keep His promises to us!

Something that Replacement theologians rarely stop to consider is the following: If God could break His covenants with the Jewish people, what’s to stop Him from breaking His covenant with us Christians as well? As theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg has remarked, "How could Christians be certain of their own comparatively new membership in the circle of God’s elect if God for his part did not remain faithful to his election in spite of Israel’s unbelief? This is the apostle’s point when he advocates the inviolability of the election of the Jewish people (11:29; cf. 9:6). He has in mind also Christian assurance of election."

In my mind, the most ridiculous aspect of the Replacement dogma is the absolute blindness of any person who thinks he or she is without sin, not to mention the believing corporate Church over the last 1900 years. Has it acted righteously and without sin? There is no more pharisaical attitude than this.

Think about this concept – that the Church has replaced Israel because of Israel’s sin and rejection of God. The history of the Church is so incredibly full of sin, violence, and evil, that a person has to be in deep dark blindness to be unaware of

the Church's own historical wretchedness. Sexual abuse by Catholic Church leaders, perfidy of Protestant wars, hatred, greed, and so much more. How much clearer could the Bible be than to let the world know that all – Jews and Gentiles – have sinned and come short of the glory of God!

Of course, there are godly people in the Church, past and present. But if God has forever forsaken His chosen people because of their sins, how could He not forever forsake the Church for all its sins as well?

Israel is YOUR insurance policy for God's faithfulness, love and covenant-keeping nature

- We can learn by observing the twists and turns of the love story between God and Israel about the kind of character that we follow. We can see His standards. We can see His compassionate love and mercy, as well as His jealousy and wrath when He is rejected for others.

Dealing with Replacement theology's favorite proof-texts.

Galatians 3:7, 29 - Christians are called 'sons of Abraham' and 'Abraham's offspring.'

Galatians 3:7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ... 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- These are, perhaps, Replacement theology's favorite texts because in them **Christians are called 'sons of Abraham' and 'Abraham's offspring.'**
- Replacement theologians take these passages to mean that Christians are now Abraham's offspring instead of the Jews, and thus, that the **Jewish people have now been excluded from the promises and covenants** that God made with them back in the Old Testament.
 - This is a very shallow interpretation because it completely ignores the **many passages of Scripture that directly contradict it**
 - Rom 9:4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.
 - Rom 11: 1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.
 - Rom 11:26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. 27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."
 - Rom 11:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.
 - Jer 31:35 This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD Almighty is his name: 36 "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me." 37 This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.
- In truth, the only thing this passage actually says is that Gentile believers are now included under the covenant and blessings and promises that God had previously given only to the Jewish people. Thus, this is not an exclusionary passage about the Jewish nation, but rather an inclusionary passage for Gentile believers – **Gentile believers are now included in what God had already started with the nation of Israel.**
- Perhaps it would be helpful to here draw a distinction between Jewish individuals and the Jewish nation.
 - Individual level
 - Jewish individuals are saved in the same way as Gentile individuals – by faith in Christ. This is the one and only plan of salvation for all people on the earth, whether Jew or Gentile. Hence Paul's statement above 'that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.'

- Thus, on an individual level, Jewish individuals who reject Christ are just as unsaved as any Gentile unbeliever – they will be cast into hell at the end of their days, and will not inherit any of the blessings or promises God made to the nation of Israel.
- National level
 - God has made promises (ie. ‘covenants’) to the Jewish nation that He is bound to keep:
 - He has said that the land of Israel will be the Jews’ inheritance forever
 - Gen 17:8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."
 - Ps 105:8 He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, 9 the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. 10 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: 11 "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."
 - 1 Chronicles 16:15 He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, 16 the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. 17 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: 18 "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."
 - Rom 11:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.
 - He has said that He would one day write His laws in the Jewish people’s hearts and turn their hearts towards Him (Jer 31:33)
 - He has said that He would one day bring the Jewish people back into the land of Israel and save all those living at that time (Ez 39:21-29; Zech 12:10-13:9; Rom 11:26-29).

God has promised the Jewish people that He will do all of these things, so we can be sure that He will. And nowhere in Galatians 3 does Paul state that these promises to the Jewish people (on a national level) have been cancelled, or that the Church has replaced the nation of Israel in the receiving of those promises. His only point is that believing Gentile individuals can now know the joy of salvation along with believing Jewish individuals.

- The truth of the matter is that Replacement theology puts too much emphasis on Paul’s use of the terms ‘sons of Abraham’ and ‘Abraham’s offspring’ in Galatians 3. Yes, Paul here uses the term to describe Gentile believers, but this cannot be taken to mean that, in God’s eyes, Gentile believers have now replaced the nation of Israel as Abraham’s descendants. Why? Because **even a brief study of the New Testament shows that the terms ‘sons of Abraham’ and ‘Abraham’s offspring’ are elsewhere used ONLY of the Jewish people.** Thus, Galatians 3 does not prove that believers have replaced the Jewish people as the only ‘sons of Abraham.’

There are four different ways the New Testament uses the term ‘sons of Abraham’ (or ‘Abraham’s offspring’):

- First, the term ‘sons of Abraham’ (or ‘Abraham’s offspring’) sometimes refers exclusively to the Jewish people, the biological descendants of Abraham
 - Acts 3:12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel ... 25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed."
 - Acts 13:26 "Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent.
 - 2 Cor 11:22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I.
- Second, it can refer to individual Jewish believers
 - Isa 41:8 with Rom 9:6
 - Is 41:8 "But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend,
 - Rom 9:6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.
- Third, it is also once used to specifically identify Jesus (Gal 3:15-16)

- Gal 3:15 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.
- Fourth, it can be used in a spiritual sense for both believing Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:7, 29 as above).
 - Galatians 3:7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ... 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Conclusion: In his book *The relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, John Feinberg says this about the four different senses in which the term 'sons of Abraham' is used in the New Testament; **"no sense (spiritual especially) is more important than any other, and no sense cancels out the meaning and implications of the other senses."** In other words, Replacement theology cannot use Galatians 3 to say that 'the sons of Abraham' only applies to believers, and not to the nation of Israel. Thanks to Jesus' death on the cross Gentile believers have now been included in the promise of salvation that God made to Abraham, but this does not mean that God's promises to the nation of Israel are null and void.

- God's promises are for whom?

It may here be helpful to differentiate between the various promises God made to the Jewish people in the Old Testament, some of which Gentile believers have now been grafted into (thank God!), and others which are still just for national Israel:

God's promises to the Jewish people in the Old Testament		
Now applies to believing Jews and Gentiles	1. The promise of salvation and forgiveness for sins (Jer 31:34; 33:8; Ez 36:24-33; 37:23; Zech 13:1-2,9; Isa 43:25; 53:11-12).	Spiritual promises
	2. The promise of the Holy Spirit (Isa 44:3; Ez 36:27; Joel 2:28-29; Zech 12:10).	
	3. The promise of new hearts that want to do right and want to love God (Jer 31:33; 32:39-40; Ez 11:19-20; 36:24-29).	
Still applies only to the Jewish people	4. The promise to re-gather the Jewish people into the land of Israel (Ez 36:24-29; 37:21-28; 39:25-29).	Physical promises
	5. The promise to give the land of Israel to the Jewish people forever (Gen 17:8; Ps 105:8-11; 1 Chron 16:15-18; Ez 37:25-28; Rom 11:29).	
	6. The promise to bless the nation of Israel above all the other nations of the earth (Isa 49:22-23; 60:3-22; Jer 33:9).	
	7. The promise to fight for the Jews against all their Gentile enemies on the Day of the Lord (Ez 38:17 – 39:22; Zech 14:3, 12).	
	8. The promise that every Jew who is still alive when Jesus returns will get saved (Zech 12:10; 13:2,9; Rom 11:26; Jer 31:33-34).	

It is important to note that all of these promises were originally made only to the Jews. Through Christ's death and resurrection, however, Gentile believers came to be included in the spiritual promises pertaining to salvation, the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and the Holy Spirit. Where Replacement theology goes wrong is in ignoring the fact that this still leaves a number of the specifically physical promises (like the re-gathering of the Jews to the land of Israel, and the promise to the Jewish people of their permanent possession of the land of Israel) that can only be applied to the Jewish people.

Note: the 8th promise in the list on the chart above states that at Jesus' Second Coming every Jew who is alive will be saved. This is a unique promise that applies only to the Jewish people. No such thing is promised for any other nation of the earth: for example, there is no promise that every Canadian living on the earth will be saved when Jesus returns, nor every Italian or Persian or Chinese or African or anyone else. But every Jew that is alive on the earth when Jesus returns will be saved. How? There are no shortcuts here; all of these Jews must be saved in the same way that every other believer throughout history has been saved – by turning to Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and eternal life. There is no other way to be saved. Thus, this promise is the promise that at Jesus' Return every Jew that is still alive will willingly give their life to Jesus and repent of their sins (see Zech 12:10-13:2). Once again we see that Replacement theology here

proves false; it teaches that there is no longer any difference between the Jewish people and the other nations of the world. But we see here that there still are a number of unique promises which apply only to the Jewish nation and not to any of the other nations on the earth.

Ephesians 2:11-22 – Christians are equal, not identical, to Jews

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)— 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

In this famous passage Paul talks about the fact that, through Christ, 'the dividing wall of hostility' (v. 14) has been taken down between Jews and Gentiles, and how Gentile believers have now become 'fellow citizens' with the Jewish saints (v. 19).

Replacement theology takes these statements to mean that there is now no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. False!

- Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 - Does this mean that there are no longer any gender differences between men and women who have become Christians? Absurd! Men remain men after coming to Christ and women remain women. Paul is not here saying that in Christ men and women become identical and indistinguishable, nor that in Christ Jews and Gentiles become identical and indistinguishable. **What Paul is saying is that, in Christ, men and women and Jews and Gentiles and slaves and masters are all equal. Equal and identical are two very different things.**
 - Equal in Christ means that all these different groups of people are equal before God in terms of status in Christ – they are saved in the same way (by faith), and receive the same Spirit and the same benefits as a result of their salvation.
 - But they are still distinct from each other in terms of identity and roles in God's plan for the earth. Men and women continue to have different roles from each other in Christ (eg. When's the last time you saw a pregnant man?!?),
 - The same is true of Jews and Gentiles. The fact that in Christ Gentile believers have been made 'fellow citizens' and have become 'one' with the Jewish people (Eph 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility) does not mean that they are now indistinguishable from Jews in God's eyes, nor that the Jewish people have ceased to hold a unique and distinct place in the historical working out of God's redemption of the world.

Romans 11:17-24 – Gentiles have been grafted into God's tree

Rom 11:17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you

stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

In this famous passage Paul stresses that believing Gentiles have now been grafted into God's tree, along with believing Jews, and that they now share in the blessings of God's promises and covenant. But it does not say that the church is now the true Israel. As Michael Vlach says in his book 'Has the Church replaced Israel?' "There is a difference between saying that believing Gentiles (ie. the Church) participate with Israel in Israel's covenants and claiming that believing Gentiles become Israel. **Gentiles are partakers of the covenants not taker-overs.** This passage does not rule out a future role for national Israel or indicate that the church is now Israel."

Romans 9:6-8 – Only believing Jews will inherit the promises made to the Jewish people

Rom 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

Replacement theologians take the statement 'it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring' to mean that Christians have now replaced the Jews in God's covenants.

- But context is everything – several verses earlier Paul clearly stated that the covenants and promises do still belong to the Jewish people (verses 1-4)! A simple read through chapter 9 confirms that Paul's point here is not that believing Gentiles are now considered Israelites, but rather, that **not everyone who is physically a Jew will share in the promises made to the Jewish people; only believing Jews will inherit the promises made to the Jewish people.** That is the point of this passage, not that Gentile believers have now somehow mystically becoming the new Jews of God's covenants, thereby replacing ethnic Jews.
- As William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam so succinctly put it in their commentary about this passage: "But St. Paul does not mean here to distinguish a spiritual Israel (i.e. the Christian Church) from the fleshly Israel, but to state that the promises made to Israel might be fulfilled even if some of his descendants were shut out from them. What he states is that **not all the physical descendants of Jacob are necessarily inheritors of the Divine promises implied in the sacred name Israel.**"

Galatians 6:16 – 'Israel of God' distinguishes believing Israel from secular Israel

Gal 6:16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

Replacement theologians take the phrase 'Israel of God' in this passage to refer to the Church, so that the Church has somehow replaced ethnic Jews as the new Israel in God's plan.

- But **nowhere does this passage state that the 'Israel of God' refers to Gentile Christians!** It is purely an assumption made by those who believe in Replacement theology.
- In fact, the 'Israel of God' here simply refers to Jewish believers, who are thereby distinguished from their unbelieving Jewish kinsmen.

As Ronald E. Diprose in his book entitled 'Israel and the Church,' "Galatians 6:16 is insufficient grounds on which to base an innovative theological concept such as understanding the Church to be the new and/or true Israel."

Mal. 1:11

The nation of Israel was only the seed of the future Church, which would arise and incorporate people of all nations (Mal. 1:11): "For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the nations, and in every place, incense shall be offered to My Name, and a pure offering for My Name shall be great among the nations, says the Lord of Hosts."

- Rebuttal: This shows that the Jewish people and Israel fulfilled one of their callings to be "a light to the nations," so that God's Word has gone around the world. But it does not suggest God's dealing with Israel was negated because His Name spread around the world.

Matt. 21:43

Jesus taught that the Jews would lose their spiritual privileges, and be replaced by another people: "Therefore I am saying to you, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it.'" (Matt. 21:43)

- Rebuttal: In this passage, Jesus was talking about the priests and Pharisees, who failed as leaders of the people. This passage is not talking about the Jewish people or nation of Israel.

Rom 2:28-29

A true Jew is anyone born of the Spirit, whether he is Gentile or Jewish: "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom 2:28-29)

- Rebuttal: This argument does not support the notion that the Church replaced Israel. Rather, it simply reinforces what had been said throughout the Hebrew Scriptures [the Old Testament], that outward circumcision is not enough to be justified before God but that circumcision of the heart is also necessary.

Rom 4:13

The promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham was only a "starter." The real Promised Land is the whole world, which the Church will inherit. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom 4:13).

- Rebuttal: Where does this verse exclude Abraham and His natural prodigy, the Jews? It simply says that through the law, they would not inherit the world, but this would be acquired through faith. This is also true of the Church.

Rom 9:6-8

"True Israelites" are not the physical descendants of Abraham ("children of the flesh") but rather believers in Christ ("children of the promise"): "For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants; but 'It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you.' This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants" (Rom 9:6-8).

- Rebuttal: Paul is not transferring the meaning of Israel to mean the Church or implying that the Church replaces Israel. He is merely restricting the use of Israel to those who believe in the promises. In other words, it is not enough to be a physical descendant of Abraham to be a true Israelite; one must also have faith in God's promises. True, Paul also writes that others (Gentiles) may also be included to the promise made to Israel (cf. Rom 9:25-26)

Gal 3:27-28

Paul apparently abolishes the differences between Jews and non-Jews: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:27-28).

- If this passage were literally meant to abolish the distinction between Jew and Greek, it would also have to abolish the difference between man and woman. The passage is speaking of everyone's standing before God as

equals, because we are all sinners saved by God's grace and Christ's Paschal sacrifice. But there is still a distinction in roles between Jews and Gentiles in God's economy of salvation, just as there remains clearly distinct roles between men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers.

Gal 3:29

To be a real son of Abraham is not to belong to the nation or people of Israel but to have faith in Jesus Christ. Sonship to Abraham is seen only in spiritual, not national terms: "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29).

- Rebuttal: While this is a wonderful inclusionary promise for Gentiles, this verse does not exclude the Jewish people from their original covenant, promise and blessing as the natural seed of Abraham. This verse simply joins Gentile Christians to what God had already started with Israel.

Gal 6:16

The Church is allegedly the "Israel of God": "As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, [and] upon the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16).

- Some translations (e.g. RSV) omit the Greek word *kai* (and) that is found in the original text. This is a serious omission, because without the *kai* the verse would imply that all who "walk by the rule" - that is, all Christians - are the Israel of God. But when the *kai* of the original text is preserved, the verse implies that there is a distinction between "those who walk according to the rule", the Christians, and the "Israel of God" - the remnant of natural Israel who have accepted God's promises in Christ.

1Pe 2:9

God's intention was to bless the world through a spiritual nation of Israel that has placed their faith in Yeshua. Since the majority of the nation has not placed their trust in Yeshua, during this present age, the present body of believers in Yeshua [the Church] takes on this role temporarily.

This is why in 1 Peter 2:9 the Apostle says to both Jewish and Gentile followers of Yeshua, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." These original words come from Exodus 19:5-6,

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

This was God's stated goal for Israel, but since the nation turned its back on their Messiah, Jewish and gentile members of the Church temporarily fulfill this role. However, God makes it clear in Revelation 7 that the role of Israel as the voice of God to the nations shall return to the Jewish nation.

For those replacement theologians who claim the Church has replaced Israel based on 1 Peter 2:9, the response is twofold: First, an application of an Old Testament passage to a New Testament people does not mean replacement. In Hebrews 8:12 the writer quotes a lengthy section from Jeremiah 31:31-34 that describes the contents of the New Testament. The text in Jeremiah reads, "

"The days are coming, declares the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant
I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they did not remain faithful to my covenant,
and I turned away from them,
declares the Lord.

This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

Jeremiah's prophecy is addressed to "the people of Israel and with the people of Jacob." Replacement theologians assume because the author of Hebrews applies this verse to New Testament Christians that followers of Jesus are now the "new house of Israel." However, these same theologians ignore other sections of Jeremiah 31 such as verses 8-9 that are not applied to the Church because it doesn't fit their theology and they would be forced to spiritualize the text:

See, I will bring them from the land of the north
and gather them from the ends of the earth.
Among them will be the blind and the lame,

expectant mothers and women in labor;
a great throng will return.
They will come with weeping;
they will pray as I bring them back.
I will lead them beside streams of water
on a level path where they will not stumble,
because I am Israel's father,
and Ephraim is my firstborn son.

When has this every happened with the church or when will it ever happen. When has the Lord brought followers of Jesus to the land of Israel, a piece of property God never promised to the church.

Second, the Church has not fulfilled Isaiah 2:2-4 which portrays the Isaiah's vision for a time when the Word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem.

In the last days
the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established
as the highest of the mountains;
it will be exalted above the hills,
and all nations will stream to it.
Many peoples will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths."
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.

When has the Church been brought forth peace among the nations as described in verse 2. The early church started in Jerusalem but the result of their preaching was not world peace. In fact, in 70 A.D. the Romans attacked Jerusalem, and destroyed Herod's Temple.

The nations of the world are still at war. The Church has not fulfilled this passage from Isaiah even though the Church is teaching the word of God to the nations. The end result of the preaching of the gospel is nowhere close to the picture drawn by Isaiah.

The nations are not coming to Jerusalem where the word of the Lord will go forth. Isaiah's prophecy describes the messianic kingdom where Yeshua King Messiah will judge between the nations and will bring true peace on the earth.

[Col 3:12](#)

[Role of Israel – God wants to live with human beings](#)

How Christians and the Jewish people fit together under the umbrella of God's covenants.

There is much confusion in the Church today about the relationship between the Church and the Jews with regards to God's covenants. Are both Christians and Jews God's people? Are both Christians and Jews saved? Replacement theology, as we have already seen, falsely asserts that Christians have replaced the nation of Israel as God's people. On the other side of the spectrum however, other theologies falsely assert that there are two separate peoples of God and that Jewish people are automatically God's people and can be saved even without accepting Christ. But what does the Bible say?

In order to properly answer these questions we have to go back to the beginning – specifically, the fact that it has always been God's desire to live with human beings.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

After the fall of Adam, however, God was forced to separate Himself from humanity. But from the very moment that Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden of Eden God already had a plan of redemption in place. His plan was to find for Himself a family to live with (Ex 29:45-46) out of all the peoples of the earth, and from that family to produce a Messiah who could redeem the world from its sins.

Ex 29:45 Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. 46 They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

Thus, one of the first steps in God's plan of redemption was the finding and calling out of the patriarch Abraham. Here was a man of faith and obedience through whom a godly family could be grown, and through whom the Messiah could be raised up. Thus, Abraham's physical descendants – the Jews – became God's chosen people, or family, from out of all the nations of the earth.

But from the very beginning God's plan was to save everyone – all the nations of the earth – not just Abraham's descendants. As God said to Abraham when He first spoke to him, "and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen 12:3b). It is not as though God loves Jews more than other people, it is just that they, because Abraham their father was a righteous man who was a friend of God (James 2:23), were chosen to be the vehicle of salvation through which the rest of the world could be reached and saved.

- James 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

Israel was to serve as God's vehicle of salvation in two primary ways:

1. The Messiah (Jesus) would be born into their nation and He would save the whole world from its sins.
2. They were to be a light to the other nations of the world, attracting them to the one true God, Yahweh, by the justice of their laws and the goodness of their conduct
 - Dt 4:6 Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." 7 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? 8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?
 - Isa 51:4 "Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations.

The two points above each required a different set of promises. These unique promises apply only to the Jewish people and not to any other nation – the Church has not replaced the Jews with respect to any of these! When God gives a promise that promise is eternal and irrevocable (Rom 11:29), thus we can rest assured that God will follow through on His Word to the Jewish people.

- Rom 11:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

Israel provided The Messiah

In the case of the Messiah, God gave to the Jews the promises of salvation which the Messiah would bring to the whole world:

"I promise to forgive all of your sins"

- Jer 31:34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."
- Jer 33:8 I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me.
- Ez 36:24 " 'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. 32 I want you

to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel! 33 " This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt.

- Ez 37:23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

"I promise to fill you with my Holy Spirit"

- Isa 44:3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.
- Ez 36:27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
- Joel 2:28 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.
- Zech 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

"I promise to give you a new heart that loves me and wants to do right"

- Jer 31:33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.
- Jer 32:39 I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. 40 I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.
- Ez 11:19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. 20 Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.
- Ez 36:24 " For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.

Promises to the world, not just the Jewish people

These promises of salvation were always intended to be for the whole world, not just the Jewish people

- Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
- Gen 18:18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.
- Gen 22:18 and through your offspring ^[b] all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."
- Gen 26:4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring ^[a] all nations on earth will be blessed,
- Gen 28:14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

In Old Testament times, however, the nations of the world did not know who Yahweh was; thus, these promises of salvation were given to the Jews alone, for safekeeping, until the time of the Messiah would come. At that time Jews and Gentiles alike would share in God's promises of salvation for mankind.

Israel is a light to the nations

Thus, though Jews and Gentiles were both destined to one day share equally in the promises of salvation as individuals, the **Jewish nation had a unique role to play among all the Gentile nations. They were the keepers of the promises, as well as God's missionary nation to the other nations.**

- Is 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,
- Is 49:5 And now the LORD says— he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength- 6 he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

As a result of these responsibilities which He had laid across their collective shoulders, God gave to the Jewish people additional promises, meant only for them, in order to enable them to carry out their mission, and also to reward them.

Israel

One of these promises was the promise of the land of Israel – in order to be God's light to the nations, the Jews would need a piece of land in which to be a nation. Thus, God gave the Jewish people the land of Israel as their own special possession

- Gen 17:8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."
- Ps 105:8 He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, 9 the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. 10 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: 11 "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."
- 1 Chronicles 16:15 He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, 16 the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. 17 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: 18 "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."
- Ez 37: 25 They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. 27 My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.' "

God would fight for them

God also promised the Jews that at Jesus' Return (in the Old Testament this was known as 'the Day of the Lord') He would fight for them against all of their Gentile enemies

- Ez 38-39 – Gog Magog War
- Zech 14 – The LORD will come and reign

Every Jew would be given a spirit of repentance and would turn to Jesus willingly and wholeheartedly and be saved

As an additional blessing, God also promised to ensure that at Jesus' Return to earth, every Jew alive would be given a spirit of repentance and would turn to Jesus willingly and wholeheartedly and be saved

- Zech 12:10-13:2,9 - Mourning for the One They Pierced and Cleansing From Sin
- Rom 11:26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
- Jer 31:33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know

me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

God's promises to the Jews and Gentiles

Below is a chart which details God's promises, showing which ones are for both Jews and Gentiles, and which ones are specifically just for the Jews:

God's promises to the Jewish people in the Old Testament		
Now applies to believing Jews and Gentiles	1. The promise of salvation and forgiveness for sins (Jer 31:34; 33:8; Ez 36:24-33; 37:23; Zech 13:1-2,9; Isa 43:25; 53:11-12).	Spiritual promises
	2. The promise of the Holy Spirit (Isa 44:3; Ez 36:27; Joel 2:28-29; Zech 12:10).	
	3. The promise of new hearts that want to do right and want to love God (Jer 31:33; 32:39-40; Ez 11:19-20; 36:24-29).	
Still applies only to the Jewish people	4. The promise to re-gather the Jewish people into the land of Israel (Ez 36:24-29; 37:21-28; 39:25-29).	Physical promises
	5. The promise to give the land of Israel to the Jewish people forever (Gen 17:8; Ps 105:8-11; 1 Chron 16:15-18; Ez 37:25-28; Rom 11:29).	
	6. The promise to bless the nation of Israel above all the other nations of the earth (Isa 49:22-23; 60:3-22; Jer 33:9v).	
	7. The promise to fight for the Jews against all their Gentile enemies on the Day of the Lord (Ez 38:17 – 39:22; Zech 14:3, 12).	
	8. The promise that every Jew who is still alive when Jesus returns will get saved (Zech 12:10; 13:2,9; Rom 11:26; Jer 31:33-34).	

God is STILL using the Jewish nation today.

- **Replacement theology teaches that since the book of Acts, when God sent the Gospel to the Gentiles** (see Acts 10-11), **the Jewish nation has ceased to play a unique role among the nations in God's plan to redeem the earth.** In other words, according to Replacement theology, the Jewish nation is now no different than Canada or Italy or Iran or Mexico in terms of God's plan of redemption. In Replacement theology only the Church now serves as God's light among the nations. Though it is true that the Church is God's light among the nations, **it is false and unbiblical to say that Israel no longer functions as a light for God among the nations** as well.
 - For example, many prophecies in Scripture speak of how God would one day bring the Jews back into the land of Israel in order to 'vindicate His holiness' in front of all the nations of the earth
 - Ez 20:41 I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will show myself holy among you in the sight of the nations.
 - Ez 36:23 I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. 24 " 'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.
 - Ez 39:27 When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations.
 - Rebirth of Israel – In other words, what happened in 1948 when God brought the Jewish people back to the land of Israel and re-birthed the nation, was God vindicating His holiness to the world (ie. proving to the world, through Israel, that He is God and He is still in charge!).
 - Indeed, the birth of the modern state of Israel is one of the most astounding miracles in all of history, and one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God anywhere.

- Thus, the Jewish people are still playing a unique role as God's light among the nations, serving as proof for the existence of God.
- And in the future, on the great Day of the Lord when Jesus returns, God is going to fight for the nation of Israel in a gigantic battle (Ez 38:17 – 39:22; Zech 14:3, 12), and destroy all of her Gentile enemies, as even further proof to the nations that He is God.
 - Ezekiel 38 clearly states that God is specifically setting up this battle in such a way that He can once again show Himself to the world through Israel
 - Ez 38:16 You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.
- Thus, it is clear from Scripture that the nation of Israel still plays a unique role among all the nations of the earth in God's plan to redeem the world.
- How is a Jewish person saved? A: In the same way that a Gentile is saved – by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22; 4:24; 10:9)! On a national level, the nation of Israel is unique among the nations and is thus heir to some unique promises. But on an individual level, all people are the same before God (Gal 3:26-28) and no one can be saved apart from believing in Christ.

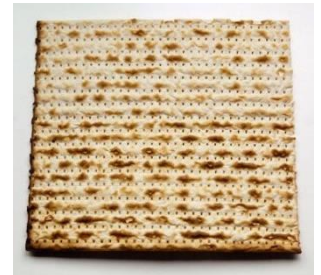
Roman Catholicism

The main reason that this website is here, is because of the great error and apostasy found within "Christianity" around the world. The Roman Catholic Church has the largest number of members with over 1 billion, and yet the Bible reveals this church to be apostate. And we now also have many of the Protestant churches heading back to Rome, back to the "mother" (Mother of harlots). So while the world is preaching ecumenism, driven by the Catholic Church, we remain steadfast upon the truth, upon the Rock which is Christ Jesus, and we say, come out of her and stay separate, because God is going to pour out His wrath upon her and anyone who continues to commit fornication with her. Please study the truth for yourself and find out about God's end time remnant church. Follow Jesus, not Jezebel! To those who overcome, God will grant them to rule over the nations with Jesus.

- Rome claims that she is the only true church – she is the spokesman and the Pope is infallible
 - But when you begin to study Rome, you will find that the heart of Catholicism is none other than Babylonian worship
 - In the Pergamos age, we saw how paganism got into Rome through the Pergamos church
 - Julius Caesar asked to be Maximus Pontifex in 33 BC – which made him the God king of the Babylonian worship system, which was passed from Caesar to Caesar
 - In 376 AD, because of Christian influence, Emperor Gratian refused to wear the pagan crown
 - It lay for 2 years until Damascus (the Bishop of Bishops in Rome) decided to wear the crown.
 - In 378 AD, the head of the Christian church in Rome became the worldwide head of the pagan mysteries
 - Those mysteries became mixed and commingled with Christian doctrine until you can hardly tell them apart
 - So once again we see the introduction of idols in worship relics to be worshiped and idols to be kissed or prayed to

Eucharist

- Catholic church's roots in Eucharist are in heathen religions and not in teaching of the Bible.
- Round IHS communion
 - On the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, there are priests. One holds the wine and one holds a plate with three round cross buns. Have you ever wondered why they use round wafers for communion?
 - At Passover unleavened, rectangular bread with holes and baking stripes was used.
 - The entire Passover meal is a description of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - The bread is unleavened. Leaven represents sin. The bread or Christ is without sin.
 - The baking stripes represent the stripes inflicted upon Jesus during His beating before the crucifixion – the stripes by which the Bible says we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).
 - The holes represent the piercing Jesus received in His hands and feet from the nails, the thorns on His brow, and the spear in His side.
 - The wine represents the blood shed as the covering for all sin.
 - So why do they use round wafers?
 - They mixed pagan mass with Christian communion and the wafers took the place of the bread.
 - They are images of the sun god, Baal.
 - A Catholic communion wafer – See the sun god surrounding the wafer?
 - The Babylonians worshipped Baal using the small, thin, round wafers as a symbol of the sun god.
 - People in Egypt worshipped sun. On the altars of Egypt were circular sun shaped wafers made from unleavened bread.
 - This bread represented the body of sun god and in middle were initialing IHS (Isis, Horus, Seb – Egyptian trinity).



- Transubstantiation
 - (especially in the Roman Catholic Church) the conversion of the substance of the Eucharistic elements into the body and blood of Christ at consecration, only the appearances of bread and wine still remaining.
 - Egyptians priests prayed above their round wafers, to make them as holy. Then they told to the people, that miracle had taken place. They said that wafers have changed for the flesh of sun god Osiris. And after the change, the nation ate its god.
 - This Egyptian bread god ritual points out perfectly Roman Catholic Church Eucharist, in which catholic priests pray over the bread and changes the wafer to Jesus Christ.
- IHS
 - Catholic church of Rome says these letters is for the Latin: "*Iesus Hominum Salvatore*", which mean Jesus Saviour of the people.
 - The letters I H S stand for the Egyptian unholy trinity of Isis, Horus and Seb.
 - Because teaching of Roman catholic Church is exactly similar as in heathen religions, so maybe IHS letters are "dedicated" also to Egyptian trinity?
- Pope Francis Coat of Arms
 - Note the sun and IHS designation



- Jezebel taught people to eat things sacrificed unto idols.
 - What do Christians eat as an act of worship? Bread and wine. If the Lord instituted the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine in church, how can they become things sacrificed unto idols?
 - If the bread is not alive it cannot be sacrificed. In order for something to be sacrificed it must be put to death. How was bread made living?
 - Sin is in the spirit and the mind. The moment someone believes the bread to be the actual living flesh of Christ they begin to worship an idol (the bread).
 - If the bread is then eaten it becomes a living sacrifice. The person believes they are sacrificing Christ again.
 - This mass goes on thousands of times a day. Instead of having faith in a living savior, people choose to believe in a repetitive piece of bread.
- Communion should be symbolic
 - Lk 22 ¹⁹ And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”
 - If you are remembering someone he is not there - he is gone.
 - 1Co 11 ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.
 - This implies He is not here because He will come later.
 - Scripture tells us the bread is symbolic.
 - Some may argue saying, "But He said it is His body."
 - Jesus also said He is the door. When you see Him do you expect Him to have a knob for a nose?
 - He said He is the way. Do you think He is made of bricks and people are walking around on Him?
 - He said He was a Shepherd though He did not take care of the animals we know as sheep. He was a spiritual Shepherd.
 - He said He is the vine, but that does not mean His skin had a green tint to it.
 - He used these words as ways of helping people understand.
 - People take the terminology of the bread and abuse it’s meaning.
 - He said I am the bread as He was physically sitting there holding it.
 - He said this is my body. If it were His body then it would have sufficed as the final sacrifice and Jesus never would have had to go to the cross - sin would have been covered by the bread.
 - From the first Passover, the Jewish people have held pieces of bread up saying this is the Messiah.
 - Jesus proclaimed I am the Messiah – I am the bread.
 - That is what the bread symbolizes.
 - You say I shouldn’t judge Catholic mass that way. I’m not, the scripture is.
 - Let us see what Catholics say about us.
 - Canon 1 from the Council of Trent 1563 says, "If anybody shall deny that the blood and the body together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ and therefore entire Christ are truly and

really and substantially contained in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist and say He is only in it as a figure let him be accursed that is damned."

- This was ratified by Vatican 2 council 1963 and is still in effect as the official position of the Pope.

Roman Catholic Popes (Papacy)

- Rome is a deceiver and a liar. She will try to tell people the first Pope was Peter and the church was once under his leadership.
- The first leader of the church after the death of Christ was not Peter. It was in fact, James, Jesus' half brother.
 - Peter was not even available to run the church. He was traveling all over the known world doing missionary work.
- There has never been a time in the history of the Christian church when the bishop of Rome ruled the entire church.
 - He never ruled the east, he never ruled all of Africa, he never ruled the Coptic church, and even in the west where his power reigned supreme, he never ruled all of the people there.
 - The Waldensians and the Albigenses had their own Bible and their own evangelical faith, but the Catholic church had armies that hunted these people down and slaughtered them.
 - When I was in Rome I attended a local Methodist service. I met a man there who was attending the Waldensian Bible College. He told me that it was only within the last 100 years that they had the freedom to be known in public. In Italy the Waldensians have never been under the authority of Rome.

The Sovereign Pontiff

- Catholicism view the Pope as the sovereign pontiff, the representative of divinity on earth, the infallible, who's laws cannot be revoked, as was the case with Esther during the times of the Medes and the Persians.
 - The pope is addressed as "Your Holiness"
 - His slipper is often kissed.
 - He holds the keys of Janus and Cybele (on his robe), Peter's keys to heaven, although Peter was probably never in Rome.
- History has confused the Pagan statue of Jupiter with Peter.
 - It is curious that the title of the high priest of Babylon was pronounced "Peter."
 - He was the grand interpreter, Roma.

Spiritual fornication

- When a person is married he or she belongs to their companion.
 - Any sexual relationship outside of this union is fornication and adultery.
- While a man belongs to his wife, he also belongs to God. God alone can receive worship.
 - Anytime honor, praise, or worship is given to a person, place, or thing spiritual fornication is committed.
 - God will not share any glory or honor with a statue, a place, a thing or person.
 - Titles belonging to God are only given to God.
 - Behavior patterns of divinity are only His.
- Examples of spiritual fornication
 - Calling the Pope "His Holiness"
 - Kissing the Pope's ring
 - Bowing down before statues.
- Places with many statues will find many demons hanging around. I went to the shrine of the Immaculate Conception outside of Washington D.C. and saw 50+ statues of the Virgin Mary.
 - That night as I lay sleeping I had nightmares. I was in 53 places where demons were waiting for people to bow down and worship.
 - You do not want to spend your time praying around statues. You may excite some demon enough to come home with you. You will get your prayer answered, but it will not be from God.
 - There is only one you can bow down to and worship – the one true God.
- Have you ever wondered why the Pilgrims wore such big black hats?
 - The King of England was also the head of the church. He demanded everyone to remove their hats and bow down in homage to him. The Pilgrims made the biggest, and blackest hats they could. When the King passed

by they would not remove them. They wanted him to know they would not give to man that which belonged to God.

Peter

Was Peter the first pope? The answer, according to Scripture, is a clear and emphatic “no.”

The Roman Catholic Church sees Peter as the first pope upon whom God had chosen to build His church ([Matthew 16:18](#)). It holds that he had authority (primacy) over the other apostles. The Roman Catholic Church maintains that sometime after the recorded events of the book of Acts, the Apostle Peter became the first bishop of Rome, and that the Roman bishop was accepted by the early church as the central authority among all of the churches. It teaches that God passed Peter’s apostolic authority to those who later filled his seat as bishop of Rome. This teaching that God passed on Peter’s apostolic authority to the subsequent bishops is referred to as “apostolic succession.”

The Roman Catholic Church also holds that Peter and the subsequent popes were and are infallible when addressing issues “ex cathedra,” from their position and authority as pope. It teaches that this infallibility gives the pope the ability to guide the church without error. The Roman Catholic Church claims that it can trace an unbroken line of popes back to St. Peter, citing this as evidence that it is the true church, since, according to their interpretation of [Matthew 16:18](#), Christ built His church upon Peter.

But while Peter was central in the early spread of the gospel (part of the meaning behind [Matthew 16:18-19](#)), the teaching of Scripture, taken in context, nowhere declares that he was in authority over the other apostles, or over the church (having primacy). See [Acts 15:1-23](#); [Galatians 2:1-14](#); and [1 Peter 5:1-5](#). Nor is it ever taught in Scripture that the bishop of Rome, or any other bishop, was to have primacy over the church. Scripture does not even explicitly record Peter ever being in Rome. Rather there is only one reference in Scripture of Peter writing from “Babylon,” a name sometimes applied to Rome ([1 Peter 5:13](#)). Primarily upon this and the historical rise of the influence of the Bishop of Rome come the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching of the primacy of the bishop of Rome. However, Scripture shows that Peter’s authority was shared by the other apostles ([Ephesians 2:19-20](#)), and the “loosing and binding” authority attributed to him was likewise shared by the local churches, not just their church leaders (see [Matthew 18:15-19](#); [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#); [2 Corinthians 13:10](#); [Titus 2:15](#); [3:10-11](#)).

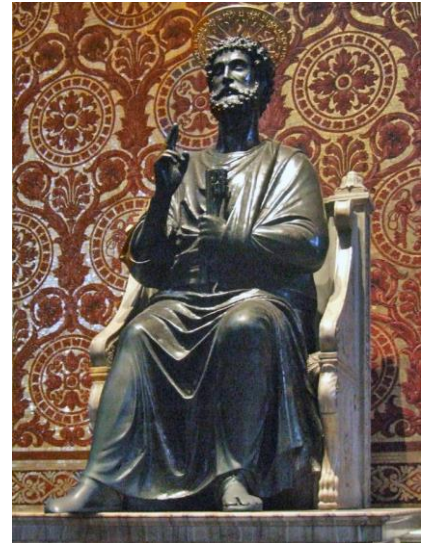
Also, nowhere does Scripture state that, in order to keep the church from error, the authority of the apostles was passed on to those they ordained (the idea behind apostolic succession). Apostolic succession is “read into” those verses that the Roman Catholic Church uses to support this doctrine ([2 Timothy 2:2](#); [4:2-5](#); [Titus 1:5](#); [2:1](#); [2:15](#); [1 Timothy 5:19-22](#)). Paul does NOT call on believers in various churches to receive Titus, Timothy, and other church leaders based on their authority as bishops or their having apostolic authority, but rather based upon their being fellow laborers with him ([1 Corinthians 16:10](#); [16:16](#); [2 Corinthians 8:23](#)).

What Scripture DOES teach is that false teachings would arise even from among church leaders, and that Christians were to compare the teachings of these later church leaders with Scripture, which alone is infallible ([Matthew 5:18](#); [Psalm 19:7-8](#); [119:160](#); [Proverbs 30:5](#); [John 17:17](#); [2 Peter 1:19-21](#)). The Bible does not teach that the apostles were infallible, apart from what was written by them and incorporated into Scripture. Paul, in talking to the church leaders in the large city of Ephesus, makes note of coming false teachers. To fight against their error does NOT commend them to “the apostles and those who would carry on their authority”; rather, Paul commends them to “God and to the word of His grace” ([Acts 20:28-32](#)). It is Scripture that was to be the infallible measuring stick for teaching and practice ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)), not apostolic successors. It is by examining the Scriptures that teachings are shown to be true or false ([Acts 17:10-12](#)).

Was Peter the first pope? The answer, according to Scripture, is a clear and emphatic “no.” Peter nowhere claims supremacy over the other apostles. Nowhere in his writings (1 and 2 Peter) did the Apostle Peter claim any special role, authority, or power over the church. Nowhere in Scripture does Peter, or any other apostle, state that their apostolic authority would be passed on to successors. Yes, the Apostle Peter had a leadership role among the disciples. Yes, Peter played a crucial role in the early spread of the gospel (Acts chapters 1-10). Yes, Peter was the “rock” that Christ predicted he would be ([Matthew 16:18](#)). However, these truths about Peter in no way give support to the concept that Peter was the first pope, or that he was the “supreme leader” over the apostles, or that his authority would be passed on to the bishops of Rome. Peter himself points us all to the true Shepherd and Overseer of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ ([1 Peter 2:25](#)).

Bronze statue of St. Peter holding the keys of heaven in his Basilica in Rome

- It shows Peter with a halo that looks more like a wagon wheel.
 - The Roman god Janis rides the chariot across the sky.
- The keys in the hand of the "keeper of the keys".
 - This is he who knew the mysteries before and after the flood.
- This statue was modeled after Janis not Peter.
- Notice how shiny his toes are.
 - This is because Catholics get on their knees and kiss the foot of that statue. It's foot has been replaced once, and the current ones toes are so smooth you cannot see any separation in them.
- Bending down to kiss a statue is idolatry.
 - I watched these people kiss statues of popes gone by.
 - I witnessed them kissing the dead popes' coffins and crypts.
 - I saw them go into a special room where there was a communion wafer they would spend hours praying to because they were told it was the Lord Jesus Christ and He would die for their sins that day.



Mary

- Mary is a person who should be honored for obeying God and doing His will, but she is a person just like the rest of us. Jesus said several things in the Bible to deflect goddess worship from her. God will not tolerate you putting a human before Him.
- The Roman Catholic church is still putting the emphasis on Mary.
 - The Catholic Charismatic and other groups are pressuring the Pope to declare Mary as the Co-Redemptrix with Jesus. This means they believe Mary could redeem you as well as Jesus. What blasphemy!
 - Heb 9 ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
- This would also mean that all prayers must go through Mary to be heard and answered.
 - Do you know if you prayer through Mary instead of Christ your prayers are going to the dead letter box? Mary cannot receive, answer or respond to prayer. She is a spirit in heaven and her body is buried somewhere in the world.
 - It is a lie she has ascended up to heaven. There is no provision in the Bible for her ascension. She is waiting for the Rapture just as we are.
 - 1Ti 2 ⁵ For *there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,* ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all,

Necromancy

- Necromancy is communicating with the dead.
- Do you know God outlawed this?
 - Lev 19 ³¹ "Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God. (ESV)
 - 1Ch 10 ¹³ So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. ¹⁴ But *he* did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

- Dt 18 – Avoid Wicked Customs – ⁹“When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. ¹⁰There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or* a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹²For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. ¹³You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.
- Mic 5 ¹²and I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes;
- You are not permitted to talk to the dead or try to get them to talk back to you.
- Christians are not mediums for the dead to flow through.
- Anytime you have a dead person talking through a live person there is demonic activity.
- Once a Christian is dead they cannot contact the world.
 - Their body is dead and their soul is in the presence of the Lord.
 - Mary cannot hear or answer prayer and she cannot leave heaven to walk the earth.
- There is a group of nuns called cloistered nuns who spend their whole life praying to the Virgin Mary for the men in Purgatory.

Queen of Heaven

- Mary is not the Queen of Heaven – The Queen of Heaven is Semiramis
 - Nimrod, Semiramis and Tammuz (Tower of Babel)
 - Semiramis – Nimrod’s wife
 - Tammuz – Son of Nimrod and Semiramis
 - In this legend, Nimrod was torn to pieces. Although they found most of his body and cremated it, only his reproductive organ was preserved. Following his death, Semiramis found she was pregnant. The child she bore was named Tammuz. Semiramis said Nimrod was the sun god and Tammuz was actually Nimrod reborn. Semiramis herself became known as Queen of Heaven and both she and Tammuz became the originators of the mother and child cult.
 - The legend of Nimrod and Semiramis (his wife) and their son Tammuz moved across the Middle East and came to Egypt where they became the Egyptian sun god Osiris and his wife Isis; their son was named Horus.
 - The legends of Nimrod, Semiramis and Tammuz are almost identical to Osiris, Isis and Horus. Both husbands died and the wife had a son following the husband’s death, which they said was the husband Nimrod in Babylon and Osiris in Egypt. Both gods and both reborn in their son.
 - Hence, the obelisks we see in Egypt and elsewhere are representations of Nimrod’s/Osiris; the god’s phallus.
- Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III
 - The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III is a black limestone Assyrian sculpture with many scenes in bas-relief and inscriptions. It comes from Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), in northern Iraq, and commemorates the deeds of King Shalmaneser III (reigned 858–824 BC). It is on display at the British Museum in London, and several other museums have cast replicas.
 - It is the most complete Assyrian obelisk yet discovered, and is historically significant because it is thought to display the earliest ancient depiction of a biblical figure – Jehu, King of Israel. The traditional identification of "Yaw" as Jehu has been questioned by some scholars, who proposed that the inscription refers to another king, Jehoram of Israel. Its reference to Parsua is also the first known reference to the Persians.
 - Tribute offerings are shown being brought from identifiable regions and peoples.
 - Engraved in this obelisk is a picture of Jeru, the last king of Israel before the Assyrian god king. There is a wagon wheel in the sky representing the chariot of fire or Nimrod. There are a few representations of Baal. There is a cup in his hand. The next side shows priests. One holds the wine and one holds a plate with three round cross buns.



Immaculate Conception

- The Catholic church teaches Mary was immaculately conceived? The Immaculate Conception is a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church which states that the Virgin Mary was free of original sin from the moment of her conception.
- It proved highly controversial in the Middle Ages, but revived in the 19th century and was adopted as church dogma when Pope Pius IX promulgated *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854. The move had the overwhelming support of the church's hierarchy, although a few, including the Archbishop of Paris, warned that it is not stated in the New Testament and could not be deduced from it.
- Protestants overwhelmingly rejected *Ineffabilis Deus* as an exercise in papal power and the doctrine itself as without foundation in Scripture,
- Orthodox Christianity, although it reveres Mary in its liturgy, called on the Roman church to return to the faith of the early centuries.
- The iconography of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception shows her standing, with arms outspread or hands clasped in prayer, and her feast day is 8 December.
- Immaculate Conception is a title worn by the fertility goddesses.
 - Do you know what Immaculate Conception means? It does not mean Christ was immaculately conceived. The Catholics say it was Mary who was conceived that way. She was born without sin. If that were so, she would have been the savior, but she needed salvation just like you and I.

Lady Day

- In Pagan Rome, March 25th was a holiday celebrating the annunciation of the virgin, in honor of Cybele, the mother of the Babylonian messiah.
- Consequently, on the Pope's calendar, March 25th is Lady Day, the day to observe the miraculous conception and annunciation of the Virgin Mary.
- Since the birthdays of the two respective messiahs is the same, one might expect that the day of their conception might be celebrated exactly nine months before their birth.

Catholic Holy Days

- The Feast of the Nativity of St. John
 - The next point of interest on the Papal Calendar is June 24th, midsummer day, The Feast of the Nativity of St. John.
 - In ancient Babylon, June 24th had commemorated the Festival of Tammuz – son of Nimrod and Semiramis – which celebrated his death and resurrection (during June, the month of Tammuz).
 - Hislop writes, "When the papacy sent its emissaries over Europe, towards the end of the sixth century, to gather in the pagans into its fold, this festival was found in high favor in many countries... the famous advice of Pope Gregory I, that by all means they should meet the Pagans half-way, and so bring them into the Roman Church."
 - So, to appease the Pagans, this festival was adopted by the church, but they did not want to use the name Tammuz, and there was no event of Christ's life to commemorate in June. Therefore, they contrived the scheme to celebrate this holiday as the birth of John the Baptist, since it conveniently coincided with a date six months prior to the celebration of the birth of Christ.
 - Also, the name that the Babylonians used for Tammuz after he had been slain was Oannes. Conveniently, the name John, or Joannes, therefore satisfied both the Christians and the Pagans.
 - In France and Ireland, this festival was celebrated with huge bonfires of purifying fire, across which children were thrown. This coincided with the Babylonian ritual in Jeremiah 32:35 which tells of the children being passed through the fire to the god Moloch.
 - Jer 32 ³⁵ And they built the high places of Baal which *are* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.'
- Festival of St. Dionysius

- October 9th is the festival of St. Dionysius (and St. Eleuther and St. Rustic).
- Dionysius was also known as St. Denys, the patron saint of Paris who was beheaded and is said to have carried his head in his hands to his grave.
- This festival was abolished in 1789, but somewhat revived in the 20th century.
- The origin of this Christian myth was also from Nimrod, who was said to have been beheaded and worshipped.
- This led to the famous statues in Rome of the man holding his head in his hands.
- Feast of the Assumption
 - The Feast of the Assumption is observed by the Catholic Church on August 15th to honor the Virgin Mary as the omnipotent goddess who was perfect on earth and now resides in heaven.
 - In Babylon, Bacchus rescued his mother in hell and took her to heaven. The Chinese also celebrate a feast in August, in honor of a mother.
 - The Holy Virgin in ancient times was the wife of Pluto, the god of hell. She experienced the Immaculate Conception and was absolutely immaculate.
 - In Rome, Madonna and her child are honored in the form of graven image statues.
- The date of October 7th on the Papal calendar is set apart to be observed in honor of St. Bacchus the Martyr, the martyr of the fire worshippers

Indulgences – Works-Based Salvation

- Another common doctrine shared by ancient Babylonians and Catholicism is the doctrine of justification by works.
- “fear of the scales” – Merits and demerits are measured in the balance of God's justice
 - by Anubis, the god of the scales, in ancient Babylon
 - by St. Michael, the Archangel, in Catholicism
 - The priests were the judges, and the people had to pay to compensate for their demerits.
 - This led to the "fear of the scales" in the Catholic Church, as well as to the practice of absolution by paying indulgences
- Practice of absolution by paying indulgences
 - Moloch, the god of barbaric blood, in ancient Babylon, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Assyria, and Phoenicia, claimed that he was not satisfied without groans and sighs, lacerations of the flesh, tortures of the body, and penances including whippings and scourges.
 - From the first to the third centuries, Christianity recognized this practice as purely Pagan.
 - After that, Catholicism claimed that God was not satisfied without groans and sighs, lacerations of the flesh, tortures of the body, and penances including whippings and scourges.
 - It was common practice for Catholics to crawl on their bare knees over sharp rocks in order to pay for their displeasing of God. The Flagellants would even publicly scourge themselves.
- This is one of the things that Martin Luther found so revolting about the Catholic Church.
 - Indulgences were, from the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, a target of attacks by Martin Luther and other Protestant theologians.

Purgatory

- Purgatory is an intermediate state after physical death for expiatory purification.
- The word "purgatory" has come to refer also to a wide range of historical and modern conceptions of postmortem suffering short of everlasting damnation and is used, in a non-specific sense, to mean any place or condition of suffering or torment, especially one that is temporary.
- The Catholic Church holds that "all who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified" undergo the process of purification which the Church calls purgatory, "so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven".
- It has formulated this doctrine by reference to biblical verses that speak of purifying fire (1 Corinthians 3:1, 1 Corinthians 3:15 and 1 Peter 1:7) and to the mention by Jesus of forgiveness in the age to come (Matthew 12:32).
- It bases its teaching also on the practice of praying for the dead, in use within the Church ever since the Church began, and mentioned in 2 Macc 12:46
- It is a part of Celtic and Greek mythology. It does not belong in Christianity.
- Purgatory does not exist.
 - 2Co 5 ⁶So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.
- People say the rosary in front of a statue in Mexico of a man in flames. A loose translation of the inscription says, "while you are sitting there your loved ones are in Purgatory- help get them out by putting money in the box."
- Your loved ones are in Purgatory. This is the message you get from the Catholic church. No one knows how long they will be there.
- It is said by one of the Reformers in Germany, if a person did everything the Catholic church has to offer to reduce time spent in Purgatory, five million years would be taken away. So just how long does a person have to stay in Purgatory?
- There is a group of nuns called cloistered nuns who spend their whole life praying to the Virgin Mary for the men in Purgatory.



Pilate's Judgment Hall

- These are the steps to Pilate's judgment hall. The statuary tells the story of Pilate finding no fault in Jesus and Judas' betrayal kiss on the cheek.
- The church moved these steps from Israel to Rome and built a great Cathedral around them.
- Catholics working years off of Purgatory – When you climb the steps on your knees you are said to have earned 28 years off of your stay in Purgatory.
- When you get to the top there is a room with the bones of dead saints. Everyone knows the bones of dead saints have a lot of power in them right?
- These are the steps Martin Luther was standing on when he read:
 - Romans 1:17 KJV, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as not save you but you are saved by faith."
 - That changed Luther there and then. He realized works do not save you, but you are saved by faith in Jesus Christ.
 - So started the battle cry of the reformation movement, "solo faith, solo scripture".
- On Reformation Day, October 31, 1999 Pope John Paul II traveled to Germany and forgave Luther for what he did.
- The Catholics and Lutherans are beginning a process to merge into one. One world religion is coming under one leadership and it is not that of God.



History of purgatory

- At the **Second Council of Lyon** in 1274, the Catholic Church defined, for the first time, its teaching on purgatory, in two points:
 - some souls are purified after death;
 - such souls benefit from the prayers and pious duties that the living do for them.

The council declared:

[I]f they die truly repentant in charity before they have made satisfaction by worthy fruits of penance for (sins) committed and omitted, their souls are cleansed after death by purgatorial or purifying punishments, as Brother John has explained to us. And to relieve punishments of this kind, the offerings of the living faithful are of advantage to these, namely, the sacrifices of Masses, prayers, alms, and other duties of piety, which have customarily been performed by the faithful for the other faithful according to the regulations of the Church.

- A century and a half later, the **Council of Florence** repeated the same two points in practically the same words, again excluding certain elements of the purgatory of popular imagination, in particular fire and place, against which representatives of the **Orthodox Church** spoke at the council:

[The Council] has likewise defined that if those truly penitent have departed in the love of God, before they have made satisfaction by the worthy fruits of penance for sins of commission and omission, the souls of these are cleansed after death by purgatorial punishments; and so that they may be released from punishments of this kind, the suffrages of the living faithful are of advantage to them, namely, the sacrifices of Masses, prayers, and almsgiving, and other works of piety, which are customarily performed by the faithful for other faithful according to the institutions of the Church.

- The **Council of Trent** repeated the same two points and moreover in its 4 December 1563 Decree Concerning Purgatory recommended avoidance of speculations and non-essential questions:

Since the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, in conformity with the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers in sacred councils, and very recently in this ecumenical Synod, has taught that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained there are assisted by the suffrages of the faithful, and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar, the holy Synod commands the bishops that they insist that the sound doctrine of purgatory, which has been transmitted by the holy Fathers and holy Councils, be believed by the faithful of Christ, be maintained, taught, and everywhere preached.

Let the more difficult and subtle "questions", however, and those which do not make for "edification" (cf. 1Tm 1,4), and from which there is very often no increase in piety, be excluded from popular discourses to uneducated people. Likewise, let them not permit uncertain matters, or those that have the appearance of falsehood, to be brought out and discussed publicly. Those matters on the contrary, which tend to a certain curiosity or superstition, or that savor of filthy lucre, let them prohibit as scandals and stumbling blocks to the faithful.

- Catholic doctrine on purgatory is presented as composed of the same two points in the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, first published in 2005, which is a summary in dialogue form of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It deals with purgatory in the following exchange:

210. What is purgatory?

Purgatory is the state of those who die in God's friendship, assured of their eternal salvation, but who still have need of purification to enter into the happiness of heaven.

211. How can we help the souls being purified in purgatory?

Because of the **communion of saints**, the faithful who are still pilgrims on earth are able to help the souls in purgatory by offering prayers in suffrage for them, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice. They also help them by almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance.

- These two questions and answers summarize information in sections 1030–1032 and 1054 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published in 1992, which also speaks of purgatory in sections 1472–1473.

- In *Theological Studies*, John E. Thiel argued that "purgatory virtually disappeared from Catholic belief and practice since Vatican II" because it has been based on "a competitive spirituality, gravitating around the religious vocation of ascetics from the late Middle Ages". "The birth of purgatory negotiated the eschatological anxiety of the laity. [...] In a manner similar to the ascetic's lifelong lengthening of the temporal field of competition with the martyr, belief in purgatory lengthened the layperson's temporal field of competition with the ascetic."

Statues/Idols

- 2nd Commandment
Ex 20 ⁴“**You shall not make for yourself a carved image**—any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁵**you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.** For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- Idol processions
 - Rome is famous for its long idol processions in which images are carried on men's shoulders, priests are adorned in gorgeous dresses, monks and nuns wear various habits, flying banners are displayed, and instrumental music is played.
 - The same was true for Babylon. Also, the clothing and crowning of images in Rome originated with ancient Egypt, Nimrod, and the Queen of Troy.
- Rome uses rags or bones of saints to commemorate their deified heroes, as did Babylon. Both also artificially multiplied many fake relics for profit.

Mystery

- A primary example of the analogies drawn between the Babylonian mystery religions and Roman Catholicism is the practice of incorporating certain well-kept secrets that are available to only a select few.
- Rome insured that the common man was studiously kept in the dark, as did Babylon.
 - Throughout the years, Catholicism has become known for a priesthood which seems to include only members of the clergy. By discouraging the reading of the Bible in the common language of the people, the church has also discouraged personal Bible study among its non-clergy members.
 - This in turn has tended to teach the laypersons to become very dependent upon the clergy for Bible truths, and even for access to God.
- This hardly seems in step with the priesthood of the believer (1 Peter 2:5, 9), where we are all encouraged to enter into the mind of God through His revealed Word.
 - 1Pe 2 ⁴Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, ⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ... ⁹But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

The Rosary

- The rosary and prayer beads of Catholicism are pagan practices used in Mexico, Tibet, China, and Greece, as well as by Hindus and Pagan Rome.
- The rosary resembles a human heart.
- Thus, the god of the heart, or the god of love, was worshipped.
 - This began as the Rosary of the Sacred Heart in Babylon and Egypt
 - The heart was a sacred symbol of Osiris when he was reborn and appeared as Harpocrates, or the infant divinity, born in the arms of his mother Isis.
 - Also, Cupid originated in Pompeii as a boyish divinity. He was a fair, full, fleshy boy in fine and sportive action, usually portrayed tossing back a heart.

- The bow and arrows were used to identify him with his father, the mighty hunter Nimrod.
 - Taking aim with his gold-tipped arrows at the hearts of mankind, he was immortalized.
- The ancients deified Venus and Cupid
- The Catholics deified Madonna and child.

Confession

- The confessional had its roots in Babylon.
- All the people were required to make secret confessions to the priest in a prescribed form, if they were to be admitted, or initiated, into the "mysteries" of their religion. They were commanded to keep secret about these mysteries.
- Later, the Church of Rome began requiring the same type of confession for admission to the sacraments.
- Even the symbol of the Halo of Madonna was originated in Babylon as a disk symbol of the sun god.

Baptismal Regeneration

- Semaramis (Nimrod's wife) was known as a dove, a holy spirit incarnate, who passed through water when she was overcome by her enemies, and she took refuge in the water.
 - In Babylon, baptism was required before any instruction of the mysteries could be received. It provided the necessary washing and purifying.
- Catholicism holds that water baptism is an initiating ordinance and an absolute necessity for salvation.
 - In Rome, a Pagan exorcism used water baptism with the use of salt, spittle, anointing oil, the sign of the cross, and holy water (consecrated salt water into which a burning torch was placed for purification).
 - As part of excommunication, this phrase is used, "May the Holy Ghost who suffered for us in baptism curse him."
- In Pagan Mexico, baptismal regeneration coincided with the worship of Wodan, the father of humanity, from whom evolved the name Wodansday (Wednesday).

Extreme Unction

- (in the Roman Catholic Church) a former name for the sacrament of anointing of the sick, especially when administered to the dying.
- The practice of extreme unction, when death is visibly at the very door, originated in Babylon as an anointing for the last journey into the mysteries.

The Sign of the Cross

- The Catholic sign of the cross originated in Babylon as a grand charm before prayer which drew the initial of the name Tammuz, Tau, or T. This same T can be found on the garments of Catholic priests.
- The Vestal Virgins of Pagan Rome and the nuns of Catholicism wore it on their necklaces.
- Bacchus wore a headband covered with crosses. The Buddhists wear them today.
- The cross was considered a divine tree, the tree of the gods, the tree of life and knowledge, and the product of whatever is good and desirable.
- In Catholicism, the cross is also called the tree of life, "hail, O cross, triumphant wood, true salvation of the world ..."
 - It is viewed as the only hope to increase righteousness and pardon offenses.
- Tammuz used the mistletoe tree to heal the sick.
 - When Constantine came along, he popularized the X for Christ instead of the T for the cross, so again both Christians and pagans were satisfied.
 - In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the word Christos (Christ) begins with the letter "X," or *chi*. Here's what it looks like: Χριστός
 - In the early fourth century, Constantine the Great, Roman Emperor from 306-337, popularized this shorthand for Christ. According to legend, on the eve of his great battle against Maxentius, Constantine had a vision that led him to create a military banner emblazoned with the first two letters of Christ on it: *chi* and *rho*.
 - These two letters, then, became a sort of shorthand for Jesus Christ.



The College of Cardinals

- Rome's College of Cardinals coincides with the Babylonian Council of Pontiffs and the Pagan College of Pontiffs.
- The word "Cardinal" comes from the word "cardo" which meant hinge.
- Janus, the god of doors and hinges, Patulcius and Clusius, was the opener and the shutter, controlling the door of heaven.
- Peter's chair, similar to that of Hercules and Mohammad, is where the ancients were carried in pomp and state in Egypt.
- Janus was the incarnation of Noah, half man and half fish.
- The Pontifical crosier corresponds to the magic of Nimrod.

Priesthood

- Jesus' perfect sacrifice abolished the need of a formal priesthood (Hebrews 10:12-14), creating instead a "kingdom of priests" (Revelation 1:6; 5:10).
 - Heb 10 ¹¹ And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.
 - Rev 1 ⁵ ...To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
 - Rev 5 ⁹ ...For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."
- The early church, again influenced by paganism, re-established a priesthood that added a barrier between the "ordinary" believer and God (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15).
 - 1Ti 2 ⁵ For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all,
 - Heb 9 ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
- The celibacy of the catholic priesthood corresponds with the practice of Pagan Rome.
 - The clerical tonsure, a circular haircut around the temples, used at ordination ceremonies was started by Peter of the Mystery Gods. Head shaving was a ritual in Egypt, India, and China.
 - Monks and nuns maintain perpetual virginity, and are often isolated in convents and monasteries. The same was true in Tibet, Japan, Scandinavia, Pagan Rome, and even with the American Indians, although most modern confinement is only temporary, while in ancient times, it was permanent.
- The Bible does not teach that there are to be "priests" in the New Covenant established by Christ. Please read our articles on the "priesthood of believers" and "confession of sin to a priest" for more information. The Bible addresses the celibacy of church leaders, but not celibacy of priests.
 - In regards to celibacy of church leaders, in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, the apostle Paul teaches, "An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs — how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world — how he can please his wife — and his interests are divided" (1 Corinthians 7:32-34). In some instances, celibacy has a positive impact on ministry. If a church leader is free from spousal and familial responsibilities, he can better focus on ministering to others. Jesus mentions some becoming "eunuchs" for the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:12). Celibacy is definitely allowed for church leaders, and to a certain degree, it is encouraged. However, Scripture nowhere requires celibacy for those serving in positions of church leadership.

- In 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9, the Apostle Paul seems to assume that elders, bishops, overseers, and deacons will be married. Notice the phrases “the husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6), “he must manage his own family well” (1 Timothy 3:4,12), and “his children obey him with proper respect” (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6). On a related issue, please read our article on whether these Scripture mean that a church leader must be married and have children. While these Scriptures are not a requirement for church leaders to be married, they most definitely present an allowance for church leaders to be married. It is therefore anti-biblical for any church to require celibacy of its leaders.
- Why, then, does the Roman Catholic Church (and a few other Christian denominations) require celibacy of priests /church leaders? The celibacy of priests has an interesting history. The first official church statements requiring celibacy appeared at the Councils of Elvira (A.D. 306) and Carthage (A.D. 390), although clerical celibacy, to a lesser degree, definitely predated these councils. Ultimately, though, celibacy became the official requirement of the Roman Catholic Church due to the practice of nepotism. Church leaders were giving their children positions in the church, despite a lack of any qualifications or training. Further, church leaders were giving church property to their descendants. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church mandated celibacy in order to keep its priests from having familial attachments which made nepotism attractive.
- Again, the Bible encourages, but does not demand celibacy of priests / church leaders. In fact, Paul recognizes that most church leaders will be married. The Roman Catholic requirement of celibacy is a sad example of the Church taking something that the Bible encourages and transforming it into a requirement in order to protect its own interests. Sadder still is the damage that has been done as a result of the Roman Catholic Church’s anti-biblical requirement. Men whom God has not gifted or called to be celibate (1 Corinthians 7:7) are being required to be celibate, and the result is tremendous failures in the areas of adultery, fornication, and the sexual abuse of children.

Trinity

The idea of the trinity was ancient and rooted in pagan religions. Marie Sinclair, Countess of Caithness, in her 1876 book *Old Truths in a New Light*, states: “It is generally, although erroneously, supposed that the doctrine of the Trinity is of Christian origin. *Nearly every nation of antiquity possessed a similar doctrine.* [The early Catholic theologian] St. Jerome testifies unequivocally, ‘*All the ancient nations believed in the Trinity*’ ” (p. 382).

Notice how the following quotes document belief in a divine trinity in many regions and religions of the ancient world.

- Sumeria
“The universe was divided into three regions each of which became the domain of a god. Anu’s share was the sky. The earth was given to Enlil. Ea became the ruler of the waters. *Together they constituted the triad of the Great Gods*” (*The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, 1994, pp. 54-55)
- Babylonia
“The ancient Babylonians *recognised the doctrine of a trinity, or three persons in one god*—as appears from a composite god with three heads forming part of their mythology, and the use of the equilateral triangle, also, as an emblem of such trinity in unity” (Thomas Dennis Rock, *The Mystical Woman and the Cities of the Nations*, 1867, pp. 22-23).
- India
“The Puranas, one of the Hindoo Bibles of more than 3,000 years ago, contain the following passage: ‘O ye three Lords! know that I recognize only one God. Inform me, therefore, which of you is the true divinity, that I may address to him alone my adorations.’ The three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva [or Shiva], becoming manifest to him, replied, ‘Learn, O devotee, that there is no real distinction between us. What to you appears such is only the semblance. *The single being appears under three forms* by the acts of creation, preservation, and destruction, *but he is one.*’
“Hence the triangle was adopted by all the ancient nations as a symbol of the Deity . . . Three was considered among all the pagan nations as the chief of the mystical numbers, because, as Aristotle remarks, it contains within itself a beginning, a middle, and an end. Hence we find it designating some of the attributes of almost all the pagan gods” (Sinclair, pp. 382-383).
- Greece
“In the Fourth Century B.C. Aristotle wrote: ‘All things are three, and thrice is all: and let us use this number in the worship of the gods; for, as the Pythagoreans say, everything and all things are bounded by threes, for the end, the middle and the beginning have this number in everything, and these compose the number of the Trinity’ ” (Arthur Weigall, *Paganism in Our Christianity*, 1928, pp. 197-198).
- Egypt
“The *Hymn to Amun* decreed that ‘No god came into being before him (Amun)’ and that ‘*All gods are three: Amun, Re and Ptah, and there is no second to them. Hidden is his name as Amon, he is Re in face, and his body is Ptah.*’ . . . *This is a statement of trinity, the three chief gods of Egypt subsumed into one of them, Amon.* Clearly, the concept of organic unity within plurality got an extraordinary boost with this formulation. *Theologically, in a crude form it came strikingly close to the later Christian form of plural Trinitarian monotheism*” (Simson Najovits, *Egypt, Trunk of the Tree*, Vol. 2, 2004, pp. 83-84).
- Other areas
Many other areas had their own divine trinities. In Greece they were Zeus, Poseidon and Adonis. The Phoenicians worshipped Ulomus, Ulosuros and Eliun. Rome worshipped Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto. In Germanic nations they were called Wodan, Thor and Fricco. Regarding the Celts, one source states, “The ancient heathen deities of the pagan Irish[,] Criosan, Biosena, and Seeva, or Sheeva, are doubtless the Creeshna [Krishna], Veeshnu [Vishnu], [or the all-inclusive] Brahma, and Seeva [Shiva], of the Hindoos” (Thomas Maurice, *The History of Hindostan*, Vol. 2, 1798, p. 171).
- “The origin of the conception is entirely pagan”
 - Egyptologist Arthur Weigall, while himself a Trinitarian, summed up the influence of ancient beliefs on the adoption of the Trinity doctrine by the Catholic Church in the following excerpt from his previously cited book:

“It must not be forgotten that Jesus Christ never mentioned such a phenomenon [the Trinity], and nowhere in the New Testament does the word ‘Trinity’ appear. The idea was only adopted by the Church three hundred years after the death of our Lord; *and the origin of the conception is entirely pagan . . .*

“The ancient Egyptians, whose influence on early religious thought was profound, usually arranged their gods or goddesses in trinities: there was the trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, the trinity of Amen, Mut, and Khonsu, the trinity of Khnum, Satis, and Anukis, and so forth . . .

“The early Christians, however, did not at first think of applying the idea to their own faith. They paid their devotions to God the Father and to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and they recognized the mysterious and undefined existence of the Holy Spirit; but there was no thought of these three being an actual Trinity, co-equal and united in One . . .

“The application of this old pagan conception of a Trinity to Christian theology was made possible by the recognition of the Holy Spirit as the required third ‘Person,’ co-equal with the other ‘Persons’ . . .

“The idea of the Spirit being co-equal with God was not generally recognised until the second half of the Fourth Century A.D. . . . In the year 381 the Council of Constantinople added to the earlier Nicene Creed a description of the Holy Spirit as ‘the Lord, and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified.’ . . .

“Thus, the Athanasian creed, which is a later composition but reflects the general conceptions of Athanasius [the 4th-century Trinitarian whose view eventually became official doctrine] and his school, formulated the conception of a co-equal Trinity wherein the Holy Spirit was the third ‘Person’; and so it was made a dogma of the faith, and belief in the Three in One and One in Three became a paramount doctrine of Christianity, though not without terrible riots and bloodshed . . .

“Today a Christian thinker . . . has no wish to be precise about it, more especially since the definition is obviously pagan in origin and was not adopted by the Church until nearly three hundred years after Christ” (pp. 197-203).

- James Bonwick summarized the story well on page 396 of his 1878 work *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*: “It is an undoubted fact that *more or less all over the world the deities are in triads*. This rule applies to eastern and western hemispheres, to north and south.

“Further, it is observed that, in some mystical way, the triad of three persons is one. The first is as the second or third, the second as first or third, the third as first or second; in fact, they are each other, one and the same individual being. *The definition of Athanasius, who lived in Egypt, applies to the trinities of all heathen religions.*”

Pope = False Prophet (One-World Religion)

- Catholicism Unites With Islam - Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together
 - <https://signsoftherapture.com/rapture-signs/ecumenism/catholicism-unites-with-islam/>
 - <https://www.ncronline.org/news/quick-reads/us-catholic-officials-welcome-catholic-muslim-document-signed-pope>
- The Pope's Push for a One-World Religion
 - <http://www.reachingcatholics.org/pope.html>
- Pope Francis says there can be no justice without 'social rights'
 - <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/06/pope-francis-says-there-can-be-no-justice-without-social-rights/>
- Climate change
 - Pope Francis: Pandemic Could Be 'Nature's Revenge' For Ignoring Climate Change
 - <https://www.zerohedge.com/health/pope-francis-suggests-pandemic-natures-revenge-ignoring-climate-change>
- A Catholic case for open borders
 - <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/03/05/catholic-case-open-borders>
- Pope Francis reportedly denies the existence of hell. Vatican panics.
 - <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/30/17179952/pope-francis-hell-vatican-interview-scalfari-italian>
 - Speaking to the newspaper's founder, journalist and atheist Eugenio Scalfari, Francis was quoted as saying of those who die in a state of mortal sin: "They are not punished. Those who repent obtain God's forgiveness and take their place among the ranks of those who contemplate him, but those who do not repent and cannot be forgiven disappear. A hell doesn't exist, the disappearance of sinning souls exists."
- Vatican releases logo for Pope Francis' visit to Morocco
 - <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-01/pope-francis-morocco-visit-logo-hope-interreligious-dialogue.html>
- Pope Francis Now International Monetary Guru?
 - <https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-01-09/pope-francis-now-international-monetary-guru>
- Now is time to build new world without inequality, injustice, pope says
 - <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-chronicles/now-time-build-new-world-without-inequality-injustice-pope-says>



Final Popes

- In the 12th Century, St. Malachy O'Morgair, the Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland, had a prophetic vision of the 112 popes following Pope Celestine II, who died in 1144. The descriptions of all 112 Popes are here: [St. Malachy's Prophecy of the Final 112 Popes](#). These are St. Malachy's Latin descriptions (in italics) for the final five Popes:
 - Paul VI (1963-1978): *Flos florum*, which means "flower of flowers." Paul VI's coat of arms bore the image of three lilies.
 - John Paul I (1978): *De medietate Lunae*, meaning "of the half of the moon." John Paul reigned for about a month—from half a moon to the next half moon.
 - John Paul II (1978-2005): *De labore Solis*, or "from the labor of the sun." John Paul II was born during a partial solar eclipse (May 18, 1920). There also was a rare "hybrid" eclipse on the day of his funeral (April 8, 2005).
 - Benedict XVI (2005-2013): *Gloria Olivæ*, or "glory of the olive." St. Benedict himself prophesied that before the end of the age, his Order, known also as the Olivetans, triumphantly would lead the Catholic Church in its fight against evil. This pope was a conservative peacemaker, and the olive branch is a symbol of peace.
 - Francis (2013-????): *Petrus Romanus*, or "Peter of Rome." It was predicted that this pope would reign during a time of extreme persecution of the Church. He would feed the sheep through many tribulations, at the end of which the city of seven hills (seemingly, Rome) would be destroyed, and then the formidable Judge will judge His people.
- Thus, Pope Francis could be the final pope.
 - He was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, so one might wonder how he could be considered to be *Petrus Romanus* or "Peter of Rome." In fact Pope Francis (Jorge Mario Bergoglio) is of Italian descent because his father, Mario José Bergoglio, was an Italian immigrant to Argentina.

- Also, Pope Francis named himself after St. Francis of Assisi, who was an Italian or Roman priest. His original name was Giovanni di Pietro (Peter) di Bernardone or “Peter the Roman”; and, of course, Pope Francis does reside at the Vatican in Rome.
- Furthermore, Pope Francis has reaffirmed the authority of the Roman Pontiff over the Church. He also has emphasized the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Faith and the Roman Catholic Church above all other religions and denominations, as well as its authority over all Christians and all peoples of the world.

Salvation

- We have salvation for all of eternity – we cannot lose our salvation
 - Jn 5:24 “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.
 - Jn 6:37 All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.
 - Jn 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.
 - 1Jn 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Star of Bethlehem

A Coronation

JUPITER. The name of the greatest god of Roman mythology. And the name of the largest planet of our solar system. Jupiter has been known from ages-old to the present as the King Planet. This greatest of planets is a “gas giant,” approximately eleven times the size of Earth and over 300 times more massive. It circles the Sun far beyond Earth, in an orbit of about twelve years duration. In ancient times, planets like Jupiter were considered “wandering stars.” Since humans have assigned kingly qualities to this giant wanderer for dozens of centuries, might it have something to do with our Star announcing the birth of a king? That will be our working theory.



The gas giant Jupiter, many times larger than Earth, is visible to the naked eye

It's not enough to have a kingly name and reputation, of course. To be Matthew's Star, Jupiter as viewed from Earth would have to do peculiar things. More precisely, as considered by a magus viewing from the Middle East during the years 3 and 2 BC, Jupiter's movements would have to satisfy all nine identifying characteristics of the Star. In September of 3 BC at the time of the Jewish New Year, Rosh ha-Shanah, Jupiter began to do just that.

A magus watching Jupiter that September saw two objects moving so close that they appeared to touch. This close approach of celestial bodies is sometimes called a 'conjunction.' Our Middle Eastern viewer saw Jupiter coming into a close conjunction with the star, Regulus. Regulus takes its name from the word root which yields our word 'regal.' The Babylonians called Regulus Sharu, which means 'king.' The Romans called Regulus Rex, which means 'king.' So to start things, at the beginning of the new Jewish year, the Planet of Kings met the Star of Kings.

This conjunction may have indicated kingship in a forceful way to a Babylonian magus (satisfying one qualification for the Star), but would it have startled him? Probably not.

Jupiter's royal dance

Jupiter glides slowly past Regulus about every 12 years. Let's assume our magus enjoyed a 50-year career, say from age 20 to age 70. We don't know how old the Magi were, but if our man was in the second half of his career, he might have seen such a pass two or three times before. Jupiter's orbit wobbles relative to Regulus, so not every conjunction is as close as the one he saw in 3 BC. Perhaps our magus recorded this event with some interest, but it is hard to imagine great excitement. Not from this alone. But, of course, there is more.

The planets move against the field of fixed stars. From Earth, they appear to be "active." For example, were you to watch Jupiter each night for several weeks, you would see that it moves eastward through the starry field. Each night Jupiter rises in the east (satisfying a second Star qualification). Each night it appears to be slightly farther east in the field of fixed stars. All of the planets move like this.

But the wandering stars exhibit another, stranger motion. Periodically, they appear to reverse course and move backward through the other stars. This may seem odd, but the reason is simple enough: we watch the planets from a moving platform—Earth—hurtling around the Sun in its own orbit. When you pass a car on the freeway, it appears to go backward as it drops behind. For similar reasons, when the Earth in its orbit swings past another planet, that planet appears to move backward against the starry field. Astronomers call this optical effect retrograde motion.

In 3/2 BC, Jupiter's retrograde wandering would have called for our magus' full attention. After Jupiter and Regulus had their kingly encounter, Jupiter continued on its path through the star field. But then it entered retrograde. It "changed its mind" and headed back to Regulus for a second conjunction. After this second pass it reversed course again for yet a third rendezvous with Regulus, a triple conjunction. A triple pass like this is more rare. Over a period of months, our watching magus would have seen the Planet of Kings dance out a halo above the Star of Kings. A coronation.

The birth of a King

Jupiter's interesting behavior may explain the kingly aspect of the Star. But there are nine qualifications of the Star of Bethlehem. Many are still missing. How did Jupiter's movement relate to the Jewish nation? Is its association with the Jewish New Year enough? Where is an indication of a birth? Some might say that the triple conjunction by itself would indicate to a magus that a new king was on the scene. Maybe. But there is more.

The Jewish nation is composed of twelve ancient tribes. Jewish prophecy states that a particular tribe will bring forth the Messiah: the tribe of Judah. The symbol of Judah's tribe is the lion. You can see these connections in an ancient prediction of Messiah's coming found in the first book of the Bible, the **Book of Genesis, Chapter 49**:

9 You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness— who dares to rouse him? 10 The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.— GENESIS 49:9-10

This association of Messiah with the tribe of Judah and with the lion is a productive clue. It clarifies the connection between Jupiter's behavior and the Jewish nation, because the starry coronation—the triple conjunction—occurred within the constellation of Leo, The Lion. Ancient stargazers, particularly if they were interested in things Jewish, may well have concluded they were seeing signs of a Jewish king. But there is more.

The last book of the New Testament is, in part, a prophetic enigma. But a portion of the Book of Revelation provides clear and compelling guidance for our astronomical investigation. The apostle John wrote the book as an old man while in exile on the island of Patmos. Perhaps the austerity of this exile or a lack of companionship left him time to ponder the night sky. Whatever the reason, Revelation is full of star imagery. In **Revelation, Chapter 12**, John describes a life and death drama played out in the sky: the birth of a king.

1 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. 2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. 3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. 4 His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. 5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre... — REVELATION 12:1-5

A woman in labor, a dragon bent on infanticide and a ruler of the nations. We have already seen this ruler in the Book of Genesis, above. This would be the Messiah, in his role as King of Kings. If that interpretation is correct, then according to the gospel story the woman would be Mary, the mother of Jesus. The dragon which waits to kill the child at birth would be Herod, who did that very thing. John says the woman he saw was clothed in the Sun. She had the moon at her feet. What can he be describing? When we continue our study of the sky of September of 3 BC, the mystery of John's vision is unlocked: he is describing more of the starry dance which began with the Jewish New Year.

As Jupiter was beginning the coronation of Regulus, another startling symbol rose in the sky. The constellation which rises in the east behind Leo is Virgo, The Virgin. When Jupiter and Regulus were first meeting, she rose clothed in the Sun. And as John said, the moon was at her feet. It was a new moon, symbolically birthed at the feet of The Virgin.

The sheer concentration of symbolism in the stars at this moment is remarkable. These things could certainly lead our magus to conclude that a Jewish king had been born. But even this is not the whole story. These symbols could indicate a birth, but if they were interpreted to indicate the time of conception, the beginning of a human life, might there be something interesting in the sky nine months later? Indeed. In June of 2 BC, Jupiter continued the pageantry.

Westward Leading

By the following June, Jupiter had finished crowning Regulus. The Planet of Kings traveled on through the star field toward another spectacular rendezvous, this time with Venus, the Mother Planet. This

conjunction was so close and so bright that it is today displayed in hundreds of planetaria around the world by scientists who may know nothing of Messiah. They do it because what Jupiter did makes such a great planetarium show. Jupiter appeared to join Venus. The planets could not be distinguished with the naked eye. If our magus had had a telescope, he could have seen that the planets sat one atop the other, like a figure eight. Each contributed its full brightness to what became the most brilliant star our man had ever seen. Jupiter completed this step of the starry dance as it was setting in the west. That evening, our Babylonian magus would have seen the spectacle of his career while facing toward Judea.

No one alive had ever seen such a conjunction. If the Magi only began their travel plans in September, when they saw this sight nine months later, someone may have shouted "What are we waiting for? Mount up!" At the end of their travel, which may have taken weeks or months, these experts arrived in Jerusalem. They told their tale, and "all Jerusalem was disturbed." Herod wanted to know two things: when the Star had appeared, and where this baby was. The Magi presumably described the timing of events starting in September of 3 BC and continuing through June of 2 BC. Herod sent them to Bethlehem in search of the child with orders that they return to tell where he was.

To qualify as the Star, Jupiter would have to have been ahead of the Magi as they trekked South from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Sure enough, in December of 2 BC if the Magi looked south in the wee hours, there hung the Planet of Kings over the city of Messiah's birth.

All but one of the nine Biblical qualifications for the Star have now been plausibly satisfied:

1. The first conjunction signified birth by its association to the day with Virgo "birthing" the new moon. Some might argue that the unusual triple conjunction by itself could be taken to indicate a new king.
2. The Planet of King's coronation of the Star of Kings signified kingship.
3. The triple conjunction began with the Jewish New Year and took place within Leo, showing a connection with the Jewish tribe of Judah (and prophecies of the Jewish Messiah).
4. Jupiter rises in the east.
5. The conjunctions appeared at precise, identifiable times.
6. Herod was unaware of these things; they were astronomical events which had significance only when explained by experts.
7. The events took place over a span of time sufficient for the Magi to see them both from the East and upon their arrival in Jerusalem.
8. Jupiter was ahead of the Magi as they traveled south from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

But the ninth qualification would require that Jupiter stop over Bethlehem. How could a planet do that? And did Jupiter do it?

To Stop a Star

The problem with a planet stopping is not what you might think. The problem is not that planets can't stop. Just the opposite. The problem is that all planets are always stopped to the eye of a human observer. The sky moves above Earth at half the speed of the hour hand on a common clock. Its movement is imperceptible to the naked eye. So, if all stars are always stopped, what can Matthew have meant?

Perhaps you have already anticipated the key to this final mystery: retrograde motion.

An astronomer tracking the movement of planets through the star field watches not so much on the scale of minutes, but on the longer scale of days, weeks and months.

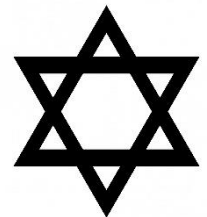
On this scale of time, Jupiter did stop.

On December 25 of 2 BC as it entered retrograde, Jupiter reached full stop in its travel through the fixed stars. Magi viewing from Jerusalem would have seen it stopped in the sky above the little town of Bethlehem.

Star of David

Question: "What is the Star of David and is it biblical?"

Answer: There is no reference to the Star (or shield) of David in the Bible. There are several rabbinical tales as to the origin of the Star of David. These range from the star being the shape of King David's shield, to being the symbol on King Solomon's signet (seal) ring, to being an invention of Bar Kokhba, the Jewish leader who led what is known as the Bar Kokhba revolt against the Roman Empire in A.D. 132. Mekubbalim (followers of Kabbala) claim that the symbol has magical powers. There is no explicit historical or archaeological support for any of those claims.



The star consists of two intertwined triangles: one pointing up to God and the other pointing down to man, symbolizing the relationship between the two—"the interpenetration of two realms" (source: Franz Rosenzweig, *Star of Redemption*, 1912). The six points are said by Rosenzweig to represent two triads: creation, revelation, and redemption, along with God, Israel, and the Gentile world. These are alternatively characterized by Eder as representing the six aspects of the Divine Spirit as per Isaiah 11:2 (Eder, *The Star of David*, p. 73). Kabbala teaches that the six points indicate the extent of God's sovereignty (north, south, east, west, up, and down). The star has 12 lines about its perimeter, possibly representing the 12 Tribes of Israel.

The earliest archaeological finds bearing the sign are a Jew's tombstone in Tarentum, Italy, dating to the 3rd century and its appearance on the wall of a 6th-century synagogue within the borders of ancient Israel. It was used quite infrequently until its official adoption by Jews in Prague in the 17th century and later by the Zionist movement in 1897. Nazi Germany used the symbol to mark Jews within their borders, and after much debate, it came to be used on the national flag of reconstituted Israel in 1948. As a result, the Star of David is now universally recognized as a representation of Judaism, Israel, and Zionism.



6 Pointed Star
6 mini triangles surrounding
6 sided Hexagon

2 Equilateral Triangles
60 - 60 - 60 degrees

Conquest for God or conquest for Satan? Do we really believe that God (and His Beloved Son Jesus Christ) will use the Satanic 666 Hex(agram) on His beloved Israel? Wake up people!!!

IDF planting Zionist Israel flag. Source: AP.



The only Scriptural reference to a star associated with God

- Amos 5:26 You have lifted up the shrine of your king, the pedestal of your idols, the star of your god—which you made for yourselves.
- Steven's speech to the Sanhedrin – Acts 7:39 "But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. 40 They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don't know what has happened to him!' 41 That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made. 42 But God turned away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: " 'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel? 43 You have lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.
- These references are to the idols Rephan or Molech – aka Satan

Tribulation (Day of the Lord, Time of Jacob's Trouble, Great Tribulation)

The Scriptures indicate that the Day of the Lord, the Time of Jacob's Trouble, and the Great Tribulation have several things in common. Notice that all three involve the concept of an unparalleled time of trouble.

- Unparalleled time of trouble
 - Unparalleled implies two things:
 - Since there cannot be more than one unparalleled time of trouble, their time periods must overlap.
 - These events have not transpired in the past.
 - Joel 2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand:
2 A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains.
 - Jer 30:5 “For thus says the Lord: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace.
6 Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child?
So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale?
7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it;
And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.
 - Dan 12:1 “At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time.
And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.
 - Mt 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.
- The term ‘great’ is used for all three
- The concept of birth pangs is associated with all three
- The expression ‘that day’ is used for all three
- Israel's future repentance or spiritual restoration to God is associated with all three.

These comparisons demonstrate that several of the same concepts and terms are associated with the Day of the Lord, the Time of Jacob's Trouble, and the Great Tribulation . . . they indicate that the Day of the Lord will cover or at least include the same time period as the Time of Jacob's Trouble and the Great Tribulation.

- Characteristics of the Tribulation
 - The cruel reign of the “beast out of the sea” (Rev 13), who, at the beginning of the three and a half years, will break his covenant with the Jews (by virtue of which they will have re-established the temple worship, Dan 9:27), and show himself in the temple, demanding that he be worshipped as God (Mt 24:15; 2Th. 2:4)
 - The active interposition of Satan “having great wrath” (Rev 12:12), who gives his power to the Beast (Rev 13:4-5)
 - The unprecedented activity of demons (Rev 9)
 - The terrible “bowl” judgments of Rev 16

The purpose of the Tribulation

The tribulation is for the salvation of the Jewish Nation

- In Mt 24, Jesus says, “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains (Mt 24:16). . . . And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.(Mt 24:20)” There is an explicit Jewish element to this entire passage. This is because the events are related to the Time of Jacob's Trouble described by Jeremiah:

‘For behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,’ says the LORD. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’ Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah. For thus says the LORD: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.’ (Jer. 30:3-7)

- Notice several important aspects within this passage:
 - **Jacob is Israel** – Jacob fathered the 12 tribes and was given the name Israel by God (Gen. 32:28).
 - Thus, this is describing a time of trouble specifically for the Jews.
 - **Gathering in the Land** – This time of trouble occurs after Israel is gathered back in the Promised Land
 - **Birth Pangs** – The passage refers to every man acting “like a woman in labor.”
 - How similar this is to the words of Jesus, “All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Mt 24:8).
 - Sorrows (ὠδίν [ōdín]) indicates “a pang or throe, especially of childbirth.” [emphasis added]
 - **A Unique Day** - There is no other day like it.
 - **Results in Salvation** - “But he shall be saved out of it.”
 - Although the Jews undergo an extremely troubling time, salvation comes at the end.
- Although the book of Revelation indicates that all those living on the earth immediately prior to the return of Jesus will be involved in troublesome times, this is especially true for the Jews. This is because God applies judgment first and more fully to those who have greater revelation and responsibility.
 - Amos 3 ² “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”
 - Lk 12 ⁴⁸ For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.
- While it is true that all will suffer during that time, Israel will suffer more so. The basic reason for this lies in Israel’s relationship to God as God’s first born (Ex 4:22) and, therefore, Israel receives double, both in blessing and cursing.
 - The principle that Israel receives double for all her sins is stated in Isaiah and Jeremiah
 - The principle of Israel’s receiving double for all her sins is the reason why the Tribulation is uniquely the Time of Jacob’s Trouble.
 - Is 40 ¹ “Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God.
² “Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her,
 That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned;
 For she has received from the LORD’s hand Double for all her sins.”
 - Jer 16 ¹⁶ “Behold, I will send for many fishermen,” says the LORD, “and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. ¹⁷ For My eyes *are* on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes. ¹⁸ And first I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin, because they have defiled My land; they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols.”
- It concerns ‘Daniel’s people,’ the coming of ‘false Messiah,’ the preaching of the ‘gospel of the kingdom,’ flight on the ‘sabbath,’ the temple and the ‘holy place,’ the land of Judea, the city of Jerusalem, the twelve ‘tribes of the children of Israel,’ the ‘son of Moses,’ ‘signs’ in the heavens, the ‘covenant’ with the Beast, the ‘sanctuary,’ the ‘sacrifice and the oblation’ of the temple ritual—these all speak of Israel and prove that the tribulation is largely a time when God deals with His ancient people prior to their entrance into the promised kingdom.”

- Dt 4 ³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice ³¹ (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.
- Jer 30 ⁷ Alas! For that day *is* great, So that none *is* like it; And it *is* the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.
- Ez 20 ³⁷ "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸ I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I *am* the LORD.
- Dan 12 ¹ "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book
- Zec 13 ⁸ And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "*That* two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and* die, But *one*-third shall be left in it: ⁹ I will bring the *one*-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This *is* My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my God.' "
- Olivet Discourse of Christ (Mt 24, Lk 21)
- By the book of Revelation itself

To make an end of wickedness and wicked ones

- The Tribulation will purge the earth of wicked people in order to establish the Messianic Kingdom in righteousness
 - Is 13 ⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.
 - Is 24 ¹⁹ The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. ²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.
 - Ez 37 ²³ They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.
 - Zec 13 ² "It shall be in that day," says the LORD of hosts, "*that* I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.
 - Zec 14 ⁹ And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be— "The LORD *is* one," And His name one.
 - Is 11 ⁹ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.
- This violent reduction of the world's unbelieving population will result from the divine judgments unleashed throughout the Tribulation (Rev 6 – Rev 18), climaxing with the Battle of Armageddon under King Messiah (Rev 19) and His purge of rebel Jews (Eze. 20:33-38) and oppressive Gentiles (Mat. 25:31-46) at the end of the Tribulation.

Bring about a worldwide revival

- The tribulation will produce a messianic revival among Jewish people scattered throughout the world
 - Dt 4 ²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. ²⁸ And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹ But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice

- Rev 7 ¹ After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” ⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed
- Mt 24 ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.
- The Tribulation will convince the Jewish nation of their need for the Messiah in order to produce a national regeneration
 - Dan 12 ⁵ Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. ⁶ And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders *be*?” ⁷ Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that *it shall be* for a time, times, and half *a time*; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished.
 - Jer 31 ³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³ But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”
 - Ez 20:34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. 36 Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,” says the Lord God. 37 “I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.
 - Ez 26 ²⁵ Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.
 - Eze. 37:1-14 – The Dry Bones Live
 - Zec 12 ⁹ It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. ¹⁰ “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. ¹¹ In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of ^[c]Megiddo. ¹² And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; ¹³ the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; ¹⁴ all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves. Zec 13 ¹ “In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.
 - Is 59 ²⁰ “The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” Says the LORD. ²¹ “As for Me,” says the LORD, “this *is* My covenant with them: My Spirit who *is* upon you,

and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore."

- This will result in a massive return of Jews to the land of Israel
 - Zec 8⁷ "Thus says the LORD of hosts:
'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east And from the land of the west;
⁸I will bring them *back*, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.'
 - Ez 36²⁴ For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*. ²⁸Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. ²⁹I will deliver you from all your uncleanness.
 - Ez 37²¹ "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ²²and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. ²³They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

To break the power of the stubborn will of the Jewish nation

- The Tribulation will complete the decreed period of national Israel's judicial hardening as punishment for its rejection of the messianic program, which the partial return from exile did not remove and which culminated in the national rejection of Jesus
 - Is 6⁹ And He said, "Go, and tell this people:
'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'
¹⁰"Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart, And return and be healed."
¹¹Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered:
"Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate,
¹²The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places *are* many in the midst of the land.
¹³But yet a tenth *will be* in it, And will return and be for consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump *remains* when it is cut down.
So the holy seed *shall be* its stump."
 - Is 24¹ Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
²And it shall be:
As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master;
As with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller;
As with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
³The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the LORD has spoken this word.
⁴The earth mourns *and* fades away, The world languishes *and* fades away;
The haughty people of the earth languish.
⁵The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.

⁶ Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men *are* left.

- Jn 12 ³⁷ But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:
“Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with *their* eyes, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”

⁴¹ These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

- Ro 11 ⁷ What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. ⁸ Just as it is written:

“God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see
And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.”

⁹ And David says:

“Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them.

¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always.”

¹¹ I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles.

- It will end the time of the Gentiles and effect the deliverance of the Jewish people from Gentile dominion

- Is 24 ²¹ It shall come to pass in that day *That* the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones,
And on the earth the kings of the earth.

²² They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit,
And will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished.

²³ Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed;

For the LORD of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.

- Is 59 ¹² For our transgressions are multiplied before You, And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions *are* with us, And *as for* our iniquities, we know them:

¹³ In transgressing and lying against the LORD, And departing from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt, Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

¹⁴ Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off;

For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter.

¹⁵ So truth fails, And he *who* departs from evil makes himself a prey.

Then the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased Him That *there was* no justice.

¹⁶ He saw that *there was* no man, And wondered that *there was* no intercessor;

Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.

¹⁷ For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head;

He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, And was clad with zeal as a cloak.

¹⁸ According to *their* deeds, accordingly He will repay, Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies; The coastlands He will fully repay.

¹⁹ So shall they fear The name of the LORD from the west,

And His glory from the rising of the sun; When the enemy comes in like a flood,

The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.

²⁰ “The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” Says the LORD.

- Mt 24 ²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His

angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

- (; Mat. 24:29-31; Mark Mark 13:24-27; Rom. Rom. 11:25).

The timing of the Great Tribulation

- Jesus said “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” (Mat. 24:15-22)
 - Jesus referred to this Daniel 9:27 “overspreading of abominations” in Matthew 24:15. Then He said, “then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Mat. 24:21), thereby indicating that the Great Tribulation will begin when the overspreading of abominations of Daniel Dan. 9:27 occurs. Since the Great Tribulation will begin when the overspreading of abominations occurs in the middle of the 70th week, we can conclude that the Great Tribulation will begin in the middle of the 70th week of Daniel, or after the first three and one-half years of that seven-year period have transpired.
- The Jewish aspect of this period can also be seen in the wider context of Micah’s well-known prophecy concerning the birthplace of Messiah:
Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; He has laid siege against us; they will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek. But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. **Therefore He shall give them up, until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel.** And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth. (Mic. 5:1-4) [emphasis added]
 - Scripture record’s two pregnancies in relation to Messiah.
 - The first labor terminates in the First Coming of Messiah (Rev. 12:2-4+).
 - The second labor terminates in the ushering in of the Millennial Kingdom.
 - It is this second period of labor, subsequent to the going forth of Messiah from Bethlehem, which Micah sets forth.
 - This second labor leads to the millennial age: “For now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.”
 - The time of Jacob’s trouble describes the labor pains associated with the second pregnancy.
 - “She who travaileth” does not refer to Israel bringing forth (giving birth to) Messiah, but to her last-day Tribulation travail (Jer. 30:5-7) in bringing forth a believing remnant, . . . Israel’s greatest and most anguishing sufferings of all her long and checkered history of woe will take place during the coming Great Tribulation (Rev. 8:1-Rev. 20:3). Her terrible travail pains that in God’s plan precede the joy of birth (cf. Mic. Mic. 4:9; cf. John 16:21), will bring forth a regenerated nation to enter the joy of the Kingdom, which will be as unparalleled as the agony that introduces it.
 - This period is mentioned in the books of Revelation and also Daniel which provides additional details as to its duration:

- Revelation 12:1 states the length of time this persecution and hiding of the Jews in the wilderness will last . . . it will last 1,260 days (Rev. 12:6)
- Revelation 12:14 states that Israel will hide in the wilderness from Satan for “a time, and times, and half a time.”
- Daniel 7:25 uses this identical time designation for the length of time that the Antichrist will persecute the saints of the 70th week
- Revelation Rev. 13:5-7+, when referring to this same persecution of 70th-week saints by the Antichrist, declares that it will last for 42 months, which equal three and one-half years. . . . The Jews will be persecuted and will hide in a wilderness area for three and one-half years, exactly one-half of the seven-year 70th week. . . . the Great Tribulation will be finished when God has completely shattered the obstinate rebellion of the nation of Israel against Him [Dan. Dan. 9:24; Dan. 12:7]. In other words, the Great Tribulation will end when Israel’s rebellion against God’s rule ends.⁹

God’s wrath involves the whole 7-Year Tribulation.

The view that the Rapture will occur at the mid-point of the Tribulation is based upon 1 Corinthians 15:52 which states that the Rapture will occur at the blowing of “the last trumpet.” This Mid-Tribulation Rapture view then declares this trumpet to be the last of the seven trumpets in Revelation 11 that is blown at the mid-point of the Tribulation.

Why of the 114 references to trumpets in the Bible these two are identified as one and the same only defies sound Bible study. The context clearly shows the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15 is blown for believers whereas the seven trumpets of Revelation 8, 9 and 11 are sounded for unbelievers. The Revelation trumpets therefore can have no relevance for the Church.

Proponents of the Pre-Wrath Rapture view believe the Rapture will occur about three-quarters of the way through the Tribulation, about five years or shortly thereafter, with up to four comings of Christ. According to Dr. David Reagan in his article The Pre-Wrath Rapture:

“Those who espouse this viewpoint believe that the Seal Judgments are the wrath of Man and Satan and that they continue throughout the first half of the Tribulation and into the second half, right up to the three-quarters point, or shortly thereafter. They place the Trumpet Judgments in the last quarter of the Tribulation and the Bowl Judgments in the first 30 days following the end of Daniel’s 70th Week of Years.”

But, isn’t it Jesus Himself who breaks the seals that launch each of the Revelation 6 seal judgments which occur at the beginning of the Tribulation? Also, the seven angels who blow the trumpets that initiate each of the trumpet judgments are given their trumpets at the throne of God (Revelation 8:2). And, Revelation 15:1 states that the bowl judgments at the end of the Tribulation finish the wrath of God, not begin His wrath.

Because these judgments are initiated by Jesus Himself at the beginning of the Tribulation, the whole Tribulation must be God’s wrath, which the Church is exempt from.

Passages describing the period of time

- Is 2:12
- Jer 30:7
- Ez 22:17-22
- Dan 9:26-27
- Dan 12:1
- Zec 13:8-9
- Mal 3:1-4

Dan 8 ¹⁹ And he said, “Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end *shall be*.

References to the Tribulation

Moab discourse of Moses

The Moab discourse of Moses contains some pointed words about the Jews in the latter days – they will experience a period of distress (tribulation) which will motivate them to return to God. Once Israel reaches the point of repentance, the Lord will bless them by fulfilling His covenant promises to Abraham.

- ❖ Dt 4:30 When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him. ³¹ For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath.

The 2nd Song of Moses (Dt 32) prophesies Israel's unfaithfulness (Dt 32:5; 15-18) and God's decision to set them aside and work instead through the church (Dt 32:19-21). This song also gives us a glimpse of the horrors of the tribulation (Dt 32:23-27) as God pours out His wrath to bring the Jews to repentance. And just as the song leads us to believe that there is no hope for the Jews, it suddenly reveals the glorious grace of God in His salvation of the remnant (Dt 32:36). The Lord sums up the action saying "I have wounded, and it is I who heal..." (Dt 32:39)

- ❖ Dt 32:5 They have acted corruptly toward him; to their shame they are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation. I
- ❖ Dt 32:15 Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior. 16 They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. 17 They sacrificed to demons, which are not God— gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. 18 You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.
- ❖ Dt 32:19 The LORD saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. 20 "I will hide my face from them," he said, "and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful. 21 They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.
- ❖ Dt 32:23 "I will heap calamities upon them and spend my arrows against them. 24 I will send wasting famine against them, consuming pestilence and deadly plague; I will send against them the fangs of wild beasts, the venom of vipers that glide in the dust. 25 In the street the sword will make them childless; in their homes terror will reign. Young men and young women will perish, infants and gray-haired men. 26 I said I would scatter them and blot out their memory from mankind, 27 but I dreaded the taunt of the enemy, lest the adversary misunderstand and say, 'Our hand has triumphed; the LORD has not done all this.' "
- ❖ Dt 32:36 The LORD will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free.
- ❖ Dt 32:39 "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

Land Covenant

The land covenant of Dt 28-30 lays down the conditions for the Jews possession and enjoyment of their Promised Land. It contains a panorama of Jewish history:

- Dispersion among the nations as punishment for idolatry (Dt 28:58-64)
- Persecution by nations where the Jews are dispersed (Dt 28:65-67)
- Affliction of the land of Israel until it becomes a "wasteland" (Dt 29:22-28)
- Repentance of the Jews (Dt 30:1-2)
- Spiritual regeneration of the repenting remnant (Dt 30:6,8)
- Regathering of the remnant to the land of promise (Dt 30:3-4)

- This is regathering in belief that will take place at the 2nd advent, not the regathering in unbelief that is happening now
- Repossession of the Promised Land by the Jews (Dt 30:5)
- Punishment of the enemies of Israel (Dt 30:7)
- Blessing the re-established nation of Israel with material prosperity (Dt 30:5,9)

Other nations

The fourth prophecy of Balaam pictures the nations in judgement during the tribulation

- ❖ 17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth. 18 Edom will be conquered; Seir, his enemy, will be conquered, but Israel will grow strong. 19 A ruler will come out of Jacob and destroy the survivors of the city." 20 Then Balaam saw Amalek and uttered his oracle: "Amalek was first among the nations, but he will come to ruin at last." 21 Then he saw the Kenites and uttered his oracle: "Your dwelling place is secure, your nest is set in a rock; 22 yet you Kenites will be destroyed when Asshur takes you captive." 23 Then he uttered his oracle: "Ah, who can live when God does this? 24 Ships will come from the shores of Kittim; they will subdue Asshur and Eber, but they too will come to ruin."

Day of the Lord

The phrase “day of the Lord” usually identifies events that take place at the end of history (Isaiah 7:18-25) and is often closely associated with the phrase “that day.” One key to understanding these phrases is to note that they always identify a span of time during which God personally intervenes in history, directly or indirectly, to accomplish some specific aspect of His plan.

Most people associate the day of the Lord with a period of time or a special day that will occur when God’s will and purpose for His world and for mankind will be fulfilled. Some scholars believe that the day of the Lord will be a longer period of time than a single day—a period of time when Christ will reign throughout the world before He cleanses heaven and earth in preparation for the eternal state of all mankind. Other scholars believe the day of the Lord will be an instantaneous event when Christ returns to earth to redeem His faithful believers and send unbelievers to eternal damnation.

The phrase “the day of the Lord” is used often in the Old Testament (e.g. Isaiah 2:12; 13:6, 9; Ezekiel 13:5, 30:3; Joel 1:15, 2:1,11,31; 3:14; Amos 5:18,20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7,14; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi. 4:5) and several times in the New Testament (e.g. Acts 2:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10). It is also alluded to in other passages (Revelation 6:17; 16:14). It is also alluded to in other passages (Revelation 6:17; 16:14).

The Old Testament passages dealing with the day of the Lord often convey a sense of imminence, nearness, and expectation: “Wail, for the day of the Lord is near!” (Isaiah 13:6); “For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near” (Ezekiel 30:3); “Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand” (Joel 2:1); “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision” (Joel 3:14); “Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is near” (Zephaniah 1:7). This is because the Old Testament passages referring to the day of the Lord often speak of both a near and a far fulfillment, as does much of Old Testament prophecy. Some Old Testament passages that refer to the day of the Lord describe historical judgments that have already been fulfilled in some sense (Isaiah 13:6-22; Ezekiel 30:2-19; Joel 1:15, 3:14; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:14-18), while others refers to divine judgments that will take place toward the end of the age (Joel 2:30-32; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:1, 5).

The New Testament calls it a day of “wrath,” a day of “visitation,” and the “great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:14) and refers to a still future fulfillment when God’s wrath is poured out on unbelieving Israel (Isaiah 22; Jeremiah 30:1-17; Joel 1-2; Amos 5; Zephaniah 1) and on the unbelieving world (Ezekiel 38–39; Zechariah 14). The Scriptures indicate that “the day of the Lord” will come quickly, like a thief in the night (Zephaniah 1:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:2), and therefore Christians must be watchful and ready for the coming of Christ at any moment.

Besides being a time of judgment, it will also be a time of salvation as God will deliver the remnant of Israel, fulfilling His promise that “all of Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26), forgiving their sins and restoring His chosen people to the land He promised to Abraham (Isaiah 10:27; Jeremiah 30:19-31, 40; Micah 4; Zechariah 13). The final outcome of the day of the Lord will be that “the arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day” (Isaiah 2:17). The ultimate or final fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the day of the Lord will come at the end of history when God, with wondrous power, will punish evil and fulfill all His promises.

- Isaiah 2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,
And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. 12 For the day of the Lord of hosts
Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low—
- Isaiah 13:6 **Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.**
7 Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man’s heart will melt,
8 And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth;
They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames.
9 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.
10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light;
The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.
11 “I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
- Ezekiel 13:3 Thus says the Lord God: “**Woe to the foolish prophets**, who follow their own spirit and have
seen nothing! 4 O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts. 5 **You have not gone up into the gaps to build a
wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord.** 6 They have envisioned futility and false
divination, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord!’ But the Lord has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be
confirmed. 7 Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, ‘The Lord says,’
but I have not spoken.” 8 Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies,
therefore I am indeed against you,” says the Lord God. 9 “My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility
and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of
Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord God.
- Ezekiel 30:1 30 The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, 2 “Son of man, prophesy and say,
‘**Thus says the Lord God: “Wail, ‘Woe to the day!’**
3 For the day is near, Even the day of the Lord is near;
It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles.
4 The sword shall come upon Egypt, And great anguish shall be in Ethiopia,
When the slain fall in Egypt, And they take away her wealth, And her foundations are broken down.
- Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! For **the day of the Lord is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.**
16 Is not the **food cut off** before our eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of our God?
17 The seed shrivels under the clods, Storehouses are in shambles; Barns are broken down, For the grain has withered.
18 How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless,
Because they have **no pasture**; Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.
19 O Lord, to You I cry out; For **fire has devoured the open pastures**,
And a **flame has burned all the trees** of the field.
20 The beasts of the field also cry out to You, For the **water brooks are dried up**,
And fire has devoured the open pastures.
- Joel 2 The Day of the Lord
2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand:
2 A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains.

A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations.

3 A fire devours before them, And behind them a flame burns;
The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, And behind them a desolate wilderness;
Surely nothing shall escape them.

4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like swift steeds, so they run.

5 With a noise like chariots Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, Like a strong people set in battle array.

6 Before them the **people writhe in pain; All faces are drained of color.**

7 They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like men of war;
Every one marches in formation, And they do not break ranks.

8 They do not push one another; Every one marches in his own column.

Though they lunge between the weapons, They are not cut down.

9 They run to and fro in the city, They run on the wall;
They climb into the houses, They enter at the windows like a thief.

10 **The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble;**
The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness.

11 The Lord gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great;
For strong is the One who executes His word.

For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; Who can endure it?

...

28 “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.
29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

30 “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance,
As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls.

- Joel 3 God Judges the Nations

3:12 “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
For there **I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.**

13 **Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.** Come, go down; For the winepress is full,
The vats overflow—For their **wickedness is great.**”

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

15 The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness.

16 The Lord also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake;
But the Lord will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.

- Amos 5 The Day of the Lord

5:16 Therefore the Lord God of hosts, the Lord, says this:

“**There shall be wailing in all streets,** And they shall say in all the highways, ‘Alas! Alas!’
They shall call the farmer to mourning, And skillful lamenters to wailing.

17 In all vineyards there shall be wailing, For I will pass through you,” Says the Lord.

18 Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!

For **what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness, and not light.**

19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion, And a bear met him!

Or as though he went into the house, Leaned his hand on the wall, And a serpent bit him!

20 Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?

- Obadiah 1:15 “For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near;
As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head.
- Zephaniah 1:1 The Great Day of the Lord
1:2 **“I will utterly consume everything From the face of the land,” Says the Lord;**
3 “I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, The fish of the sea,
And the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land,” Says the Lord.
4 “I will stretch out My hand against Judah, And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, The names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests—
5 Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops;
Those who worship and swear oaths by the Lord, But who also swear by Milcom;
6 Those who have turned back from following the Lord, And have not sought the Lord, nor inquired of Him.”
7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; For the day of the Lord is at hand,
For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests.
8 “And it shall be, In the day of the Lord’s sacrifice,
That I will punish the princes and the king’s children, And all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.
9 In the same day I will punish All those who leap over the threshold,
Who fill their masters’ houses with violence and deceit.
10 “And there shall be on that day,” says the Lord, “The sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate,
A wailing from the Second Quarter, And a loud crashing from the hills.
11 Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh!
For all the merchant people are cut down; All those who handle money are cut off.
12 “And it shall come to pass at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And **punish the men Who are settled in complacency,**
Who say in their heart, ‘The Lord will not do good, Nor will He do evil.’
13 Therefore their goods shall become booty, And their houses a desolation;
They shall build houses, but not inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine.”
14 The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.
15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers.
17 “I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the Lord;
Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse.”
18 Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the Lord’s wrath;
But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.
- Zechariah 14 The Day of the Lord
14:1 Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst.
2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
3 Then the Lord will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.
4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.
5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.
Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You.
6 It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish.
7 It shall be one day Which is known to the Lord—Neither day nor night.
But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light.

8 And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,

Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea;

In both summer and winter it shall occur.

9 And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—"The Lord is one," And His name one.

10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.

11 The people shall dwell in it; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

12 And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,

And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

13 It shall come to pass in that day That a great panic from the Lord will be among them.

Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand;

14 Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.

And the wealth of all the surrounding nations Shall be gathered together: Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.

15 Such also shall be the plague On the horse and the mule, On the camel and the donkey,

And on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be.

- Malachi 4 The Great Day of God

4:1 "For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven,

And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.

And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the Lord of hosts,

"That will leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings;

And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

3 You shall trample the wicked, For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet

On the day that I do this," Says the Lord of hosts.

4 "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,

Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers,

Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

- 1 Thessalonians 5 The Day of the Lord

5:1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.** 3 For **when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them,** as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. **And they shall not escape.** 4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, **but let us watch and be sober.** 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 **Therefore comfort each other**

and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

- 2 Thessalonians 2 The Great Apostasy

2:1 Now, brethren, **concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,** we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for **that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,** 4 **who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.** 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 **And now you know what is restraining,** that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.** 8 **And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord**

will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- 2 Peter 3 The Day of the Lord

3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

- Revelation 6 Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

6:12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

- Revelation 16 Sixth Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up

16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. **13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.** 15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." 16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

Time of Jacob's trouble

The tribulation is a time of Jacob's trouble

- Jer 30:5 "For thus says the Lord: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace.
6 Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child?
So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale?
7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it;
And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

Great Tribulation

- Mt 24 The Great Tribulation

24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

The Beast from the Sea

Rev 13 ¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The word "anti" in antichrist does not mean someone who is going to be openly anti (against) Christ. That word "anti" in the original Bible language can actually mean "IN PLACE OF".

So could the bible antichrist be someone who has actually put himself "in place of" Christ? Well, we have further Bible evidence to support this. In 1 John 2:18-19 it says that there were "many antichrists", who "**WENT OUT FROM THE CHURCH**". In other words, John is pointing to the fact that those "antichrists" were **WITHIN THE CHURCH!!** Not only that, but Paul in 2 Thess. 2:3-4 calls the man of sin the "son of perdition". Now there is only one other place in the Bible where the name "son of perdition" is used, and that is in John 17:12 talking about **JUDAS!** And what was Judas? A professing follower of Christ Jesus. Someone who deceived from WITHIN the "church".

*"The leader of the Catholic church is defined by the faith as the Vicar of Jesus Christ (and is accepted as such by believers). The Pope is considered the man on earth who **TAKES THE PLACE** of the Second Person of the omnipotent God of the Trinity." (John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 3, 1994).*

"ANTI" - Christ = "IN PLACE OF" Christ!

From the evidence, it is our firm belief that we need to look WITHIN the professing church to find the end time Bible antichrist. And the rest of this study will confirm that even more.

There are so many identifying marks that God has given us in His Word that we can all come to the truth without any doubt as to who is the antichrist today. We would only need a few of these identifying marks to know who the antichrist is, but God has given us many more so that there can be NO DOUBT as to who it is. So here we will not make any wild guesses about the Bible antichrist, instead we will use scripture and history to prove who it is ... *2 Peter 1:20 ... 'Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.**' ...* Pretty clear direction there from God. We are not to make any wild speculations about this important issue, instead we must let scripture interpret scripture and let history prove that scripture.

The Little Horn (Daniel 7 and 8)

Dan 7 – Vision of the 4 Beasts

⁷ “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was* different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸ I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. ...

[Angel’s interpretation] ²³ “Thus he said:

‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.

²⁴ The ten horns *are* ten kings *Who* shall arise from this kingdom.

And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first *ones*, And shall subdue three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law.

Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

²⁶ ‘But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy *it* forever.

²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.

His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

Dan 8 – Vision of the Ram and He Goat

⁸ Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. ⁹ And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious *Land*. ¹⁰ And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and *some* of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. ¹¹ He even exalted *himself* as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. ¹² Because of transgression, an army was given over *to the horn* to oppose the daily *sacrifices*; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did *all this* and prospered.

¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, “How long *will* the vision *be*, concerning the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?” ¹⁴ And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

... “Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision.” ... “Understand, son of man, that the vision *refers* to the time of the end.” ... “Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end *shall be*. ²⁰ The ram which you saw, having the two horns—*they are* the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹ And the male goat *is* the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that *is* between its eyes *is* the first king. ²² As for the broken *horn* and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

²³ “And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.

²⁴ His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;

He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive;

He shall destroy the mighty, and *also* the holy people.

²⁵ “Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule;

And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart. He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity.

He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without *human* means.

²⁶ “And the vision of the evenings and mornings
Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For *it refers to many days in the future.*”

The Man of Sin (2 Thessalonians 2)

2Th 2³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

'Antichrists' professed to be followers of Jesus (1 John 2)

1Jn 2¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

Beast of the Sea (Revelation 13)

Rev 13¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ²Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Babylon the Mother of Harlots (Revelation 17)

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ²with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

³ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which* was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. ⁵ And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.



Martin Luther, trans. *Luther Bible* (with 117 woodcuts by Lucas Cranach, this one colored). Wittenberg: Hans Lufft Press, 1534.

⁶ I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

⁷ But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

⁹ “Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

¹² “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful.”

¹⁵ Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. ¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

Zechariah 9:10

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Names of the Antichrist

- The *little horn* of Daniel 7:8.
- The *king of fierce countenance* of Daniel 8:23.
- The *Prince that shall come* of Daniel 9:26.
- The *willful king* of Daniel 11:36-45.
- The one who comes *in his own name* of John 5:43, whom Israel will receive as a messiah.
- The *son of perdition, the man of sin, the lawless one* of 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Antichrist = Roman Catholic Papacy

When people think about antichrist, they only tend to look at the English word itself, "ANTI-Christ" and place the meaning of this as someone who is a direct and open enemy of Jesus Christ. Someone who is 'against' Christ. And thus they fail to see the deeper, original meaning of this word in the original Bible language.

'anti' in the original Greek also has a meaning of 'instead of' or 'in place of'

So the Bible antichrist isn't just someone who is opposed to Christ and His ways. It is someone who puts themselves **in place of** Jesus Christ. Now we know that Satan is the ultimate antichrist, as he is the one who leads the rebellion against Christ, and tries to put himself in place of God and of Jesus. The Bible even confirms this about Satan:

Isaiah 14:12-14 ...'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.'

So Satan's main goal was to be **IN THE PLACE OF** God and of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And this is the same thinking that Satan has placed in his antichrist system that the Bible reveals. So we have Satan as the main antichrist, but we also have an antichrist system that Satan set up on earth to **take the place of** Jesus Christ on earth. The following 29 characteristics reveal just what that antichrist [IN PLACE OF-Christ] system is.

The Little Horn (Daniel 7 and 8)

Dan 7 – Vision of the 4 Beasts

⁷ “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was* different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸ I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. ...

[Angel's interpretation] ²³ “Thus he said:

‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.

²⁴ The ten horns *are* ten kings *Who* shall arise from this kingdom.

And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first *ones*, And shall subdue three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law.

Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

²⁶ ‘But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy *it* forever.

²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.

His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

Dan 8 – Vision of the Ram and He Goat

⁸ Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. ⁹ And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious *Land*. ¹⁰ And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and *some* of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. ¹¹ He even exalted *himself* as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the

place of His sanctuary was cast down. ¹² Because of transgression, an army was given over *to the horn* to oppose the daily *sacrifices*; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did *all this* and prospered.

¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, “How long *will* the vision *be*, concerning the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?” ¹⁴ And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

... “Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision.” ... “Understand, son of man, that the vision *refers* to the time of the end.” ... “Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end *shall be*. ²⁰ The ram which you saw, having the two horns—*they are* the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹ And the male goat *is* the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that *is* between its eyes *is* the first king. ²² As for the broken *horn* and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

²³ “And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness,
A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.

²⁴ His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;
He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive;
He shall destroy the mighty, and *also* the holy people.

²⁵ “Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule;
And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart. He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity.
He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without *human* means.

²⁶ “And the vision of the evenings and mornings
Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For *it refers* to many days *in the future*.”

There is only one kingdom that matches these characteristics perfectly, and that is the Papal Church of Rome.

- The fourth beast from which the little horn comes from is the 'fourth [world] kingdom' upon the earth (Daniel 7:23).
 - This is the same kingdom as the iron legs on Nebuchadnezzar's image, which is ROME.
 - So *the little horn comes from the nation of the old Roman Empire*
 - *The Papacy arose from the Roman Empire.*
- The little horn comes up AMONG the other ten horns of the 'Roman' beast (Daniel 7:8).
 - Meaning that the *little horn power comes into existence during the time that the Roman Empire split into the ten kingdoms of Europe and rises to power after the split.*
 - *The Papacy rose to power after the Roman Empire split up into the ten original kingdoms of Europe.*
- The little horn is a 'LITTLE' horn (Daniel 7:8). Meaning *it is specifically a 'little' kingdom.*
 - *The Papacy based at the Vatican in Rome is it's own country, and is the smallest country in the world.*
- The little horn is 'different' from the other ten horns (kingdoms) of Europe (Daniel 7:24).
 - *The Papal power was different from the other kingdoms of Europe in that it was a combined religious and political kingdom.*
- The little horn has three of the other horns 'plucked up by the roots' (Daniel 7:8).
 - Meaning *the little horn kingdom had 3 of the original kingdoms of Europe completely destroyed.*
 - *The Papacy had 3 of the original kingdoms of Europe (Heruli, Vandals and Ostrogoths) destroyed. As these were Arian tribes that opposed the teachings of Papal Rome.*
- The little horn '*speaks great things against God*' (Daniel 7:25).
 - *The Papacy has made great boasts and spoken very proud things throughout history that is against God*
 - See below: [Quotes from the Antichrist Roman Catholic Church](#)
- The little horn persecutes the saints of God for a time, times and half a time (Daniel 7:25).

- Meaning the little horn kingdom persecutes the true believers in Jesus Christ for 1260 (prophetic) days. Which are 1260 literal years.
- The Papal Church of Rome persecuted God's people and reigned over the kings of the earth for 1260 years between 538 AD and 1798.
- The little horn 'thinks to change times and laws' (Daniel 7:25).
 - Meaning this kingdom thinks it has the authority to change God's set times and laws.
 - The Papal Church has thought to change God's set time, which is the 7th day sabbath and replaced it with SUN-day sabbath (1st day).
 - Also the Papal Church has thought to change God's laws by doing away with the 2nd commandment to do with idols - amongst other things.
- The little horn 'magnifies himself to the Prince of host' (Daniel 8:11).
 - Meaning this little kingdom exalts itself like Satan by putting itself **IN PLACE OF** Christ on earth.
 - The Papacy magnifies itself and places the pope as equal with God.
 - John Paul II once stated that the pope is 'IN PLACE OF Christ' on earth (Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 3, 1994).
- The little horn 'casts the place of the sanctuary down' and 'casts truth to the ground' and 'tramples upon the sanctuary and host' (Daniel 8:11-14).
 - Meaning this little kingdom replaces the Heavenly sanctuary service performed by our High Priest, Jesus Christ with it's own service and it's own priests on earth. This little kingdom also tramples upon the truth and causes error to prosper.
 - The Papacy has replaced the priestly service that Jesus Christ does in heaven (see Hebrews 8 and 9) with it's own priestly service, telling people that the priests can forgive sins.
- The little horn's 'power shall be mighty, but not by it's own power' (Daniel 8:24).
 - Meaning this little kingdom does not have any power itself to conquer. It uses the power of other nations to help it do it's 'dirty work'.
 - The Papacy has no power of it's own to rule. Instead it relies upon the power of other nations.

The Man of Sin (2 Thessalonians 2)

2Th 2³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

There is only one man who matches this description perfectly, and that is the pope(s) of the Papal Church of Rome.

- The man of sin is called 'the son of perdition' (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
 - Judas was also called 'the son of perdition' (John 17:12).
 - So calling the man of sin by this name also, means the man of sin would be like Judas - A DECEIVER FROM WITHIN THE CHURCH.
- The man of sin sits in the temple of God professing to be like God' (2 Thessalonians 2:4).
 - Meaning the man of sin sits in a leadership position in 'the professed church' acting like he is god.
 - The pope(s) sit in the Roman Catholic Church acting like he is god on earth giving out indulgences to forgive sins, which only our Heavenly Father can do and being called 'holy father', a title which only our Heavenly Father has (Mark 10:18).

'Antichrists' professed to be followers of Jesus (1 John 2)

1Jn 2¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they did not really

belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

- John confirms in 1 John 2 that those who were antichrists professed to be followers of Jesus, but 'went out' from the TRUE church and revealed themselves to not be true followers of the Lord.
 - The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church profess to be followers of Jesus, but they have made manifest that they 'went out from' the TRUE church and it's true original teachings to follow after heresy and Pagan traditions.

Beast of the Sea (Revelation 13)

Rev 13 ¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Again, the Papacy is the only kingdom that matches the sea beast perfectly.

- The beast rises up out of the sea (Revelation 13:1).
 - Rev 17 The Woman and the Sea – ¹⁵ Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.
 - Meaning it *rises up among many nations, tongues and people*
 - The Papacy rose up in Europe amongst many nations, tongues and people.
- The dragon gives the beast it's 'seat and authority' (Revelation 13:2).
 - Revelation 12 confirms that the dragon is Satan and also the nation of Pagan Rome (it was Pagan Rome who tried to kill the 'man child', Jesus Christ).
 - Rev 12 ⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
 - Rev 12 ⁴ And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.
 - Mt 2 ¹³ When they [Magi] had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."
 - The Papacy received it's 'seat and power' from the old Roman Empire, and ultimately from Satan himself.
- The beast would receive a 'mortal wound' which would be healed (Revelation 13:3).
 - Meaning *this kingdom would be conquered at some stage, and lose it's power. But would then be revived into a power again.*
 - The Papacy received a 'mortal wound' in 1798 when the French army marched into Rome and captured the pope and the Papacy lost it's control and power. But then in 1929 Mussolini granted state power back to the Vatican and the deadly wound began to heal.

- All the world would 'wonder after the beast' (Revelation 13:3).
 - Meaning exactly as it says. The **WHOLE WORLD** would follow after the beast and the beast would lead the nations.
 - Is the world 'wondering after' the pope and the Papal Church of Rome today? **YES!**
- The beast 'continues for forty two months' (Revelation 13:5).
 - Meaning it would rule for 1260 (prophetic days), which are 1260 literal years. Same as the little horn power.
 - This is the same time as the little horn power, which is 1260 years.
 - The Papacy ruled the world between 538AD and 1798.

Babylon the Mother of Harlots (Revelation 17)

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ²with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

³So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which* was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. ⁵And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.



Martin Luther, trans. *Luther Bible* (with 117 woodcuts by Lucas Cranach, this one colored). Wittenberg: Hans Lufft Press, 1534.

⁶I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

⁷But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

⁹“Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

¹²“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. ¹³These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful.”

¹⁵Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. ¹⁶And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind,

and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

There is only one city/institution/religion that matches perfectly with Babylon the Great, and that is the Roman Catholic Church.

- The harlot sits upon many 'waters' (Revelation 17:1).
 - Meaning *she sits upon lots of nations, people and tongues* (Revelation 17:15).
 - *Rev 17 ¹⁵ Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.*
 - *The Roman Catholic Church is supported by over 1 Billion people worldwide and has people and leaders in nearly every (if not every) nation on earth.*
- The harlot has 'committed fornication with the kings of the earth' (Revelation 17:2).
 - Meaning *the kings have united with Babylon forming a church/state alliance and forced her decrees upon the people of the world.*
 - *The Roman Catholic Church has 'diplomatic relations' with nearly all the countries on the planet, and she unites with the leaders of this world to push her decrees.*
- The earth has been 'made drunk' with the wine of Babylon (Revelation 17:2).
 - Meaning, *she has deceived the world with her false teachings.*
 - *The vast majority of professed Christians worldwide, whether Catholic or not, have been deceived by the Vatican's false teachings. Specifically, they have embraced Rome's false SUN-day sabbath. Her false trinity doctrine and her false teaching on the 'immortal soul'. As well as other falsehoods.*
 - False trinity? <https://www.thetrumpet.com/10217-do-you-know-the-truth-about-the-trinity>
- Babylon is dressed in 'purple and scarlet' and 'decked with gold and precious stones' (Revelation 17:4).
 - Meaning her 'special colours' are Purple and Scarlet.
 - Purple is a royal and priestly colour, so *the harlot would place herself in a position of royalty and a position of priesthood.*
 - Scarlet in the Bible denotes the colour of *sin* (Isaiah 1:18) and is also the colour of the *dragon*, which is Satan.
 - Also, Babylon is very *rich*.
 - *The main colours of the bishops and cardinals in the Roman Catholic Church are purple and scarlet.*
 - *And you only need to look at the Vatican and the Catholic Church's other buildings to see how much she is decked with gold and precious stones. Some say the Roman Church is the wealthiest institution on earth.*
- Babylon has a cup 'full of abominations' (Revelation 17:4).
 - Meaning *she has committed great abominations against God and against mankind.*
 - *The Roman Catholic Church has committed abomination after abomination throughout her history. She has tortured and killed MILLIONS of God's people. She has sexually abused and killed countless numbers of little children. She is full of homosexual priests and leaders. Just to name a few abominations.*
- John 'wondered' (or was greatly amazed) at the sight of Babylon (Revelation 17:5).
 - Meaning that *something about her look or actions amazed John.*
 - *John wondered in great amazement because he saw a church who professed to be God's people (Roman Catholic Church) doing horrendous acts 'in the name of God', which the Roman Church HAS done.*
- Babylon is the 'MOTHER of harlots' (Revelation 17:5).
 - Meaning *she has harlot daughters.*
 - *Who else has 'harlot daughters' like the Roman Catholic Church? Her daughters are Orthodox church and the ex-Protestant churches, who held on to Rome's teachings (like Sunday sabbath and soul immortality) and have now run back to their 'mother' and embraced her once more.*

- She is the 'great city that reigns over the kings of the earth' (Revelation 17:18).
 - The Vatican is THAT 'great city which reigns over the kings of the earth'. All leaders of the earth come to the Vatican to seek council from the pope(s). As stated above, the Vatican has diplomatic relations with virtually all nations on earth.
- Babylon thinks she is a 'queen' to the world and will see no sorrow (Revelation 18:7).
 - Meaning, she thinks she is the only true church and that all people need her. She has placed herself in this high position over the people and thinks she cannot be touched.
 - The Roman Catholic Church states that she is the only true church and that we need to be united with her to gain salvation. She acts as 'queen' of the earth and places Mary as the 'queen of heaven'.
- The voice of the bride and bridegroom shall no longer be heard in her (Revelation 18:23).
 - Whether this is taken literally or symbolically, it still means Babylon is a church, as people get married in a church and symbolically, Christ is the bridegroom and we are His bride, again pointing to a church.
 - The Roman Catholic Church is that 'church' in which the voice of the bride and bridegroom will no longer be heard in her, because she is soon to be destroyed by the kings of the earth (Revelation 17:16) and the Lord at His coming.

There is no other religion, institution, city or kingdom that matches the Bible antichrist the way the Papal Church of Rome does. It's a PERFECT match! And do you remember what we showed you above how Satan wants to be IN PLACE OF God and Jesus? Well, he is using the Roman Catholic Church to take the place of Jesus on earth and cause the world to worship him through this church. Even John Paul II admitted in his book that the pope(s) TAKE THE PLACE OF Jesus on earth:

*"The leader of the Catholic church is defined by the faith as the Vicar of Jesus Christ (and is accepted as such by believers). The Pope is considered the man on earth who **TAKES THE PLACE** of the Second Person of the omnipotent God of the Trinity.'* (John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 3, 1994)

**But the Bible clearly tells us that it is God's Spirit that takes the place of Jesus on earth. NOT the pope!
Remember: ANTI-Christ = IN PLACE OF-Christ = Roman Catholic Church!**

Quotes from the Antichrist Roman Catholic Church

The antichrist speaks his blasphemies. Below you will find a large number of quotes that have come from the Roman Catholic Church during its history. Please don't look at these quotes and say "Oh the Catholic Church has changed", because it hasn't changed one bit. The pope is declared as infallible, which means he cannot make error, and all doctrines and teachings no matter how old still exist in the church. Take indulgences as an example. Martin Luther exposed this doctrine as wrong and wicked hundreds of years ago, but this doctrine still continues in Catholic Churches today! See the following blasphemous quotes from this church.

Pope Declared as "God on Earth"

- "The Pope is not simply the representative of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, he is Jesus Christ Himself, under the veil of the flesh." (Evangelical Christendom, January 1, 1895, pg. 15, published in London by J. S. Phillips)
- "Against this background of love towards Holy Church, 'the pillar and bulwark of the truth' (1 Tim 3:15), we readily understand the devotion of Saint Francis of Assisi for 'THE LORD POPE', the daughterly outspokenness of Saint Catherine of Siena towards the one whom she called 'SWEET CHRIST ON EARTH'." (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on the Consecrated Life and Its Mission in the Church and in the World, to the bishops and clergy, religious orders and congregations, societies of apostolic life, secular institutes, and all the faithful, given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, March 25, 1996)
- "The Pope is of so great dignity, and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God and the vicar of God." (Ferraris Ecclesiastical dictionary)
- "All names which in the Scriptures are applied to Christ, by virtue of which it is established that He is over the church, all the same names are applied to the Pope." (On the Authority of the Councils, book 2, chapter 17)

- "The Pope and God are the same, so he has all power in Heaven and earth." (Pope Pius V, quoted in Barclay, Chapter XXVII, p. 218, "Cities Petrus Bertanous")
- "To believe that our Lord God the Pope has not the power to decree as he is decreed, is to be deemed heretical." (the Gloss "Extravagantes" o.f Pope John XXII Cum inter, Tit. XIV, Cap. IV. Ad Callem Sexti Decretalium, Paris, 1685)
- "Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions." (Ferraris, «Prompta Bibliotheca», 1763, Volume VI, 'Papa II', p.26)
- "The Saviour Himself is the door of the sheepfold: 'I am the door of the sheep.' Into this fold of Jesus Christ, no man may enter unless he be led by the Sovereign Pontiff; and only if they be united to him can men be saved, for the Roman Pontiff is the Vicar of Christ and His personal representative on earth." (Pope John XXIII in his homily to the Bishops and faithful assisting at his coronation on November 4, 1958)
- "This is our last lesson to you: receive it, engrave it in your minds, all of you: by God's commandment salvation is to be found nowhere but in the Church; the strong and effective instrument of salvation is none other than the Roman Pontificate." (Pope Leo XIII, Allocution for the 25th anniversary of his election, February 20, 1903; Papal Teachings: The Church, Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, St. Paul Editions, Boston, 1962, par. 653)

Pope Declared as Infallible

- "The Pope takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth...by divine right the Pope has supreme and full power in faith, in morals over each and every pastor and his flock. He is the true vicar, the head of the entire church, the father and teacher of all Christians. He is the infallible ruler, the founder of dogmas, the author of and the judge of councils; the universal ruler of truth, the arbiter of the world, the supreme judge of heaven and earth, the judge of all, being judged by no one, God himself on earth." (Quoted in the New York Catechism)
- "The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as Supreme Pastor and teacher of all the faithful--who confirms his brethren in the faith--he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals....The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, 'they exercise the supreme Magisterium,' above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine 'for belief as being divinely revealed,' and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions 'must be adhered to with the obedience of faith.' This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine revelation itself." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #891, 1994 edition)

Popes and Priests Declared Authority to Forgive Sin

- "And God himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of his priest and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse to give absolution, provided the penitent is capable of it." (Liguori, «Duties and Dignities of the Priest», p.27)
- "This judicial authority will even include the power to forgive sin." (The Catholic Encyclopaedia Vol xii, article 'Pope' pg 265)
- "the poor sinner kneels at his confessor's feet. He KNOWS he is not speaking to an ordinary man but to 'ANOTHER CHRIST,' He hears the words: 'I absolve thy sins... and the HIDEOUS LOAD OF SINS DROPS FROM HIS SOUL FOREVER.'" (William Doyle, Shall I be a priest, pp 14, 15)

Vatican Claims Power over ALL Churches

- "No man has a right to choose his religion." (New York Freeman, official journal of Bishop Hughes, Jan 26, 1852)
- "Protestantism has not, and never can have, any right where Catholicity has triumphed." (Catholic Review, June 1875)
- "It is error to believe that Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true." (Pope Pius IX, The Syllabus (of Errors), Issued in 1864, Section III, Indifferentism, Latitudinarianism, #15)

- "It is error to believe that hence it has been wisely decided by law, in some Catholic countries, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the public exercise of their own peculiar worship." (Pope Pius IX, The Syllabus (of Errors), Issued in 1864, Section X, Errors Having Reference to Modern Liberalism, #78)

Vatican Claims Power to Change God's Law

- "Not the Creator of Universe, in Genesis 2:1-3,-but the Catholic Church can claim the honor of having granted man a pause to his work every seven days." (S. C. Mosna, Storia della Domenica, 1969, pp. 366-367)
- "The Pope is of great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws... The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man, but of God, and he acts as vicegerent of God upon earth." (Lucius Ferraris, Prompta Ribliotheca, Papa, art. 2, translated)
- "The Pope has the power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ. The Pope has the authority and often exercised it, to dispense with the command of Christ." (Decretal, de Tranlatic Episcop. Cap. (The Pope can modify divine law.) Ferraris' Ecclesiastical Dictionary)
- "Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; --she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." (Rev. Stephan Keenan, A Doctrinal Catechism, On the Obedience Due to the Church, chap. 2, p. 174. (Imprimatur, John Cardinal McCloskey, archbishop of New York)
- "The authority of the church could therefore not be bound to the authority of the Scriptures, because the Church had changed...the Sabbath into Sunday, not by command of Christ, but by its own authority." (Canon and Tradition, p. 263)
- "Is not yet too late for Protestants to redeem themselves. Will they do it?... will they indeed take the written word only, the Scripture alone, as their sole authority and their sole standard? Or will they still hold the indefensible, self contradictory, and suicidal doctrine and practice of following the authority of the Catholic church and wear the SIGN of her authority? Will they keep the Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day, according to Scripture? Or will they keep the Sunday according to the tradition of the Catholic church." (Ibid, page 31)

Roman Catholic Church is Babylon

- "It is interesting to note how often our Church has availed herself of practices which were in common use among pagans...Thus it is true, in a certain sense, that some Catholic rites and ceremonies are a reproduction of those of pagan creeds." (The Externals of the Catholic Church, Her Government, Ceremonies, Festivals, Sacramentals and Devotions, by John F. Sullivan, p 156, published by P.J. Kennedy, NY, 1942)
- "It has often been charged... that Catholicism is overlaid with many pagan incrustations. Catholicism is ready to accept that accusation - and even to make it her boast... the great god Pan is not really dead, he is baptized." (The Story of Catholicism p 37)
- "Cardinal Newman admits in his book that; the "The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints, and ornamented on occasions with branches of trees; incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness; holy water; asylums; holydays and seasons, use of calendars, processions, blessings on the fields; sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, images at a later date, perhaps the ecclesiastical chant, and the Kyrie Eleison [Note 17], are all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church. (374)" (An Essay on the The Development of the Christian Doctrine John Henry, Cardinal Newman, p.359)
- "The penetration of the religion of Babylon became so general and well known that Rome was called the New Babylon." (Faith of our fathers 1917 ed. Cardinal Gibbons, p. 106)
- "In order to attach to Christianity great attraction in the eyes of the nobility, the priests adopted the outer garments and adornments which were used in pagan cults." (Life of Constantine, Eusabius, cited in Altai-Nimalaya, p. 94)
- "The Church did everything it couldto stamp out such 'pagan' rites, but had to capitulate and allow the rites to continue with only the name of the local diety changed to some Christian saint's name." (Religious Tradition and Myth. Dr. Edwin Goodenough, Professor of Religion, Harvard University. p. 56, 57)

- "The popes filled the place of the vacant emperors at Rome, inheriting their power, their prestige, and their titles from PAGANISM." (Stanley's History, page 40)

Catholic Church Speaks Against God's Word

- The decree set forth in the year 1229 A.D. by the Council of Valencia... places Bible on The Index of Forbidden Books. The doctrine withholds "it is forbidden for laymen (common man) to read the Old and New Testaments. - We forbid them most severely to have the above books in the popular vernacular. The lords of the districts shall carefully seek out the heretics in dwellings, hovels, and forests, and even their underground retreats shall be entirely wiped out." (Council Tolosanum, Pope Gregory IX, Anno. Chr. 1229)
- "The very nature of the Bible ought to prove to any thinking man the impossibility of its being the one safe method to find out what the Savior taught." (Ibid., p. 67)
- "The Scriptures indeed is a divine book but it is a dead letter, which has to be explained, and cannot exercise the action which the preacher can obtain." (Our Priesthood, p. 155)
- "The simple fact is that the Bible, like all dead letters, calls for a living interpreter." (The Faith of Millions, p. 155)
- "The Bible was not intended to be a textbook of Christian religion." (Catholic Facts, p. 50)
- "The belief in the Bible as the sole source of faith is unhistorical, illogical, fatal to the virtue of faith, and destructive of unity." (The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XIII, Protestantism, Section III A - Sola Scriptura ("Bible Alone"), Nihil Obstat, February 1, 1912 by Remy Lafort, D.D., Censor, Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York)

Catholic Church Declares Mary as REDEEMER!

- "The foundation of all our confidence is found in the Blessed Virgin Mary. God has committed to her the treasury of all good things, in order that everyone may know that through her are obtained every hope, every grace, and all salvation. For this is His will: That we obtain everything through Mary." (Pope Pius IX)
- "To such extent did Mary suffer and almost die with her suffering and dying Son; to such extent did she surrender her maternal rights over her Son for : man's salvation . . that we may rightly say she redeemed the human race together with Christ." (Benedict XV, Inter Sodalicia, 1918)
- "O Mary, the guardian of our peace and the dispensatrix of heavenly graces." (Leo XIII, Supremi Apostolatus, 1883)
- "In fact, by being assumed into heaven she has not laid aside the office of salvation but by the manifold intercession she continues to obtain for us the grace of eternal salvation." (John Paul II, Dives in Misericordia, 1980, quoting Lumen Gentium)

Does this sound like the church of Christ? I say not a chance! The Roman Catholic Church declares that the pope is the "Vicar of Christ". It is clear that he is not the vicar of Christ, but the Vicar of Satan. You can now see from the above how the antichrist speaks.

Dan 8:23 "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. 24 He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. 25 He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

Peace Plan – Starts 7 year Tribulation

7 Years starts with Peace Plan

Exodus 23:32-33

"You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. "They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

Exodus 34:12-15

"Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. "But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim --for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God--*read more.*

Deuteronomy 7:2

Verse Concepts

and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.

Judges 2:2

Verse Concepts

and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done?

2 Chronicles 19:2

Verse Concepts

Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so bring wrath on yourself from the LORD?

2 Chronicles 20:37

Verse Concepts

Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." So the ships were broken and could not go to Tarshish.

Isaiah 8:11-12

For thus the LORD spoke to me with mighty power and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying, "You are not to say, 'It is a conspiracy!' In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it.

Isaiah 30:2

Verse Concepts

Who proceed down to Egypt Without consulting Me, To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

Isaiah 31:1

Verse Concepts

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help And rely on horses, And trust in chariots because they are many And in horsemen because they are very strong, But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!

Hosea 4:17

Verse Concepts

Ephraim is joined to idols; Let him alone.

Hosea 12:1

Verse Concepts

Ephraim feeds on wind, And pursues the east wind continually; He multiplies lies and violence. Moreover, he makes a covenant with Assyria, And oil is carried to Egypt.

Ex 34:12-15

Ex 23:32-33

Judge 2:2

Joel 3:2

<http://www.alphanewsdaily.com/Warning%2014%20Coming%20Peace%20Plan.html>

A "Peace" Plan Will Be Enforced Upon Israel Which Will Change the World . . . Forever!

A coming "peace" plan enforced upon nation Israel will change the world ... FOREVER!!!

The Bible warns a coming "peace plan" will trigger the coming "Apocalypse"... DON'T MISS THIS ... we are warned the coming "Apocalypse" will be the IRREVERSIBLE result of a coming "Peace" Plan which will be enforced upon Israel. It appears from Bible prophecy that the very day this coming "peace" agreement ("covenant") is enforced upon Israel by a coming world leader (who will be the Antichrist) will mark Day 1 of "Apocalypse" ("the Day of (God's) Wrath," "the Time of Jacob's (Israel's) Trouble," the Day of the Lord,"... the "Great Tribulation".)

The Bible also warns there will be NO PEACE in Israel (or the world) until Jesus Christ (Yeshua Ha'Mashiach in Hebrew) returns (at the very end of the coming 7 Year "Apocalypse") ...

"Because, even because

they have seduced My (God's) people, (Israel)

saying, 'Peace',

and there was no peace ..."

(Ezekiel 13:10)

"For they have healed the hurt

of the daughter of My people (Israel) slightly,

saying, 'Peace, Peace';

WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE!"

(Jeremiah 8:11)

The Bible warns to beware of the "Peace" movements . . .

"For you yourselves know perfectly

that the Day of the Lord (the coming "Apocalypse")

so comes as a thief in the night.

FOR WHEN THEY SAY, "PEACE AND SAFETY!"

THEN SUDDEN DESTRUCTION COMES UPON THEM,

as labor pains upon a pregnant woman.

And they shall not escape.

But you, brethren, (believing Christians who have put their faith and trust in the Messiah of Israel)

are not in darkness,

so that this Day (the coming 'Apocalypse')

should overtake you as a thief.

You are all sons of light and sons of the day.

We are not of the night nor of darkness.

Therefore let us not sleep, as others do,

but let us watch and be sober. (watch the world news and know the Bible prophecies!)

For those who sleep, sleep at night,

and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

But let us who are of the day be sober,

putting on the breastplate of faith and love,

and as a helmet the hope of salvation. ('Salvation'... saved from Hell and the coming 'Apocalypse')

For God did NOT appoint us (believing Christians) to wrath, (the "Day of God's Wrath")

but to obtain salvation (saved from our sins and from Hell ... and the coming "Apocalypse")

through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Yeshua Ha'Mashiach in Hebrew)

who died FOR us, (taking upon Himself the wrath and punishment we deserve for our sins ...)

that whether we wake or sleep,

we should live together with Him (in Heaven)." (Thank You, Lord!!!)

(1 Thessalonians 5:2-10)

We are warned in Bible prophecy of a last remaining 7 year period ("one week of years") which has been "determined" upon the children of Israel which will be defined by a peace treaty ("covenant") which will be forced upon Israel. This coming 7 years or "one week of years" is first revealed in the book of Daniel (9:24-27) ... and then outlined in the book of Revelation. Chapters 6 - 20 in the book of Revelation provide the prophetic details of the (terrible) events which will take place during this coming 7 year period of time which is first prophesied in the book of Daniel.

This coming 'peace plan,' 'treaty,' or 'resolution' will be "enforced" (confirmed) by a coming world leader who (we are told in Bible prophecy) will first rise over a group of 10 nations which were once part of the Roman Empire (Europe?). The Bible doesn't say this coming world leader (the "Antichrist") writes this coming 'peace plan' or treaty, but says he will enforce a peace plan ("covenant") upon Israel ... this coming treaty or peace plan may have been drafted sometime earlier ...

The Bible also warns exactly 3½ years (1,260 days) after this 'false peace' is enforced, this "peace plan" or treaty will be 'annulled' by this coming world leader (the Antichrist) while addressing the world from a new Jewish Temple which will someday be built in Jerusalem . . . it will be this address, given by this leader, from a newly built Jewish Temple which will trigger the terrors of the final 3½ years of the "Great Tribulation."

FIRST ... the Bible warns a coming world leader (the Antichrist) will rise out of "the people" who once made up the Roman Empire sometime AFTER the city (Jerusalem) and the Jewish Temple were destroyed in 70 AD (Daniel wrote these prophecies around 500 years before Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple) ...

"And the people (the Roman Empire)
OF the prince (the coming Antichrist)

who is to come ("the people shall destroy" ... the Antichrist would come after "his people" destroy "the City") shall destroy the City (Jerusalem) (this "people" who destroyed Jerusalem was the Roman Empire) and the Sanctuary (the Jewish Temple)." (the "prince" would rise out of this "people" in the future) (Daniel 9:26)

THE COMING PEACE PLAN ... THE COMING "APOCALYPSE": This coming world leader ("the prince"... the coming "Antichrist") will one day enforce ("confirm") a treaty ("covenant") upon "the many" in Israel for "one week" (7 years) which we are also told will be the LAST 7 years of "this Age"...

"Then (later) he ("the prince who is to come" ... the coming Antichrist) shall confirm (enforce)

a covenant ('peace treaty' or 'peace plan')
with many (in Israel)
for one week (shabua or shabu'im = a week of Years = 7 years)

But in the middle of the week (exactly $3\frac{1}{2}$ years ... 1260 days ... after enforcing this 'peace' plan)
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. (there will be a new Jewish Temple built in Jerusalem)
And on the wing of abominations
shall be one who makes desolate ..." (Revelation chapters 6-20 detail the terrors after this event)
(Daniel 9:27)

Jesus Christ (Yeshua Ha'Mashiach in Hebrew) warns NEVER in the history of mankind has there ever been (or ever will be) anything as terrible and deadly as the coming "Apocalypse"... only a small remnant of the world will survive after the Antichrist commits "the abomination of desolations" while standing in the Jewish Temple exactly $3\frac{1}{2}$ years (1260 days) AFTER this coming "Peace" Plan is enforced upon the people and nation of Israel . . .

"For there will be Great Tribulation

such has not been

since the beginning of the world until this time

no, nor ever shall be.

And UNLESS those days were shortened

NO flesh (on Earth) would be saved"

(Matthew 24:21-22)

It also appears from Bible prophecy the "Rapture" of all sincere, believing Christians (followers of Jesus Christ ... Yeshua Ha'Mashiach in Hebrew) will take place sometime BEFORE this coming "peace treaty" is enforced upon Israel.

We must never force Israel to give up the land God has given them. It is theirs. Pray for Israel and Her people.

As noted, this coming 'peace plan' or treaty defines and marks the beginning of the coming Apocalypse. The coming Apocalypse will last exactly 7 (360 day) years (which includes $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of false peace in Israel after the "covenant" is enforced, and then $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of unspeakable global terror.) The coming Apocalypse will be

the irreversible and irrevocable result of this 'Peace Plan' which will one-day be enforced upon the nation and people of Israel by a very popular coming world leader, a false 'man of peace' ... the coming Antichrist.

The world will soon get the leader it seems to be longing and waiting for. This powerful leader will be popular, attractive, charismatic, and a great talker whose many words will not be chosen for truth, but for lies and deception. This coming leader, who has many titles in the Bible including the Antichrist, will kill many Christians and Jews . . .

The armies of the world who will have gathered in Israel for the coming Battle of Armageddon will be utterly destroyed by Jesus Christ (Yeshua Ha'Mashiach in Hebrew) exactly 7 years after this coming peace plan is enforced upon the nation and people of Israel . . .

"... And they gathered them together (the armies of world)

to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."

(Revelation 16:12-16)

Armageddon . . .

The prophecies will be fulfilled. The weapons will be used. Cities will disappear. Nations will be destroyed.

The Bible warns "at the time of the end" (around the time of the coming "Apocalypse," Armageddon and the "Time of Jacob's (Israel's) Trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7) ALL NATIONS (including the US) will unite (united nations?) and turn against Israel (Zechariah 14:1-2 ... Joel 3:1-2 ... Revelation 16:13-16.)

Armageddon means the "Hill of Megiddo." Megiddo is part of the Plain of Esdraelon which is located in Israel. Napoleon declared it to be the finest battlefield in the world. The whole world will someday be drawn into this devastating global war over Jerusalem and Israel. When all seems lost, and when all the nations of the world gather a great coalition and armies against the remnant of Israel (after a series of conflicts), Jesus Christ, the Messiah (the "Son of Man"... "the Son of God") will return to engage this final battle Himself . . .

"Now I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse.

And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True,

and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

His eyes were like a flame of fire,

and on His head were many crowns.

He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, (after the battle of Armageddon)

and His Name is called The Word of God . . .

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword,

that with it He should strike the nations.

And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron.

He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

(Revelation 19:11-16)

Don't miss the significance here ... this is Jesus (Yeshua), the Messiah, who will save the children of Israel and destroy her enemies. When you study this awesome prophecy describing the final return of Jesus Christ (Yeshua Ha'Mashiach in Hebrew) and the many other prophecies describing this same event . . . Jesus (Yeshua), the Messiah, is returning to save Israel from the nations and armies of this world who will accuse her of "unjustly occupying" the Land. According to the Bible, the "right side" is "Israel's side" in this coming battle. Believing Christians should never turn against Israel. However, there are many Christian churches and denominations who have accepted the "Roman" doctrine that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. This doctrine is not found in the Bible ... and it is dead wrong!!! The Church (drawn from both Jews and Gentiles) and nation Israel have two separate prophetic destinies. For the Church, (both Jews and non-Jews who believe in and receive Jesus as Messiah and Savior before the Rapture), Jesus returns as the "Bridegroom" to shelter and protect us from the wrath which will soon pour out upon mankind, and then (later), for the Jews of Israel who have gone through the Great Tribulation (those who will then recognize Him as their promised "Messiah"), He will return as the promised King, the son of David, (above all on Earth). Sadly, for some (yet unknown) reason the U.S. will not be there for Israel in that Day. Israel must stand alone. Her only hope is in God, Jesus (Yeshua), the Messiah . . .

Have a hard time believing in God? The above verses are clear . . .

Why? God is warning us . . .

Please remember . . .

Please remember, the Kingdom of Heaven is available to every man, woman, boy, and girl in this world, no matter who they are, where they live, or what they have done. It is freely offered to any and all who will receive it. Simply learn of Jesus (Yeshua), the promised Messiah, invite Him into your life as Lord, believe He died on the Cross for all of your sins and rose from the grave (proving there a Kingdom of Heaven ... and a Hell). Learn of Him and believe in Him . . . for He was the only one who has ever loved you enough to Himself for on the Cross. He shed His blood, suffered, and died on the Cross to you from your sins from the utter darkness and torment of Hell, you will accept it, believe it, and trust in it. That is why Jesus is called Savior. He now lovingly and graciously offers you life in Heaven (and we are warned it is a "take it or leave it" proposition.) We have to consciously receive it and accept it in faith. If you sincerely admit you have sinned (which means you will a Savior to get into Heaven) and ask Jesus to come into your life and honestly try to stop doing (and saying) those things God says are wrong, you go to Heaven ... and with open arms and tears of joy He will receive who will come to Him in faith and in love ...

is substitute you save and if need will all It's God's Promise!!!

The unpardonable sin is to reject God's love and His free offer of life in the Kingdom of Heaven by rejecting Jesus (Yeshua), the Messiah, who stepped forth from Heaven (as promised) ... not to condemn the sinner, but to the sinner (from the torment of Hell) and who willingly and lovingly shed His blood on the Cross so we can be washed clean of our sins. The Bible warns there will be no peace in our lives until we make peace with God through His Son, Jesus (Yeshua), the promised Messiah. The Bible says there will be no peace in Israel or on Earth until Jesus (Yeshua), the Messiah returns . . .

only save all also

Peace and Safety

1Th 5:1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.** 4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

- The United Nations came into being in 1945, following the devastation of the Second World War, with one central mission: the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN does this by working to prevent conflict; helping parties in conflict make peace; peacekeeping; and creating the conditions to allow peace to hold and flourish.
- Trump: And we have laid out a pathway toward peace and security in our world

Do not make a covenant with your neighbors

- Is 21 – The Fall of Babylon Proclaimed
1 The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.
As whirlwinds in the South pass through, So it comes from the desert, from a terrible land.
2 A distressing vision is declared to me;
The treacherous dealer deals treacherously, And the plunderer plunders.
Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Media! All its sighing I have made to cease.
3 Therefore my loins are filled with pain; Pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor.
I was distressed when I heard it; I was dismayed when I saw it.
4 My heart wavered, fearfulness frightened me; The night for which I longed He turned into fear for me.
- Is 24 – Impending Judgment on the Earth
1 Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
2 And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master;
As with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller;
As with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
3 The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the Lord has spoken this word.
4 The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish.
5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.
6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left.
7 The new wine fails, the vine languishes, All the merry-hearted sigh.
8 The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, The joy of the harp ceases.
9 They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
10 The city of confusion is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.
11 There is a cry for wine in the streets, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone.
12 In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction.
13 When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.
14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; For the majesty of the Lord They shall cry aloud from the sea.
15 Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, The name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: “Glory to the righteous!”
But I said, “I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me!”
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.”
17 Fear and the pit and the snare Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.
18 And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear Shall fall into the pit,
And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare;
For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken.
19 The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.
20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.
21 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones,
And on the earth the kings of the earth.
22 They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison;
After many days they will be punished.
23 Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed;
For the Lord of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.

False Prophet

The Beast from the Earth

Rev 13 ¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. ¹⁵ He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

- It is the False Prophet that makes everyone take the mark of the beast

Miracles

- ¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.
 - The beast rising from the sea has the “signs and wonders” to back up his false teaching. A specific miracle of the false prophet is described: **he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men**. It is important that John highlights *this* miracle. In the eyes of the deceived world, it answers the miracle of the two witnesses, who minister during this period and are persecuted by the Antichrist and his false prophet (Revelation 11:5). To the deceived world, this also puts this false prophet in the class of Elijah (1 Kings 18). We can imagine the false prophet as saying, “Let the true God answer with fire” and then performing his deceptive wonder.
 - “There is a supernatural power which is *against* God and truth, as well as one *for* God and truth. A miracle, simply as a work of wonder, is not necessarily of God. There has always been a devilish supernaturalism in the world, running alongside of the supernaturalism of divine grace and salvation.” (Seiss)
 - In the days of the Exodus, Aaron performed miracles, and up to a point was matched miracle-for-miracle by the magicians of Egypt (Exodus 7-9).
 - In Deuteronomy 13:1-5, God assumes there will be supernatural works on behalf of false prophets and idols, and He warns His people to judge a worker of miracles by their message, not only by their works.
 - Jesus said that some who worked miracles – *even in His name* – were false followers and would perish in hell (Matthew 7:22-23).
 - Jesus said that in the end times, false prophets would emerge and *show great signs and wonders to deceive* (Matthew 24:24).
 - Paul said that the Antichrist will come *with all power, signs, and lying wonders* (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
 - Knowing all this, the emphasis on *signs and wonders* among some Christians is frightening. Some Christians say or think, “You can really know where God is and where His power is by signs and wonders.” Thinking this way is to leave yourself wide open to deception. Years ago there was a large, multi-denominational conference of people who thought this way, and their slogan – on a huge banner over the conference platform – read “Unity Under Signs and Wonders.” That’s a unity that Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet could all join in. Signs and wonders will be present among Christians, but the real marks of God’s work are love and truth.
 - The False Prophet will be able to call down fire from heaven. This miracle is associated with the power of God.
 - Ge 19:24
 - Lv 10:1-2

- 1Ki 18:38
- Rev 11:3-6

- ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. ¹⁵ He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.
 - The beast rising from the earth will use a deceptive, animated AI **image** as the focus point of the worship of the beast.
 - It may seem strange to us to have the whole world give this kind of worship to the image of a man, but the personality cults of totalitarian governments in the twentieth century are a good example of this kind of worship. All we have to do is remember totalitarian states like the Soviet Union or Communist China, and their omnipresent pictures of Stalin or Mao and we see a pattern that will be ultimately fulfilled by the Antichrist.
 - The image of the beast is animated in some way, in that it has **breath** and can **speak**. Whether the image is animated supernaturally or technologically, the result will be impressive. The Psalmist mocked idol worshippers because *the idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not* (Psalm 135:15-16). This image of the Antichrist will be a different kind of idol, because **the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed**.
 - This idolatrous image is what Jesus, Daniel, and Paul spoke of as *the abomination of desolation* (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). It is an idolatrous image set up in the holy place of a rebuilt temple; it is an *abomination* in the sense of being supreme idolatry, and it is *desolation* in the sense that it will bring the judgment described by the seals, trumpets, and bowls.
 - This is the summation of the power of the Antichrist, whose authority ends after forty-two months (Revelation 13:5). This marks the halfway point of the final seven years of man's rule of this planet. The Antichrist's power ends as soon as it peaks.
 - This is not a recent understanding of this passage. The first commentary we have on the Book of Revelation, written by Victorinus in the early church, says of this Revelation 13:15: "He shall cause also that a golden image of Antichrist shall be placed in the temple at Jerusalem, and that the apostate angel should enter, and thence utter voices and oracles."

Mark of the Beast

¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number *is* 666.

The mark of the beast = drugs

Rev 18 ²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. ²² The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. ²³ The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your

merchants were the great men of the earth, **for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.** ²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

- **sorcerers** [φάρμακος, fahr'-mah-kos]
 - From the etymology we get pharmakia – pharmacy, drug dealers
 - **for by your ‘drugs’ all the nations were deceived**
- There a pharmakia/drug coming that is going to be very deceptive
- This drug will also be very poisonous
 - **Rev 16 ² So the first [angel] went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.**

Mark = tattoo

◀ 5480. charagma ▶

Strong's Concordance

charagma: a stamp, impress

Original Word: χάραγμα, ατος, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: charagma

Phonetic Spelling: (khar'-ag-mah)

Definition: a stamp, impress

Usage: sculpture; engraving, a stamp, sign.

HELPS Word-studies

5480 *xáragma* – properly, an engraving (etching); (figuratively) a mark providing *undeniable identification*, like a symbol giving *irrefutable connection* between parties.

5480 /*xáragma* ("brand-mark") was originally any *impress* on a coin or a seal, used by an engraver on a die (stamp, branding iron). **5480** (*xáragma*) later became "*the identification-marker*" (like with an *owner's* unique "brand-mark").

[Ancient documents were validated by such stamps or seals (see Plutarch, *Agesilaus*, 15:6; *De Lysandro* 16:2, *ala DNTT*, 2, 574).]

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Englishman's Concordance

Acts 17:29 N-DNS

GRK: ἡ λίθῳ **χάραγματι** τέχνης καὶ

NAS: stone, **an image formed** by the art

KJV: or stone, **graven** by art and

INT: or to stone **a graven thing** craft and

Revelation 13:16 N-ANS

GRK: δῶσιν αὐτοῖς **χάραγμα** ἐπὶ τῆς

NAS: to be given **a mark** on their right

KJV: to receive **a mark** in their

INT: it should give them **a mark** on the

Revelation 13:17 N-ANS

GRK: ἔχων τὸ **χάραγμα** τὸ ὄνομα

NAS: the one who has **the mark**, [either] the name

KJV: save he that had **the mark**, or the name

INT: has the **mark** the name

Revelation 14:9 N-ANS

GRK: καὶ λαμβάνει **χάραγμα** ἐπὶ τοῦ

NAS: and receives **a mark** on his forehead

KJV: and receive **[his] mark** in his

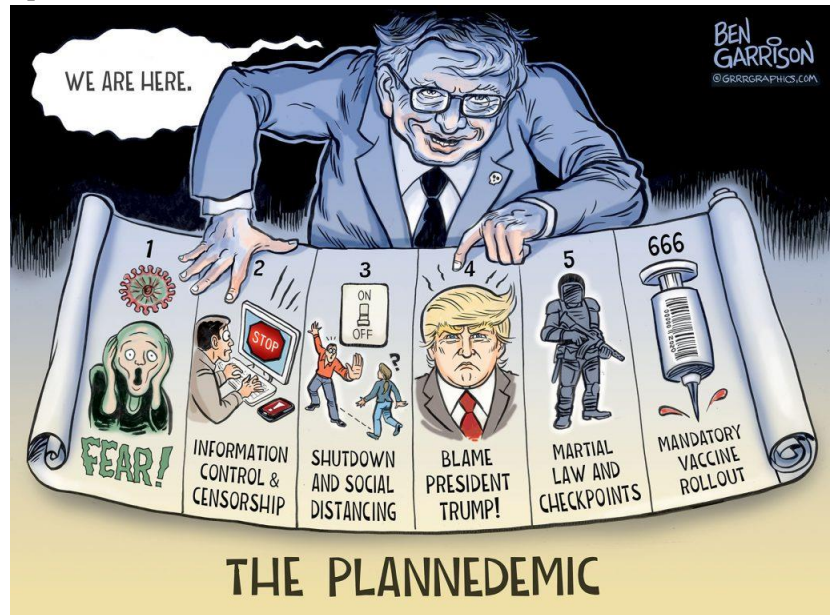
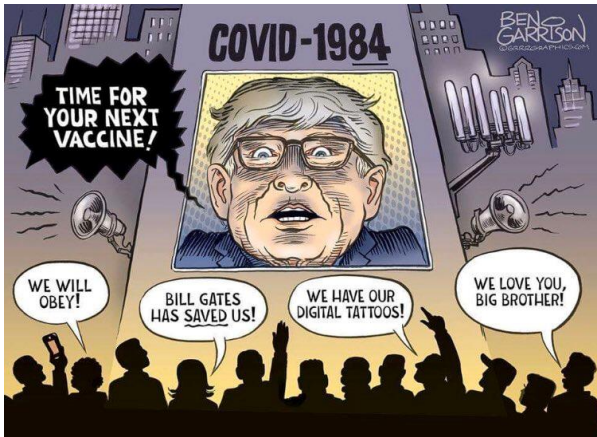
INT: and receives **a mark** on the

Eternally damned once you accept the mark

- The mark will in some way change your DNA so you are no longer made in the image of God – not redeemable
- Wrath – carries with it the idea of heat, poison, venom, and rage
- <https://allpropastors.org/mark-of-the-beast-part-ii/>
- <https://www.douglashamp.com/how-the-mark-of-the-beast-will-rewrite-the-human-genome-part-three-corrupting-the-image/>

Coronavirus Vaccine

Everything we are hearing today seems to be scripted/planned



Event 201 - October 18, 2019

- <https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/event201/>
- A high-level coronavirus pandemic exercise modeling a 'fictional' coronavirus outbreak
- Held in New York City weeks before the COVID 19 outbreak
- Hosted by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and World Economic Forum
- Quotes from the Communications discussion (controlling the narrative)
 - "I think, as in previous conversations, centered around management of information of public health needs, there needs to be a centralized response around the communications approach that can then be cascaded to inform advocates represented in the NGO [non-governmental organizations] communities and the medical professionals, etc. centralized on an International basis because there needs to be a centralized depository of data facts and key messages."
 - "To add to it, maybe by saying that I think that one of the things we want to do is work with telecommunications companies to ensure that everyone has the kind of access to ensure communications that we are interested in providing because that's going to be critical"
 - "We can speak to them very clearly in a daily briefing. In this case, I can't imagine any other institution other than the World Health Organization being the focal point."
 - "I think a complimentary tactic is to tap faith-based organizations and civil society and other institutions to recruit them also to basically almost at a grassroots level to basically have the integrity"
 - In other words, to lend credence to what we're going to do, we need to recruit the faith-based community because that will add credibility
 - "The social media platforms, there's an opportunity to understand who it is that's a susceptible forum to misinformation"
 - "We need to stop social media from creating huge damage and we should use it and get it on our side and we should work together with them and try to avoid this misinformation."
 - Everything now seems to be scripted

- Facebook will remove ‘misinformation’ and warn people that ‘like’ or react to ‘fake’ coronavirus news
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/16/facebook-will-warn-people-who-like-or-react-to-fake-coronavirus-news.html>
- Twitter - Are you about to post a tweet containing “harmful” language? Don’t worry — Twitter is experimenting with a feature that will warn you ahead of time, so you don’t accidentally infect any users with your **wrongthink**.
 - <https://americanpriority.com/news/twitter-will-now-warn-you-if-you-are-about-to-post-wrongthink/>
 - Can anyone say ‘1984’?
 - **Is 5²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!**

World Economic Forum – Shaping the new normal

- The plan for the New World Order (Global Government) <https://www.weforum.org/>
 - <https://www.weforum.org/platforms>
 - The WEF's mission is cited as "committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas". It is a membership-based organization, and membership is made up of the world's largest corporations.
- COVID-19
 - <https://intelligence.weforum.org/topics/a1G0X000006O6EHUA0?tab=publications>
 - COVID-19: Finding a Vaccine – Has links to climate change and the LGBTQ inclusion
 - COVID-19 Biotechnology
 - <https://intelligence.weforum.org/topics/a1Gb0000001j9vIEAA?tab=publications>
 - Details the vaccine using body activity data by way of a biocompatible near infrared quantum tattoo that is delivered to the skin by micro needle patches to record vaccination. Not only will it identify who has been vaccinated (and who has not), it will also be your digital ID (ID 2020).
 - Identifies you so you have access to basic goods and services
 - The Greek word for ‘mark’ (χάρagma) is where we get our English word for ‘tattoo’
- Cashless Society
 - <https://www.weforum.org/platforms/shaping-the-future-of-digital-economy-and-new-value-creation>
 - By devaluing the dollar, you will beg for a new currency that has value

5G

- Maps of where 5G is most prevalent corresponds to where the hot spots are in the country (NYC, Philadelphia)

	Radiation Introduced	Resulting Pandemic	Mortality Rate
1918	Radio Waves	Spanish Flu	2%
2003	3G	SARS	9.6%
2009	4G	H1N1 (Swine Flu)	0.02%
2020	5G	COVID 19	0.06% *

Players

WHO – World Health Organization

- WHO's primary role is to direct international health within the United Nations' system and to lead partners in global health responses.
- Downplayed the severity of the coronavirus and toting the Chinese government line.
- Immunity passports required for life to return to normal
 - WHO has published guidance on adjusting public health and social measures for the next phase of the COVID-19 response. Some governments have suggested that the detection of antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, could serve as the basis for an “immunity passport” or “risk-free certificate” that would enable individuals to travel or to return to work assuming that they are protected against re-infection. There is currently no evidence that people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies are protected from a second infection.
 - <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/immunity-passports-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

Dr Anthony Fauci

- US director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
- Dr Anthony Fauci approved a US-funded \$3.7 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) project at the Wuhan Institute of Virology for bat-coronavirus research in 2015 after US ban imposed on 'monster-germ' research
- Received HUGE amounts of money from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for his organization

Deborah L. Birx, M.D.

- Bill Gates and Ambassador Deborah L. Birx, M.D.
- PEPFAR builds meaningful and wide-ranging partnerships so we can make an impact greater than the sum of our investments. We foster public-private partnerships that support and complement our prevention, care, and treatment work. These partnerships pilot new scale-up of existing interventions and benefit from significant private sector resources. (Photo: PEPFAR)



Bill Gates

- Friends with George Soros, Anthony Fauci and Rockefeller
- Deborah Birx accidentally said Bill Gates is the boss
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhjCzLEKW-c>

Father founded Planned Parenthood

- Controversial vaccine studies: Why is Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation under fire from critics in India?
 - In 2009, several schools for tribal children in Khammam district in Telangana — then a part of undivided Andhra Pradesh — became sites for observation studies for a cervical cancer vaccine that was administered to thousands of girls aged between nine and 15. The girls were administered the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine in three rounds that year under the supervision of state health department officials. The vaccine used was Gardasil, manufactured by Merck. It was



administered to around 16,000 girls in the district, many of whom stayed in state government-run hostels meant for tribal students. Months later, many girls started falling ill and by 2010 five of them died. Two more deaths were reported from Vadodara, Gujarat, where an estimated 14,000 children studying in schools meant for tribal children were also vaccinated with another brand of HPV vaccine, Cervarix, manufactured by GSK. Earlier in the week, the Associated Press reported that scores of teenaged girls were hospitalized in a small town in northern Colombia with symptoms that parents suspect could be an adverse reaction to Gardasil. A standing committee on health and family welfare that investigated the irregularities pertaining to the observation studies in India tabled its report a year ago, on August 30. The committee found that consent for conducting these studies, in many cases, was taken from the hostel wardens, which was a flagrant violation of norms. In many other cases, thumbprint impressions of their poor and illiterate parents were duly affixed onto the consent form. The children also had no idea about the nature of the disease or the vaccine. The authorities concerned could not furnish requisite consent forms for the vaccinated children in a huge number of cases. The committee said it was “deeply shocked to find that in Andhra Pradesh out of the 9,543 [consent] forms, 1,948 forms have thumb impressions while hostel wardens have signed 2,763 forms. In Gujarat, out of the 6,217 forms 3,944 have thumb impressions and 5,454 either signed or carried thumb impressions of guardians. The data revealed that a very large number of parents or guardians are illiterate and could not even write in their local languages, Telugu or Gujarati.” Earlier this month, taking a serious view of the death of seven tribal girls in the context of the observation studies, the Supreme Court asked the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to explain how permissions were given.

- There are Numerous lawsuits against the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation because of their vaccines on human beings in 3rd world countries, under the banner of doing good.
- Bill Gates: Philanthropist or Eugenicist?
 - After it was exposed that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the philanthropic brainchild of Microsoft founder Bill Gates, purchased 500,000 shares in Monsanto back in 2010 valued at more than \$23 million, it became abundantly clear that this so-called benevolent charity is up to something other than eradicating disease and feeding the world’s poor. It turns out that the Gates family legacy has long been one of trying to dominate and control the world’s systems, including in the areas of technology, medicine, and now agriculture. The Gates Foundation, aka the tax-exempt Gates Family Trust, is currently in the process of

spending billions of dollars in the name of humanitarianism to establish a global food monopoly dominated by genetically-modified (GM) crops and seeds. And based on the Gates family's history of involvement in world affairs, it appears that one of its main goals besides simply establishing corporate control of the world's food supply is to reduce the world's population by a significant amount in the process. Bill Gates' father, William H. Gates Sr., has long been involved with the eugenics group Planned Parenthood, a rebranded organization birthed out of the American Eugenics Society. In a 2003 interview with PBS' Bill Moyers, Bill Gates admitted that his father used to be the head of Planned Parenthood, which was founded on the concept that most human beings are just "reckless breeders" and "human weeds" in need of culling. Gates also admitted during the interview that his family's involvement in reproductive issues throughout the years has been extensive, referencing his own prior adherence to the beliefs of eugenicist Thomas Robert Malthus, who believed that populations of the world need to be controlled through reproductive restrictions. Though Gates claims he now holds a different view, it appears as though his foundation's initiatives are just a modified Malthusian approach that much more discreetly reduces populations through vaccines and GMOs. William Gates Sr.'s association with Planned Parenthood and continued influence in the realm of "population and reproductive health" is significant because Gates Sr. is co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This long-time eugenicist "guides the vision and strategic direction" of the Gates Foundation, which is currently heavily focused on forcing GMOs on Africa via its financing of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The Gates Foundation has admittedly given at least \$264.5 million in grant commitments to AGRA, and also reportedly hired Dr. Robert Horsch, a former Monsanto executive for 25 years who developed Roundup, to head up AGRA back in 2006. According to a report published in La Via Campesina back in 2010, 70 percent of AGRA's grantees in Kenya work directly with Monsanto, and nearly 80 percent of the Gates Foundation funding is devoted to biotechnology. The same report explains that the Gates Foundation pledged \$880 million in April 2010 to create the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), which is a heavy promoter of GMOs. GAFSP, of course, was responsible for providing \$35 million in "aid" to earthquake-shattered Haiti to be used for implementing GMO agricultural systems and technologies. Back in 2003, the Gates Foundation invested \$25 million in "GM (genetically modified) research to develop vitamin and protein-enriched seeds for the world's poor," a move that many international charities and farmers groups vehemently opposed. And in 2008, the Gates Foundation awarded \$26.8 million to Cornell University to research GM wheat, which is the next major food crop in the crosshairs of Monsanto's GM food crop pipeline. If you control agriculture, you control the populations of the world. The Gates Foundation's ties with Monsanto and corporate agriculture in general speak volumes about its real agenda, which is to create a monopolistic system of world control in every area of human life. Vaccines, pharmaceuticals, GMOs, reproductive control, weather manipulation, global warming — these and many other points of entry are the means by which the Gates Foundation is making great strides to control the world by pretending to help improve and save it. Rather than promote real food sovereignty and address the underlying political and economic issues that breed poverty, Gates and Co. has instead embraced the promotion of corporately-owned and controlled agriculture and medicine paradigms that will only further enslave the world's most impoverished. It is abundantly evident that GMOs have ravished already-impoverished people groups by destroying their native agricultural systems, as has been seen in India. Some may say Gates' endeavors are all about the money, while others may say they are about power and control. Perhaps it is a combination of both, where Gates is still in the business of promoting his own commercial investments, which includes buying shares in Monsanto while simultaneously investing in programs to promote Monsanto. Whatever the case may be, there is simply no denying that Gates now has a direct interest in seeing Monsanto succeed in spreading GMOs around the world. And since Gates is openly facilitating Monsanto's growth into new markets through his "humanitarian" efforts, it is clear that the Gates family is in bed with Monsanto. "Although Bill Gates might try to say that the Foundation is not linked to his business, all it proves is the opposite: most of their donations end up favoring the commercial investments of the tycoon, not really "donating" anything, but instead of paying taxes to state coffers, he invests his profits in where it is favorable to him economically, including propaganda from their supposed good intentions," wrote Silvia Ribeiro in the Mexican news source La Jornada back in 2010. "On the contrary, their 'donations' finance projects as destructive as geoengineering or replacement of natural community medicines for high-tech patented medicines in the poorest areas of the world ... Gates is also engaged in trying to destroy rural farming worldwide, mainly through the 'Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa' (AGRA). It works as a Trojan

horse to deprive poor African farmers of their traditional seeds, replacing them with the seeds of their companies first, finally by genetically modified (GM).”

Dr Fauci, Deborah Birx and Bill Gates connections

- 1. Dr. Anthony Fauci is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), a division of National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- 2. The drug company Moderna was the first company to receive funding to develop a vaccine for COVID19. It is to be developed under the leadership of Dr. Fauci and the NIAID.
- 3. Moderna dispatched vaccine vials to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in Bethesda, Md. The clinic aims to test the vaccine on about 20 to 25 healthy volunteers by late April.
- 4. The goal of the study will be to see if two doses of the vaccine are safe and produce a response in the immune system to fight off COVID-19 infection.
- 5. This vaccine is going to be an mRNA-based vaccine which has never previously been in the market. It has the potential to alter human DNA. See:
<https://vaccineimpact.com/2020/will-a-covid19-vaccine-be-the-first-vaccine-to-alter-human-dna-to-further-advance-transhumanism/>
- 6. The National Plan to Vaccinate Every American – National Registry to Record Everyone’s Vaccination Status <https://vaccineimpact.com/2020/the-national-plan-to-vaccinate-every-american-national-registry-to-record-everyones-vaccination-status/>
- 7. Invoking the PREP Act (Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act) for the first time in our nation’s history, the COVID19 vaccine is being fast-tracked without the usual testing and safety precautions....
- 8.and will undoubtedly become the first mRNA-based vaccine to be tested in the U.S. and world population.
- 9. Dr. Debra Birx, the other doctor on the White House Coronavirus Task Force, has worked with Dr. Fauci on HIV/AIDS research and vaccine development, and also has financial ties to Bill Gates.
- 10. According to Patrick Howley, writing for the National File, Dr. Birx discarded several proposed models for the Coronavirus outbreak and chose a single model funded by Bill Gates, via the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)
- 11. Deborah Birx Sits on the Board of The Global Fund, which is heavily funded by Bill Gates’ organizational network, as journalist Jordan Schactel discovered. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation gave the Global Fund a \$750 million promissory note in 2012.
- 12. The Gates Foundation has contributed US\$2.24 billion to the Global Fund to date, and pledged US\$760 million for the Global Fund’s Sixth Replenishment, covering 2020-2022.”
- 13. Dr? Funny.....
- 14. Bill Gates global agenda is no secret, and in recent days he has made the media circuits to promote his agenda. He wants the entire population vaccinated with a new mRNA-based COVID19 vaccine, and he wants the lock downs to continue until this vaccine is developed.
- 15. Once it is developed, only those who have a COVID19 vaccine certificate will be allowed to travel. See: <https://vaccineimpact.com/2020/bill-gates-calls-for-vaccine-certificates-as-requirement-for-travel/>
- 16. This is nothing new for Bill Gates. This plan has been in place for many years, and with the current Coronavirus scare and world-wide lock down, he is coming close to seeing his dreams come true of vaccinating every human being on the planet with a vaccine that he funds.
- 17. People have been sounding the alarm on Bill Gates’ global agenda for years, and not just those who take a skeptical view of vaccines.



Meet the world's most powerful doctor: Bill Gates

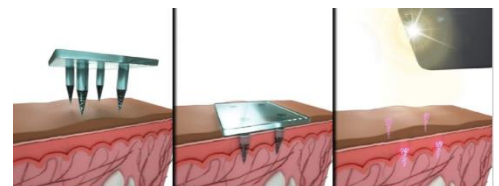
The software mogul's sway over the World Health Organization spurs criticism about misplaced priorities and undue influence.

- 18. Even some among the corporate-sponsored media have raised concerns over the years about Gates' control of global health and the influence he has over the World Health Organization (WHO).
- 19. The media has been reporting for years that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is one of the largest contributors to WHO, second only to the United States, and outspending all other nations of the world.
- 20. The bulk of spending through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is for the development of vaccines. They are behind the Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (GAVI) organization, which supplements what WHO spends on vaccine development.
- 21. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation teamed up with Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security & the World Economic Forum last year to present Event 201....
- 22.which ran simulation exercises on how to plan for a world-wide pandemic due to a coronavirus, six weeks before the outbreak in Wuhan China occurred. See: <https://vaccineimpact.com/2020/did-bill-gates-world-economic-forum-predict-coronavirus-outbreak-will-there-be-an-internet-blackout-to-control-information/>
- 23. Almost everything they planned for has now happened with the current COVID19 reactions. The only thing that has NOT happened, is an Internet blackout to control the flow of information.
- 24. The most likely reason this has not happened, is that the public for the most part has complied with their agenda and stayed home.
- 25. There are no protests or civil unrest, which is something they probably were not anticipating, as there has been almost full compliance to locking down the country and destroying the economy.
- 26. And with everyone staying at home there has been a record surge in Internet usage as people are bored with nothing to do and are streaming content like never before.
- 27. If this were to be cutoff, most likely there would be civil unrest due to Americans' current addiction to entertainment.
- 28. So at least that allows Internet sites like Health Impact News to continue publishing information that is contrary to the controlled narrative coming from the corporate media and White House – for now.
- 29. To learn more about Bill Gates' global agenda, which goes beyond vaccinating everyone on the planet and includes digital currency and controlling the world banking system. VIEW while it is still available.
- 30. The Dark Truth About Fauci and Birx, Bill Gates
<https://nationalfile.com/president-trump-vs-bill-gates-on-treatment-fauci-has-a-100-million-conflict-of-interest/>
- Laura Birx, daughter of Deborah Birx, works for Bill Gates https://www.reddit.com/r/DrainTheSwamp/comments/fx7jnt/laura_birx_daughter_of_deborah_birx_works_for/
- 31. EXCLUSIVE: Deborah Birx's Medical License Is Expired Birx, appointed by former President Obama to serve as United States Global AIDS Coordinator in 2014, graduated from the Pennsylvania St. University medical school in 1980. <https://nationalfile.com/exclusive-deborah-birxs-medical-license-is-expired/>

Biotechnology included with the Immunity Passport

Digital Immunity Certificate / Immunity Passport

- Dissolving microneedles that embed fluorescent medical info
 - <http://news.rice.edu/2019/12/18/quantum-dot-tattoos-hold-vaccination-record/>
 - Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Luciferase Enzyme
 - These self-illuminating quantum dot conjugates can be prepared by coupling of commercially available carboxylate-presenting quantum dots to the light-emitting protein Renilla luciferase. When the conjugates are exposed to the luciferase's substrate coelenterazine, the energy released by substrate catabolism is transferred to the quantum dots through bioluminescence resonance energy transfer, leading to quantum dot light emission. The availability of self-illuminating quantum dot conjugates will provide many new possibilities for ... new quantum dot-based biosensors.
 - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17406398>



- <https://id2020.org/>
- Alliance Partners: Microsoft, The Rockefeller Foundation, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, etc
- A digital identity, as we see it is a grouping of digital identifiers. So, if you interact with any technology connected to the Internet, or to a mobile network, you have a digital identity.
- In the developed world, most of us use large service providers to manage the huge number and variety of digital identifiers we collect. The most prevalent service providers are Facebook, Google, and Amazon. Each provider mediates digital interactions in order to provide a seamless digital experience. And yet, as they do, they also collect digital identifiers, in order to derive insights and drive profit. So your digital identifiers are, for the most part, not in your control. In fact, they are more often than not stored in siloes. And the more siloed and numerous your digital identifiers become the less control you have over them. So while you do have a digital identity, you probably don't have control over it. And that's just you. Over 1 billion people worldwide do not have access to any form of identification. This lack can make it difficult, if not impossible, to access basic critical services like education or healthcare. So, a large group of individuals have no digital identity and those of us that do don't enjoy our rights to privacy, security, and choice. Your digital identity should be yours, but it isn't.

Cryptocurrency System using body activity data

- <https://patentscope.wipo.int/search/en/detail.jsf?docId=WO2020060606>
- Microsoft (Bill Gates) Patent WO/2020/060606 (World Order 2020 666)
 - Not a real patent number claims a patent attorney
- Filed 3/26/2020
- Abstract: Human body activity associated with a task provided to a user may be used in a mining process of a cryptocurrency system. A server may provide a task to a device of a user which is communicatively coupled to the server. A sensor communicatively coupled to or comprised in the device of the user may sense body activity of the user. Body activity data may be generated based on the sensed body activity of the user. The cryptocurrency system communicatively coupled to the device of the user may verify if the body activity data satisfies one or more conditions set by the cryptocurrency system, and award cryptocurrency to the user whose body activity data is verified.
- Cryptocurrency – Digital economy using block-chain technology to track everyone's currency

Enforcement

- Washington State - Governor Inslee lays out statewide contact tracing plan for COVID-19
 - <https://lynnwoodtimes.com/2020/05/12/governor-inslee-lays-out-statewide-contact-tracing-plan-for-covid-19/>
 - For those businesses/individuals that don't comply, the governor stated that he confirmed with Attorney General Bob Ferguson, there will be sanctions in civil or criminal court. ... those individuals that refuse to cooperate with contact tracers and/or refuse testing, will not be allowed to leave their homes to purchase basic necessities such as groceries and/or prescriptions. Those persons will need to make arrangements through friends, family, or a state provided "family support personnel." ... Therefore, any person **not voluntarily complying** could be deemed to be a person "intentionally putting others at risk," in which case **involuntary isolation or quarantine is within the authority of health officials**.
- The National Plan to Vaccinate Every American – National Registry to Record Everyone's Vaccination Status
 - <https://vaccineimpact.com/2020/the-national-plan-to-vaccinate-every-american-national-registry-to-record-everyones-vaccination-status/>
- We Have NO RIGHT to NOT be Vaccinated Alan Dershowitz
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwveriU8tcA>
- Everything moving VERY fast
 - Trump Administration's 'Operation Warp Speed' Zeroes in on 14 Possible COVID-19 Vaccines

Life won't return to normal until we have a vaccine

The narrative continues that there will be no return to normal until EVERYONE has been vaccinated

- “One of the questions I get asked the most these days is when the world will be able to go back to the way things were in December before the coronavirus pandemic. My answer is always the same: when we have an almost perfect drug to treat COVID-19, or when almost every person on the planet has been vaccinated against coronavirus. The former is unlikely to happen anytime soon. We’d need a miracle treatment that was at least 95 percent effective to stop the outbreak. Most of the drug candidates right now are nowhere near that powerful. They could save a lot of lives, but they aren’t enough to get us back to normal. Which leaves us with a vaccine. Humankind has never had a more urgent task than creating broad immunity for coronavirus. Realistically, if we’re going to return to normal, we need to develop a safe, effective vaccine. We need to make billions of doses, we need to get them out to every part of the world, and we need all of this to happen as quickly as possible. That sounds daunting, because it is. Our foundation is the biggest funder of vaccines in the world, and this effort dwarfs anything we’ve ever worked on before. It’s going to require a global cooperative effort like the world has never seen. But I know it’ll get done. There’s simply no alternative.” (Bill Gates)
- Innovations we need to reopen the economy (Bill Gates)
 - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/23/bill-gates-here-are-innovations-we-need-reopen-economy/?arc404=true>
- Life won't return to normal until we have a vaccine
 - <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/coronavirus-live-updates-covid-19-covid19>
 - <https://globalnews.ca/news/6799110/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-return-to-normality-trudeau/>
- Life may never get back to normal
 - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/life-normal-coronavirus-scientist-200407101112133.html>
- Many Vaccine Skeptics Plan to Refuse a COVID-19 Vaccine, Study Suggests
 - <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2020-05-04/many-vaccine-skeptics-plan-to-refuse-a-covid-19-vaccine-study-suggests>

House Resolution (H.R.) 6666 – COVID-19 Testing, Reaching, And Contacting Everyone (TRACE) Act

- To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to eligible entities to **conduct diagnostic testing for COVID-19**, and related activities such as contact tracing, through mobile health units and, as necessary, **at individuals’ residences**, and for other purposes.
- <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6666/text?r=2&s=1>
- <https://www.nowtheendbegins.com/nteb-first-broke-the-story-about-the-ultra-creepy-h-r-6666-trace-bill-last-week-and-its-a-whole-lot-worse-than-we-originally-thought-heres-why/>

COVID-19 Credentials Initiative (CCI)

- <https://www.covidcreds.com/>
- We are a global, cross-sector community of organizations using digital identity as a way to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and reboot public trust.
- The initiative is a direct response to the many calls for an ‘immunity passport,’ a digital certificate that lets individuals prove (and request proof from others) that they’ve recovered after testing negative, have tested positive for antibodies, or have received a vaccination, once one is available. By proving some level of immunity, individuals will be able to begin participating in everyday life again.

Masks

- Could wearing a mask for long periods be detrimental to health?
 - <https://www.jpost.com/health-science/could-wearing-a-mask-for-long-periods-be-detrimental-to-health-628400>
 - Retired neurosurgeon Dr. Russell Blaylock has highlighted a number of studies linking prolonged mask use to headaches and lowered blood oxygen levels, which can weaken the immune system.

- A psychotherapist explains why you want to wear a face mask — even though it probably won't help you avoid illness
 - <https://www.businessinsider.com/face-masks-wont-help-avoid-illness-so-why-wear-them-mental-health>
- Face masks can 'increase risk' of catching coronavirus
 - <https://www.the-sun.com/news/478330/face-masks-increase-risk-coronavirus/>
 - The World Health Organization's (WHO) official advice is that "if you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection".

Vitamin D

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3585561

This is a retrospective cohort study which included two cohorts (active and expired) of 780 cases with laboratory-confirmed infection of SARS-CoV-2 in Indonesia. Age, sex, co-morbidity, Vitamin D status, and disease outcome (mortality) were extracted from electronic medical records. The aim was to determine patterns of mortality and associated factors, with a special focus on Vitamin D status. Results revealed that majority of the death cases were male and older and had pre-existing condition and below normal Vitamin D serum level. Univariate analysis revealed that older and male cases with pre-existing condition and below normal Vitamin D levels were associated with increasing odds of death. When controlling for age, sex, and comorbidity, Vitamin D status is strongly associated with COVID-19 mortality outcome of cases.

Levels of Vitamin D	Mortality
Normal	4%
Insufficient	88%
Deficient	99%

Economic disaster

<https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/coronavirus-pennsylvania-gov-wolf-secrecy-hypocrisy-exacerbate-crisis-charles-mitchell>

One-World Religion

Ecumenism

- The term "ecumenism" refers to efforts by Christians of different church traditions to develop closer relationships and better understandings. The term is also often used to refer to efforts towards the visible and organic unity of different Christian denominations in some form.
- The adjective ecumenical can also be applied to any interdenominational initiative that encourages greater cooperation among Christians and their churches, whether or not the specific aim of that effort is full, visible unity. It can also be applied in the same way to other religions or to refer to unity between religions or between people in general - in this sense it means non-sectarian, non-denominational.
- The terms ecumenism and ecumenical come from the Greek οἰκουμένη (oikoumene), which means "the whole inhabited world", and was historically used with specific reference to the Roman Empire. The ecumenical vision comprises both the search for the visible unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:3) and the "whole inhabited earth" (Matthew 24:14) as the concern of all Christians.
- Right now there is a great move to wipe the word "protestant" out of Christianity.
 - The current thought is we should be one body with acceptance for all teaching and doctrine.
 - One of the biggest "coming together" promoters is TV evangelism.

- The man in charge of one of the largest networks said he is wiping the word "protestant" out of his dictionary. We are all just one.
- Another of these TV preachers traveled to a supposed viewing site of the Virgin Mary. He is of protestant denomination yet he indulged in Catholic Communion (by participating he committed heresy). On national Christian television he told the owner of the Christian network, "You know, I felt such a presence of God when I ate that bread". The owner replied, "I knew it. There is no difference. We are all one and I am knocking the word "protestant" out of my language." In other words, "I am getting into bed with the harlot".
- What will happen to him or anyone like him? The Bible tells us they are going to be cast into Great Tribulation. They will not be taken in the Rapture. They will be in bed with this harlot during the great tribulation. When we get to Revelation 17 and 18 we will see how she suffers. She will be raped and murdered by the ten kings. Her city is destroyed in a single day. You do not want to play around with Rome. The only way to escape this fate is to repent of Rome's deeds.

Coexist

Signify the capability or desire of humans to live together in peace.

C – Islamic crescent moon

O – Peace sign

E – Hindu Om symbol

X – Star of David

I – Pentagram for the dot of the "I"

S – Yin-yang symbol

T – Christian cross



Chrislam

Chrislam — What is it?

Chrislam is a modern-day attempt to blend the teachings and practices of Christianity and Islam. Historically, Chrislam began under a Nigerian leader named Tela Tella in the 1970s. It recognizes both the Bible and Qur'an as holy books and reads from both sources during its gatherings. Likewise, both Christian and Muslim holidays are celebrated as equal. God and Allah are considered the same god.

While the number of Chrislam adherents in Nigeria is few, the concepts of Chrislam have spread worldwide in recent years. Many have claimed that the interfaith movements that incorporate both Christian and Muslim teaching in the West are Chrislam, while some Eastern movements have used elements of both religions in blended, syncretistic movements. Some also wrongly confuse Chrislam with Christian-Islam dialogue since the website chrislam.org uses the term in this way in Lebanon. However, dialogue is a different matter than blending Christianity and Islam into one religion.

Both biblical Christianity and traditional Islam reject modern attempts of Chrislam. The Bible teaches there is one God (Genesis 1:1) and that Jesus Christ is the only way to God (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Islam rejects the idea of Jesus as divine, rejects the Christian view of God as Triune, and rejects the Christian belief in salvation by faith alone. These two religions logically contradict one another in numerous ways. The only way in which these two belief systems can be blended into one is to choose only those beliefs that fit one's preconceived notions or to reinterpret both the Bible and Qur'an to fit a particular agenda.

Chrislam came into particular spotlight in 2009 following megachurch pastor Rick Warren's address at the ISNA 2009 gathering (a major Muslim national event). Accusations were made that Warren had preached a message of Chrislam, that both religions were one. Warren soon responded with a clear rejection of these Chrislam accusations and a reaffirmation of orthodox Christianity. However, the events surrounding this controversy led to much attention regarding the definition of Chrislam and its spread throughout America.

Some have begun calling interfaith gatherings in the U.S. that involve combined worship services with Muslim and Christian elements Chrislam. Theologically, this label is accurate, though these participants are not connected with the movement in Nigeria and would likely reject the label.

Ultimately, however, Christians must be aware that the blending of Islamic worship elements with Christian worship is to be rejected (Jude 3). Instead, Muslims need a clear example of Christians who stand firm in their faith, present the biblical view of Jesus Christ, and live the teachings of the Bible. Only then will the biblical gospel message be clear to Muslims who seek salvation.

Pope

Pope Francis I is doing a LOT that the False Prophet

- Hell does not exist
- Catholicism Unites With Islam
- Social justice
- Global warming
- Open borders
- Taking control of finance

See [Roman Catholicism: Pope = False Prophet \(One-World Religion\)](#)

Birth pains

Beginning of sorrows

God will protect us during the time of trouble (birthpains/tribulation)

- Psalm 27:5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.
 - In light of New Testament teaching I would paraphrase Psalm 27:5 this way: “During the horrific tribulation period, God will hide his people in heaven—high above the trouble.”
- Isaiah 26:19-21 Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. Take Refuge from the Coming Judgment. Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.
 - Here’s the THPV (Todd Hampson’s Paraphrase Version [I’m joking of course]): “The dead in Christ will rise and take refuge away from judgment. God’s people will enter a sealed chamber for a period of time until the indignation or wrath is completed. God will come out of his place to punish the whole earth during a time when all sin is seen for what it really is.”
- Psalm 57:1 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.
 - Again, with our pre-trib rapture framework in mind, this could mean: “Those who trust in God’s mercy will be physically close to God taking refuge during the terrible events of the tribulation period on earth.”
- Zephaniah 2:3 Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, Who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord’s anger.
 - We could paraphrase this like so: “Those who truly seek God’s ways will be hidden and protected during the well known ‘Day of the Lord’, also known as the tribulation period.”
- Psalm 83:3 They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones.
 - This verse makes reference to God’s two distinct people groups, the Jewish people (David’s people), and the sheltered or hidden ones. That’s you and I as believers in Christ (Colossians 3:1-4).
- Song of Solomon 2:10-13 My beloved spoke, and said to me: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!”
 - I don’t have space to unpack all of the symbolism and how it relates to end-time events, but notice that the groom speaks, calling his bride to rise up and come away at a specific appointed time. He also notes the fig tree has green figs. These are young unripened figs. This may be a veiled reference to the mention of the young fig tree in Matthew 24:32-34. which many experts agree symbolizes Israel’s rebirth as the key sign that generation has entered the last-days time frame (a topic for another day).

2 Witnesses (1st half of Tribulation)

- Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
- See [Two witnesses \(Rev 11:1-14\)](#)

Abomination of Desolation

- Occurs halfway (3½ years) through the tribulation
- The Antichrist puts an end to sacrifice and offering, and sets up an abomination in the temple

- ... but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations (or detestable things) will come one who makes desolate (or causes horror), even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” — Daniel 9:27
- Those in Judea are told by Jesus to flee to the mountains
 - “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. — Matthew 24:15
 - For when this happens, Jesus says, all hell is about to break loose; it is the beginning of the “great tribulation,” the three and one half years portrayed in Revelation 6-19.

Earth is destroyed

- Is 24 – Impending Judgment on the Earth

1 Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants.

2 And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master; As with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller; As with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor.

3 The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the Lord has spoken this word.

4 The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away;
The haughty people of the earth languish.

5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.

6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left.

7 The new wine fails, the vine languishes, All the merry-hearted sigh.

8 The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, The joy of the harp ceases.

9 They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

10 The city of confusion is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.

11 There is a cry for wine in the streets, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone.

12 In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction.

13 When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.

14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; For the majesty of the Lord They shall cry aloud from the sea.

15 Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, The name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.

16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: “Glory to the righteous!”
But I said, “I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me!”
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.”

17 Fear and the pit and the snare Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.

18 And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear Shall fall into the pit,
And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare;
For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken.

19 The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.

20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.

21 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones,
And on the earth the kings of the earth.

22 They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison;
After many days they will be punished.

23 Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed;
For the Lord of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.

- Is 34 – Judgment on the Nations

34 Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people!

Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it.

2 For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies;
He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.

3 Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses,
And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

4 All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;
All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.

...

9 Its streams shall be turned into pitch, And its dust into brimstone; Its land shall become burning pitch.

10 It shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever.

From generation to generation it shall lie waste; No one shall pass through it forever and ever.

11 But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it, Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.

And He shall stretch out over it The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.

12 They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, But none shall be there, and all its princes shall be nothing.

13 And thorns shall come up in its palaces, Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;

It shall be a habitation of jackals, A courtyard for ostriches.

14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
Also the night creature shall rest there, And find for herself a place of rest.

15 There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay eggs And hatch, and gather them under her shadow;
There also shall the hawks be gathered, Every one with her mate.

16 “Search from the book of the Lord, and read: Not one of these shall fail; Not one shall lack her mate.
For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.

17 He has cast the lot for them, And His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line.
They shall possess it forever; From generation to generation they shall dwell in it.”

- 2 Peter 3 The Day of the Lord

3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, **in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.** 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the **day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?** 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

- Joel 1 – The Land Laid Waste

² Hear this, you elders, And give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!

Has *anything like* this happened in your days, Or even in the days of your fathers?

³ Tell your children about it, *Let* your children *tell* their children, And their children another generation.

⁴ What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten;

What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;

And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

⁵ Awake, you drunkards, and weep; And wail, all you drinkers of wine,
Because of the new wine, For it has been cut off from your mouth.

⁶ For a nation has come up against My land, Strong, and without number;
His teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.

⁷ He has laid waste My vine, And ruined My fig tree;

He has stripped it bare and thrown *it* away; Its branches are made white.

⁸ Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth For the husband of her youth.

⁹ The grain offering and the drink offering Have been cut off from the house of the LORD;
The priests mourn, who minister to the LORD.

¹⁰ The field is wasted, The land mourns;

For the grain is ruined, The new wine is dried up, The oil fails.

¹¹ Be ashamed, you farmers, Wail, you vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley; Because the harvest of the field has perished.

¹² The vine has dried up, And the fig tree has withered;
The pomegranate tree, The palm tree also,
And the apple tree—All the trees of the field are withered;
Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

- Joel 1 – Mourning for the Land

¹³ Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; Wail, you who minister before the altar;
Come, lie all night in sackcloth, You who minister to my God;
For the grain offering and the drink offering Are withheld from the house of your God.

¹⁴ Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders *And* all the inhabitants of the land
Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD.

¹⁵ Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD *is* at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.

¹⁶ Is not the food cut off before our eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of our God?

¹⁷ The seed shrivels under the clods, Storehouses are in shambles;
Barns are broken down, For the grain has withered.

¹⁸ How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless,
Because they have no pasture; Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.

¹⁹ O LORD, to You I cry out; For fire has devoured the open pastures, And a flame has burned all the trees of the field.

²⁰ The beasts of the field also cry out to You,
For the water brooks are dried up, And fire has devoured the open pastures.

Second Coming of Jesus – Ends the Tribulation

- The Greek word παρουσία (parousia) means "presence" or "coming/arrival"
- Occurs at the end of the tribulation
 - ... with regard to the coming (or presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ ... it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness [i.e., the Antichrist] is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god (or everyone who is called God) or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. — 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2:3–4
 - Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming (or presence) — 2 Thessalonians 2:8
- Believers who died before Christ's resurrection (e.g., OT believers) or after the Rapture (e.g., Tribulation saints) are given resurrected physical bodies, and join the raptured to reign with Christ during the Millennium
 - For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming — 1 Corinthians 15:22–23
 - ... And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their (lit.: the) testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. — Revelation 20:4–5
 - From the order of events in Revelation, it appears that these believers are resurrected after the Battle of Armageddon
- Christ returns from Edom
 - Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing (or crimson) colors from Bozrah [in Jordan], this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching (lit.: inclining) in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come. — Isaiah 63:1, 63:4

- Mount of Olives bisected from east to west, forming a large valley
 - Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle (lit.: His day of fighting). In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. — Zechariah 14:3–4
- Jerusalem secured
 - All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem (lit.: it) will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. People (lit.: They) will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security. — Zechariah 14:10–11

Judgements

Upon the Nations

Upon the Jews

Upon Babylon

75 Day Post-Tribulation Period

An interrum of 75 days between the reign of the Antichrist and the formal beginning of the reign of Jesus (Millennium)

- Great Tribulation lasts 1260 days

¹¹“And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. ¹²Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.
- 30 extra days (1290 days)
 - *¹¹“And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.*
 - Daniel 12:11 mentions 1,290 days, which is 30 days more than the second half of the tribulation.
 - The Bible doesn't reveal what will happen during the 30 days between the 1260th and 1290th day at the end of the great tribulation. Different ideas have been put forward to explain what happens in those 30 extra days.
 - One likely theory is that the land of Israel will be rebuilt in that month after the devastation it endured during the tribulation.
 - Removal of the Abomination of Desolation
 - Cleansing of Jerusalem and the land after the Battle of Armageddon (e.g., burying the dead)
 - Resurrection of the OT and Tribulation saints
 - Construction of the 4th (Millennial) temple described in Ezekiel?
- An additional 45 extra days (1335 days)
 - *¹²Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.*
 - In the 45 days between the 1290th and the 1335th day, Jesus will judge all the nations of the Earth.
 - Those who are spared until the 1335th day will be allowed to enter into the glorious Millennial Kingdom age with Jesus
 - Matthew 25:31-46 Sheep and Goats
 - What will take place during those 45 days?
 - Very likely, this is when the judgment of the Gentile nations, described in Matthew 25:31–46, will take place. In this judgment, also called the judgment of the sheep and the goats, the Gentiles are judged for their treatment of Israel during the tribulation. Did they aid Jesus' "brothers and sisters" (Matthew 25:40), or did they turn a blind eye to the Jews' troubles or, worse yet, aid in their persecution?

So, those who survive the tribulation and survive the sheep and goat judgment will enter the millennium. This is a blessing, indeed.

Old Testament saints are resurrected and glorified

- There will also be a judgment of the Old Testament saints. They will be raised from the dead and judged.
Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2).
- Jesus said.
For the Son of Man is to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay everyone for what has been done (Matthew 16:27).

Tribulation saints judged

- When Christ returns, those who were killed during the Great Tribulation will be judged.
- They will be raised from the dead in a glorified body, receive rewards, and will enter into the kingdom of God.

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6).

Living Gentiles are Judged (Mt 25)

- Jesus spoke of judging the living Gentile (non-Jewish) nations at His Second Coming.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31,32).

- Those Surviving Tribulation
 - These Gentiles are people who are still upon the earth during the Great Tribulation. They are the living, not the dead. The dead will be raised to judgment in the future. The prophet Isaiah wrote of these.

Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, He takes up the isles like fine dust. All the nations are as nothing before Him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness (Isaiah 40:15,17).

- Place – They will be brought to the city of Jerusalem and judged in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

For then, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of My people and My heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations. They have divided My land, and cast lots for My people, and traded boys for prostitutes, and sold girls for wine, and drunk it down (Joel 3:1-3).

- The righteous will enter into God's Millennial kingdom while the unrighteous will be taken to judgment. Like the unbelievers from the nation Israel, they will probably be killed at this time. Their final judgment is still future.

Living Jews are Judged (Ez 20)

Ez 20 God Will Restore Israel

33 “As I live,” says the Lord God, “surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. 34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. 36 Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,” says the Lord God.

37 “I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

- When Christ returns, He will judge those from the nation Israel, who have survived the Great Tribulation.
 - This judgment is described in Ezekiel 20:34-38.
 - Jesus also illustrates this judgment in Matthew 25:1-30 in the parables of the ten maidens and the ten talents.
- Regathered
 - These survivors of the Great Tribulation will be regathered from all over the world to the land of Israel. This will follow the victory of Christ over His enemies at Armageddon.
- Purpose
 - The purpose is to determine which individuals will enter God's kingdom on the earth-the Millennium. The righteous from Israel, those who have put their trust in Christ, will enter God's kingdom. They will experience the long-promised blessings that God has given to that nation
- Unrighteous Sent Away
 - The unrighteous will be purged from the righteous and sent away. Jesus illustrated this truth in the parable of the talents.

As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30).

- Awaiting Final Judgment
 - Although the Scripture does not say, they will probably be put to death. Their final judgment does not take place at this time. It will occur after the Millennium, the thousand reign of Christ upon the earth.

Prophecies about the Tribulation

Revived Israel (Green)

Tribulation/Birth Pains (Orange)

Millennial Kingdom (Blue)

New Heavens / New Earth (Red)

Psalms 2 - The Messiah's Triumph and Kingdom

1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together,

Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,

3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.

5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:

6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

7 "I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me,

'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way,

When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

Is 11 – The Reign of Jesse's Offspring

1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord,

And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,

The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.

7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people;

For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time

To recover the remnant of His people who are left,

From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.

12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,

And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

13 Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;

Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

14 But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west;

Together they shall plunder the people of the East; They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab;

And the people of Ammon shall obey them.

15 The Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt;

With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River,

And strike it in the seven streams, And make men cross over dry-shod.

16 There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria,

As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

Is 24 – Impending Judgment on the Earth

1 Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
2 And it shall be:
 As with the people, so with the priest;
 As with the servant, so with his master;
 As with the maid, so with her mistress;
 As with the buyer, so with the seller;
 As with the lender, so with the borrower;
 As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
3 The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the Lord has spoken this word.

4 The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish.
5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants,
Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.
6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left.

7 The new wine fails, the vine languishes, All the merry-hearted sigh.
8 The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, The joy of the harp ceases.
9 They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
10 The city of confusion is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.
11 There is a cry for wine in the streets, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone.
12 In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction.
13 When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.

14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; For the majesty of the Lord They shall cry aloud from the sea.
15 Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, The name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: “Glory to the righteous!”
But I said, “I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me!
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.”

17 Fear and the pit and the snare Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.
18 And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear Shall fall into the pit,
And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare;
For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken.

19 The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.
20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.

21 It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings of the earth.
22 They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit,
And will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished.
23 Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed;
For the Lord of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.

Is 32 – A Reign of Righteousness

1 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice. 2 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.
3 The eyes of those who see will not be dim, And the ears of those who hear will listen. 4 Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge, And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.

5 The foolish person will no longer be called generous, Nor the miser said to be bountiful; 6 For the foolish person will speak foolishness, And his heart will work iniquity: To practice ungodliness, To utter error against the Lord, To keep the hungry unsatisfied, And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. 7 Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; He devises wicked plans To destroy the poor with lying words, Even when the needy speaks justice. 8 But a generous man devises generous things, And by generosity he shall stand.

Is 42 – Promise of the Lord's Help

14 “I have held My peace a long time, I have been still and restrained Myself.
Now I will cry like a woman in labor, I will pant and gasp at once.
15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills, And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands, And I will dry up the pools.
16 I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them, And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them, And not forsake them.
17 They shall be turned back, They shall be greatly ashamed,
Who trust in carved images, Who say to the molded images, ‘You are our gods.’
18 “Hear, you deaf; And look, you blind, that you may see.
19 Who is blind but My servant, Or deaf as My messenger whom I send?
Who is blind as he who is perfect, And blind as the Lord's servant?
20 Seeing many things, but you do not observe; Opening the ears, but he does not hear.”

Is 51 - The Lord Comforts Zion

4 “Listen to Me, My people; And give ear to Me, O My nation:
For law will proceed from Me, And I will make My justice rest As a light of the peoples.
5 My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples;
The coastlands will wait upon Me, And on My arm they will trust.
6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath.
For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will die in like manner;
But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.
7 “Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law:
Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults.
8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool;
But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation.”

Dan 2 - Daniel Explains the Dream

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 **And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.** 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

Dan 7 – Vision of 4 Beasts

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. 2 Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. 5 “And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’ 6 “After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7 “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

Dan 7 – Vision of the Ancient of Days

9 “I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire;
10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him.
A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was seated, And the books were opened.

11 “I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.
14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

Dan 7 – Daniel’s Visions Interpreted

15 “I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 ‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’

19 “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

21 “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

23 “Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.

24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom.

And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,

And shall intend to change times and law.

Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

26 ‘But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,

Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

28 “This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.

Dan 9 – The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy

20 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

24 “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city,

To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity,

To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

25 “Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;

The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

26 “And after the sixty-two week Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;

But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

Dan 12 - Prophecy of the End Time

1 “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time.

And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,

Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament,

And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

4 “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

5 Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?”

7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?”

9 And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

11 “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

13 “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

Mic 4 – Zion’s Future Triumph

6 “In that day,” says the Lord, “I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted;

7 I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation;

So the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.

8 And you, O tower of the flock, The stronghold of the daughter of Zion,

To you shall it come, Even the former dominion shall come, The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.”

9 Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished?

For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor.

10 Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs.

For now you shall go forth from the city, You shall dwell in the field, And to Babylon you shall go.

There you shall be delivered; There the Lord will redeem you From the hand of your enemies.

11 Now also many nations have gathered against you, Who say, “Let her be defiled, And let our eye look upon Zion.”

12 But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, Nor do they understand His counsel;

For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

13 “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; For I will make your horn iron,

And I will make your hooves bronze; You shall beat in pieces many peoples;

I will consecrate their gain to the Lord, And their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.”

Hab 2 – Woe to the Wicked

1 I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart,

And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected.

2 Then the Lord answered me and said:

“Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.

3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.

Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

4 “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.

5 “Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, He is a proud man, And he does not stay at home.

Because he enlarges his desire as hell, And he is like death, and cannot be satisfied,

He gathers to himself all nations And heaps up for himself all peoples.

6 “Will not all these take up a proverb against him, And a taunting riddle against him, and say,

‘Woe to him who increases What is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges?’

7 Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty.

8 Because you have plundered many nations, All the remnant of the people shall plunder you,

Because of men’s blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it.

9 “Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, That he may set his nest on high,
That he may be delivered from the power of disaster!
10 You give shameful counsel to your house, Cutting off many peoples, And sin against your soul.
11 For the stone will cry out from the wall, And the beam from the timbers will answer it.

12 “Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, Who establishes a city by iniquity!
13 Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts That the peoples labor to feed the fire, And nations weary themselves in vain?
14 For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.

15 “Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle,
Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness!
16 You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also—drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised!
The cup of the Lord’s right hand will be turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory.
17 For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you, And the plunder of beasts which made them afraid,
Because of men’s blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it.

18 “What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies,
That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols?
19 Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Awake!’ To silent stone, ‘Arise! It shall teach!’
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all.

20 “But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

Zec 14 – The Day of the Lord

1 Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst.
2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the Lord will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.
4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.
5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.
Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You.
6 It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish.
7 It shall be one day Which is known to the Lord—Neither day nor night.
But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light.
8 And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.
9 And the Lord shall be King over all the earth.
In that day it shall be— “The Lord is one,” And His name one.
10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up
and inhabited in her place from Benjamin’s Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of
Hananel to the king’s winepresses.
11 The people shall dwell in it; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

12 And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:
Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet,
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.
13 It shall come to pass in that day That a great panic from the Lord will be among them.
Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, And raise his hand against his neighbor’s hand;

14 Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.

And the wealth of all the surrounding nations Shall be gathered together: Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.

15 Such also shall be the plague On the horse and the mule, On the camel and the donkey,
And on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be.

Rev 2 – The Persecuted Church

8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9 “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’

Rev 2 – The Compromising Church

12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” ’

Rev 2 – The Corrupt Church

18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 19 “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. 20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. 22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. 24 “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast what you have till I come. 26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star.

29 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Rev 3 – The Dead Church

1 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,

‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. 4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they

shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

Rev 3 – The Faithful Church

7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,
‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”’: 8 “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. 13 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

Rev 3 – The Lukewarm Church

14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,
‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ”

Rev 19 - Christ on a White Horse

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

Rev 19 – The Beast and His Armies Defeated

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Trinity

Gen 1 – Let us create man

Baptism of Jesus – Father, Son and Holy Spirit all in 1 verse

The most difficult thing about the Christian concept of the Trinity is that there is no way to perfectly and completely understand it. The Trinity is a concept that is impossible for any human being to fully understand, let alone explain. God is infinitely greater than we are; therefore, we should not expect to be able to fully understand Him. The Bible teaches that the Father is God, that Jesus is God, and that the Holy Spirit is God. The Bible also teaches that there is only one God. Though we can understand some facts about the relationship of the different Persons of the Trinity to one another, ultimately, it is incomprehensible to the human mind. However, this does not mean the Trinity is not true or that it is not based on the teachings of the Bible.

The Trinity is one God existing in three Persons. Understand that this is not in any way suggesting three Gods. Keep in mind when studying this subject that the word “Trinity” is not found in Scripture. This is a term that is used to attempt to describe the triune God—three coexistent, co-eternal Persons who are God. Of real importance is that the concept represented by the word “Trinity” does exist in Scripture. The following is what God’s Word says about the Trinity:

1) There is one God ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#); [1 Corinthians 8:4](#); [Galatians 3:20](#); [1 Timothy 2:5](#)).

2) The Trinity consists of three Persons ([Genesis 1:1, 26; 3:22; 11:7](#); [Isaiah 6:8, 48:16, 61:1](#); [Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#)). In [Genesis 1:1](#), the Hebrew plural noun "Elohim" is used. In [Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7](#) and [Isaiah 6:8](#), the plural pronoun for “us” is used. The word "Elohim" and the pronoun “us” are plural forms, definitely referring in the Hebrew language to more than two. While this is not an explicit argument for the Trinity, it does denote the aspect of plurality in God. The Hebrew word for "God," "Elohim," definitely allows for the Trinity.

In [Isaiah 48:16](#) and [61:1](#), the Son is speaking while making reference to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Compare [Isaiah 61:1](#) to [Luke 4:14-19](#) to see that it is the Son speaking. [Matthew 3:16-17](#) describes the event of Jesus’ baptism. Seen in this passage is God the Holy Spirit descending on God the Son while God the Father proclaims His pleasure in the Son. [Matthew 28:19](#) and [2 Corinthians 13:14](#) are examples of three distinct Persons in the Trinity.

3) The members of the Trinity are distinguished one from another in various passages. In the Old Testament, “LORD” is distinguished from “Lord” ([Genesis 19:24](#); [Hosea 1:4](#)). The LORD has a Son ([Psalm 2:7, 12](#); [Proverbs 30:2-4](#)). The Spirit is distinguished from the “LORD” ([Numbers 27:18](#)) and from “God” ([Psalm 51:10-12](#)). God the Son is distinguished from God the Father ([Psalm 45:6-7](#); [Hebrews 1:8-9](#)). In the New Testament, Jesus speaks to the Father about sending a Helper, the Holy Spirit ([John 14:16-17](#)). This shows that Jesus did not consider Himself to be the Father or the Holy Spirit. Consider also all the other times in the Gospels where Jesus speaks to the Father. Was He speaking to Himself? No. He spoke to another Person in the Trinity—the Father.

4) Each member of the Trinity is God. The Father is God ([John 6:27](#); [Romans 1:7](#); [1 Peter 1:2](#)). The Son is God ([John 1:1, 14](#); [Romans 9:5](#); [Colossians 2:9](#); [Hebrews 1:8](#); [1 John 5:20](#)). The Holy Spirit is God ([Acts 5:3-4](#); [1 Corinthians 3:16](#)).

5) There is subordination within the Trinity. Scripture shows that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and the Son, and the Son is subordinate to the Father. This is an internal relationship and does not deny the deity of any Person of the Trinity. This is simply an area which our finite minds cannot understand concerning the infinite God. Concerning the Son see [Luke 22:42](#), [John 5:36](#), [John 20:21](#), and [1 John 4:14](#). Concerning the Holy Spirit see [John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7](#), and especially [John 16:13-14](#).

6) The individual members of the Trinity have different tasks. The Father is the ultimate source or cause of the universe (1

Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4:11); divine revelation (Revelation 1:1); salvation (John 3:16-17); and Jesus' human works (John 5:17; 14:10). The Father initiates all of these things.

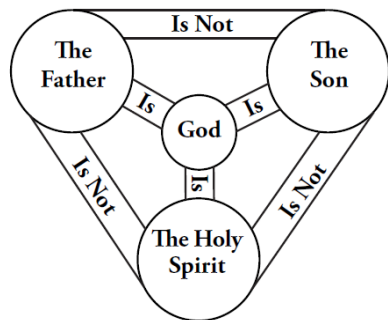
The Son is the agent through whom the Father does the following works: the creation and maintenance of the universe (1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17); divine revelation (John 1:1, 16:12-15; Matthew 11:27; Revelation 1:1); and salvation (2 Corinthians 5:19; Matthew 1:21; John 4:42). The Father does all these things through the Son, who functions as His agent.

The Holy Spirit is the means by whom the Father does the following works: creation and maintenance of the universe (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30); divine revelation (John 16:12-15; Ephesians 3:5; 2 Peter 1:21); salvation (John 3:6; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2); and Jesus' works (Isaiah 61:1; Acts 10:38). Thus, the Father does all these things by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There have been many attempts to develop **illustrations of the Trinity**. However, none of the popular illustrations are completely accurate. The egg (or apple) fails in that the shell, white, and yolk are parts of the egg, not the egg in themselves, just as the skin, flesh, and seeds of the apple are parts of it, not the apple itself. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not parts of God; each of them is God. The water illustration is somewhat better, but it still fails to adequately describe the Trinity. Liquid, vapor, and ice are forms of water. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not forms of God, each of them is God. So, while these illustrations may give us a picture of the Trinity, the picture is not entirely accurate. An infinite God cannot be fully described by a finite illustration.

The doctrine of the Trinity has been a divisive issue throughout the entire history of the Christian church. While the core aspects of the Trinity are clearly presented in God's Word, some of the side issues are not as explicitly clear. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—but there is only one God. That is the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. Beyond that, the issues are, to a certain extent, debatable and non-essential. Rather than attempting to fully define the Trinity with our finite human minds, we would be better served by focusing on the fact of God's greatness and His infinitely higher nature. "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34).

Below is the best symbol for the Trinity we are aware of:



TRINITY

GOD ETERNALLY EXISTS AS THREE PERSONS, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, AND EACH PERSON IS FULLY GOD, AND THERE IS ONE GOD

MODALISM

ONE PERSON WHO APPEARS IN DIFFERENT FORMS OR MODES

BAD ILLUSTRATIONS



THE TRINITY IS LIKE WATER BECAUSE IT CAN BE LIQUID, SOLID, AND STEAM WHILE REMAINING H₂O.

EACH PART IS NEVER IN THE SAME FORM AT THE SAME TIME. GOD IS ALWAYS FULLY GOD WHILE BEING THREE DISTINCT PERSONS.

THE THREE PERSONS ARE COEQUAL & COETERNAL

IF YOU DENY THIS YOU COMMIT THE ERROR OF SUBORDINATIONISM.

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

IF YOU DENY THIS YOU COMMIT THE ERROR OF TRITHEISM.

SUBORDINATIONISM

CLAIMS THAT THE SON AND SPIRIT ARE SUBORDINATE TO THE FATHER IN NATURE AND BEING

BAD ILLUSTRATIONS



THE TRINITY IS LIKE THE SUN BECAUSE IT IS COMPRISED OF A BODY, LIGHT, AND HEAT YET ALL ARE THE SUN.

LIGHT AND HEAT RADIATE AND ONLY EXIST BECAUSE THE BODY EXISTS.

GOD

THERE ARE THREE DIVINE PERSONS

IF YOU DENY THIS YOU COMMIT THE ERROR OF MODALISM.

TRITHEISM

DENIES THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD AND CLAIMS THERE ARE THREE GODS

BAD ILLUSTRATIONS



THE TRINITY IS LIKE AN EGG BECAUSE IT HAS THREE PARTS – EGG, YOLK, AND SHELL BUT IS ONE EGG

EACH PART IS ONLY THAT, A PART, AND CANNOT BE SAID TO BE THE ENTIRE THING.

GOD THE FATHER IS THE GREAT ARCHITECT OF CREATION, REDEMPTION, AND CONSUMMATION, WHO PLANS, DIRECTS, AND SENDS. THE SON AND HOLY SPIRIT ARE WILLINGLY SUBORDINATE TO HIM IN ROLE EVEN WHILE EQUAL IN DEITY.

GOD THE SON OBEYS THE FATHER, ACCOMPLISHES REDEMPTION, AND WITH THE FATHER SENDS THE HOLY SPIRIT TO APPLY THE WORK HE HAS BEGUN. IN ALL THINGS HE GLORIFIES THE FATHER.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS TO COMPLETION THE WORK PLANNED BY THE FATHER AND BEGUN BY THE SON. IN ALL THINGS HE WORKS TO GLORIFY THE SON.

RESOURCES

THE FORGOTTEN TRINITY
FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

JAMES WHITE
BRUCE WARE
WAYNE GRUDEM

Attributes of all persons of God

Omniscient – All knowing

- Is 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.
9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Omnipotent – All powerful

- Jer 32:27 “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?”
- Lk 1:37 37 For with God nothing will be impossible.”
- Ep 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

Omnipresent – All present

- Ps 139:7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in [c]hell, behold, You are there.
9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

Trinity is based in Pagan belief

The idea of the trinity was ancient and rooted in pagan religions. Marie Sinclair, Countess of Caithness, in her 1876 book *Old Truths in a New Light*, states: “It is generally, although erroneously, supposed that the doctrine of the Trinity is of Christian origin. *Nearly every nation of antiquity possessed a similar doctrine.* [The early Catholic theologian] St. Jerome testifies unequivocally, ‘*All the ancient nations believed in the Trinity*’ ” (p. 382).

Notice how the following quotes document belief in a divine trinity in many regions and religions of the ancient world.

- Sumeria
“The universe was divided into three regions each of which became the domain of a god. Anu’s share was the sky. The earth was given to Enlil. Ea became the ruler of the waters. *Together they constituted the triad of the Great Gods*” (*The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, 1994, pp. 54-55)
- Babylonia
“The ancient Babylonians *recognised the doctrine of a trinity, or three persons in one god*—as appears from a composite god with three heads forming part of their mythology, and the use of the equilateral triangle, also, as an emblem of such trinity in unity” (Thomas Dennis Rock, *The Mystical Woman and the Cities of the Nations*, 1867, pp. 22-23).
- India
“The Puranas, one of the Hindoo Bibles of more than 3,000 years ago, contain the following passage: ‘O ye three Lords! know that I recognize only one God. Inform me, therefore, which of you is the true divinity, that I may address to him alone my adorations.’ The three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva [or Shiva], becoming manifest to him, replied, ‘Learn, O devotee, that there is no real distinction between us. What to you appears such is only the semblance. *The single being appears under three forms* by the acts of creation, preservation, and destruction, *but he is one.*’
“Hence the triangle was adopted by all the ancient nations as a symbol of the Deity . . . Three was considered among all the pagan nations as the chief of the mystical numbers, because, as Aristotle remarks, it contains within itself a beginning, a middle, and an end. Hence we find it designating some of the attributes of almost all the pagan gods” (Sinclair, pp. 382-383).
- Greece
“In the Fourth Century B.C. Aristotle wrote: ‘All things are three, and thrice is all: and let us use this number in the worship of the gods; for, as the Pythagoreans say, everything and all things are bounded by threes, for the end, the middle and the beginning have this number in everything, and these compose the number of the Trinity’ ” (Arthur Weigall, *Paganism in Our Christianity*, 1928, pp. 197-198).
- Egypt

“The *Hymn to Amun* decreed that ‘No god came into being before him (Amun)’ and that ‘*All gods are three: Amun, Re and Ptah, and there is no second to them. Hidden is his name as Amon, he is Re in face, and his body is Ptah.*’ . . . *This is a statement of trinity, the three chief gods of Egypt subsumed into one of them, Amon.* Clearly, the concept of organic unity within plurality got an extraordinary boost with this formulation. *Theologically, in a crude form it came strikingly close to the later Christian form of plural Trinitarian monotheism*” (Simson Najovits, *Egypt, Trunk of the Tree*, Vol. 2, 2004, pp. 83-84).

- Other areas

Many other areas had their own divine trinities. In Greece they were Zeus, Poseidon and Adonis. The Phoenicians worshipped Ulomus, Ulosuros and Eliun. Rome worshipped Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto. In Germanic nations they were called Wodan, Thor and Fricco. Regarding the Celts, one source states, “The ancient heathen deities of the pagan Irish[,] Criosan, Biosena, and Seeva, or Sheeva, are doubtless the Creeshna [Krishna], Veeshnu [Vishnu], [or the all-inclusive] Brahma, and Seeva [Shiva], of the Hindoos” (Thomas Maurice, *The History of Hindostan*, Vol. 2, 1798, p. 171).

- “The origin of the conception is entirely pagan”

- Egyptologist Arthur Weigall, while himself a Trinitarian, summed up the influence of ancient beliefs on the adoption of the Trinity doctrine by the Catholic Church in the following excerpt from his previously cited book:

“It must not be forgotten that Jesus Christ never mentioned such a phenomenon [the Trinity], and nowhere in the New Testament does the word ‘Trinity’ appear. The idea was only adopted by the Church three hundred years after the death of our Lord; *and the origin of the conception is entirely pagan . . .*

“*The ancient Egyptians, whose influence on early religious thought was profound, usually arranged their gods or goddesses in trinities: there was the trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, the trinity of Amen, Mut, and Khonsu, the trinity of Khnum, Satis, and Anukis, and so forth . . .*

“The early Christians, however, *did not at first think of applying the idea to their own faith.* They paid their devotions to God the Father and to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and they recognized the mysterious and undefined existence of the Holy Spirit; *but there was no thought of these three being an actual Trinity, co-equal and united in One . . .*

“The application of this old pagan conception of a Trinity to Christian theology *was made possible by the recognition of the Holy Spirit as the required third ‘Person,’ co-equal with the other ‘Persons’ . . .*

“The idea of the Spirit being co-equal with God *was not generally recognised until the second half of the Fourth Century A.D. . . .* In the year 381 the Council of Constantinople added to the earlier Nicene Creed a description of the Holy Spirit as ‘the Lord, and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified.’ . . .

“Thus, the Athanasian creed, which is a later composition but reflects the general conceptions of Athanasius [the 4th-century Trinitarian whose view eventually became official doctrine] and his school, formulated the conception of a co-equal Trinity wherein the Holy Spirit was the third ‘Person’; *and so it was made a dogma of the faith, and belief in the Three in One and One in Three became a paramount doctrine of Christianity, though not without terrible riots and bloodshed . . .*

“Today a Christian thinker . . . has no wish to be precise about it, more especially since *the definition is obviously pagan in origin and was not adopted by the Church until nearly three hundred years after Christ*” (pp. 197-203).

- James Bonwick summarized the story well on page 396 of his 1878 work *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*: “It is an undoubted fact that *more or less all over the world the deities are in triads.* This rule applies to eastern and western hemispheres, to north and south.

“Further, it is observed that, in some mystical way, the triad of three persons is one. The first is as the second or third, the second as first or third, the third as first or second; in fact, they are each other, one and the same individual being. *The definition of Athanasius, who lived in Egypt, applies to the trinities of all heathen religions.*”

Trusting God

How do you know if you can trust God – do a word study on faithfulness

- 1Co 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 2Th 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

Nu 23 Balaam's response to Balak asking him to curse Israel

Nu 23:19 God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind.

Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?

20 Listen, I received a command to bless; God has blessed, and I cannot reverse it!

God is faithful despite our mistrust

Promises kept

- All of the prophecies about Jesus 1st coming
- Holy Spirit
 - Act 2:1 On the day Pentecost was being fulfilled, all the disciples were gathered in one place. 2 Suddenly they heard the sound of a violent blast of wind rushing into the house from out of the heavenly realm. The roar of the wind was so overpowering it was all anyone could bear! 3 Then all at once a pillar of fire appeared before their eyes. It separated into tongues of fire that engulfed each one of them. 4 They were all filled and equipped with the Holy Spirit and were inspired to speak in tongues—empowered by the Spirit to speak in languages they had never learned!

Westminster Catechism

Goal - Trainings at home in the doctrines of the Christian faith
Systematically teach the truth of the Christian beliefs

Catechism – Verb – Share a communication that one receives
Teach / instruct

Apostolic fathers – Trained with the Apostles

Letting go of the old world and learning the new

The evidence of your justification is your sanctification

The proof is in the pudding

History

1648

Westminster confession

Supplemental Info - Apostolic fathers and Didache

Smaller – use in home

Larger – Used by pastors

- doctrine of the church
- difference between the visible (congregation) and invisible (God's elect) church

Westminster Confession of Faith

What We Believe

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's

redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. On this sure foundation we affirm these additional Essentials of our faith:

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.
6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth-personally, visibly, and bodily-to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)
7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us." He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10)

These Essentials are set forth in greater detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In Essentials Unity
In Non-Essentials Liberty
In All Things Charity

Explanatory Statement to "Essentials of Our Faith"*

The Westminster Confession of Faith is a confessional statement of orthodox Presbyterianism. The Westminster Confession of Faith is our standard of doctrine as found in Scripture. It is a positive statement of the Reformed Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith constitutes a system of biblical truth that an officer of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is required to believe, acknowledging that each individual court has the freedom to allow exceptions which do not infringe upon the system of doctrine in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

"Essentials of Our Faith" is an irenic statement of historic evangelicalism. The purpose of "Essentials of Our Faith" is to define core beliefs of the Christian Faith. It expresses historic Christian beliefs common to all true believers and churches throughout the world. "Essentials of Our Faith" is not intended to be the exclusive test of orthodoxy for

ordination. It is not intended to be used as an explicit standard for minimal core beliefs for candidates, ordination or ministerial examinations. It is not to be construed as a substitute for the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Both the Westminster Confession of Faith and “Essentials of Our Faith” are important documents in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Westminster Confession of Faith and “Essentials of Our Faith” are not alternative statements of truth, nor are they competitive statements of truth. They each serve important and harmonious purposes within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Westminster Confession of Faith preserves our commitment to the historic orthodoxy of the Reformed Faith. “Essentials of Our Faith” preserves our commitment to historic evangelicalism.

Outline / Structure

Apostles Creed
10 Commandments (Decalogue)
Lord’s prayer

An Outline of the Westminster Shorter Catechism

- I. Introduction (1-3)
 - A. Man’s Chief End (1)
 - B. Doctrine of Scripture / Revelation (2)
 - C. Two-fold Purpose of Biblical Revelation: Belief and Duty (3)
- II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)
 - A. Doctrine of God (4-11)
 - 1. Attributes
 - 2. Works: Creation and Providence
 - B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:
 - 1. Innocence
 - 2. Sin
 - 3. Grace
 - 4. Glory
 - C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)
 - 1. Mediatorial Role of Christ
 - a. Prophet
 - b. Priest
 - c. King
 - 2. Two-fold State of Christ’s Incarnation
 - a. Humiliation
 - b. Exaltation
 - D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)
 - 1. Effectual Calling
 - 2. Benefits in this Life
 - 3. Benefits in the Life to Come
- III. “What duty God requires of man” (39-107)
 - A. The Law of God (39-84)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 1. Faith and Repentance (85-87)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer (98-107)

Westminster Shorter Catechisms

Reference: G. I. Williamson. Westminster Shorter Catechism: For Study Classes. Kindle Edition.

Purpose – To teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man

Q1. What is man's primary purpose?

I. Introduction (1-3)

A. Man's Chief End (1)

A1. Glorify God and to enjoy him forever

Q1. What is man's primary purpose?

Man's primary purpose is to glorify God ¹, and to enjoy him forever ².

¹ 1Co 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Rev 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

² Ps 73: 25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Explanation

One of the greatest questions any of us can ever wrestle with is "what is my purpose in life?" "What am I here for?" Most folks have pretty shallow answers to this question! Do you know what your purpose in life is? It is to bring God glory! That is the end for which you were made, and it is what can give your every decision and action eternal significance. It is also the source of your joy. You receive joy not by seeking joy, but by seeking God. Pursue his glory!

Life is to be God-centered, not self-centered.

Purpose implies creation, creation implies a creator.

To "glorify God" does not mean "to make God glorious." God already ready is glorious. He has been glorious from all eternity, and nothing created by God can ever make him more glorious than he already is. To "glorify God" must therefore be understood this way: it means to reflect God's glory.

Even if a person does not want to glorify God – even if a person does not want to serve God willingly – he still remains subject to God. Both the lost and the saved are instruments by which God's glory is revealed.

- By means of the one (those who are saved) God's mercy can be seen and praised.
- By means of the other (those who are lost) God's wrath and justice can be seen and honored.

When a person seeks to glorify God, he seeks at all times and in all activities alike to do that which is well pleasing to God's sight. The true view of Christian discipleship is that 'which sees the whole of life as that which is to be consciously lived un to the honor of God, and in the service of His name!

Enjoying God is a distinctive human characteristic

- We were made to be in a loving, joyful relationship with God
- Those that are in the flesh cannot please God (Ro 8) – they don't want t

All of human wisdom is contained within knowledge of God and knowledge of self

2 dangerous forms of ignorance

1. Ignorance of self – leads to pride
 - Pride – Thinking more of ourselves than we should
 - Pride is the root of every other sin
2. Ignorance of God – Leads to despair
 - If there is no God, then you might as well eat, drink & be merry
 - Can lead to suicide

Leads us to live a humble life

Q2. How do we know how to glorify and enjoy him?

I. Introduction (1-3)

B. Doctrine of Scripture / Revelation (2)

A2. Follow the Bible, the Word of God

Q2. What authority from God directs us how to glorify and enjoy Him?

The only authority for glorifying and enjoying Him is the Bible, which is the word of God and is made up of the Old and New Testaments.

Q2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments¹, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.²

¹ 2Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

² Rev 22:18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Explanation

The word “rule” here means “standard” or “measure.” Think of a “ruler.” The question is essentially asking, “How can I know what it means to know God’s plan and purpose? To what source can I turn?” The answer we must give is Scripture alone. Humans look to many sources for wisdom, but for us Christians there can be no other authority.

Rule = canon = measuring unit

Rule – singular

What is the rule by which we know whether we are glorifying God
Scripture alone provides the guidelines by which to live

2 Kinds of Revelation

God did not make man to know everything (or, for that matter, anything) by his own power. Only God knows everything, and so, from the beginning, only God could give to man a sure knowledge of anything at all. The only way in which man can be saved from sin is revealed in the Bible alone. It is only in the Bible that men actually can learn what they must believe (in order to be saved from sin) and do (in order to serve God once more).

1. Natural Revelation

- The revelation of God in nature is sufficient to leave men without out excuse. It shows them the glory of the true God so that they ought to worship and serve him.
- Ps 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
- Ro 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

2. Special Revelation

- Interpreting the ‘facts of nature’ in the ‘light of God’s word’
- When Adam sinned against God, he rejected God’s word – he acted as if he did not need God to tell him what was right. Instead he decided to try the so-called ‘scientific method’ (trial and error’ method) of discovering the truth.

But if man in the beginning (sinless less Adam) could not understand the "light" of nature, without the "light" of God's word, how much more is this true for us!

The meaning of 'contained in'

- Liberalism – They believe that they can decide for themselves which parts are true or false
- Neo-Orthodoxy (Barthianism) – The whole Bible is the fallible word of man
 - Named after Karl Barth, famous theologian
- **Reformed – The Bible is the word of God**
 - The whole Bible (every single word) is the truth of God. No part is uninspired. And even when the Bible is read by an unbeliever, it is still the word of God from cover to cover.

3 Important characteristics of reformed theology

If the Bible is the word of God, the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God and enjoy him forever, then three further things may be said.

1. The Bible is infallible – This means that everything that the Bible says is true
 - This does not mean that you can take every statement of the Bible as true apart from its context (or setting).
 - For example, Psalm 53:1 says "There is no God!" But this is only part of the statement. The whole statement reads: "The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no God." Only when we read the whole Bible and understand what it means can we say that every statement is infallible.
2. The Bible is clear.
 - The Scriptures were written so that ordinary people could understand them. God speaks directly to children even (Eph. 6:1-3).
 - Some churches deny this. They say that it is only the priests or scholars who can understand the Bible. (It is true, of course, that there is much in the Bible that we do not understand. Even scholars have more to learn.) But God, by his Spirit, can and does lead ordinary people to understand quite clearly the things they need to know in order to be saved.
3. The Bible is sufficient (we do not need something else in addition to the Bible in order to know what we need to know).
 - Many false religions deny this.
 - The Roman Catholic Church says that we need tradition as well as the Bible.
 - Mormons say that the Book of Mormon is needed as well as the Bible.
 - Modernists tell us that we need "the findings of science" as well as the Bible.
 - But Jesus said that the Bible is sufficient by itself (Rev. 22:18-20).

We must always make sure that we personally prove the teaching of the Catechism by the Bible. Only then will our faith be acceptable and secure.

Westminster Confession - Holy Scripture

1. Our natural understanding and the works of creation and providence so clearly show God's goodness, wisdom, and power that human beings have no excuse for not believing in him.¹ However, these means alone cannot provide that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary for salvation.² Therefore it pleased the Lord at different times and in various ways to reveal himself and to declare that this revelation contains his will for his church.³ Afterwards it pleased God to put this entire revelation into writing so that the truth might be better preserved and transmitted and that the church, confronted with the corruption of the flesh and the evil purposes of Satan and the world, might be more securely established and comforted.⁴ Since God no longer reveals himself to his people in those earlier ways,⁵ Holy Scripture is absolutely essential.⁶

1. Rom 2.14-15, 1.19-20, Ps 19.1-4, Rom 1.32, 2.1.
2. 1 Cor 1.21, 2.13-14, 2.9-12, Acts 4.12, Rom 10.13-14.
3. Heb 1.1-2, Gal 1.11-12, Dt 4.12-14.
4. Prv 22.19-21, Lk 1.3-4, Rom 15.4, Mt 4.4,7,10, Is 8.19-20, Lk 24.27, 2 Tm 3.16, 2 Pt 3.15-16.
5. Heb 1.1-2, see General Note.
6. 2 Tm 3.15-16, 2 Pt 1.10, Lk 16.29-31, Heb 2.1-3.

Q3. What does the Bible teach?

I. Introduction (1-3)

C. Two-fold Purpose of Biblical Revelation: Belief and Duty (3)

A3. Belief and Duty – What we believe about God and what God requires of us

Q3. What does the Bible primarily teach?

The Bible primarily teaches what man must believe about God and what God requires of man.

Q3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God ¹, and what duty God requires of man ².

¹ John 20:30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

² Mic 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Explanation

People try to make the Bible many things, but we affirm that the Bible is principally about one thing: how it is we as humans can know God and his plan of salvation. That is what the Bible is about from Genesis to Revelation. It is the good news of Jesus Christ, the good news that God is making a way for sinners to be forgiven through faith in Christ's saving work.

The Bible clearly teaches that everything was created – and it is this relationship to God that is the most important thing of all.

Outlines the rest of the Catechism

Provides a basic outline for the rest of the Catechism – Both are necessary for a true picture of a Christian life

- Questions 4-38 – Summary of what the Bible teaches us to believe concerning God
 - This is the most important part of the Catechism – what we believe matters
 - 2Jo 9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.
 - John 4:22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."
- Questions 39-107 – The law, the means of grace, and prayer – Summary of the duty which God requires of man
 - When a man does actually have a true faith (if he really does believe what God commands him to believe), he must also do what God commands.
 - There is no such thing as a true faith unless it also results in right practices.
 - Jam 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.
 - Jam 2: 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

The Law – The 10 Commandments

- Gal 3: 24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.
 - A man cannot come to a true faith in Christ *as his savior* unless he first comes to realize his need

- It is only by the law that sinful men come to know that they are sinful
 - Ro 3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.
- 1Jo 5:2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 This is love for God: to obey his commands.

Jesus came to fulfill the Law

- Mt 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
- Catechism firmly rejects the choice between Christianity as a doctrine and Christianity as a life. "True Christianity is never one without the other. It is always both together: like the good tree and its fruit.

Q4. What is God?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

A. Doctrine of God (4-11)

1. Attributes
2. Works: Creation and Providence

A4. A perfect, infinite spirit

Q4. What is God?

God is a spirit, Whose being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth are infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.

Q4. What is God?

God is a spirit¹, infinite, eternal², and unchangeable³, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth⁴.

¹ Jn 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

² Ps 90:2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

³ Mal 3:6 "I the LORD do not change.

⁴ Ex 3:14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am .

Ps 147:5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

Rev 4:8 ...Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Rev 15:4 Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy.

Ex 34:6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

Explanation

What are God's essential attributes

Questions 4-9

There are ways in which God is like us: he is a person; we can have a relationship with him. But he is also not like us in important ways. He is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. We change in many ways: we are often faithless; we break promises; we betray; we lie. However, God is always faithful, reliable, true. There is no shadow of turning in him. God never changes, and that is very good news!

- Not who is God, but what is God – These are attributes of God
- Infinite
- Unchangeable – you can't trust a God that changes

Attributes

- 1st 4 attributes are used as descriptors of the last 7 attributes
- Communicable vs incommunicable

What is a spirit?

1Co 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

- Thinking, or knowing, is an activity of the spirit of a man
- The spirit of a man is non-material – it can't be seen or felt, weighed, or measured
- Before the incarnation, Jesus was spirit. After the incarnation, Jesus was flesh.
 - Christmas is the celebration of Jesus taking on flesh so He could die for us

God is invisible

- God has not a body like men. God is invisible. No man has ever seen God, and no man will ever see God with his physical eyes
 - John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.
 - 1Jo 4: 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.
- It is a sin to try to make God visible by any kind of statue or picture
 - Ex 20: 4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
- The only way that we can 'see' God, then, is indirectly. We can see him only as we learn to see His 'reflection' in the things that He has made.
 - Is 40:18 To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?
26: Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?

Man is made in the image of God

- Man is made in the exact image of God, yet he is completely different (like looking in a mirror)
 - Incommunicable attributes – they belong to God alone
 - God has certain attributes (characteristics, qualities) that he does not 'share' with man
 - God is infinite, man is not
 - God is eternal, man is not
 - Communicable attributes – Attributes that God does share with man
 - God gives these attributes to man in order that he might be like God
 - God has all these in a far higher sense than man ever can.
 - God's wisdom is always ways infinite, eternal, and unchangeable wisdom. His power is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, too.
 - Whereas the wisdom of man, or the power of man, is always finite, temporal, and changeable.
- God is unchangeable
 - How can God repent if He is unchangeable?
 - The answer is that when Scripture speaks like this of God, it always tells us first that it is man who has really changed. Man changes in his attitude or relationship to God. From this change in man himself there comes a change in God's manner of dealing with man. But the change is not really in God, it is only in man.

Q5. Are there more Gods than one?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

A. Doctrine of God (4-11)

1. Attributes
2. Works: Creation and Providence

A5. No

Q5. Is there more than one God?

There is only one, the living and true God.

Q5. Are there more Gods than one?

There is but one only¹, the living and true God.

¹ 1Co 8:4...there is no God but one

Explanation

We live in a pluralistic society that believes there are many paths to God. In fact, there are many gods! Whatever version of God (or no God) works for you. In contrast to this, the Bible affirms unapologetically that “The LORD, Our God, the LORD is one!” There is only one God: the one who called Abraham, who covenanted with David, who became a man in Jesus Christ, who reveals his plan of redemption for his people to know, love, and live forever with him.

We serve a living God

Jeremiah 10:10

Habakkuk 2:18-20

Isiah 44:9-20

1Co 12:2

1Ki 18:18-41

Q6. How many persons are there in the godhead?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

A. Doctrine of God (4-11)

1. Attributes
2. Works: Creation and Providence

A6. 3 – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Q6. How many persons are in the one God?

Three persons are in the one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.

Q6. How many persons are there in the godhead?

There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost¹; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory².

¹ Mt 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

² 2Co 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Explanation

Godhead = Holy trinity

The Doctrine of the Trinity is hard to understand. In fact, it is impossible for a human to *fully* comprehend (should it surprise us that the nature of God is beyond our puny human ability to fully comprehend?). While hard to understand, it is *not* a contradiction. We believe that there is only one God (God is one in his substance or essence). But we also affirm that God is three in person (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). This has been true of God's nature from all eternity. This doctrine is taught in scripture, and it is absolutely essential doctrine in Christian orthodoxy. We believe and affirm it!

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come. Amen.

Athanasian Creed

The Athanasian Creed, also known as Pseudo-Athanasian Creed or Quicumque Vult (also Quicumque Vult), is a Christian statement of belief focused on Trinitarian doctrine and Christology.

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is; such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and the Holy Ghost unlimited. The Father eternal; the Son eternal; and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated; nor three infinities, but one uncreated; and one infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties; but one Almighty. So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity; to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; So are we forbidden by the catholic religion; to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid; the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation; that he also believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess; that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Substance [Essence] of the Father; begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Substance [Essence] of his Mother, born in the world. Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who although he is God and Man; yet he is not two, but one Christ. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by assumption of the Manhood into God. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance [Essence]; but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the God the Father Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.

Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

A. Doctrine of God (4-11)

1. Attributes

2. Works: Creation and Providence

Answer – God's eternal plans

Q7. What are the decrees of God?

The decrees of God are his eternal plan, based on the purpose of His will, by which, for His own glory, He has foreordained everything that happens.

Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Explanation

People often affirm that “Everything happens for a reason.” Indeed, this is the case. We affirm that all things happen according to the decree of God. Of course, we also affirm that we have no earthly idea what those reasons might be. That is the whole point. It is God alone who in his sovereignty governs all things according to his own secret, eternal purpose, and his own inscrutable will.

Q. 8. How doth God execute His decrees?

- II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)
 - A. Doctrine of God (4-11)
 - 1. Attributes
 - 2. Works: Creation and Providence

Answer

Q8. How does God carry out His decrees?

God carries out His decrees in creation and providence.

Q. 8. How doth God execute His decrees?

God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Explanation

In Reformed theology we often highlight the important divine attribute of God’s sovereignty. God is sovereign over all things. He is the maker of all things visible and invisible as their Creator. He does not cease to interact with his creatures once made, however. He also governs all things continually. This is the doctrine of divine providence.

2 parts – creation and providence (governing)

Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

- II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)
 - A. Doctrine of God (4-11)
 - 1. Attributes
 - 2. Works: Creation and Providence

Answer – God spoke everything out of nothing in 6 days and it was very good

Q9. What is creation?

Creation is God’s making everything out of nothing by His powerful word in six days - and all very good.

Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

The work of creation is God’s making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Explanation

We affirm that God is maker of all things. He made these things out of nothing, using no pre-existent matter (God alone is eternal). We also affirm that God made all things “very good.” The world as we see it around us today exhibits warfare, deceit, disease, death. But, this is our fault, not God’s. God made all things very good, in a state of innocence and uprightness.

Creatio ex nihilo – Heb 11:3 – Creation out of nothing
That means that God alone is eternal

‘Fiat’ – Latin for let it be done

Q. 10. How did God create man?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

A. Doctrine of God (4-11)

1. Attributes
2. Works: Creation and Providence

Answer

Q10. How did God create man?

God created man, male and female, in His own image and in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, to rule over the other creatures.

Q. 10. How did God create man?

God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Explanation

Human beings stand in a unique place in the created order. Men and women bear the image of God – we were made to be like him, to reflect his glory, to be his sons and daughters, to live forever. Our first parents were righteous and holy; sin had not yet brought about our debasement. God set man over his created order to have dominion. We were to righteously govern the Creation and reflect our maker in this.

Knowledge, righteousness, holiness → represents our rational, moral, and spiritual natures

5 ?? Of Calvinism – TULIP (See section on Calvinism)

1. Total depravity
2. Unconditional election
3. Limited atonement
4. Irresistible grace
5. Perseverance of the saints

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

A. Doctrine of God (4-11)

1. Attributes
2. Works: Creation and Providence

Answer

Q11. What is God's providence?

God's providence is His completely holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing every creature and every action.

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Explanation

In looking around us at a broken world it may not seem readily evident that God is governing all things according to a “most holy, wise” purpose! Yet this is exactly what the Bible teaches and we believe and affirm. God governs all our actions and ultimately this will work for the good of those who know him (Rom 8:28) and for the glory of God.

Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:

1. Innocence
2. Sin
3. Grace
4. Glory

Answer

Q12. What did God's providence specifically do for man whom He created?

After the creation God made a covenant with man to give him life, if he perfectly obeyed; God told him not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or he would die.

Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?

When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

Explanation

God gave our first parents a gracious covenant. He gave them the opportunity to live forever with him in a relationship of devotion and obedience, to his honor and glory. He gave them one commandment, and with it an opportunity to trust the goodness of his word. He also warned them of the grievous results that would ensue should they violate that sacred commandment. We too stand before a covenant making God who offers unto us a gracious covenant – will we listen to his word? Will we choose the path of life...or death?

Covenant of life = Covenant of works

Broken by Adam and Eve, but Adam was held responsible

1st Adam fell, 2nd Adam we are redeemed

Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:

1. Innocence
2. Sin
3. Grace
4. Glory

Answer

Q13. Did our first parents remain as they were created?

Left to the freedom of their own wills, our first parents sinned against God and fell from their original condition.

Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Explanation

What would have happened if our first parents had never sinned? Well... they never would have died! And world history would look quite a bit different. Why would God have put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden in the first place? Well, though Adam was innocent of sin at his creation, he was not yet mature. It is through temptation that he should have learned greater faith and obedience, but in his rebellion we have all fallen into a state of sin and death.

Q. 14. What is sin?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:

1. Innocence
2. Sin
3. Grace
4. Glory

Answer

Q14. What is sin?

Sin is disobeying or not conforming to God's law in any way.

Q. 14. What is sin?

Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Explanation

This is an important definition! We often view sin as bad stuff that we do, and it is that! Lying, cheating, murder, etc. would fit under the category "transgression of the law of God." But sin is also a "want of conformity to the law of God." What is a "want of conformity"? It is a failure to conform, a failure to fulfill our obligation. When I fail to love my neighbor as I've been commanded it is sin – want of conformity to the law of God. We also talk about these two types of sin as sins of "commission" (transgressions) and sins of "omission" (want of conformity).

Q. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:

1. Innocence
2. Sin
3. Grace
4. Glory

Answer

Q15. By what sin did our first parents fall from their original condition?

Our first parents' sin was eating the forbidden fruit.

Q. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Explanation

Vital to our entire understanding of our nature as humans, our current condition as sinners, and our hope in redemption is the doctrine of the Fall. The Bible teaches clearly that human beings were created as morally upright, without sin, but that we have fallen from that condition into a state of sin. How did this happen? We rebelled against God. This is what the catechism emphasizes. The fruit was forbidden. Only one commandment was given, but our first parents chose to rebel against God's commandment and go their own way. Man's nature was corrupted and can only be set right by God's gracious work in Christ.

Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:

1. Innocence
2. Sin
3. Grace
4. Glory

Answer

Q16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first disobedience?

Since the covenant was made not only for Adam but also for his natural descendants, all mankind sinned in him and fell with him in his first disobedience.

Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

Explanation

This is certainly hard to understand, and we may not think it fair. But the Bible is very clear that when Adam sinned we all sinned. Adam's sin was not simply his own, but the sin of humanity. It isn't just an example of sin that we've followed (it certainly is that), but it is a real fall. We are all sinners by nature. We are guilty of sin, and the wages of sin is death. God is just in condemning all men eternally and owes us nothing. This is why there can be no religion of works. If we are to know God, if we are to have life everlasting as we were created to have, it must be due to God's gracious work on our behalf in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:

1. Innocence
2. Sin
3. Grace
4. Glory

Answer

Q17. What happened to man in the fall?

Man fell into a condition of sin and misery.

Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Explanation

People often fight over an inheritance. People want their share of the estate. But if there is one inheritance we would all love to forswear it would be this one! The fall has left us an estate...of sin and misery. We look around us at a twisted, broken world. Disease, death, murder, genocide, loneliness, depression. This is the inheritance of sin and it is truly miserable. How desperately the remedy of Christ is needed.

Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate where into man fell?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:

1. Innocence
2. Sin
3. Grace
4. Glory

Answer

Q18. What is sinful about man's fallen condition?

The sinfulness of that fallen condition is twofold. First, in what is commonly called original sin, there is the guilt of Adam's first sin with its lack of original righteousness and the corruption of his whole nature. Second are all the specific acts of disobedience that come from original sin.

Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate where into man fell?

The sinfulness of that estate where into man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Explanation

This answer is a particularly long and potentially confusing one, but it is important. It describes the reality that our natures have been corrupted by sin. We call this original sin. We are sinners by nature. It isn't just that we sin (we do); rather it is that we are sinners. We aren't sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners! We are conceived in guilt, we want (as in lack) righteousness, our whole nature is corrupt (total depravity), and, therefore, we sin.

Imputation

1. Sin has been imputed to us from Adam
2. Our sins are imputed to Jesus
3. Jesus' righteousness is imputed to the elect

Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate where into man fell?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

B. Doctrine of Man (12-19), in his Four-fold State:

1. Innocence
2. Sin
3. Grace
4. Glory

Answer

Q19. What is the misery of man's fallen condition?

By their fall all mankind lost fellowship with God and brought His anger and curse on themselves. They are therefore subject to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate where into man fell?

All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Explanation

Sin has brought much misery to the world. But chief among all our miseries is that we are estranged from God. No longer in fellowship with him, we are instead cursed and under his wrath. The judgment of death means not only physical death, but spiritual death in hell as well. This is misery indeed! How desperately we need a deliverance from our misery....

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)

1. Mediatorial Role of Christ

- a. Prophet
- b. Priest
- c. King

2. Two-fold State of Christ's Incarnation

- a. Humiliation
- b. Exaltation

Answer

Q20. Did God leave all mankind to die in sin and misery?

From all eternity and merely because it pleased Him God chose some to have everlasting life. These He freed from sin and misery by a covenant of grace and brought them to salvation by a redeemer.

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a redeemer.

Explanation

God could have left us to suffer the misery that our sin had brought upon us. He would have been well justified in doing so. But, he didn't! By his sheer grace, and by his remarkable goodness, he chose to fix his love upon us by his covenant of grace! He chose to give us another inheritance – salvation by a Redeemer!

Narrow is the path and few are those that find it

Saved by God's grace → should leave to Doxology

Answer – Grace / election

Covenant of grace began at the fall, when God didn't abandon Adam and Eve

Monergism – The position in Christian theology that God, through the Holy Spirit, works to bring about the salvation of an individual through spiritual regeneration irrespective of the individual's cooperation

Q. 21. Who is the redeemer of God's elect?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)

1. Mediatorial Role of Christ

- a. Prophet
- b. Priest
- c. King

2. Two-fold State of Christ's Incarnation

- a. Humiliation
- b. Exaltation

Answer

Q21. Who is the redeemer of God's chosen ones?

The only redeemer of God's chosen is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, Who became man. He was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.

Q. 21. Who is the redeemer of God's elect?

The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

Explanation

Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer from our misery in sin. There can be no other. This truth is tied to his identity as the God-man. Christ is fully God and fully man. As a man he can represent us before God. As God he can fulfill all righteousness, something that no other human ever has or could do. There is only one way possible, and God provided it!

Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)

1. Mediatorial Role of Christ

- a. Prophet
- b. Priest
- c. King

2. Two-fold State of Christ's Incarnation

- a. Humiliation
- b. Exaltation

Answer

Q22. How did Christ, the Son of God, become man?

Christ, the Son of God, became man by assuming a real body and a reasoning soul. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who gave birth to Him; yet He was sinless.

Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Explanation

Christ is the Son of God. That is to say, he is fully God, and together with the Father and the Spirit he has existed from all eternity. Yet he became man. And when he became man he became *fully* man. This is why the doctrine of the virgin birth is so critical. Christ became human in every way (yet without sin).

Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our redeemer?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)

1. Mediatorial Role of Christ

a. Prophet

b. Priest

c. King

2. Two-fold State of Christ’s Incarnation

a. Humiliation

b. Exaltation

Answer

Q23. How is Christ our redeemer?

As our redeemer, Christ is a prophet, priest, and king in both His humiliation and His exaltation.

Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our redeemer?

Christ, as our redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Explanation

Hidden behind this question is a bit of Old Testament theology about the “Christ.” The Greek term Christ, like the Hebrew term Messiah, means Anointed One. And in the Old Testament there were three particular offices that were assumed with an anointing of oil – prophet, priest, and king. Each of these anointed offices pointed forward to the coming of *the* Christ.

Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)

1. Mediatorial Role of Christ

a. Prophet

b. Priest

c. King

2. Two-fold State of Christ’s Incarnation

a. Humiliation

b. Exaltation

Answer

Q24. How is Christ a prophet?

As a prophet, Christ reveals the will of God to us for our salvation by His word and Spirit.

Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

Explanation

John begins his gospel by describing Christ as the Word. Hebrews begins with an affirmation that while God spoke at many times and in various ways through the prophets, the ultimate revelation was through His Son. Christ is the pinnacle of revelation. He is the ultimate making known of God – his identity, plan, purpose, and salvation.

Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)

1. Mediatorial Role of Christ

- a. Prophet
- b. Priest
- c. King

2. Two-fold State of Christ’s Incarnation

- a. Humiliation
- b. Exaltation

Answer

Q25. How is Christ a priest?

As a priest, Christ offered Himself up once as a sacrifice for us to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God, and He continually intercedes for us.

Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.

Explanation

According the book of Hebrews, there were many priests and many sacrifices. But even though these priests ministered for centuries and offered many thousands of sacrifices, they could never take away sin. But Christ is the Great High Priest – he makes sacrifice once and for all. He is also the Lamb of God – his sacrifice takes away the sin of the world. And his priestly work continues as he (even now!) intercedes for us.

Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)

1. Mediatorial Role of Christ

- a. Prophet
- b. Priest
- c. King

2. Two-fold State of Christ’s Incarnation

- a. Humiliation
- b. Exaltation

Answer

Q26. How is Christ a king?

As a king, Christ brings us under His power, rules and defends us, and restrains and conquers all His and all our enemies.

Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Explanation

David was promised a son who would reign forever, over an ever-increasing kingdom of righteousness. Christ was honored as a king at birth. The kingdom of God was central to his teaching. He was crucified as king. And he reigns as king in his ascension. We submit to his lordship and seek his dominion over our lives and his entire creation. Let thy kingdom come!

Q. 27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

- II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)
 - C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)
 - 1. Mediatorial Role of Christ
 - a. Prophet
 - b. Priest
 - c. King
 - 2. Two-fold State of Christ's Incarnation
 - a. Humiliation
 - b. Exaltation

Answer

Q27. How was Christ humiliated?

Christ was humiliated: by being born as a man and born into a poor family; by being made subject to the law and suffering the miseries of this life, the anger of God, and the curse of death on the cross; and by being buried and remaining under the power of death for a time.

Q. 27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Explanation

Christ suffered everything that sinful humanity suffers. We are all aware of the "miseries of this life." We know too well the misery of poverty, of hunger, of temptation, of suffering, and of death. These are part of the humiliation of man suffered due to our sin. But God knows this humiliation too, for he has entered into it! He has experienced the full suffering of the curse, including the worst misery of all: the wrath of God – death and hell.

Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

- II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)
 - C. Doctrine of Christ – Redemption Accomplished (20-28)
 - 1. Mediatorial Role of Christ
 - a. Prophet
 - b. Priest
 - c. King
 - 2. Two-fold State of Christ's Incarnation
 - a. Humiliation
 - b. Exaltation

Answer

Q28. How is Christ exalted?

Christ is exalted by His rising from the dead on the third day, His going up into heaven, His sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and His coming to judge the world at the last day.

Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Explanation

The gospel doesn't end with Christ's death (necessary and wonderful though it is). Christ didn't remain in the grave, but overcame death in resurrection. Also vitally important is his ascension into heaven, where he lives and reigns even now – sovereign over our lives. And he will come again to judge all things. Christ our Lord is exalted; let us exalt his holy name!

Q. 29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q29. How are we made to take part in the redemption Christ bought?

We take part in the redemption Christ bought when the Holy Spirit effectively applies it to us.

Q. 29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Explanation

As wonderful as the work of Christ is in his death and resurrection from the dead, it would have no significance for us unless it is applied to us personally. How do we come into contact with the work of Christ? How is it applied to our lives? Through the work of the Holy Spirit of God. The Spirit moves in our lives before we are even aware of it. He convicts, guides, and teaches according to his sovereign and free will.

Q. 30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q30. How does the Holy Spirit apply to us the redemption Christ bought?

The Spirit applies to us the redemption Christ bought by producing faith in us and so uniting us to Christ in our effective calling.

Q. 30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Explanation

It is impossible to overstate the importance of the Holy Spirit of God in our redemption. We are justified by faith, but, as Paul states, even that faith is the gift of God. It is the Holy Spirit who moves in our minds and hearts that we might believe. It the Spirit who convicts us and leads us to repentance. He brings us to Christ and we are united with him and his saving work is applied to our lives.

Q. 31. What is effectual calling?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q31. What is effective calling?

Effective calling is the work of God's Spirit, Who convinces us that we are sinful and miserable, Who enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and Who renews our wills. This is how He persuades and makes us able to receive Jesus Christ, Who is freely offered to us in the gospel.

Q. 31. What is effectual calling?

Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

Explanation

The gospel is a wonderful gift, freely offered. But we are hard-hearted sinners, corrupted in our minds, wills, and efforts at obedience. The Holy Spirit of God moves in us, however. He convicts us of sin, teaches us the necessity of trusting Christ, transforms our wills, and enables “us to embrace Christ.” This gracious movement of the Holy Spirit is dubbed “effectual calling,” and without it no one would believe!

Q. 32. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q32. What benefits do those who are effectively called share in this life?

In this life those who are effectively called share justification, adoption, sanctification, and the other benefits that either go with or come from them.

Q. 32. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

Explanation

Does the Christian faith make any difference *for this life* or is it only concerned with heaven? According to the catechism, the benefits of faith go far beyond the next life. We benefit in the here and now in myriad ways from knowing God through faith in Jesus Christ. Assurance of our Father's providential care, access to the wisdom of God, moral clarity, to name just a few. The most practical thing you will ever do *in this life* is believe in Jesus!

Q. 33. What is justification?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q33. What is justification?

Justification is the act of God's free grace by which He pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight. He does so only because He counts the righteousness of Christ as ours. Justification is received by faith alone.

Q. 33. What is justification?

Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Explanation

The central doctrine of our faith is "justification by faith alone." God forgives us our sins and counts us righteous not because of any good in us (we're sinners!), but because *Christ* is good. We receive his righteousness by faith alone, completely apart from any good that we do. It is by God's grace alone.

Q. 34. What is adoption?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q34. What is adoption?

Adoption is the act of God's free grace by which we become His sons with all the rights and privileges of being His.

Q. 34. What is adoption?

Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of, the sons of God.

Explanation

It is popular to talk about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all mankind. But all men are not children of God. In fact, none of us are by nature. We are God's enemies until we are adopted by him. Adoption is a great picture of our salvation, because it is dependent on the gracious action of those who choose to become parents. It is God's initiative to give us what we don't deserve – the rights and privileges of sons and daughters of God himself.

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q35. What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace by which our whole person is made new in the image of God, and we are made more and more able to become dead to sin and alive to righteousness.

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Explanation

We were never intended to just be saved for the next life. God's intention for us is that we would be holy as he is holy. We are to be cleansed from sin, growing in maturity and in godliness. We are to make progress in our salvation, looking more and more like Jesus in our character. God is doing this work in us by the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?

II. "What man is to believe concerning God" (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q36. What benefits in this life go with or come from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

The benefits that in this life go with or come from justification, adoption, and sanctification are: the assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and growing and persevering in grace to the end of our lives.

Q36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?

The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Explanation

There are so many benefits that come from knowing God by faith. One of these is “peace of conscience” – even though we have sinned greatly (and all carry a burden of guilt), we have peace. We are freed from this tremendous burden. We are also blessed with “perseverance” – this great blessing of being able to endure and bear up under the trials we will face in this life. All men face such trials, but for the believer there is the confidence of God’s sustaining hand and ultimate deliverance from suffering.

Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ when they die?

When believers die, their souls are made perfectly holy and immediately pass into glory. Their bodies, which are still united to Christ, rest in the grave until the resurrection.

Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Explanation

When we die we will at once be “made perfect in holiness” – we will be delivered from our sin nature! We will also be with God, at once and immediately. “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” We do not believe in soul sleep. But we believe even more than this. We will not remain disembodied in this intermediate state, we will receive resurrection bodies at the return of Christ.

Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

II. “What man is to believe concerning God” (4-38)

D. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – Redemption Applied (29-38)

1. Effectual Calling
2. Benefits in this Life
3. Benefits in the Life to Come

Answer

Q38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

At the resurrection, believers, raised in glory, will be publicly recognized and declared not guilty on the day of judgment and will be made completely happy in the full enjoyment of God forever.

Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Explanation

This is what we affirm in the Apostles’ Creed – “I believe in the resurrection of the body.” We won’t be disembodied souls for eternity. God intended for us to have bodies. And we will – bodies that never get sick, suffer, grow weary, or

die. Bodies like Christ's body. We'll be able to hug one another in the new heavens and the new earth. We'll be able to eat together. Every prayer for healing of the body will ultimately be answered, on resurrection day.

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q39. What does God require of man?

God requires man to obey His revealed will.

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Explanation

Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q40. What rules did God first reveal for man to obey?

The rules He first revealed were the moral law.

Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.

Explanation

Q. 41. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q41. Where is the moral law summarized?

The moral law is summarized in the ten commandments.

Q. 41. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

Explanation

Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q42. What is the essence of the ten commandments?

The essence of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and to love everyone else as we love ourselves.

Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

The sum of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

Explanation

Q. 43. What is the preface to the ten commandments?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q43. What introduces the ten commandments?

These words introduce the ten commandments: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Q. 43. What is the preface to the ten commandments?

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Explanation

Q. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q44. What does the introduction to the ten commandments teach us?

The introduction to the ten commandments teaches us that, because God is Lord and is our God and redeemer, we must keep all His commandments.

Q. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us that because God is the Lord, and our God, and redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Explanation

Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q45. What is the first commandment?

The first commandment is: You shall have no other gods before me.

Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Explanation

Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q46. What does the first commandment require?

The first commandment requires us to know and recognize God as the only true God and our God, and to worship and glorify Him accordingly.

Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Explanation

Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q47. What does the first commandment forbid?

The first commandment forbids denying God or not worshipping and glorifying Him as the true God and our God. It also forbids giving worship and glory, which He alone deserves, to anyone or anything else.

Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Explanation

Q. 48. What are we specially taught by these words before me in the first commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q48. What are we specifically taught in the first commandment by the words 'before me'?

The words 'before me' in the first commandment teach us that God, who sees everything, notices and is very offended by the sin of having any other god.

Q. 48. What are we specially taught by these words before me in the first commandment?

A. These words before me in the first commandment teach us that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god.

Explanation

Q. 49. Which is the second commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q49. What is the second commandment?

The second commandment is: You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand (generations) of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Q. 49. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Explanation

Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q50. What does the second commandment require?

The second commandment requires us to receive, respectfully perform, and preserve completely and purely all the regulations for religion and worship that God has established in His word.

Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

Explanation

Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q51. What does the second commandment forbid?

The second commandment forbids our worshipping God with images or in any other way not established in His word.

Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

Explanation

Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q52. What are the reasons for the second commandment?

The reasons for the second commandment are that God totally rules over us, that we belong to Him, and that He is eager to be worshipped correctly.

Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

Explanation

Q. 53. Which is the third commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q53. What is the third commandment?

The third commandment is: You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Q. 53. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Explanation

Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q54. What does the third commandment require?

The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, qualities, regulations, word, and works.

Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works.

Explanation

Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q55. What does the third commandment forbid?

The third commandment forbids our treating as unholy or abusing anything God uses to make Himself known.

Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

Explanation

Q. 56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q56. What is the reason for the third commandment?

The reason for the third commandment is that the Lord our God will not allow those who break this commandment to escape His righteous judgement, although they may escape punishment from men.

Q. 56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

Explanation

Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q57. What is the fourth commandment?

The fourth commandment is: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Explanation

Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q58. What does the fourth commandment require?

The fourth commandment requires us to set apart to God the times He has established in His word - specifically one whole day out of every seven as a holy Sabbath to Him.

Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy sabbath to himself.

Explanation

Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q59. Which day of the week has God designated as the Sabbath?

From the beginning of the world until the resurrection of Christ, God established the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. From that time until the end of the world the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath.

Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath.

Explanation

Q. 60. How is the sabbath to be sanctified?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q60. How do we keep the Sabbath holy?

We keep the Sabbath holy by resting the whole day from worldly affairs or recreations, even ones that are lawful on other days. Except for necessary works or acts of mercy we should spend all our time publicly and privately worshipping God.

Q. 60. How is the sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Explanation

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q61. What does the fourth commandment forbid?

The fourth commandment forbids failing to do or carelessly doing what we are supposed to do. It also forbids treating the day as unholy by loafing, by doing anything in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thinking, talking about, or working on our worldly affairs or recreations.

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Explanation

Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q62. What are the reasons for the fourth commandment?

The reasons for the fourth commandment are these: God allows us six days of the week to take care of our own affairs; He claims the seventh day as His own; He set the example; and He blesses the Sabbath.

Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the sabbath day.

Explanation

Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q63. What is the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment is: Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Explanation

Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q64. What does the fifth commandment require?

The fifth commandment requires us to respect and treat others, whether above, below, or equal to us, as their position or our relationship to them demands.

Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors or equals.

Explanation

Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q65. What does the fifth commandment forbid?

The fifth commandment forbids being disrespectful to or not treating others as their position or relationship to us demands.

Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.

Explanation

Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q66. What is the reason for the fifth commandment?

The reason for the fifth commandment is the promise of long life and prosperity, if these glorify God and are for the good of those who obey this commandment.

Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

Explanation

Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q67. What is the sixth commandment?

The sixth commandment is: You shall not murder.

Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

Explanation

Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q68. What does the sixth commandment require?

The sixth commandment requires making every lawful effort to preserve one's own life and the lives of others.

Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

Explanation

Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q69. What does the sixth commandment forbid?

The sixth commandment forbids taking one's own life or the lives of others unjustly or doing anything that leads to suicide or murder.

Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

Explanation

Q. 70. Which is the seventh commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q70. What is the seventh commandment?

The seventh commandment is: You shall not commit adultery.

Q. 70. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Explanation

Q. 71. What is required in the seventh commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q71. What does the seventh commandment require?

The seventh commandment requires us and everyone else to keep sexually pure in heart, speech, and action.

Q. 71. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech and behavior.

Explanation

Q. 72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q72. What does the seventh commandment forbid?

The seventh commandment forbids thinking, saying, or doing anything sexually impure.

Q. 72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words and actions.

Explanation

Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q73. What is the eighth commandment?

The eighth commandment is: You shall not steal.

Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

Explanation

Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q74. What does the eighth commandment require?

The eighth commandment requires that we lawfully acquire and increase our own and others' money and possessions.

Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

Explanation

Q. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q75. What does the eighth commandment forbid?

The eighth commandment forbids anything that either does or may unjustly take away money or possessions from us or anyone else.

Q. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.

Explanation

Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q76. What is the ninth commandment?

The ninth commandment is: You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Explanation

Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q77. What does the ninth commandment require?

The ninth commandment requires us to tell the truth and to maintain and promote it and our own and others' reputations, especially when testifying.

Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Explanation

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q78. What does the ninth commandment forbid?

The ninth commandment forbids anything that gets in the way of the truth or injures anyone's reputation.

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name.

Explanation

Q. 79. Which is the tenth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q79. What is the tenth commandment?

The tenth commandment is: You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Q. 79. Which is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Explanation

Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q80. What does the tenth commandment require?

The tenth commandment requires us to be completely satisfied with our own status in life and to have a proper, loving attitude toward others and their possessions.

Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

Explanation

Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q81. What does the tenth commandment forbid?

The tenth commandment forbids any dissatisfaction with what belongs to us, envy or grief at the success of others, and all improper desire for anything that belongs to someone else.

Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

Explanation

Q. 82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q82. Can anyone perfectly keep the commandments of God?

Since the fall no ordinary man can perfectly keep the commandments of God in this life but breaks them every day in thought, word, and action.

Q. 82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed.

Explanation

Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q83. Are all sins equally evil?

In the eyes of God some sins in themselves are more evil than others, and some are more evil because of the harm that results from them.

Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Explanation

Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve?

III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)

A. The Law of God (39-84)

Answer

Q84. What does every sin deserve?

Every sin deserves God's anger and curse, both in this life and in the life to come.

Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

Explanation

Q. 85. What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 1. Faith and Repentance (85-87)

Answer

Q85. What does God require from us to escape His anger and curse, which we deserve for our sin?

To escape God's anger and curse, which we deserve for our sin, God requires from us faith in Jesus Christ and repentance unto life along with diligent involvement in all the external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of redemption.

Q. 85. What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Explanation

Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 1. Faith and Repentance (85-87)

Answer

Q86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, by which we receive and rest on Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel.

Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Explanation

Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 1. Faith and Repentance (85-87)

Answer

Q87. What is repentance unto life?

Repentance unto life is a saving grace, by which a sinner, being truly aware of his sinfulness, understands the mercy of God in Christ, grieves for and hates his sins, and turns from them to God, fully intending and striving for a new obedience.

Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

Explanation

Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q88. What are the ordinary, external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of redemption?

The ordinary, external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of redemption are His regulations, particularly the word, sacraments, and prayer, all of which are made effective for the salvation of His chosen ones.

Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Explanation

Q. 89. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q89. What makes the word effective for salvation?

The Spirit of God causes the reading and especially the preaching of the word to convince and convert sinners and to build them up in holiness and comfort through faith to salvation.

Q. 89. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

Explanation

Q. 90. How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q90. How is the word to be read and heard in order to become effective for salvation?

For the word to become effective for salvation, we must pay careful attention to it, prepare ourselves, and pray for understanding. We must also receive it with faith and love, treasure it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

Q. 90. How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

Explanation

Q. 91. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q91. How do the sacraments become effective means of salvation?

The sacraments become effective means of salvation, not because of any special power in them or in the people who administer them, but rather by the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in those who receive them by faith.

Q. 91. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

Explanation

Q. 92. What is a sacrament?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q92. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a holy regulation established by Christ, in which Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers by physical signs.

Q. 92. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

Explanation

Q. 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q93. What are the sacraments of the New Testament?

The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper.

Explanation

Q. 94. What is baptism?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q94. What is baptism?

The sacrament of baptism is a washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which is a sign and seal that we are joined to Christ, that we receive the benefits of the covenant of grace, and that we are engaged to be the Lord's.

Q. 94. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Explanation

Q. 95. To whom is baptism to be administered?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q95. Who should be baptized?

Those who are not members of churches should not be baptized until they have publicly stated that they believe in Christ and will obey Him, but the infant children of church members should be baptized.

Q. 95. To whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

Explanation

Q. 96. What is the Lord's supper?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q96. What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament in which bread and wine are given and received as Christ directed to proclaim His death. Those who receive the Lord's Supper in the right way share in His body and blood with all His benefits, not physically but by faith, and become spiritually stronger and grow in grace.

Q. 96. What is the Lord's supper?

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Explanation

Q. 97. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 2. Word and Sacrament (88-97)

Answer

Q97. What is the right way to receive the Lord's Supper?

The right way to receive the Lord's Supper is to examine whether we discern the Lord's body, whether our faith feeds on Him, and whether we have repentance, love, and a new obedience - so that we may not come in the wrong way and eat and drink judgement on ourselves.

Q. 97. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Explanation

Q. 98. What is prayer?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q98. What is prayer?

Prayer is offering our desires to God in the name of Christ for things that agree with His will, confessing our sins, and thankfully recognising His mercies.

Q. 98. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Explanation

Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q99. How does God direct us to pray?

The whole word of God, but especially the Lord's prayer, which Christ taught His disciples, directs our prayers.

Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's prayer.

Explanation

Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q100. What does the beginning of the Lord's prayer teach us?

The beginning of the Lord's prayer (Our Father in heaven) teaches us to draw near to God with completely holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father who is able and ready to help us. It also teaches that we should pray with and for others.

Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer, which is, Our Father which art in heaven, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Explanation

Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q101. For what do we pray in the first request?

In the first request (hallowed be your name) we pray that God will enable us and others to glorify Him in everything He uses to make Himself known and that He will work out everything to His own glory.

Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, which is, Hallowed be thy name, we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Explanation

Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q102. For what do we pray in the second request?

In the second request (your kingdom come) we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, with ourselves and others brought into and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may come quickly.

Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is, Thy kingdom come, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Explanation

Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third petition?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q103. For what do we pray in the third request?

In the third request (your will be done on earth as it is in heaven) we pray that by His grace God would make us have the capability and the will to know, obey, and submit to His will in everything, as the angels do in heaven.

Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Explanation

Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q104. For what do we pray in the fourth request?

In the fourth request (Give us today our daily bread) we pray that we may receive an adequate amount of the good things in this life as a free gift of God and that with them we may enjoy His blessing.

Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, which is, Give us this day our daily bread, we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

Explanation

Q. 105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q105. For what do we pray in the fifth request?

In the fifth request (Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors), encouraged by God's grace, which makes it possible for us sincerely to forgive others, we pray that for Christ's sake God would freely pardon all our sins.

Q. 105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, which is, And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Explanation

Q. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q106. For what do we pray in the sixth request?

In the sixth request (And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one) we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, which is, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Explanation

Q. 107. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

- III. "What duty God requires of man" (39-107)
 - B. The Means of Grace (85-107)
 - 3. Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (98-107)

Answer

Q107. What does the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever) teaches us to be encouraged only by God in our prayers and to praise Him by acknowledging that kingdom, power, and glory are His. To show that we want to be heard and have confidence that we are, we say "Amen".

Q. 107. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer, which is, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen, teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power and glory to him. And in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.

Explanation

Catechism for Young Children

An Introduction to the Shorter Catechism

Q. 1. Who made you?

A. God.

Q. 2. What else did God make?

A. God made all things.

Q. 3. Why did God make you and all things ?

A. For his own glory.

Q. 4. How can you glorify God?

A. By loving him and doing what he commands.

Q. 5. Why ought you to glorify God?

A. Because he made me and takes care of me.

Q. 6. Are there more gods than one?

A. There is only one God.

Q. 7. In how many persons does this one God exist?

A. In three persons.

Q. 8. What are they?

A. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Q. 9. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, and has not a body like men.

Q. 10. Where is God?

A. God is everywhere.

Q. 11. Can you see God?

A. No; I cannot see God, but he always sees me.

Q. 12. Does God know all things?

A. Yes; nothing can be hid from God.

Q. 13. Can God do all things?

A. Yes; God can do all his holy will.

Q. 14. Where do you learn how to love and obey God?

A. In the Bible alone.

Q. 15. Who wrote the Bible?

A. Holy men who were taught by the Holy Spirit.

Q. 16. Who were our first parents?

A. Adam and Eve.

Q. 17. Of what were our first parents made?

A. God made the body of Adam out of the ground, and formed Eve from the body of Adam.

Q. 18. What did God give Adam and Eve besides bodies?

A. He gave them souls that could never die.

Q. 19. Have you a soul as well as a body?

A. Yes; I have a soul that can never die.

Q. 20. How do you know that you have a soul?

A. Because the Bible tells me so.

Q. 21. In what condition did God make Adam and Eve?

A. He made them holy and happy.

Q. 22. What is a covenant?

A. An agreement between two or more persons.

Q. 23. What covenant did God make with Adam?

A. The covenant of works.

Q. 24. What was Adam bound to do by the covenant of works?

A. To obey God perfectly.

Q. 25. What did God promise in the covenant of works?

A. To reward Adam with life if he obeyed him.

Q. 26. What did God threaten in the covenant of works?

A. To punish Adam with death if he disobeyed.

Q. 27. Did Adam keep the covenant of works?

A. No; he sinned against God.

Q. 28. What is Sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

Q. 29. What is meant by want of conformity?

A. Not being or doing what God requires.

Q. 30. What is meant by transgression?

A. Doing what God forbids.

Q. 31. What was the sin of our first parents?

A. Eating the forbidden fruit.

Q. 32. Who tempted them to this sin?

A. The devil tempted Eve, and she gave the fruit to Adam.

Q. 33. What befell our first parents when they had sinned?

A. Instead of being holy and happy, they became sinful and miserable.

Q. 34. Did Adam act for himself alone in the covenant of works?

A. No; he represented all his posterity.

Q. 35. What effect had the sin of Adam on all mankind?

A. All mankind are born in a state of sin and misery.

Q. 36. What is that sinful nature which we inherit from Adam called?

A. Original sin.

Q. 37. What does every sin deserve?

A. The wrath and curse of God.

Q. 38. Can any one go to heaven with this sinful nature?

A. No; our hearts must be changed before we can be fit for heaven.

Q. 39. What is a change of heart called?

A. Regeneration.

Q. 40. Who can change a sinner's heart?

A. The Holy Spirit alone.

Q. 41. Can any one be saved through the covenant of works?

A. None can be saved through the covenant of works.

Q. 42. Why can none be saved through the covenant of works?

A. Because all have broken it, and are condemned by it

Q. 43. With whom did God the Father make the covenant of grace?

A. With Christ, his eternal Son.

Q. 44. Whom did Christ represent in the covenant of grace?

A. His elect people.

Q. 45. What did Christ undertake in the covenant of grace?

A. To keep the whole law for his people, and to suffer the punishment due to their sins.

Q. 46. Did our Lord Jesus Christ ever commit the least sin?

A. No; he was holy, harmless, and undefiled.

Q. 47. How could the Son of God suffer?

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man that he might obey and suffer in our nature.

Q. 48. What is meant by the Atonement?

A. Christ's satisfying divine justice, by his sufferings and death, in the place of sinners.

Q. 49. What did God the Father undertake in the covenant of grace?

A. To justify and sanctify those for whom Christ should die.

Q. 50. What is justification?

A. It is God's forgiving sinners, and treating them as if they had never sinned.

Q. 51. What is sanctification?

A. It is God's making sinners holy in heart and conduct.

Q. 52. For whom did Christ obey and suffer?

A. For those whom the Father had given him.

Q. 53. What kind of life did Christ live on earth?

A. A life of poverty and suffering.

Q. 54. What kind of death did Christ die?

A. The painful and shameful death of the cross.

Q. 55. Who will be saved?

A. Only those who repent of sin, believe in Christ, and lead holy lives.

Q. 56. What is it to repent?

A. To be sorry for sin, and to hate and forsake it because it is displeasing to God.

Q. 57. What is it to believe or have faith in Christ?

A. To trust in Christ alone for salvation.

Q. 58. Can you repent and believe in Christ by your own power?

A. No; I can do nothing good without the help of God's Holy Spirit.

Q. 59. How can you get the help of the Holy Spirit?

A. God has told us that we must pray to him for the Holy Spirit.

Q. 60. How long ago is it since Christ died?

A. More than nineteen hundred years.

Q. 61. How were pious persons saved before the coming of Christ?

A. By believing in a Savior to come.

Q. 62. How did they show their faith?

A. By offering sacrifices on God's altar.

Q. 63. What did these sacrifices represent?

A. Christ, the Lamb of God, who was to die for sinners.

Q. 64. What offices has Christ?

A. Christ has three offices.

Q. 65. What are they?

A. The offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king.

Q. 66. How is Christ a prophet?

A. Because he teaches us the will of God.

Q. 67. How is Christ a priest?

A. Because he died for our sins and pleads with God for us.

Q. 68. How is Christ a king?

A. Because he rules over us and defends us.

Q. 69. Why do you need Christ as a prophet?

A. Because I am ignorant.

Q. 70. Why do you need Christ as a priest?

A. Because I am guilty.

Q. 71. Why do you need Christ as a king?

A. Because I am weak and helpless.

Q. 72. How many commandments did God give on Mount Sinai?

A. Ten commandments.

Q. 73. What are the ten commandments sometimes called?

A. The Decalogue.

Q. 74. What do the first four commandments teach?

A. Our duty to God.

Q. 75. What do the last six commandments teach?

A. Our duty to our fellow men.

Q. 76. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. To love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself.

Q. 77. Who is your neighbor? A. All my fellow men are my neighbors.

Q. 78. Is God pleased with those who love and obey him?

A. Yes; he says, "I love them that love me."

Q. 79. Is God displeased with those who do not love and obey him?

A. Yes; "God is angry with the wicked every day."

Q. 80. What is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Q. 81. What does the first commandment teach us?

A. To worship God alone.

Q. 82. What is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any things that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Q. 83. What does the second commandment teach us?

A. To worship God in a proper manner, and to avoid idolatry.

Q. 84. What is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Q. 85. What does the third commandment teach me?

A. To reverence God's name, word, and works.

Q. 86. What is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it.

Q. 87. What does the fourth commandment teach us?

A. To keep the Sabbath holy.

Q. 88. What day of the week is the Christian Sabbath?

A. The first day of the week, called the Lord's day.

Q. 89. Why is it called the Lord's day?

A. Because on that day Christ rose from the dead.

Q. 90. How should the Sabbath be spent?

A. In prayer and praise, in hearing and reading God's Word, and in doing good to our fellow men.

Q. 91. What is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. 92. What does the fifth commandment teach me?

A. To love and obey our parents and teachers.

Q. 93. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

Q. 94. What does the sixth commandment teach us?

A. To avoid angry passions.

Q. 95. What is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. 96. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

A. To be pure in heart, language, and conduct.

Q. 97. What is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

Q. 98. What does the eighth commandment teach us?

A. To be honest and industrious.

Q. 99. What is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. 100. What does the ninth commandment teach us?

A. To tell the truth.

Q. 101. What is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

Q. 102. What does the tenth commandment teach us?

A. To be content with our lot.

Q. 103. Can any man keep these ten commandments perfectly?

A. No mere man, since the fall of Adam, ever did or can keep the ten commandments perfectly.

Q. 104. Of what use are the ten commandments to us?

A. They teach us our duty, and show our need of a Savior.

Q. 105. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is asking God for things which he has promised to give.

Q. 106. In whose name should we pray?

A. Only in the name of Christ.

Q. 107. What has Christ given us to teach us how to pray?

A. The Lord's Prayer.

Q. 108. Repeat the Lord's Prayer.

A. Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Q. 109. How many petitions are there in The Lord's Prayer?

A. Six.

Q. 110. What is the first petition?

A. "Hallowed be thy name."

Q. 111. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. That God's name may be honored by us and all men.

Q. 112. What is the second petition?

A. "Thy kingdom come."

Q. 113. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. That the gospel may be preached in all the world, and believed and obeyed by us and all men.

Q. 114. What is the third petition?

A. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Q. 115. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. That men on earth may serve God as the angels do in heaven.

Q. 116. What is the fourth petition?

A. "Give us this day our daily bread."

Q. 117. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. That God would give us all things needful for our bodies and souls.

Q. 118. What is the fifth petition?

A. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Q. 119. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. That God would pardon our sins for Christ's sake, and enable us to forgive those who have injured us.

Q. 120. What is the sixth petition?

A. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Q. 121. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. That God would keep us from sin.

Q. 122. How many sacraments are there?

A. Two.

Q. 123. What are they?

A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. 124. Who appointed these sacraments?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 125. Why did Christ appoint these sacraments?

A. To distinguish his disciples from the world, and to comfort and strengthen them.

Q. 126. What sign is used in baptism?

A. The washing with water.

Q. 127. What does this signify?

A. That we are cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ.

Q. 128. In whose name are we baptized?

A. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. 129. Who are to be baptized?

A. Believers and their children.

Q. 130. Why should infants be baptized?

A. Because they have a sinful nature and need a Savior.

Q. 131. Does Christ care for little children?

A. Yes; for he says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

Q. 132. To what does your baptism bind you?

A. To be a true follower of Christ.

Q. 133. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The eating of bread and drinking of wine in remembrance of the sufferings and death of Christ.

Q. 134. What does the bread represent?

A. The body of Christ, broken for our sins.

Q. 135. What does the wine represent?

A. The blood of Christ, shed for our salvation.

Q. 136. Who should partake of the Lord's Supper?

A. Only those who repent of their sins, believe in Christ for salvation, and love their fellow men.

Q. 137. Did Christ remain in the tomb after his crucifixion?

A. No; he rose from the tomb on the third day after his death.

Q. 138. Where is Christ now?

A. In heaven, interceding for sinners.

Q. 139. Will he come again?

A. Yes; at the last day Christ will come to judge the world.

Q. 140. What becomes of men at death?

A. The body returns to dust, and the soul goes into the world of spirits.

Q. 141. Will the bodies of the dead be raised to life again?

A. Yes; "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised."

Q. 142. What will become of the wicked in the day of judgment?

A. They shall be cast into hell.

Q. 143. What is hell?

A. A place of dreadful and endless torment.

Q. 144. What will become of the righteous?

A. They shall be taken to heaven.

Q. 145. What is heaven?

A. A glorious and happy place, where the righteous shall be forever with the Lord.

Worship

Worship Wars: Having it Your Way Might Be Exactly What you Don't Need

Posted: 14 Jan 2016 11:55 AM PST

I have a friend who pastored the same church for nearly twenty years. It almost did him in. He tried to keep everyone happy (always a losing proposition, of course), but they were un-keep-happible. Highly conflicted. *Especially around worship style.*

“We need contemporary music to reach younger people,” some folks reasonably recognized. OK, so we’ll add a contemporary worship service – praise songs rather than those dry, dusty, old hymns that the grayheads preferred. Some guitars, drums, amps – beef up the sounds system, throw in some lights. Get someone up there who looks a little bit hippish – young, glasses, more casual dress, maybe a tattoo, etc. Kill a bit of the liturgy – go with the evangelical formula of six songs and a sermon – Voila! Worship for a new generation.

In the case of this particular congregation, though, this didn’t result in wild and explosive growth. What resulted was...division. Two factions (at least, a few more than this actually, but two for the simplicity of this post):

Faction 1: The traditionalists – hymns are the way to go. The organ is the way to go (or at least the piano). The choir (with robes!) is the way to go. This is what church is. This is what I know. This is how we’ve always done it. This is the way it should be. Praise songs are too theologically tepid, too loud, too...new. We’re not doing it! Our way or the highway, pal! We’re the biggest givers, those best represented in leadership. You better listen to us!

Faction 2: The contemporaries – praise songs are way better! So much more lively, zippier. More interesting, less boring, less dry, less...dead (“dead” is a big word among the contemporaries – traditional things aren’t just not their preference – they are actually “dead”!). I mean, contemporary music is more spiritual. It touches you at a soul level in a way that hymns never could. These fossils need to get with the program! They’re on the wrong side of history! You’ve got to give the people what they want!

My friend tried to satisfy both factions. Despite not really needing to do so spacewise, he adopted a variety of options to accommodate a variety of tastes: Contemporary, then traditional. Traditional, then contemporary. He even tried Contemparitional and Trademporary. That made no one the least bit happy. Compromise after all isn’t the order of the day; victory is! My side must be victorious! If there is a hill worth dying on, it is the hill of *my* worship style preference! This is clearly a gospel-oriented way of thinking (as always, please read my posts assuming that at least 50% of the content is sarcastic).

Not surprisingly, his efforts at happy-making failed miserably. No one appreciated his efforts, they resented him for it. Eventually he moved on to greener pastures and the church...has pretty much maintained its dysfunctionality. I’d say they’ve treaded water, but in reality you’re never staying in the same place – status quo is retreat in a spiritual context. They keep aging, keep arguing, keep projecting a ridiculous and harmful witness to a lost world.

This isn’t an isolated incident. In fact, we have a term of art for this bizarre dysfunction: *worship wars*. It is painful to type those two words in tandem. Worship of the one true and living God on the part of his people should be the one time in

human affairs when unity is most clearly seen. The church is God's people: those of every race, tribe, people, and language who belong to him. The assembly of God's people for worship should be a taste of heaven – after all, our pictures of heaven are God's people gathering around his throne and giving him the glory he is due, usually in song. And yet, worship is often a source of painful division, of warfare. Certainly this must be the basis of some hearty laughter on the part of our enemy. Discord, division, faction, slander: this is the stock in trade of Satan. God is a God of order, not disorder. Christ is the Prince of Peace, not the author of discord.

I'll post a few thoughts on this biblically, personally, and practically. Closing thoughts for this particular post will focus on one aspect of this tragic warfare. **The idolatry of personal preference.** While often couched in terms of moral absolutes, there is no right or wrong of worship style. There really isn't. This is true of stylistic preference generally.

In clothes: one person prefers sweatpants, another slacks (what is this, 1976?) – a moral issue? Nope. We could discuss whether the clothes are appropriate for a given context, whether they are appropriately modest, etc. These questions could have moral dimensions, but the preference issue is basically one of "I like this not that."

It is silly to debate personal preference. If I say, "I love black raspberry ice cream," it would be nonsensical for you to object, "No way, I like German chocolate cake!" This is simply a statement of personal preference. It's not right or wrong. I'm no relativist morally or epistemologically, but I do affirm the relativism of personal preference.

Are organs more or less God honoring than guitars? Are projectors more inherently spiritual than hymn books? Come on! We can debate theological content; we can discuss ardor vs. indifference in worship; but why war over personal preference? Good grief, there are enough legitimately important and weighty matters to dispute, let's sheath the swords of unnecessary division.

Indeed, when I put my personal preference above my love for my brother and sister in this way I am guilty of the sin of idolatry. I bow before the god of my own making. In the name of the worship of the Lord God I bow before myself. While crooning out my love for God in my own preferred style, I, in fact, worship me.

Rather than dividing over a secondary matter like worship style, we have the opportunity to humble ourselves. Perhaps worshipping God in a style which isn't my personal favorite will enable me instead to die a little bit to myself and love my neighbor a little bit more.

[Worship Wars and the Bible](#)

Posted: 20 Jan 2016 01:31 PM PST

To what source can we turn to shine light on how to navigate (or, more preferably, avoid) the [worship wars](#)? Do we just go with our *gut*? What we *like*? What we *think*? What we *feel*? If we really want to know what's right when it comes to worship, we'd better seek the answers in the only place those answers can reliably be found: God's Word, scripture.

So what does the Bible say about this whole worship wars thing? Is there any insight from scripture as to how we should think about preferences in worship style? Of course. You'll never get me to answer no to the question of the Bible's relevance to anything. Certainly on this point the Bible has much to say.

Lessons from the Psalms

Let's start with the Psalms. The book of psalms stands as the prayer book of Israel. It is also the song book of Israel. Indeed *psalmos* is a Greek word that means "song." The psalms are prayers that were sung. They were songs which were prayed. This tells us something about our song singing in worship – in whatever style we do so, when we sing we are actually praying (or should be!). Songs of praise are enacted prayers. But what do these song-prayers teach us about worship style? Oodles.

- **The Psalms reflect enormous variety in subject matter and form.** Not all psalms are the same. There are many different types of psalms. There are praise psalms, confession psalms, psalms of lament (73 of them!), messianic psalms, trust psalms, psalms of Zion, imprecatory psalms, etc. We can learn something from this. We all like toe-tappers. We enjoy upbeat songs. But a lot of psalms lay bare the soul of an anguished worshipper. There is deep pathos, often grief, need, sorrow, or penitence, in these songs. Do our songs reflect this kind of

variety? I think not. And that means we're missing some stuff. Our diet should reflect the full panoply of divine worship. Neglecting to do so will lead (and has led) to our long-term spiritual malnourishment.

- **The Psalms include both Individual and Corporate songs.** Some psalms are “I” psalms. Some psalms are “we” psalms. There are many of both. Both are appropriate. Both are, in fact, necessary. This is a point I will come back to in a later post (in defense of praise songs). A common critique of praise songs: they are perceived as being too individualistic, too “me”-focused. While that can be an unhealthy thing if not balanced with “we” material, it also reflects an important biblical precedent in the psalms.
- **The Psalms reflect great variety in their presentation.** Not all psalms were sung the same way. Some psalms (like 136) clearly involved a call and antiphonal response. Others may even reflect a threefold division of the assembly (118). Still others involved choirs (“Sons of Asaph,” “Sons of Korah”). There are a variety of instruments called for, as well as references to a variety of tunes (As in Psalm 45: *For the director of music. To the tune of “Lilies.” Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. A wedding song*). There was sometimes a “conductor” – to what do we equate this office? A choir director? A praise team leader? Or both... There are also references to a variety of bodily postures. To sum up: they were sung with great variety.

On Instrumentation.

In some Christian traditions the only instrument permitted is the voice. The Reformed Presbyterian Church, for instance, allows for singing only of psalms and only without musical accompaniment. This no doubt lends itself to learning the psalms well and to high vocal quality in congregational singing, yet it is a hard position to defend biblically.

The Bible portrays varied instrumentation as being part of worship from the very beginning. Miriam leads the women of Israel in a celebratory tambourine-accompanied spontaneous chorus (Exodus 15). David played the harp (1 Samuel 16:3). Psalm 150 outlines a remarkable array of instrumentation:

Psalm 150:1-6 *Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. ² Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. ³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, ⁴ praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, ⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. ⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.*

The New Testament gives a vision of heaven that includes instrumentation as well. The saints in heaven worship God upon harps (Revelation 14:2).

What instruments are acceptable in worship? Well...on what basis could we exclude any potential candidate? Unless we restrict ourselves to zithers and lutes (something even strict traditionalists don't champion), we have to allow for more “modern” instrumentation. And if we allow the piano (invented ~1700 AD), why not the guitar? Indeed, a guitar is closer to a zither, harp, or lute, than is a piano or an organ! And if the guitar, why not the electric guitar, synthesizer, etc.?

This doesn't mean that there is no place for discussion around the appropriateness of a given instrument in a particular context (more on this in a later post). But the goal should be: 1) beauty; and 2) utility in leading the congregation in their work of worship (not performance!).

The New Testament and Worship Wars

Paul writes in Colossians (3:15-17) and Ephesians (5:19-20) about the unity which is ours in Christ. He calls for that unity to be on display through the worship of God's people in song. Consider the Colossians text:

Colossians 3:15-17 ¹⁵ *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Peace (not war!) should be on full display among God's people. And that peace should be demonstrated through the worship of God's people in song. These songs are to include “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” What does that list

include? Well, psalms are psalms (as in the book of...). Hymns are songs of praise (the word “hymn” is simply a transliteration of a Greek word meaning “praise song” – ironic, no?), and spiritual songs are songs which are spiritual. Now, we don’t know exactly what Paul envisioned as fitting into these three categories, but we can say this: Paul clearly embraced a big tent view of different types of songs which were appropriate to Christian worship! And he admonishes the church to display the peace of Christ through unity in this very matter! And we war over this?

There is also good evidence of an emerging collection of early Christian “hymns” (or praise songs, if you prefer). We see this in Colossians 1:15-20:

Colossians 1:15-20 ¹⁵ *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

We see it also in Philippians 2:5-11:

Philippians 2:5-11 ⁵ *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

It is theorized that these wonderful passages were, in fact, the emerging corpus of early Christian psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

In Conclusion: Diversity of style, instrumentation, and so on were the norm from the very beginning of the Christian movement (and before). It is beyond ridiculous that this should serve as a source of division in the worship of our day. Do we know better than the apostles? Are we wiser than scripture? I think not. Indeed, our unnecessary warfare demonstrates our folly. Lay down your weapons! Pick up your song books (if you use those)!

[In Defense of Hymns \(And Praise Songs\)](#)

Posted: 28 Jan 2016 01:12 PM PST

It’s maybe a little foolish to seek to intervene between warring parties. Especially when you are trying to mediate the conflict by arguing that both sides are a little bit right but mostly wrong. But if we all shied away from quixotic endeavors, there would be no Quixote.

In the last couple posts, we’ve considered the tragic reality facing many thousands of congregations in our cultural context: worship wars. We’ve outlined [how painful \(and dumb, and evil\) this is](#). We’ve also seen that [the Bible has lots of important things to say to this](#).

In this post I’d like to look a little more closely at some specifics about what exactly we’re fighting about. Each side of the worship wars loves to hone their weapons to take on the enemy – and the enemy is defined as a certain style of music. Hymns vs. praise songs. Let’s offer the arguments laid at the feet of each; then let’s take up the mantle of defense. For, in fact, many of the charges are more than a little unfair.

Hymns

Hymns are often attacked because they are perceived by the contemporaries as being:

- Old – Look, hymns have been around a long time. We sing songs that date back many centuries. Martin Luther penned *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* in the 16th century. Francis of Assisi gave us *All Creatures of Our God*

and King...and died in 1226! I mean, a lot of these things are public domain. No one can even collect residuals on these. They're old. And old is bad. New is good. Would you rather drink old milk or new milk? Would you rather have an old TV or a new one? So why sing these old songs?

- Slow/boring/dry/dead – Hymns are also viewed as being slow, boring, monotonous things. I mean...how many verses does this dirge have? How am I supposed to worship God when I'm practically falling asleep? These things are just empty rituals – just like so many other elements of worship in many churches – written prayers, tired liturgical responses and so on. We need jazzier stuff than this! There is no real life in hymns. Praise songs are way, way better. They are more personal, more spiritual. They touch the heart, the emotions, the soul.
- Overly theological and cognitively oriented. There are just too many words in hymns. Antiquated language. Theological jargon. To sing *All Hail the Power of Jesus Name* requires a bit of mental taxation: “angels prostrate fall” (note: not prostate!), “royal diadem,” “on this terrestrial ball,” “with yonder sacred throng.” These phrases require a bit more mental energy than is required by *Shine Jesus Shine*. And who wants that? Who wants to think too hard? Who wants to bring a dictionary to worship? It's so unspiritual to be so cognitive!

In defense of hymns:

- Old – OK, this happens to be true. Most hymns are old (though there are some wonderful examples of some really terrific modern hymns – mad props to Keith and Kristyn Getty for *In Christ Alone*, for instance). But...perhaps there is no more annoying aspect of modern society than what C.S. Lewis famously described as **chronological snobbery**. Where did we get the (very odd) notion that new is better? While this is clearly true in some areas (medicines, vaccines, computer technology), this is clearly not true in a great many other areas of human endeavor. In fact, we humans are just as likely to demonstrate regression as progress. Old doesn't equal inferior. Does anyone really seriously believe that today's painters are superior to Michelangelo? Van Gogh? Rembrandt? Are we to suppose that we have more talented authors than Shakespeare? Better theologians than Augustine? Are we really supposed to believe that all of a sudden, just because it is now the 21st century, we've reached the pinnacle of human development in musicology? That today's praise song writers are superior to Charles Wesley? Fannie Crosby? Frances Havergal? Isaac Watts? Seriously?
- Slow/boring/dry/dead – I will readily admit that I have heard hymns sung and played in such a way that these adjectives would perhaps be accurate (of course I've heard poorly performed praise songs as well!). Sometimes this means you have an organist who needs to step on the proverbial gas pedal a bit (along with the other pedals). Poor performance should not lead to the rejection of the church's worship heritage. What we need instead is...better performance. Another aspect of this (see [my last post](#) for a discussion of this) is that some songs *should* be slow. Meditative worship is at times proper, fit, right, and appropriate. Not all worship should be frantic. Whither the laments? Not all vocal worship should be the hundred yard dash.
- Overly theological and cognitively oriented. I find it ridiculous to need to defend hymns on these grounds. Have evangelicals really become so anti-intellectual, so mentally lazy, that we can't bring ourselves to engage actual theological content in our worship? Have we fallen so far from the life of the mind? Have our vocabularies become so impoverished? Entertain me! I don't want to think! What a departure from the incredible richness we see in the psalms of scripture: a dizzying array of metaphors, a theologically dense vocal rehearsal of God's nature and attributes. This may be among the most pathetic of complaints related to hymnody. “Me no like think. Hymn make head hurt.” And yet scripture calls us to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind”; this is our “spiritual act of worship.”

Now: **Praise Songs**

Praise songs are often attacked by the traditionalists because they are perceived to be:

- Repetitive – Praise songs tend to say the same thing over and over again. Praise songs tend to say the same thing over and over again. Praise songs tend to say the same thing over and over again. “There is no god like Jehovah! There is no god like Jehovah! There is no god like Jehovah!” Let's be honest: Praise songs tend to say the same thing over and over again. This can get somewhat tedious, redundant, repetitive, monotonous. Repetitious.
- Too egoistic – One of the chief criticisms of praise songs is that they are far too focused on the “I” to the neglect of the “we.” That is, they are radically individualistic and are far too divorced from the communal aspect of the

faith. It is all about me and Jesus, whereas the focus of scripture is on the community of faith as whole, the people of God coming before the Lord in worship. David Wells and many others have not only noted this, but have extensively studied and demonstrated this.

- Overly emotive – If hymns are often criticized for being too much about the head, praise songs are often critiqued for being too much about the heart. They are overly sappy, gooey, mushy. Jesus is my friend; more than this, he's my lover. I want to be near him, touch him, hold him, etc. This language of intimacy can be a real turn off for some people and (it has been argued by John Eldredge and Mark Discoll) to men in particular.

In defense of praise songs:

- Repetitive – OK. This is true. Many praise songs are repetitive. Of course, all music is repetitive. Hymns are repetitive. We keep singing that same chorus after every verse (pretty much like you do with a praise song). “Yeah...but sometimes in a praise song we just repeat the same word or phrase over and over again!” Sure. And hymns don't do that? Consider this chorus of a classic hymn: “O praise Him, O praise Him, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!” Perhaps I'm missing something, but isn't that really repetitive? Is the biblical model really so different? Consider Psalm 136 – “His love endures forever!” I'm sure there were more than a few Israelites saying, “How many times do we have to say that?” Or the ubiquitous “Hallelujah!” Count 'em. Lots. And don't all the songs we listen to (secular as well as sacred) repeat themselves? Sorry but this is a dumb reason to dis praise songs.
- Too egoistic – Some praise songs really are pretty egoistic. Of course, so are many psalms. Psalm 23 for instance. Psalm 103 for another. Psalm 91. Many of the psalms were “me” psalms. Not all, of course. [As I pointed out before](#), there is a great variety in the psalms – some are individual; some are corporate. And so are praise songs. And so are hymns! Can we really claim that a hymn like *My Jesus I Love Thee* is somehow corporately oriented? Many hymns are intensely personal. That's OK for hymnody, but not for praise songs? That seems like a bit of a double standard. In my opinion, the arguments in this direction are generally pretty selective and tend to find what they are looking for.
- Overly emotive – Some praise songs are very emotive. Sometimes that emotive language can even make us feel a bit uncomfortable. Of course, it is silly to pretend that the psalms of scripture are not also (almost painfully) emotive. Can anyone read Psalm 42 and pretend that this is not a song of deep emotional pathos? And are not hymns also emotive? Anyone who can sing *It is Well With My Soul* without welling tears is made of stronger stuff than am I (particularly if one understands the circumstances underlying its writing).

In conclusion: Hymns and praise songs each have many critics for many reasons. Most of these challenges, though, really don't stand up to much scrutiny. Frankly, people in the heat of the worship wars are allowing their personal preferences to drive their assessment. They then seek to couch those personal preferences in some sort of moral terms to justify the view that their preferred style is somehow better. This is simply personal preference posing as moral superiority. That's idolatry, and we should stop it posthaste.

Worship Wars: Terms of Peace

Posted: 04 Feb 2016 01:49 PM PST

We've considered [the tragic nature of the worship wars](#). We've examined this issue from [the vantage point of scripture](#). We've also carefully [weighed the critiques of praise songs and hymns \(and offered sound defense for both\)](#). One final post on this topic:

Whether hymn or praise song, what makes a good one? If we shouldn't be knee-jerk dyed-in-the-wool hymnners or praise-singers, by what criteria should we evaluate music for congregational singing? Are you some sort of big tent, whatever-works-for-you worship relativist? No, I'm not. Here are the criteria:

Content – what we sing matters. We aren't singing for singing's sake. We are singing for the Lord's sake: for his honor, glory, and exaltation. We need to make sure that we are lifting before him words worthy of his honor. Those words should be:

- Biblical – this doesn't mean that the words we sing need to be direct scripture quotation (some do insist on this, but without sufficient biblical justification), though this is certainly OK! In fact, I think a lot of praise songs do best when they do just this: just set some Bible to music. But even apart from this – make sure that the content aligns with the biblical witness. Our songs should reflect Genesis to Revelation, not vague odes to a generic “love,” nor doxology to the “fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man” (which wanders a long way from the God of the Bible and his particular plan of redemption). Bible, not modern therapeutic deism.
- Orthodox – Hopefully this sounds redundant, because orthodox theology is the same thing as biblical truth. Still, it can't be overstated. We shouldn't sing heresy. We obviously don't honor God when we misrepresent who he is, what he has done, the nature of the atoning work of Christ, or any other important theological truth. And, frankly, some songs are pretty sloppy theologically.
- Systematic – One thing that hymns do much better than praise songs is proclaim the full scope of the faith. You see this in last verses. Nearly every great hymn has a final verse that looks forward to: Christ's return, heaven, judgment day, the resurrection, etc. Usually they begin with Christ's finished work, then move through the present application of this truth to today, then arrive (systematically) at the eschaton in verse 4. This is beautiful; this works; we should have more of this.
- Sensible. Perhaps I'm the only one who's noticed that sometimes songs just don't make any sense? Sometimes they seem to start off going one way and ultimately end up unexpectedly in some other odd and strange place. Is it too much to ask that a song make sense? I don't see how nonsense can honor God. Also: punctuation. Can we insert commas, periods, semi-colons, question marks and line breaks where they make sense? Is it more spiritual to have poor grammar and punctuation? I think not.

Quality – Not only does *what* we sing matter, so too does *how* we sing it.

- Excellence. We should offer God our very best. The best we can make it to be. Excellent musicians, vocalists, equipment, presentation. We should be clean in our transitions, introductions, conclusions, etc. Now possibly in a particularly context we're short on certain resources – OK, but we should offer unto the Lord the best that we have to offer. Maybe I'm only a B-level singer, but then I shouldn't do C-level work! And where we have deficiencies, we should seek to improve. How can we be complacent when we are talking about worshipping the God of heaven and earth?
- Good music. I've defended hymns and praise songs, but this doesn't mean there aren't loads of examples of bad ones. There are crummy hymns (thousands of them!) and there are crummy praise songs (thousands of them!).

Charles Wesley wrote 8,989 hymns; our hymnal includes 13. Fanny Crosby wrote at least 8,000 hymns; our hymnal contains 13. There have been tens of thousands of songs composed over the centuries. Many of these were undoubtedly good ones. But we only have time to sing the best of the best. The cream of the cream of the cream of the crop. It's like Major League Baseball: only the best of the best of the best ever make it through the incredible array of farm teams for a crack at "The Show." And this is as it should be. If a song is only so-so, we shouldn't sing it.

Presentation – It matters what we sing and how we sing it, but *how we present it* also matters.

- Congregational singing vs. Performance. One distinction that a lot of congregations need to make is the distinction between congregational singing and performance. When the congregation sings, it is not a vocal *performance*. It is a corporate act of *worship* wherein God's people collectively seek to honor him. This is congregational worship, not individual or group performance. The purpose of worship leaders: to lead God's people, not to entertain. The people are not an audience; they are not the recipients of song. Instead, they are worshippers. They are offering the song to God and the musicians assist them in their work.
- Singability. With this last bit in mind, song selectors needs to wrestle with whether we are presenting this in a way that people can actually sing it. You might have a really terrific song, but if people can't sing it, it isn't appropriate for congregational worship. Make it a special music instead. A lot of popular songs are sung in a key that isn't easily managed by most congregations – re-key it or don't sing it. A lot of popular music is sung in a performance style that is great for radio, but doesn't adapt well to a congregational context. Change the style or don't sing it.
- Worship assistance. The purpose of a praise team, of a band, of an organist, of a vocalist, of anyone leading worship is to *lead* worship. Worship is the work of God's people (that's why it's called a worship *service*). The job of leaders is to lead the people, assist the people, guide the people, so that they can worship God in prayer and song. In many respects, the leadership should be as invisible as possible; they are the infrastructure – necessary and important, but not *the* thing. That's the Lord. We should make every effort to get people's minds and attention off of us and onto the Lord.
- Turn it down. I love loud music. I'm guessing that I've flattened many thousands of auditory cilia over the years by listening to the music that I love much too loudly. However, in the context of congregational worship it would be best if we scale back the volume on the instrumentals a bit and really encourage people to sing. If it is too loud, people won't sing. If I can't hear myself sing, I won't sing. We should be able to hear the people around us sing. And the purpose of leadership is to lead the people so they can sing. Less is more here.

Ardor – We should sing with gusto. Sing with some passion. There is nothing more deadly to worship than apathy. An indifferent worshipper is an energy sapper. And if you can't sing (and pray) with a little bit of sincere earnestness, there isn't much hope that you're likely to hear God's Word read and proclaimed, that you'll offer yourself significantly in other respects. I mean, what do you have to lose? So what if you're not Pavarotti? Only Pavarotti is (was). Belt it out! It's for the Lord. He gave you your voice (for this purpose). Your vocal quality won't come as a surprise to him. Worship leadership should encourage the people in just this way.

Conclusion: One of our members asked me recently, "Why are you writing so much about this? We're not having problems with this are we?" Mercifully, no. In fact, this is not the source of the slightest bit of controversy at Mt. Pleasant. Part of the reason for this is the commitment of the leadership (musical and otherwise) to incorporate the principles outlined above in our worship. That extends from prayerful song selection to rehearsals, from scripture selection to the day of worship.

Part of the reason for writing these particular blog posts is a sense of pain over the division seen in so many congregations, including some that I know and love. This simply shouldn't be.

We've opted to opt out of the worship wars. We won't participate. We'll sing hymns, praise songs, praise songs as hymns, hymns as praise songs; we'll mix pianos, drums, guitars, etc. Some wars are worth waging; this one isn't. One ancient song of praise (Psalm 133) says: *How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!* Let that be a theme of your song.

Glossary

Atonement

- Atonement – The foundational truth that Christ Jesus died on the cross for our sins
 - 1Co 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
 - In this way Christ fulfilled the old covenant sacrificial system and reconciled us to God
 - All men are sinners (Romans 3:9-18, 23). The penalty for our sinfulness is death (Romans 6:23).
 - Death in the Scriptures refers to a “separation.” Everyone will die, but some will live in heaven with the Lord for eternity, while others will live a life in hell for eternity. The death spoken of here refers to the life in hell. Without Christ, we are going to die and spend an eternity in hell as payment for our sins.
 - Eternal life in heaven is available through Jesus Christ – He is our substitutionary atonement
 - Jesus Christ died in our place when He was crucified on the cross. We deserved to be the ones placed on that cross to die because we are the ones who live sinful lives. But Christ took the punishment on Himself in our place—He substituted Himself for us and took what we rightly deserved.
 - Christ was our atonement, meaning He satisfied the payment due for the sinfulness of man
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God
 - 1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed
 - 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit
 - Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
 - We can only pay the price of sin on our own by being punished and placed in hell for all eternity. But God’s Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth to pay for the price of our sins. Because He did this for us, we now have the opportunity to not only have our sins forgiven, but to spend eternity with Him. In order to do this we must place our faith in what Christ did on the cross. We cannot save ourselves; we need a substitute to take our place. The death of Jesus Christ is the substitutionary atonement.

Expiation

- Expiation – Removal of guilt through the payment of a penalty
 - *ex* means “out of” or “from” – Removing something or taking something away
 - Horizontal – Applies to things done on earth
 - Expiation is the act that results in the change of God’s disposition toward us
 - It is the act of what Christ did on the cross – His offering of an atonement on our behalf
 - Jesus covered (atoned for) our sins by paying the penalty (expiation) and appeasing God’s wrath (propitiation)

Fish

The fish became a symbol for Christians because the word for fish in Greek is *ichthys*, and Christians used the letters of this word, *ICTHUS*, as an acronym for *Iesous, Christos, Theos, Huios, and Soter*, meaning Jesus Christ, God’s Son and Savior.



ΙΧΘΥΣ (*ich-thys*)

Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ
(*I-esous Chri-stos, The-os Yi-os, So-ter*)

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior

OrthodoxChristianityToday.org

Forgiveness

Forgiving – For giving ... grace, mercy, love

Ep 4:31 Get rid of all **bitterness**, **rage** and anger, **brawling** and **slander**, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Heaven

Biblical Descriptions of Heaven	
A Throne of God. (Deuteronomy 26:15; Psalm 11:4; Isaiah 66:1)	
A reward. (Matthew 5:12)	
A place safe from theft and destruction. (Matthew 6:20)	
A place of rejoicing. (Luke 15:7)	
A place where there will be no marrying or giving in marriage. (Matthew 22:29, 30)	
A house with many rooms. (John 14:2)	
A home of righteousness. (2 Peter 3:13)	
A garden paradise. (Revelation 2:7)	
A place that doesn't experience hunger, thirst, tears, hot sun, or scorching heat. (Revelation 7:16, 17)	
A place of victory and playing harps. (Revelation 15:2)	
A holy city. (Revelation 21:2)	
A place where God dwells with us. (Revelation 21:3)	
A place that doesn't experience sadness, death, or pain. (Revelation 21:4)	
A place of brilliance like that of a very precious jewels. The walls are made of jasper and the city made of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls are decorated with precious stones. The twelve gates are each made from one single pearl. (Revelation 21:11, 18, 19-21)	
A place that is lit by the glory of God. (Revelation 21:23)	
A place with no night. (Revelation 21:25)	
A place where no impure thing or person exists. (Revelation 21:27)	
A place of life and healing. (Revelation 22:1-3)	
A place where God reigns forever. (Rev. 22:5)	

Hell

Biblical Descriptions of Hell

A place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25:30)
A place of outer darkness. (Matthew 22:13)
A place of torments. (Luke 16:23)
A place of sorrows. (2 Samuel 22:5-7)
A place of everlasting destruction. (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
A place where people are tormented with fire and brimstone. (Revelation 21:8)
A place of worms that don't die. (Mark 9:43)
A place where fire is not quenched. (Mark 9:43)
A place where there is no rest. (Revelation 14:11)
A place that will ultimately be a lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14)
A place of hopeless of unsatisfied desires. (Luke 16:24)
A furnace of fire. (Matthew 13:42, 50)
A place of separation. (Matthew 13:49)
A place filled with the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars. (Revelation 21:8)
A place shut out from the presence of the Lord and the majesty of his power. (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
A place where fallen angels dwell. (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:16)

Justification

- Justification – Declared righteous, to make one right with God
 - The action of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God – “just-if-I’d” never sinned
 - We are justified, declared righteous, at the moment of our salvation. Justification does not make us righteous, but rather pronounces us righteous. Our righteousness comes from placing our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice covers our sin, allowing God to see us as perfect and unblemished. Because as believers we are in Christ, God sees Christ's own righteousness when He looks at us. This meets God's demands for perfection; thus, He declares us righteous—He justifies us. (gotquestions.org)
 - Romans 5:18-19 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”
 - It is because of justification that the peace of God can rule in our lives. It is because of justification that believers can have assurance of salvation. It is the fact of justification that enables God to begin the process of sanctification—the process by which God makes us in reality what we already are positionally. “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1) (gotquestions.org)

Myrrh

Myrrh = suffering and death

Uses in the Bible

- It was an ingredient in perfume
 - Ps 45 ⁸ All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia, Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.*
- It was prominent in song of Solomon
 - SS 1 ¹³ A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, That lies all night between my breasts.*

- SS 4 ⁶ Until the day breaks And the shadows flee away,
I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh And to the hill of frankincense.
- SS 5 ⁵ I arose to open for my beloved, And my hands dripped *with* myrrh,
My fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the lock.
- It was an ingredient in holy anointing oil for priests
 - Ex 30 ²² Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²³ “Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred *shekels* of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling cane, ²⁴ five hundred *shekels* of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. ²⁵ And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.
- Used in the purification of women
 - Esther 2 ¹² Each young woman’s turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months’ preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.
- It was a gift of the Maji at Christ's birth
 - Mt 2 ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
 - Gold = royalty
 - Frankincense = deity and priesthood
 - Myrrh = suffering and death
- At the 2nd coming, gold & frankincense are offered, but no myrrh, since his death is now behind Him
 - Is 60 “Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you;
Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side.
⁵ Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy;
Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.
⁶ The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
All those from Sheba shall come; *They shall bring gold and incense*,
And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.
- It was offered to Christ at the cross
 - Mk 15 ²² And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. ²³ Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it*. ²⁴ And when they crucified Him,
- It was used in embalming
 - Jn 19 ³⁸ After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹ And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. .

Letter to Smyrna, the persecuted church

- Smyrna = myrrh = death
- The name Smyrna – comes from the Greek word Smurna – from the Hebrew root that is translated myrrh
- Myrrh is a bitter gum and costly perfume which exudes from a certain tree or shrub in Arabia and Ethiopia or is obtained by incisions made in the bark

Nicolaitans

“Nicolaitans” are followers of Nicholas

- Jesus hated the ‘deeds’ of the Nicolaitans
- It’s not absolutely certain who he was or what he taught

- Thought to be a Gnostic sect, founded by Nicholas of Antioch
- Known for their unbridled and excessive lusts
- Deeds of the Nicolaitans
 - ‘Nicholaus’ or ‘nikos’ – Priest or priesthood
 - ‘Laos’ – laody, the common people
 - It is the establishing of a spiritual hierarchy, where a man comes between you and God (Catholics)
- The churches at Ephesus and Pergamum were infested with “Nicolaitans”
 - **Rev 1 ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**
 - **Rev 2 ¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**
- Whatever the teaching was, it falls into the same category as that of the “deceivers” and “antichrists” that John abhors in 2 John 7-8
 - **2Jn 1 ⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁸ Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.**

Numerology/ Gematria

Biblical numerology is the study of numbers in the Bible. Two of the most commonly repeated numbers in the Bible are 7 and 40. The **number 7** signifies completion or perfection (**Genesis 7:2-4; Revelation 1:20**). It is often called “God’s number” since He is the only One who is perfect and complete (**Revelation 4:5; 5:1, 5-6**). The number 3 is also thought to be the number of divine perfection: The Trinity consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The **number 40** is often understood as the “number of probation or trial.” For example: the Israelites wandered for 40 years (**Deuteronomy 8:2-5**); Moses was on the mount for 40 days (**Exodus 24:18**); 40 days were involved in the story of Jonah and Nineveh (**Jonah 3:4**); Jesus was tempted for 40 days (**Matthew 4:2**); there were 40 days between Jesus’ resurrection and ascension (**Acts 1:3**). Another number repeated in the Bible is 4, which is the number of creation: North, South, East, West; four seasons. The number 6 is thought to be the number of man: Man was created on the 6th day; man labors 6 days only. Another example of the Bible using a number to signify something is the number 666, the number of the Antichrist in Revelation chapter 13.

Whether or not the numbers really do have a significance is still debated in many circles. The Bible definitely seems to use numbers in patterns or to teach a spiritual truth. However, many people put too much significance on “biblical numerology,” trying to find a special meaning behind every number in the Bible. Often a number in the Bible is simply a number. God does not call us to search for secret meanings, hidden messages, and codes in the Bible. There is more than enough truth in the words and meanings of Scripture to meet all our needs and make us “complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work” (**2 Timothy 3:16**).

Meanings of numbers

5 = grace

6 = man

7 = completion

7 days of the week

7 colors of the rainbow

7 notes in the music scale

Most common number in Bible prophecy – occurs 42 times in Daniel and Revelation

8 = new beginnings

✕	Meaning < >
1	Unity; New beginnings
2	Union; Division; Witnessing
3	Divine completeness and perfection
4	Creation; The world; Creative works
5	Grace; God's goodness; Pentateuch (first five books)
6	Weakness of man; Manifestation of sin ; Evils of Satan
7	Resurrection; Spiritual completeness; Fathers perfection
8	New birth; New beginnings
9	Fruit of the spirit; Divine completeness from the Father
10	Testimony; Law and responsibility
11	Disorder and judgement
12	Governmental perfection
13	Apostasy; depravity and rebellion
14	Deliverance; Salvation
15	Rest
16	Love
17	Victory
18	Bondage
19	Faith
20	Redemption

1

1) Symbolizes the **unity of God** (there is one God) (Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4; Gal. 3:20). The number also represents the unity between the Father and the Son (Jn. 10:30), the singular sacrifice of Christ, and Christ's being the one Mediator and Shepherd (1 Tim. 2:5; Jn. 10:16).

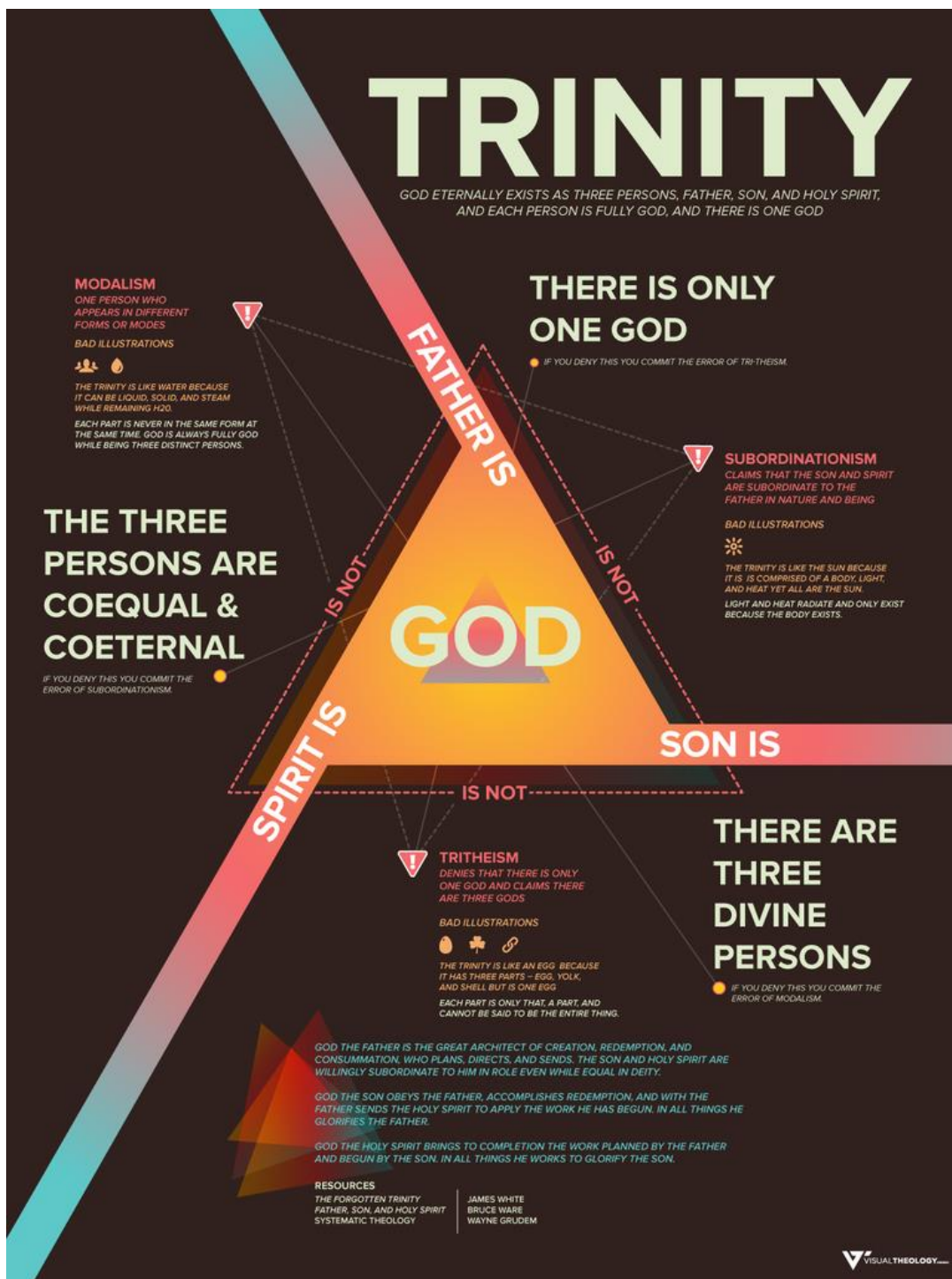
2

2) Symbolizes the **duality of man**, consistent of both spirit and flesh (Gal. 5:16-18). The number two also represents the union of two parties, the verification of two witnesses (Mk. 6:7-13; 1 Tim. 5:19), the union between Christ and the church (1 Cor. 12), and the Old and New Testaments. The number two can also represent comparison and contrast between two things.

3

3) Symbolizes the **triune nature of God**. By no surprise, three can also represent completeness. Three may also represent God's perfect design as there are three heavens (2 Cor. 12:2), three time frames (past, present, future), three points of measurement (beginning, middle, end), three kinds of sacrifice (sin, peace, and praise), three kinds of laws (moral, ceremonial, and civil), three things that were placed in the Ark of the Covenant (Ten Commandments, Aaron's staff, and a jar of manna), three gifts of grace (faith, hope, and love), and three parts to salvation (justification, sanctification, and glorification).

- Godhead/Trinity



- Revelation – Structure set on sets of 3s and 7s

Part One: What Was (Rev 1)

1. Prologue (1:1-3) – The revelation of Jesus Christ . . . to John, “unveiling” what must soon take place
2. Introduction (1:4-8) – The message is addressed specifically to “the 7 churches in the province of Asia”
3. The Commission (1:9-20)

Part Two: What Is (Rev 2-3)

1. Ephesus (2:1-7)
2. Smyrna (2:8-11)
3. Pergamum (2:12-17)
4. Thyatira (2:18-29)
5. Sardis (3:1-6)
6. Philadelphia (3:7-13)
7. Laodicea (3:14-22)

Part Three – What Is To Come (Rev 4-22)

1. 7 Seals (6-8:5)
2. 7 Trumpets (8:6-11)
 - Interlude
 - 1. The woman clothed with the sun (12:1-12:6)
 - 2. The war in Heaven (12:7-12:17)
 - 3. Preparing for Armageddon (13-14)
3. 7 Bowls (15-16)
 - Profile: Rome, the “whore of Babylon” (17-18)
1. All creation praises God (19:1-10)
2. Armageddon (19:11-21)
3. The aftermath (20-22)
 1. Millennial kingdom (20:1-20:10)
 2. Last judgement (20:11-20:15)
 3. New Jerusalem (21-22)

Rev 1:4 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

“Grace to you and peace” from the Trinity:

1. God the Father
 1. Who is
 2. Who was
 3. Who is to come
2. God the Holy Spirit (the “7-fold spirit”);
3. God the Son (Jesus Christ) who himself is 3 things:
 1. The faithful witness
 2. The firstborn from the dead
 3. The ruler of the kings of the earth

To him who

1. loves us and
 2. has freed us from our sins by his blood
 3. has made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father
- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

4

4) Symbolizes the *creative work of God* and *universal truth*: 4 corners of the earth (Rev. 7:1); 4 rivers of Paradise (Gen. 2:10); 4 winds of heaven (Jer. 49:36); 4 acts of judgment (Eze. 14:21—sword, famine, evil beasts, and pestilence); 4 horsemen (Rev. 6); and 4 winds (Matt. 24:31); and four guardians of God’s throne.

5) Represents *God's goodness and grace upon humanity* and *teaching*. There are two divisions of five in the Ten Commandments; five offerings given to God (Burnt—Lev. 4; Sin—Lev. 4; Trespass—Lev. 5:14-19; Grain—Lev. 2; and Peace—Lev. 3); the five divisions of Psalms; and the five books of the Law (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

Meaning

- The number 5 symbolizes God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans
- Five is mentioned 318 times in Scripture.
- Five is the number of grace, and multiplied by itself, which is 25, is 'grace upon grace' (John 1:16).
- The Ten Commandments contains two sets of 5 commandments.
 - The first five commandments are related to our treatment and relationship with God
 - The last five concern our relationship with others humans.

Uses

- There are 5 primary types of offerings God commanded Israel to bring to him.
 - Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1; 8:18 - 21; 16:24)
 - Sin Offering (Leviticus 4; 16:3 - 22)
 - Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5:14 - 19; 6:1 - 7; 7:1 - 6),
 - Grain Offering (Leviticus 2)
 - Peace Offering (Leviticus 3; 7:11- 34).
- The Book of Psalms is divided into 5 major sections.
 - Section 1 (Psalm 1 to 41) refers to the Passover, Israel's beginning, and the start of the God's plan of salvation that centers around Christ.
 - Section 2 (42 to 72) sings about a unified Israel in the land and pictures the creation of the New Testament Church.
 - Section 3 (73 to 89) bemoans the destruction of both God's Temple and Jerusalem. This section also hints at prophecies regarding the End Time Great Tribulation.
 - Section 4 (90 to 106) rejoices over the 1,000 reign of Jesus and shows Israel gathered again.
 - Section 5 (107 to 150) pictures a time when Judah (representing all Israel) shall again be delivered.
- There are five books of God's Law commonly referred to as the Pentateuch ('Penta' means five).
 - Genesis
 - Exodus
 - Leviticus
 - Numbers
 - Deuteronomy
- The 4 Gospels plus Acts equals five books which, as a set, can be designated as "the New Testament Pentateuch." They reveal Jesus' teachings concerning the Law and the Prophets.
- The apostle John wrote 5 books centered on the grace of God and eternal life
 - John
 - 1John
 - 2John
 - 3John
 - Revelation
- Jesus multiplied five loaves of barely to feed 5,000 (Matthew 14:17)

- The 'tabernacle in the wilderness' profoundly reflects God's grace in its use of the number 5. This tabernacle, whose design was given directly by God, contained:
 - five curtains (Exodus 26:3)
 - five bars (Exodus 26:26 - 27)
 - five pillars and five sockets (Exodus 26:37)
 - an altar made of wood that was five cubits long and five cubits wide (Exodus 27:1).
 - The height of the court within the tabernacle was five cubits (Exodus 27:18).
- The Holy anointing oil (Exodus 30:23 - 25), the ingredients of which were given directly by God, was used to consecrate the furniture of the tabernacle. It was comprised of 5 parts, for it was a revelation of pure grace. The proportion of spices used in making the oil were a multiple of five, which then had a Hin of olive oil added to it.
 - Pure Myrrh, 500 shekels
 - Sweet cinnamon, 250 shekels
 - Sweet calamus, 250 shekels
 - Cassia, 500 shekels
- There are five books in the Bible that contain only one chapter (2John, 3John, Philemon, Jude and Obadiah).
- Moses wrote 5 books, the most of any Old Testament writer.
 - In the New Testament, the apostle Paul wrote fourteen books.
- Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar was given, by God, a dream where he saw a giant statue of a man. This statue, according to the interpretation given by the Eternal to Daniel, represented 5 periods of world-ruling empires.
 - The statue's head of gold represented Babylon (Daniel 2:32, 38)
 - The Chest and Arms of Silver symbolized the Persian Empire (Daniel 2:32, 39)
 - The Belly and Thighs of Bronze (brass) represented the Macedonian Empire under Alexander the Great
 - The Two Legs of Iron symbolized Rome's Empire (Daniel 2:33, 40 - 43)
 - Period 5 are the Ten Toes of Iron mixed with Clay are the successors to the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:41 - 44)
- Book of Ruth is structured in 5s

Ruth (Recapitulation back into the days of the judges)

A. Prologue ("Back in the days when the judges ruled . . .") (1:1-5)

1. Famine in the land (1:1a)
2. The move from Bethlehem to Moab (1:1b-2)
3. Death of Naomi's husband, Elimelech (1:3a)
4. Naomi's sons, Mahlon and Kilion, marry Orpah and Ruth, Moabite girls (1:3b-4a)
5. Death of Mahlon and Kilion, leaving Naomi empty and destitute (1:4b-5)

B. Act 1: The Return to Bethlehem (1:6-22)

Act 2: In the Fields of Boaz (2:1-23)

Act 3: The Encounter at the Threshing Floor (3:1-18)

Act 4: The Resolution at the City Gate (4:1-12)

Act 5: "A Son Is Born to Naomi!" (4:13-17)

C. Epilogue (From "back in the days when the judges ruled" to David . . .) (4:18-22)

- Kinsman-Redeemer

Jesus Christ Our Kinsman-Redeemer	
Kinsman-Redeemer (Redemption from Adversity)	Jesus Christ Our Redeemer (Redemption from Sin)
1. Must redeem those who are in need (Ruth 4:1-6,15)	Came to redeem mankind from sin (Mt. 1:21; Lk. 19:10)
2. Must be a blood relative (Ruth 2:1; Deut. 25:5-10)	Became a man (Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14-15)
3. Must be able to pay the redemption price (Ruth 2:1)	Paid the price of blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19)
4. Must be willing to redeem the lost (3:11-13; 4:7-10)	Was willing to die (Mt. 20:28; Jn. 10:15; Heb. 10:7,10)
5. Must be free to redeem (Ruth 2:1; 4:7-10)	Was free from the guilt of sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22,24)
16	

6

6) Represents the *fallen nature of humanity*. God created human beings on the 6th day. Six days were given to work. 666 is the number of Satan.

7

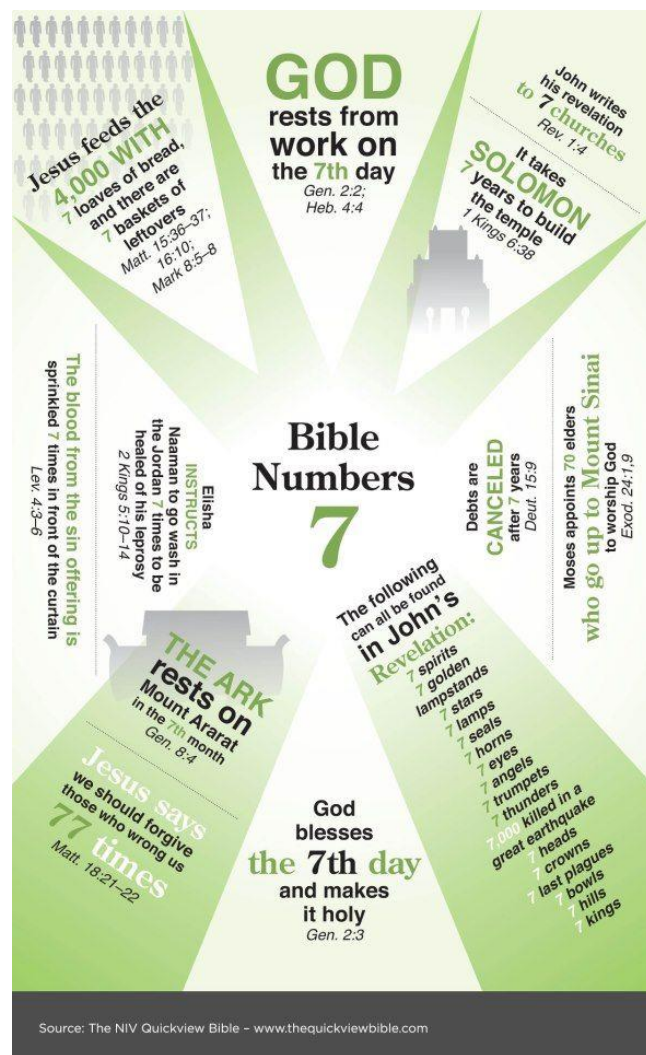
7) 7 is one of the most important numbers in the Bible. It symbolizes *completion, perfection, and rest*. God finished creation in 7 days. There are 7 great land masses. 7 colors of the rainbow. 7 notes make a perfect scale. 7 days in the feast of Passover. 7 weeks between Passover and Pentecost. 7 days for the Feast of Tabernacles. God had 7 covenants with humanity (Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Levitic, Davidic, and Messianic). In Revelation, one finds 7 churches, 7 letters, 7 candlesticks, 7 stars, 7 angels, 7 Spirits of God, 7 Seal Judgments, 7 horns, 7 eyes on the Lamb, 7 trumpets, 7 thunders, 7 mountains, 7 bowls, 7 kings, and so on.

Meaning

Completion
Wholeness
Perfection

Uses

- Used more than 50 times in Revelation
 - John writes to 7 churches
 - 7 Spirits
 - 7 Golden lampstands
 - 7 Stars
 - 7 Lamps
 - 7 Angels
 - 7 Horns
 - 7 Eyes
 - 7 Seals
 - 7 Trumpets
 - 7 Bowls
 - 7 Thunders
 - 7 Heads
 - 7 Crowns
 - 7 Hills
 - 7 Kings
- Used more than 700 times in the Bible
 - 7 Days of creation
 - $4+3 = 7$ (completion)
 - 4 – Number for the earth
 - 4 corners – North, South, East, West
 - 4 elements – Earth, Air, Fire, Water
 - 3 – Fullness of the Godhead
 - 7 'I AM' statements
 - Antichrist's number = 666 (incompletion)
 - Jesus feeds 4,000 with 7 loaves of bread and there are 7 baskets of left overs
 - Debts are cancelled every 7 years
 - Jesus says that we should forgive 77 times
 - The 7th day is holy



Throughout the Bible, God often gives symbolic significance to mundane items or concepts. For example, in [Genesis 9:12–16](#), God makes the rainbow the sign of His promise to Noah (and, by extension, to all mankind) that He will not flood the whole earth again. God uses bread as a representation of His presence with His people ([Numbers 4:7](#)); of the gift of eternal life ([John 6:35](#)); and of the broken body of Christ, sacrificed for our sins ([Matthew 26:26](#)). The rainbow and the bread are obvious symbols in Scripture. Less obvious meanings seem to be attached to some [numbers in the Bible](#), especially the number 7, which at times provides a special emphasis in the text.

The first use of the number 7 in the Bible relates to the creation week in [Genesis 1](#). God spends six days creating the heavens and the earth, and then rests on the seventh day. This is our template for the seven-day week, observed around the world to this day. The seventh day was to be “set apart” for Israel; the Sabbath was a holy day of rest ([Deuteronomy 5:12](#)).

Thus, right at the start of the Bible, the number 7 is identified with something being “finished” or “complete.” From then on, that association continues, as 7 is often found in contexts involving completeness or divine perfection. So we see the command for animals to be at least seven days old before being used for sacrifice ([Exodus 22:30](#)), the command for leprous Naaman to bathe in the Jordan River seven times to effect complete cleansing ([2 Kings 5:10](#)), and the command for [Joshua](#) to march around Jericho for seven days (and on the seventh day to make seven circuits) and for seven priests to blow seven trumpets outside the city walls ([Joshua 6:3–4](#)). In these instances, 7 signifies a completion of some kind: a divine mandate is fulfilled.

Interestingly, man was created on the sixth day of creation. In some passages of the Bible, the number 6 is associated with mankind. In Revelation “the [number of the beast](#)” is called “the number of a man.” That number is 666 ([Revelation 13:18](#)). If God’s number is 7, then man’s is 6. Six always falls short of seven, just like “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” ([Romans 3:23](#)). Man is not God, just as 6 is not 7.

Series of seven things crop up often in the Bible. For example, we find seven pairs of each clean animal on the ark ([Genesis 7:2](#)); seven stems on the tabernacle’s lampstand ([Exodus 25:37](#)); seven qualities of the Messiah in [Isaiah 11:2](#); seven signs in John’s Gospel; seven things the Lord hates in [Proverbs 6:16](#); seven parables in [Matthew 13](#); and seven woes in [Matthew 23](#).

Multiples of 7 also figure into the biblical narrative: the “[seventy weeks](#)” prophecy in [Daniel 9:24](#) concerns 490 years (7 times 7 times 10). [Jeremiah 29:10](#) predicted the [Babylonian Captivity](#) would last for seventy years (7 times 10). According to [Leviticus 25:8](#), the [Year of Jubilee](#) was to begin after the passing of every forty-ninth year (7 times 7).

Sometimes, the symbolism of 7 is a great comfort to us: Jesus is the seven-fold “I AM” in the Gospel of John. Other times, it challenges us: Jesus told Peter to forgive a wrongdoer “seventy times seven” times ([Matthew 18:22, NKJV](#)). And then there are passages in which the number 7 is associated with God’s judgment: the seven bowls of the Great Tribulation, for example ([Revelation 16:1](#)), or God’s warning to Israel in [Leviticus 26:18](#).

Speaking of the [book of Revelation](#), the number 7 is used there more than fifty times in a variety of contexts: there are seven letters to seven churches in Asia and seven spirits before God’s throne ([Revelation 1:4](#)), seven golden lampstands ([Revelation 1:12](#)), seven stars in Christ’s right hand ([Revelation 1:16](#)), [seven seals](#) of God’s judgment ([Revelation 5:1](#)), seven angels with seven trumpets ([Revelation 8:2](#)), etc. In all likelihood, the number 7 again represents completeness or totality: the seven churches represent the completeness of the body of Christ, the seven seals on the scroll represent the fullness of God’s punishment of a sinful earth, and so on. And, of course, the book of Revelation itself, with all its 7’s, is the capstone of God’s Word to man. With the book of Revelation, the Word was complete ([Revelation 22:18](#)).

In all, the number 7 is used in the Bible more than seven hundred times. If we also include the words related to *seven* (terms like *sevenfold* or *seventy* or *seven hundred*), the count is higher. Of course, not every instance of the number 7 in the Bible carries a deeper significance. Sometimes, a 7 is just a 7, and we must be cautious about attaching symbolic meanings to any text, especially when Scripture is not explicit about such meanings. However, there are times when it *seems* that God is communicating the idea of divine completeness, perfection, and wholeness by means of the number 7.

8

8) The number eight is also of great importance as it symbolizes *new life, resurrection, a new covenant, and new beginnings*. God spoke 8 words to bring forth creation (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). Jesus rose on the 8th day—the first day of the week (Sun. Apr. 5, 33 AD). Eight people were resurrected besides Jesus’s own resurrection. If you take the numerical value of Jesus’s name, it comes to 888.

9

9) Nine, a multiple of three, symbolizes the *finality of faith or divine completeness*. Christ died in the ninth hour (3 pm). Yom Kippur occurs on the 9th day of the 7th month (Lev. 23:32). The fruit of the Spirit consists of nine qualities (love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control—Gal. 5:22-23).

10

10) Like 7, 10 symbolizes *completion*. For instance, there were Ten Commandments. In the end times, 10 kingdoms will exist. 10 spies were sent out (Num. 13:32). 10 men were needed to form a quorum in the Sanhedrin.

11

11) Represents *chaos, disorder, and judgment*. The number 11 is used twenty-four times in Scripture and “11th” can be found 19 times, all denoting chaos. John saw 11 things connected to the final judgment (Rev. 20:12-14).

12

12) Another major number in Scripture, 12 symbolizes *God’s government*. God brought about 12 tribes from Jacob’s 12 sons. There are 12 lunar cycles corresponding to 12 months of one year. Jesus called 12 apostles (Matt. 10:2-4). 12 is seen quite frequently in Revelation.

Uses

- 12 Tribes of Jacob
- 12 Apostles
- Ishmael has 12 sons
- 144,000 Sealed (12 from each of the 12 tribes)

13

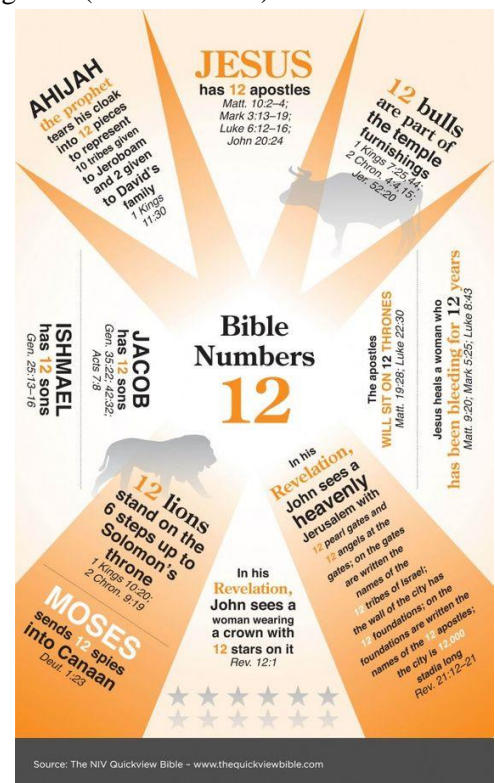
13) Implies *rebellion and lawlessness* as indicated by Nimrod who tried to take the place of God (Gen. 10:9), a man who was the 13th of Ham’s descendants.

14

14) Implies a *double measure of spiritual perfection* due to the fact that it is seven doubled and that there are three sets of 14 generations in Jesus’s lineage.

15

15) Implies *rest after deliverance* (14). The 15th day of Nisan is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Also, the 15th day of the 7th month of Tishrei begins the Feast of Tabernacles.



16

16) Implies *love and loving*. 16 is 8 doubled ($8 \times 8 = 16$). Some have suggested that the OT gives 16 names and titles for God's constant love. Zilpah and her descendants survived a brutal drought (Gen. 45:11). Zilpah and her descendant who survived numbered 16 people (Gen. 46:18).

17

17) Implies *victory*. The prophetic beasts of Daniel and Revelation (representing world powers) will have 7 heads and 10 horns, totaling 17. They will be overcome by the power of God.

18

18) Implies *bondage* as identified by 18 people who served as judges during a time of great sin in the nation (Joshua, Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Barak, Eli, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel, Ibzan, Jair, Elon, Abdon, Joel, and Abiah).

19

19) Implies *God's perfect order* as 19 is the sum of both 10 and 9, both holding tremendous biblical value. Israel had 19 kings before the Northern Kingdom was overtaken.

20

20) May imply a time of *waiting*. Jacob had to wait 20 years to marry his wives and be freed from Laban's control.

21

21) May imply *great wickedness and sin*. Advocates hold that Satan is released on the 21st day of the seventh Hebrew month ending Christ's millennial reign at the end of time. Satan will rise and will finally be defeated once and for all.

22

22) May imply *disorder, chaos, and disorganization since* 22 is 11 doubled.

23

23) May imply *evil*. Jezebel, an evil woman, is mentioned 23 times compared to Eve who is referenced 19 times.

24

24) Implies *priesthood and the worship of God*. 24 is a multiple of 12. David divided into 24 divisions (1 Chron. 24).

25

25) Implies *grace doubled*. In Ezekiel's vision of the future temple, which was seen in the 25th year of captivity (Eze. 40:1), he gives 5 measurements of the temple which are 25 cubits long (Eze. 40:13, 21, 25, 29-30).

30

30) Represents *a person's calling*. Aaronic priests were dedicated at 30 years of age. Jesus was around the age of 30 when he began his 3 ½ year ministry (Lk. 3:23).

33

33) May imply the *promises of God*. Often, 33 may be linked with divine judgment. 33 is the numeric equivalent of the term *amen*. Other links are found with 33 in the 33rd use of a particular name in Scripture (e.g., 33rd time Abraham is mentioned, he had Isaac).

Meaning

Generation – The number 40 seems to be a round number in Scripture denoting a generation

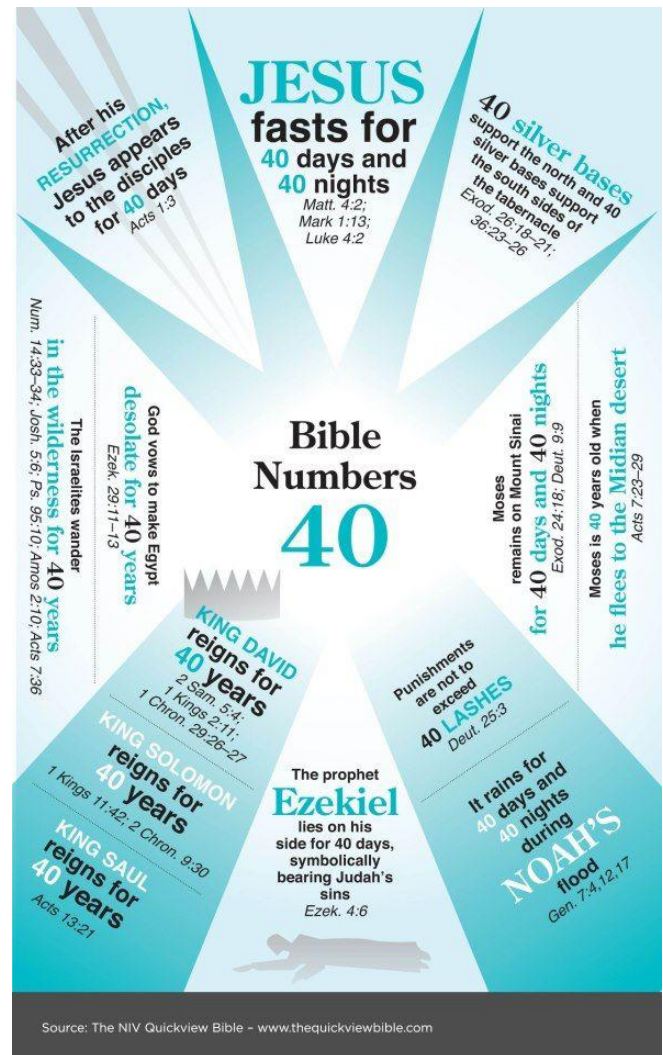
- Several judges ruled for 40 years – Othniel, Deborah, Barak, and Gideon
- Several kings reigned for 40 years – Saul, David, Solomon

Testing and purification – Especially before entering into something new and significant.

- Moses' time on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18, Deuteronomy 9:25).
- The spies' trip to Canaan (Numbers 13:25).
- Israel's time in the wilderness (Numbers 14:33, 32:13).
- Elijah's miraculous journey to Sinai (1 Kings 19:8).
- Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Mark 1:13).

Uses

- Noah's flood lasted 40 days and 40 nights
- Moses was in Egypt for 40 years, Midian for 40 years and on the mountain for 40 days
- Moses' time on Mount Sinai
- Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years
- The spies were in Canaan for 40 days
- Elijah's miraculous journey to Sinai (1 Kings 19:8).
- 40 Days were given to Nineveh to repent
- Jesus fasted and was tempted for 40 days
- Jesus was with His disciples for 40 days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3)



40) Symbolizes **testing and trials**. Genesis notes that it rained 40 days and 40 nights upon the earth during the time of Noah's testing. Moses was in Egypt 40 years, in Midian 40 years, and served God 40 years. Moses was on Mt. Sinai 40 days as God gave him the law. Saul, David, Solomon, and Josiah ruled for 40 years. Israel was in the wilderness 40 years. Jesus fasted in the wilderness 40 days. Jesus taught his disciples for 40 days following his resurrection.

42

42) Symbolizes **the antichrist**. The antichrist will be allowed to have authority for 42 months (Rev. 13:4-5).

50

50) Symbolizes **power, celebration, and joy**. The Year of Jubilees came on the 50th year (Lev. 25:10). Pentecost occurred 50 days after Jesus's resurrection, was on the 50th day after the first harvest of grain, and was the time that the Holy Spirit filled believers with his presence. David has a connection with 50 in 2 Samuel 24.

70/72

70/72) Symbolizes **human leadership and judgment**. Moses appointed 70 elders (Ex. 24:1). The Sanhedrin consisted of 70 men. Jesus chose 70 or 72 disciples (Lk. 10:1). Jesus told Peter to forgive 70 times 7.

120

120) Implies a *divine time of waiting*. 120 disciples were gathered when Matthias was chosen as Judas's replacement (Acts 1:14-26). God gave a 120 year period to allow humanity to repent of their evil before engaging in judgment against them (Gen. 6:1-3).

153

153) May imply *God's overflow of blessing* as it is linked with the 153 fish that were caught at one of Jesus's resurrection appearances (Jn. 21:11).

200

200) May imply *insufficiency*. Achan sinfully takes 200 shekels of silver in Jericho (Josh. 7). The Romans escort Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea with 200 soldiers (Acts 21-23).

390

390) Represents *separation*. Ezekiel is commanded to lie on his side for 390 days to represent Israel's sins and separation (Eze. 4:1-5).

400

400) May imply a *divine time period*.

666

666) Symbolizes the *antichrist* and *the kingdoms of humanity opposing God*. 666 is oddly a triangular number, thus representing a counterfeit trinity. The number is identified as the mark of the beast in Revelation 13:18.

1,000

1000) Symbolizes *the conclusion of a time*. Jesus will return to establish a millennial kingdom on earth. He will reign for 1,000 years after which Satan will launch one last effort against Christ that will prove fatal for Lucifer (Rev. 19:16; 20:4, 6).

144,000

144,000) Symbolizes *totality* and *the church*. David's army consisted of 12 sets of 144,000 in 1 Chronicles 27. More indicative of the numerical meaning is the reference of 144,000 end-time believers whom God saves from the tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:4-9).

The Hebrew Alphabet in Numerology

1	Aleph	א
2	Bet	ב
3	Gimel	ג
4	Daleth	ד
5	Heh	ה
6	Vav	ו
7	Zayin	ז
8	Het	ח
9	Tet	ט
10	Yud	י
20	Kaf	כ
30	Lamed	ל
40	Mem	מ
50	Nun	נ
60	Samech	ס
70	Ayin	ע
80	Peh	פ
90	Tzady	צ
100	Koof	ק
200	Reish	ר
300	Shin	ש
400	Taf	ת
500	Kaf (final)	ך
600	Mem (final)	ם
700	Nun (final)	ן
800	Peh (final)	ף
900	Tzady (final)	ץ

Gematria

Gematria is a numerological system by which Hebrew letters correspond to numbers. This system, developed by practitioners of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), derived from Greek influence and became a tool for interpreting biblical texts.

In gematria, each Hebrew letter is represented by a number (for example, aleph = 1, bet = 2, etc.). One can then calculate the numerical value of a word by adding together the values of each letter in it. In the realm of biblical interpretation, commentators base an argument on numerological equivalence of words. If a word's numerical value equals that of another word, a commentator might draw a connection between these two words and the verses in which they appear and use this to prove larger conceptual conclusions.

Who Believes in Gematria?

While gematria was used periodically in the Talmud and Midrash, it was not central to rabbinic literature. The rabbis occasionally employed gematria to help support biblical exegesis, but did not rely on it heavily. They were much more invested in the use of logical reasoning and argumentation to support their positions.

However, gematria is essential to Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition. The very basis of the kabbalistic cosmological system rests on the belief that God created the universe through the power of the Hebrew letters along with their numerical values. Indeed the many names of God and their permutations in Kabbalah have numerical values that are believed to contain potent power.

Gematria's Core Texts

The term “gematria” comes from the Greek “geometria,” and the concept can be found in the writings of the Greek philosopher Plato. In rabbinic literature it first appears in the Baraita of the Thirty-two Rules, by Rabbi Eliezer in 200 CE. This text, which no longer exists except in references, elaborated 32 rules for interpreting the Bible. The 29th rule involved the use of gematria.

Sefer Yetzirah, the earliest kabbalistic text, believed to have been written in the 2nd century CE, was the first kabbalistic text to elaborate a system of gematria. This text is concerned with God’s creation of the universe through the powers of the Hebrew alphabet, and with the permutations of God’s name. The mystic practitioner could, it was believed, use this knowledge to harness the powers of creation. Sefer Yetzirah supposedly contains the instructions to create a golem, the legendary creature made out of mud, popularized by the Maharal of Prague in the 19th century.

In the 1200s the Hasidim of Ashkenaz (“German pietists,” a group of rabbis who practiced a mystical and ascetic form of Judaism, not to be confused with Hasidism, which developed 500 years later) used gematria in their mystical writings. Their writings influenced Abraham Abulafia of the Castilian school of Kabbalah, whose meditation techniques included contemplating different names of God. The kabbalist Moses Cordovero of Safed, Israel, in 1542 compiled a handbook called Pardes Rimmonim (Garden of the Pomegranates), which includes many sections that expound on and elaborate previous systems of gematria. The Sabbatean movement of the 17th century (the followers of which believed their leader, Shabbatai Tzvi, to be the messiah) and the Hasidic movement of the 18th century built on the kabbalistic tradition, employing gematria as a tool in their mystical writings.

Famous Examples of Gematria-Based Arguments

One famous example of gematria is in the interpretation of Genesis 14:14, which appears in the Baraita of the Thirty-two Rules and in other Talmudic and Midrashic references. This verse mentions the 318 men that made up the household of Abram (later in Genesis, God changes Abram’s name to Abraham), whom he took with him to defeat the armies that had recently attacked his kinsman. The numerical equivalent of the name “Eliezer” (Abram’s servant) is 318; therefore, the text suggests that in fact it was only Eliezer that came with Abram, not all 318 men. A Hasidic text, the Kedushat Levi, uses gematria to draw additional conclusions from this verse. This text observes that the numerical value of the word “siach” (Hebrew for speaking or conversing) is 318. Therefore, the text argues that it was through the power of speaking God’s holy name that Abram defeated his enemies.

Much of gematria focuses on the various names of God and the powers of these names. The name Elohim adds up to the number 86, which equals the value of the word hateva (Nature). This equivalence leads to the conclusion that Elohim refers to the divine presence as it manifests in the physical world, as opposed to the name YHVH, which connects to the heavenly universe.

Modern Belief in Gematria

Throughout history, some people have believed that the Torah contains secrets that can be revealed by gematria and used to predict historical events. This belief continues to this day, and was popularized by Michael Drasin’s best-selling (and much criticized) *The Bible Code*, published in 1997. Some Hasidic communities that are steeped in the study of kabbalistic literature believe that the Torah, as read through the lens of gematria, contains clues to current events.

Skeptics, however, have noted that gematria can be employed as “proof” to support diametrically opposing positions, depending on the words and phrases one chooses to highlight and calculate. A somewhat tongue-in-cheek illustration of this involved an attempt to predict the 2016 United States presidential election through the gematria of the candidates’ names. The author of the article showed how this line of reasoning could be used just as easily to predict the victory of either candidate. Nevertheless, gematria continues to have an appeal in some quarters.

Propitiation

- Propitiation – Satisfying God’s wrath against sin
 - *propitiation* has to do with the object of the expiation
 - *pro* means “for” – Propitiation brings about a change in God’s attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us.
 - Vertical – Applies to how the act of expiation applies to God
 - The result of Christ’s work of expiation is propitiation—God’s anger is turned away. Through the process of propitiation, we are restored into fellowship and favor with God
 - Jesus covered (atoned for) our sins by paying the penalty (expiation) and appeasing God’s wrath (propitiation)

Reconciliation

- Reconciliation – To be reconciled is to be restored to friendship or harmony
 - We are now reunited to God, because of the atonement – We are now "at-one-ment" with God
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”
 - Christ reconciled us to God
 - Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,
 - Colossians 1:20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled
 - The fact that we needed reconciliation means that our relationship with God was broken.
 - God is holy – we are the ones to blame for our separation from God. Our sin alienated us from Him.
 - Romans 5:10 says that we were enemies of God: “For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”
 - When Christ died on the cross, He satisfied God’s judgment and made it possible for God’s enemies (us) to find peace with Him. Our “reconciliation” to God, then, involves the exercise of His grace and the forgiveness of our sin.
 - The result of Jesus’ sacrifice is that our relationship has changed from enmity to friendship.
 - “I no longer call you servants ... Instead, I have called you friends” (John 15:15).
 - Christian reconciliation is a glorious truth! We were God’s enemies, but are now His friends. We were in a state of condemnation because of our sins, but we are now forgiven. We were at war with God, but now have the peace that transcends all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

Redemption

- Redemption – the price that was paid to redeem the debtor that's sold at the slave market
 - Redeem means “to buy out.”
 - The term was used specifically in reference to the purchase of a slave’s freedom.
 - The application of this term to Christ’s death on the cross is quite telling. If we are “redeemed,” then our prior condition was one of slavery. God has purchased our freedom, and we are no longer in bondage to sin or to the Old Testament law.
 - Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)
 - Galatians 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
 - Everyone is in need of redemption.
 - Our natural condition was characterized by guilt: “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
 - Christ’s redemption has freed us from guilt, being “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).
 - The benefits of redemption:
 - Eternal life
 - Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song, saying:
“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;
For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.”
 - Forgiveness of sins
 - Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace
 - Righteousness
 - Romans 5:17 For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
 - Freedom from the law’s curse
 - Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)
 - Adoption into God’s family
 - Galatians 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
 - Deliverance from sin’s bondage
 - Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.
 - Peace with God
 - Colossians 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.
 - Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
 - Ezekiel 36:27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.
 - To be redeemed, then, is to be forgiven, holy, justified, free, adopted, and reconciled.
 - The streets of heaven will be filled with former captives who, through no merit of their own, find themselves redeemed, forgiven, and free. Slaves to sin have become saints. No wonder we will sing a

- new song—a song of praise to the Redeemer who was slain (Revelation 5:9). We were slaves to sin, condemned to eternal separation from God. Jesus paid the price to redeem us, resulting in our freedom from slavery to sin and our rescue from the eternal consequences of that sin.
- See also Psalm 130:7-8; Luke 2:38; and Acts 20:28.
 - Psalm 130:7-8 O Israel, hope in the Lord;
For with the Lord there is mercy, And with Him is abundant redemption.
And He shall redeem Israel From all his iniquities.
 - Luke 2:38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to [a]the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.
 - Acts 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church [a]of God which He purchased with His own blood.