



THEN SHALL THE END COME!

A Contemporary Comparison of World Conditions
To Scriptures on the End of Time

Rev. Allen Young
November 2019

THEN SHALL THE END COME

OCCASION OF THE STUDY

Much has happened in the world since our previous study on the end of time.

- From Ezekiel 38, Russia's military has moved south into Syria and is now positioned on the northeastern border of Israel. The great bear of the north is currently confederate with Syria and Iran, two of the four countries that border the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, and at the end will link up with Iraq and Turkey, and with nations from north Africa, to greedily attack Israel for its wealth. This is the battle of Armageddon.
- From Rev. 9, there is a confederate superpower of nations led by four evil beings that come out of the Euphrates river. Coincidentally, there are four nations that border the Euphrates river; Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and down near the Persian Gulf, Iran. These may join with other nations in the East at the end of time to form the army of two hundred million. They will slay one-third of the human race, which currently would be about 2.5 billion people. Two hundred million is astronomical! But China and India have been aborting female babies for years, which has produced a male population so large, that China alone has reported a 200 million-man army with 150 million in reserve. China's economy was anemic for years in the model of Communism. They are still Communist, but since they have embraced the economic model of capitalism and free enterprise, they earn half a trillion dollars a year just from the U.S., and they now have nearly one trillion dollars invested in American securities, on which America can only pay back the interest. China has also invested her market wealth in India, the Middle East, and South America. They have aggressively taken islands from Japan with no retaliation from the rest of the world. They are now a superpower in the east.
- From Matthew 24, we see a scale of worldwide iniquity abounding like no other time in history. Sodom was destroyed for its wickedness, some of which is described as men rejecting women and sexually preferring men. Also prophesied at the end was a willingness to change things that have always been in place, and we have certainly seen this from the LGBTQ movement around the world. This abounding in iniquity has produced the "love of many waxing cold." And now we see a tremendous escalation in hatred, wrath, rage, racism, abuse, enslavement, and murder, even on a national scale with nations warring against nations like no time in history.

INTRODUCTORY SCRIPTURES ON THE TIMING OF THE END

- 2 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." There are two pronouns "he" in this verse. However, they do not refer to the same person. The first antecedent is God; the second is the Antichrist, cf. v. 4.

- Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

THEN SHALL THE END COME

JESUS DESCRIBES THE END OF TIME – MATTHEW 24

- Many false prophets, saying “I am Christ”, vv. 4-5, 11. Certainly, there have been many who have claimed to be the return of Christ and have led many astray. But for this to be an end time sign it has to occur on a grand scale. Consider this...look at the present number of false prophets, priests, preachers, pastors, televangelists, who claim to belong to Christ but have been proven or are currently suspected of being wolves in sheep’s clothing.
- Wars and rumors of wars...80 million deaths have been recorded from world wars and conflicts, according to U.N. statistics through 2013.
- World calamities on a Biblical scale, v. 7. These are evident in our day around the world. We are receiving reports from the Arctic of 40 degrees and rain in February-March when it is their winter and temps reach 40 below! Earthquakes have occurred exponentially in the last 75 years of record-keeping. Famine follows drought, poor agricultural management, and corrupt governments, which is rife around the world. Pestilence and disease follow famine. In first world countries, we have nearly condemned ourselves with overuse of antibiotics, antibacterials, and antiseptics. We have poisoned our world’s land, air, and food, and over-indulged natural and man-made chemicals and pharmaceuticals. The list of new diseases and syndromes grows every year.
- Hatred of Christians, v. 9. This has also increased exponentially since our last study on end times, even here in America.
- Abundant iniquity, v. 12
- Lovelessness and hatred, v. 12. Abundant iniquity will produce lovelessness and hatred.

Jesus Quotes Daniel on the Abominations of the Temple

Three of the four places in the New Testament that mention the term "abomination" refer to a defiling of the holy. Two of these specifically refer to the defiling of God's Temple in Jerusalem.

Jesus told the Disciples in Matt. 24:15 and Mark 13:14 that one of the signs of the end of time would be an abomination of desolation; that is, the Temple would be abominated and made desolate. Jesus said this is the fulfilling of Daniel's prophecy in Dan. 9:27.

This abomination would be very similar to the one spoken of in Dan. 8:8-14 by the Old Testament antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes IV, who defiled and destroyed most of the Temple and caused the practices in it to cease. Gabriel revealed to Daniel in 8:15-27 that this OT antichrist would be much like the one that would come at the end of time, who would do the same to a future Temple and its practices.

Daniel Receives the Prophetic Future of Israel to the End of Time

Dan. 1:17-21 – Daniel is given knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of visions and dreams.

Dan. 2:31-45; 8:19-25 – Daniel reveals four earthly kingdoms and one heavenly kingdom through the end of time.

Dan. 5:30-31 – The second kingdom of five arrives...the Medes/Persians.

Dan. 7:1-8 – A possible reference to the U.S.A. and details on the last earthly kingdom.

Dan. 7:9-14 – The arrival of Jesus Christ to set up a heavenly kingdom.

Dan. 7:15-27 – The war between the kingdom of the Antichrist and Jesus.

Dan. 9:2; 10:12 – Daniel realizes the 70-year captivity spoken of by Jeremiah is fulfilled and yearns for Israel's restoration.

Dan. 9:20-27 – Daniel receives God's timetable through the end of time.

Dan. 10 – Gabriel and Michael facilitate the arrival of the Greek empire.

Dan. 11 – Details of the next kingdom.

Dan. 12 – Final words on the end.

DETAILS OF DANIEL THAT CORRESPOND TO JESUS' PROPHECIES & HIS REVELATION TO JOHN

In Daniel 9:24-27 Gabriel reveals a 490-year timetable for Israel's future. The years are divided into blocks of 7 years called weeks. A 49-year period is mentioned first, commencing with the command to let Israel go back to their land and rebuild Jerusalem, then followed by a 434 period at the end of which Christ will be "cut off", meaning crucified. These two periods equal 483 years or exactly 69 weeks. The 70th week curiously corresponds to the 7-year tribulation at the end of time whereas Jesus described in Matt. 24, the Temple is abominated and made desolate.

In Daniel 10:5-6, a man who looks identical to the description of Jesus in Rev. 1:13-15, came to Daniel to reveal details of Israel's Old Testament future (chp. 11) and their End-time future (chp. 12).

In Dan. 10:13 we see Persia hindering Christ and the future of Israel. Persia is Iran today, and they are still hindering Christ and the future of Israel. Jesus and Michael overthrow the evil powers ruling Persia and Greece is able to conquer them. Persia is mentioned in Ezekiel 38 as being part of the end-time coalition of nations that come against Israel. God destroys that coalition Himself. Also, compare Daniel 12 with Revelation 12.

MATTHEW 24 PROPHECIES THAT CORRESPOND TO REVELATION

Matthew 24:1-2 contains a prophecy that was fulfilled in 70 A.D., when the Roman general Titus leveled the Temple in Jerusalem.

Then in Matthew 24:3 the Disciples ask Jesus for three signs. In the rest of Matthew 24 Jesus answers them.

- a. When shall these things be?
- b. What is the sign of Your coming?
- c. What is the sign of the end of the world?

WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE?

1. When a time of great deception comes upon the saints. Matt. 24:4-5, 11, 23-27
2. When simultaneous wars occur on a scale like never before. Matt. 24:6-7a
3. When famine, pestilence, and earthquakes occur on a scale like never before. Matt. 24:7b
4. When Christians are persecuted by the world and many fall away. Matt. 24:9-10
5. When iniquity abounds on a worldwide scale and love grows cold. Matt. 24:12
6. When a Temple in Jerusalem is abominated by one who stands in the Holy of Holies. Matt. 24:15
7. When Israel hurriedly flees the Temple usurper to safety in the wilderness. Matt. 24:16-20

JESUS GIVES INSTRUCTIONS ON THE “WHEN” OF ALL THESE THINGS

1. When all these things have been fulfilled the time of “great tribulation” such as the world has never seen is at the door. Matt. 24:21-22, 32-35.
2. The unsaved generation that sees all these world conditions will see the end of time. Matt. 24:34
3. Only God the Father knows the day and hour when the Tribulation judgments will begin. Matt. 24:36

WHAT IS THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING?

1. People will be warned by Christians as Noah warned his generation, but they will ignore and go on living. Christ will come as suddenly as the flood came. Matt. 24:37-44.
2. Jesus explains the signs for the Jews who flee to the wilderness and safely hide until the end of the seven-year Tribulation. Matt. 24:20-25. They have waited 2,000 years for their Messiah, their Christ, to come and save them from their enemies and elevate them above all nations. When they flee they will be shocked and confused.
3. False Christs will perform wonders to impress the Jews to follow them. Matt. 24:24.
4. Christ will come from the sky like lightning. He will not just appear out of the mass of people on earth in the desert or in secret chambers. Matt. 24:26-27.

5. At the end of the seven-year Tribulation the sun and moon will cease to give light; the stars will fall; and the physics holding the heavens together shall be shaken. Matt. 24:29
6. The sound of a trumpet in the sky will blast and Jesus will approach Earth from the clouds in power and great glory. Jesus' angels will gather all the elect saints to Christ from heaven above and earth below. Matt. 24:30-31.

WHAT IS THE SIGN OF THE END OF THE WORLD?

1. After Christ arrives, He will give rewards to the faithful and everlasting punishment to the faithless. Matt. 24:45-51.
2. Heaven and Earth shall pass away. Matt. 24:37.

Then Shall the End Come

Revelation Study 1

INTRODUCTION

In November of 2019 we began this study comparing contemporary world conditions to end-time Biblical prophecies. We first looked at the nations in Ezekiel 38 and 39 that God will one day draw against Israel where He will destroy them. We observed that many of those nations are vehemently antagonistic to Israel in our day and seek its complete destruction. Persia and Magog are Iran and Russia. Iran has begun a nuclear program for the sole purpose of destroying Israel, and Russia is presently entrenched on Israel's northeastern border in Syria. Then we looked at Daniel and saw how contemporary history accurately confirms the order of conquering empires up through the revived Roman empire of today, the European Union. And just recently, we compared Jesus' description of the end of time in Matthew 24 to extreme conditions in our world today, and concluded we are presently in the period Jesus called, the "Beginning of Sorrows".

Now we begin to look for details on the end of time in the book of Revelation. As before, we will compare the details we find to events and conditions in our world today. When finished, we should be able to identify what has yet to happen, and be able to say, "Then shall the end come."

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE GLORY AND POWER OF CHRIST – REV. 1

1. Jesus does not want us ignorant of the details on the end of time. Blessed are they who read, hear, and keep what He is about to reveal. 1:1-3
2. John is not the author of the book of Revelation. Jesus is the author; John is just the scribe. 1:1
3. Jesus is described by the amazing things He has already done, and what He will yet do. 1:4-18
4. The addressees and recipients of the end-times revelation are seven key Gentile churches in Asia Minor. They were chosen by Christ because their conditions enabled Him to convey a comprehensive message to all Gentile Christian churches. 1:11
5. The vision of the glory, splendor, power, and authority of Jesus is meant to establish that, no matter how scary and chaotic the Revelation of the end is, Jesus is in control.

THE FIRST AND THE LAST - 1:17-20

Obviously, Christ was eternally before all things and will be there at the end of all things; but have we ever really asked the question, "Christ is the first and the last what? Is it possible Christ was telling John He is the only Savior from God. By saying He is the first could Christ have been saying no other savior has come before Him; and by saying He is the last, that no other savior will come after Him.

This opposes what other religions teach, such as Islam, where in 600 A.D. Mohammed, not Jesus, is the last great prophet, from whom we have received the final truth for man, which Mohammed recorded in the Quran (Koran). Hal Lindsey made an interesting observation on the Quran. He stated that while Mohammed was living peacefully in Mecca his so-called revelations came from a monotheistic God with instructions of love and peace.

But the rulers of Mecca rejected Mohammed's teaching of one God. They felt his new ideas were just a blend of Judaism and Christianity. Due to the unrest and uprisings Mohammed caused in Mecca, the rulers of the city exiled him. As a result, Mohammed fled to Medina. There he stewed in anger over rejection of monotheism and himself, and raised an army from his devotees in Medina. He then returned with righteous vengeance. He determined that if they would not accept his teachings when presented peacefully, they would accept them at the end of a sword or die. Hal Lindsey made the interesting observation that the portion of the Quran written during Mohammed's stay in Medina is full of violence against infidels and unbelievers.

THE RESURRECTED & GLORIFIED CHRIST HAS THE KEYS OF HELL & DEATH

In 1:18 Jesus makes the statement that He lived (as a man) and died, but He is now alive forevermore. His next statement about possessing the keys of hell and death is predicated on His first statement. In fact, one could say that if the Son of God had not lived as a man, died as the savior of mankind, and rose from death to eternal life, He would not be able to possess the keys of hell and death.

Not to oversimplify the statement, but Christ possessing keys presupposes there is a lock on a gate or door that He can now open. That door was locking all of sinful man in hell in a state of perpetual death (separation from God), but Christ has the ability to free all who will walk through the door He opens. It's possible that Satan possessed these keys before Christ brought salvation to man. Without Christ there was no solution for sin, therefore, all mankind was condemned in their sin to eternal separation from God. This was the Devil's doing, so in a sense, he possessed the keys of hell and death until Christ.

JESUS OUTLINES THE REVELATION

The outline of the book of Revelation is found in verse 19. It contains the past, present, and future; the things John has already seen, the things which presently are (as in the conditions in the seven churches), and the things which shall be hereafter.

THE RESURRECTED & GLORIFIED CHRIST HAS THE CHURCHES AND THEIR "ANGELS" IN HIS HAND

In v. 20, Jesus speaks of the number seven. In the kingdom of God the number seven denotes completeness, or perfection. But we know from history that there were many more churches in existence at the time of Christ's words than seven. So we think that while Christ singled out seven churches in Asia (Turkey) He was actually saying to all His churches, "I have you in my hand. I am aware of all you're doing well and poorly. I will guide you even if it means I have to do it firmly.

Jesus tells John to write His words and pass them on to the "angels" of each church. In the original Greek, "angel" means "messenger". So while it is very possible that every church on earth has an angel assigned to them, it is also possible that the word "angel" is referring to the pastors of each church, since they are charged to bring the "message" of God's word to their congregations on a regular basis.

THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS

Jesus described in Rev. 1:13, 20 that there are seven golden candlesticks. Even without knowing what the candlesticks represent, just by the fact that there are seven means we could say they represent the completion or fulfillment of something. But we do know what the candlesticks represent; Jesus described them in Rev. 1:20 as churches in Asia.

We must remember that the Revelation was given to John by Jesus 50-60 years after His ascension back to heaven. In fact, at this point in time, John is the last one alive of the twelve Disciples. He fulfills the prophecy of Jesus to the other Disciples in Mark 9:1, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." In the visions John was given he literally saw the return of Christ take place.

Also, the churches Paul and his cohorts founded are now seasoned and imbedded in their communities. It is possible that Christ's choice of the churches He would address represents a cross-section of all His churches on earth. If so, then Jesus' letters to the churches would represent counsel to all churches across all time.

COUNSEL TO THE CHURCHES

Jesus is very familiar with all the churches. He begins His counsel to the churches by stating He is intimately connected to them. He states in Rev. 2:1 that He holds the stars of the churches in His hand, whether they be actual angels or pastors. And He states, not that He is positioned in a distant and lofty place far removed from the churches, but that He is right in their midst.

a. **EPHESUS THE LOVELESS CHURCH.** Ephesus represents a dutiful and conscientious church that has forgotten its original motive and purpose for existence... to reflect their love for Christ to the world. Christ's counsel is to rekindle that first love they had for Him. This can only be done by refocusing and redirecting their worship upward on the character, love, and sacrifice of God. There should always be an element in every church where people are regularly connected to the character and heart of God. That will generate both a reciprocal modeling of God's character and heart to the world.

b. **SMYRNA THE SUFFERING CHURCH.** Jesus recognizes the suffering of the believers in Smyrna. It seems to be both spiritual and economic. They are suffering tribulation at the hands of Jews who are marionettes of Satan. And they are suffering poverty as a result of their devotion to Christ. But in the midst of their suffering Jesus acknowledges they are still maintaining good works. He encourages them to continue to persevere, even to the point of death, and He will give them a crown of eternal life.

c. **PERGAMOS & TYATIRA THE TOLERANT CHURCHES.** Jesus recognizes this church's setting and how they must deal with intense Satanic temptations to the flesh. But He reminds them they have left a small "lump" of wicked yeast in their midst that will spread throughout the whole church if they do not purge it.

d. SARDIS. Our Lord addresses these churches regarding their “works”. What does Jesus mean by “works”? The context of each letter indicates the churches’ works. Sardis is a sepulcher church; on the outside they appear ornate and beautiful, but on the inside they are dead. Sardis is a shell church; on the outside they appear to have life, but it is just the appearance of life. There appears to be a faint heartbeat left in Sardis. Jesus refers to a few in the church who have not defiled their garments. He calls on the church to follow their lead to life. The Lord’s reference to these righteous ones not defiling their garments implies they have not followed after the ways of the world around them. This may be a hint as to what has deterred the church from being engaged in works that are righteous, productive, and pleasing to God.

If these letters represent a composition of issues that face all churches, then all churches should use Rev. 2-3 as a litmus test of their faithfulness to God.

e. PHILADELPHIA. Like Smyrna, Jesus has no criticism for this church, only comfort, consolation, and encouragement to press on to the end. Philadelphia is a church with little strength left, but they are weak for good reason, they have been fighting persecution from hateful Jews who are errant in their righteous indignation. Jesus has no criticism for this church...only consolation and promise of reward. Churches who are faithful to God and Scripture have always suffered antagonism, if not persecution, from the community and culture around them. But Christ encourages them and us from His letter to Philadelphia to persevere and not give up.

f. LAODICEA. This is the “lukewarm” church. It has also been labeled the “hypocritical” church. Jesus bares His heart and mind to the Church on this subject, no matter the age they are in. I believe when Jesus wishes us to be hot or cold that He is simply referring to the clarity and purity of being all in for Him. He does not like wavering or doublemindedness. He does not like lukewarmness. Spewing is a harsh and graphic term. Jesus is basically saying, “turn away from lukewarmness before it’s too late or I will cast you away from me.”

There is an interesting theory about the letters to the seven churches. Some Bible scholars have drawn parallels between the content of the seven letters to seven ages the church will go through. The theory is intriguing, especially the parallel to the last age of the church being a lukewarm, falling-away period of the church.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REVELATION

Rev. 2-3 has Jesus repeating the phrase, “let him hear what the Spirit says”. But curiously, from chp. 4 to chp. 19 there is no reference to the Holy Spirit, only angels administering the justice and judgment of God on evil man. But then in chps. 20-22 we see references to the Spirit again after the Tribulation and day of judgment. Some have tied this to the belief that the Holy Spirit is taken up from the earth during the Tribulation, when the time for man to repent is over, and the Spirit’s conviction for sin is not needed. But we see saints persecuted to the point of death during the Tribulation and remaining faithful, so this theory does not seem plausible. We will have to wait to get the final answer on that.

DOES LAODICEA PARALLEL TO CONDITIONS IN THE CHURCH TODAY?

Rev. 3:17 – A church that is rich, increased with goods, and in need of nothing.

a. Lakewood Church (Joel Osteen 1999) is the largest church in America with 52,000 weekly attendees. In 2005 they paid \$11.8 million for a 30 yr. lease of the Compaq Center Arena. They renovated the arena at a cost of \$100 million; and in 2010 the Houston City Council sold the property to Lakewood Church for \$7.5 million. Their annual budget is \$70 million. Pastor Joel's net worth is between \$40-60 million mostly from book sales. His home is a \$10.5 million, 17,000 sq. ft. mansion.

b. The next 12 largest churches in America have nearly 300,000 weekly attendees. The no. 12 church is LCBC Church in Manheim, PA, with a weekly attendance of 16,012.

c. The top eight pastors with the most net worth in America have a combined net worth of \$1.03 billion.

THE HEAVENLY THRONE OF GOD – Rev. 4

1. The image of God's throne with the rainbow of promise.

2. The 24 Elders are believed to represent the saints of the twelve tribes of Israel and the convert saints of the twelve apostles.

3. The four living creatures represent God's all-seeing eyes over all the earth.

THE GLORY OF GOD'S THRONE AND TEMPLE – REV. 4; ISA. 6:1-4

In Rev. 1:10 John describes that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Some of the most intimate times of understanding from God are waiting for those who will find a solitary place of communion with God. Indeed, what may have first appeared to John as miserable exile on a remote prison island, likely became a sanctuary in which God could commune with John without interruption.

In Rev. 1:19 John is commanded by Jesus to write the contents of both things he has seen, things that are, and things that are to come. What he has seen prior to verse 19 is the glorified Jesus standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks with seven stars in His right hand and a two-edged sword coming out of His mouth. Then John is shown in chapters 2 and 3 things that are, in seven churches to his east in Asia Minor (Turkey). Then in chapter 4, John sees wonders in heaven that are, and is commanded to record them.

John's vision in chapter 4 has some parallels to Isaiah's vision in Isa. 6:1-4. In both there is God's throne, six-wing beings, and a door.

The throne of God is seen having a rainbow around it, lightning and thunder coming out of it, a sea of glass and seven lamps of fire in front of it. God is described vaguely as having the gleam of gemstones. The seven lamps in front of the throne are symbols of the seven Spirits of God, mentioned also in chps. 1:4, 3:1, and 5:6. In the 5:6 reference there is a description of seven horns and seven eyes on a lamb that appeared slain. Of course, the lamb is Jesus. The seven horns and eyes represent the seven Spirits of God. So, they are connected inseparably to Jesus. The reference in Rev. 5:6 also states the seven Spirits of God are "sent forth into all the earth".

The only speculation we can make of these Spirits comes from Isaiah 11:1-2, where there are seven Spirits connected to Jesus, who is there called the Rod and Branch of Jesse:

1. The Spirit of the Lord
2. The Spirit of Wisdom
3. The Spirit of Understanding
4. The Spirit of Counsel
5. The Spirit of Might
6. The Spirit of Knowledge
7. The Spirit of Fear of the Lord

In Romans 12:5-8 there is also an interesting list of seven grace-measured gifts given to believers who are a part of the "body" of Christ:

1. Prophecy
2. Ministry
3. Teaching
4. Exhorting (strongly urging to action)
5. Giving
6. Ruling
7. Showing Mercy

THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

Around the throne of God are the seats of twenty-four elders. Elders in the Old Testament were men of age and maturity who displayed wisdom, judgment, and competence. They were by definition leaders over others, hence, the Elders of Israel.

The same attributes were expected in Elders of the New Testament with one addition, being filled with the Holy Spirit. The junior pastor Timothy was counseled by Paul not to rebuke an Elder; but was also admonished by Paul not to let anyone despise his youth. It would seem proper if Timothy needed to correct an Elder, to confront him respectfully in private or with two or three other Elders.

In heaven, John sees 24 Elders. They are dressed in white with golden crowns. The white raiment represents the righteousness they have received by the atoning sacrifice of Christ; and the golden crowns are rewards for faithfulness. With that, we believe these 24 represent saints.

The number 24 is unique in Scripture, but the number 12 is not. The most significant twelves in Scripture are of course, the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. At the end of time Israel will come to Christ and join the Gentile saints, whose chief Elders would be the twelve Apostles.

However, in the list of the 12,000 Jews from 12 tribes, Dan and Ephraim are left out. Dan's exclusionary sin is found in 1 Kings 12:28-30 and Ephraim's is found in Psa. 78:9-17, 65-67. In the twelve-tribe list of the 144,000 in Rev. 7:4-8, Ephraim is replaced by his brother Manasseh who is then raised from a half-tribe to a full tribe, and Dan is replaced by his brother Joseph, who had forfeited his tribe to his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. And of course, in the list of the Apostles, Judas is replaced by Matthias.

There is a theory by some that since Paul humbly referred to himself as being called to be an Apostle to the Gentiles, that maybe Matthias was a temporary Apostle until Paul came along. There is no Scripture to back that up, so it is mere speculation.

These 24 Elders are also engraved on New Jerusalem, the 12 Apostles on the 12 foundations and the 12 tribes on the 12 gates, Rev. 21:10-14.

THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

These are covered with eyes to accurately see and record all the events of man on earth. They bear images of the four creatures who are kings of their domains; the lion is king of the wild animals; the calf is king of the domesticated animals; the man is king of humanity; and the eagle is king of the air. Each of these creatures have six wings and cry holy, holy, holy in worship of God. This resembles the description of the seraphim angels in Isa. 6:2-3. When the cry of worship goes out from these four living creatures, the Elders who represent all the saints bow down, cast their crowns before God, and declare that only He deserves glory, honor, and power. Let us begin now to practice what these reveal we shall do some day in eternity!

THE SCROLL-BOOK OF LAST DAYS JUDGMENTS – Rev. 5:1

Book versus Scroll; it is difficult to imagine a book with whole sections sealed somehow; and that also contains writing within and on the backside. But scroll-books with wax seals were common in Jesus' day. A scroll-book with orders or instructions from an authority might be addressed to several different people. Person one would break his wax seal, but he might not have authority to read the contents beyond the second seal. If person two had no permission to read the contents of the first portion, that portion would be removed from scroll. The scroll would then be delivered to the next person in line, who alone was allowed to break the wax seal to read his portion.

God has a book with seven seals, each revealing a detailed segment of the last days judgment of earth. Six seals have detailed content, but the seventh reveals a new set of six judgments, each commenced by a trumpet. Upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, a final set of seven bowl judgments commence.

ONLY JESUS IS WORTHY TO OPEN ALL THE SEALS – Rev. 5:2-10

In verses 2-4 a search is made for anyone in all creation who is worthy to break the seals and open the book. John weeps much when no one is found. But John's weeping is turned to joy as Jesus is described by His identity titles and in the form of a slain Lamb. The form of Jesus as a slain lamb explains His right to take the book from His Father and open it. Jesus alone fulfilled the Father's request to redeem mankind. Jesus alone, by His substitutionary sacrifice, has made provision for the salvation of mankind; and for that He has the right to reward those who turn to God through Him and judge those who do not, all of which is found in the sealed book.

THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS FURTHER IDENTIFIED – Rev. 5:8-10

Verse 9 reveals that the twenty-four Elders are redeemed saints who represent all the saints of earth. They have the prayers of the saints in their vials and will lead a government of kings and priests on the new earth.

THE GRAND CHORUS OF PRAISE! – Rev. 5:11-14

The praise of the twenty-four Elders triggers praise from the angelic hosts of heaven, described in number way beyond one hundred million. Their praise is directed at both God the Father and Jesus for their partnership in saving mankind and bringing back an eternity of everlasting righteousness and love.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS ON JUDGMENT

There aren't too many references in Scripture that compare to the judgments of God during the seven-year Tribulation. Three come close: The Flood, Sodom & Gomorrah, and Korah's Rebellion, where from Numbers 16 we see the Lord opened and closed up the earth on three men and their families for coveting the roles of Aaron and Moses, and leading 250 elders and many of Israel to follow them. The day after, many Israelites challenged Moses for what happened, and God sent a plague to consume them. Before Aaron could intercede and plead for God's mercy, 14,700 had died. The Scriptures were not kidding when they state that our God is a "consuming fire", Deut. 4:24.

The judgments of God during the seven-year Tribulation coincide with Daniel 9:24-27, where Israel is promised 490 years to be purged of sin and made eternally righteous: 483 years of the 490 expired at the appearing of Messiah, when Jesus was thirty years old. At that point the timeclock of Israel's salvation stopped, and salvation was offered to the Gentiles (and a relatively small number from the nation of the Jews). We are still in the time of the Gentiles and will be until the Rapture. After the Rapture, God will start the timeclock for the last seven years of Israel's promised 490. During the seven-year Tribulation, God will turn Israel's hearts to Jesus and protect them from the Antichrist. At the same time, God will bring judgment on the utterly wicked of the earth. These are those described in Romans 1 and Ephesians 4:17-19. As the Antichrist blasphemes God to all the earth, and enjoins mankind to do the same, the saints in heaven and the suffering and slaughtered saints on earth cry out to God, "How long O Lord?". The answer is, "until the end of the last seven years promised to Israel."

INTERPRETING THE JUDGMENTS

To interpret the specific judgments of the Great Tribulation, we must first begin with the understanding that they all fall under the umbrella of JUDGMENT. So, no matter the details and specifics, or the literalism (sic) or symbolism of the judgments, they are all an extension of judgment from God on evil.

Some of the judgments will be obviously understood; these are literal interpretations. Some of the judgments have symbolic comparisons; these are figurative interpretations. As we look at the differences between the two, we must not get lost in the details. Rather, we must step back from the blur of looking too closely at the detail, and ask, "What is the big picture of what God is doing?"

TEN END-TIME CONDITIONS THAT JUSTIFY GOD'S JUDGMENT – Matthew 24

1. In the midst of worldwide apocalyptic level chaos, many will claim to be Christ returned, and lead many astray. This is not the blind leading the blind; this is the wolf leading the sheep.
2. Worldwide hate that leads to betrayal and warmongering.
3. Worldwide hatred of and execution of Christians.
4. Iniquity on a scale equal to or worse than the days of Noah.
5. A soaring spirit of self-gratification that nearly extinguishes love for others.
6. The rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem as a substitute for God in the temple of our lives.
7. The arrival of the Antichrist; number two in the unholy trinity of Satan, Antichrist, and False Prophet.
8. The hatred and attempted genocide of the Jews.
9. The blasphemous rallying of the world against God, Jesus, and Christians by the Antichrist.
10. The starving and beheading of anyone who does not take the 666 mark of the Antichrist.

THE SIX SEAL JUDGMENTS OF REVELATION 6

The six seal judgments describe **conditions** on the earth during the 7-year great tribulation.

1. The **white horse** bow-king conqueror may represent one who will appear good and conquer many indirectly. A bow launches attacks quietly and from a distance, catching its target off-guard.
2. The **red horse** sword-conqueror may represent one who will appear fierce and conquer many overtly with direct contact. He will conquer with force and fear of death.
3. The **black horse** rider carries a scale and represents a curse of worldwide restriction or scarcity of food. People will be willing to pay a day's wages for one meal of wheat bread, or three meals of barley. The prohibition on the black horse rider from hurting olive trees and grape vines may be part of God's protection for the Jews during this time of strategic famine.
4. The **pale horse** rider's name is DEATH. He will kill 25% of all people on earth with either the sword, hunger, natural death, or death by beasts. Hell follows these deaths to receive their souls.
5. The **fifth seal** judgment is a promise of just retribution on those on the earth who have slain Christians. The cause for execution is their stand on the Bible as absolute truth, and their testimony of devotion to Jesus Christ.

THE GRAND EXECUTIONER OF THE SAINTS & THE USE OF 666

Revelation 13:1-10 describes in detail the rise of a collective group of nations under one ruler during the Tribulation. He is a puppet of the great Dragon, Satan. During the Tribulation, the Antichrist is the world's leading blasphemer against God and opposes everything that pertains to God, especially God's followers. As Hitler did with the Jews in Germany, the Antichrist will blame Christians for the woes of earth and turn public opinion against them. He will accuse them of being haters filled with hate speech. Christianity will be portrayed, not as a protected religious point of view like other religions enjoy, but as racist, sexist, and homophobic. Their very existence will be portrayed as vermin that need to be exterminated from society.

The Antichrist will implement a method of identifying true Christians that he knows will be foolproof. He will require all his followers to be marked with his prefix 666. The number won't be on a card that can be faked or forged. It will be like when Hitler tattooed ID numbers on Jews. It will be on the right hand or forehead. While the Antichrist will use the number to "root out" Christians, recipients will use it to buy and sell.

The idea of biometric identification is not as alarming today as it was 40 years ago when I began teaching on the end-times. Today, it is received with relief from the specter of identity theft. Radio Frequency ID (RFID) chips are everywhere now; in people's credit cards; in virtually every product on store shelves for inventory control; and even under the skin of our pets. And while we have not yet seen universal insertion of RFID rice-like chips in the top of people's right hand, we are seeing widespread retinal or facial scanning as a foolproof ID.

Recently, I watched a young man at a clothing store take inventory of rack after rack by simply waving a device over them. As he approached, I asked, "RFID?". He looked at me with astonishment and said, "YES, I'm surprised you knew that." Every piece of clothing had a thin chip sewed into it somewhere. They transmitted a unique short-wave ID signal that his device received and recorded.

The number 666 represents the unholy trinity of Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet (also identified in Rev. 13). Satan knows he can't overthrow the holy Trinity, which is represented by 777; if he could, he would likely go with 888. In Rev. 14:9-13, there is a stern warning not to take the mark of the Antichrist, as well as a description of the eternal consequences. In that passage, those who die in the Lord are blessed.

In the conclusion of the **fifth seal**, the saints killed for abiding by the Scriptures and maintaining their devotion to Christ are rewarded with the clean, white robes of righteousness and encouraged to be patient until God brings us all together as one.

6. The **sixth seal** judgment is spectacular to the whole world. A great earthquake occurs. Ash blackens out the sun during the day and makes the moon look red at night. The description of stars falling to the earth by John is likely a meteor shower that flies by and even impacts the earth. The people of earth do not fall to their knees in repentance. Instead, they hide wherever they can, but not from the harm of cataclysmic events, they hide from what they recognize is the great wrath of God.
7. The **seventh seal** judgment is not an individual judgment. It is the opening and revealing of the **trumpet judgments**, found in Rev. 8, which we will look at in our next study.

INTERPRETING REVELATION DETAILS

We are now 2000 years closer to the fulfillment of end-time prophecies than when Christ revealed them to John. Does this give us any advantage in interpretation? Can the Holy Spirit use more history and new knowledge to more accurately reveal the meaning of prophetic details? Let's look at the details of the **sixth seal judgment** for an example of how this may be true. Rev. 6:12-17.

1. A great earthquake, v. 12. Today, we know the earth's magma mantle is covered by a crust of floating puzzle pieces called tectonic plates. Continental plates and Oceanic plates collided, shifted, and subducted under one another causing earthquakes and uplifting mountain ranges. Some plates pulled apart, leaving great and deep rift valleys that filled in with water. The Dead Sea and the Red Sea are two examples of this.

We also now know the acute relationship between earthquakes and volcanoes. In March 1980, a 5.2 earthquake shook Mt. St. Helen and loosened her cap. In May, another earthquake collapsed the cap and instantly released an explosion so large the north side of the mountain blasted out over 35 miles and spewed ash 16 miles into the air. Days later, the ash made its way to our town and darkened our sky at midday.

2. The sun became black and the moon turned red as blood, v. 12. These have actually happened before in 2015. On March 20 the sun was totally eclipsed and turned black; and fifteen days later on April 4 the moon was eclipsed as the earth moved between it and the sun. The sun was behind the earth shining its rays through our atmosphere. The material in our atmosphere refracted the red part of the sun's light spectrum onto the moon. When the eclipse was complete the moon turned red as blood.

3. The stars of heaven fell to the earth, vv. 13-14. This reminds me of the night of Nov. 18, 2001. Astronomers announced that the Leonid meteor shower of the comet Tempel-Tuttle would pass through the earth's atmosphere. From 4:50 a.m. to 6:26 a.m. my son and I looked to the southern sky from our living room window and counted 520 "shooting stars"! Nearly all travelled Northeast to Southwest. No.240 left a trail which stayed in the sky over 30 seconds. No.295 was the largest, red in color, and uncharacteristically traveled slowly from West to Southeast. No.361 had the longest path. No. 431 marked the one-hour point. No.513 fell with a long trail and bright burst at the end. No. 520 ended the spectacular show.

But what John saw was not an entertaining light show in the night sky. John records that these "stars" will hit the earth and cause the heaven to depart like a rolling scroll, and every mountain and island to move from its place.

4. From Rev. 8:8, John sees a mountain on fire being cast into the sea; and from v. 10 he sees a star on fire falling from heaven onto land and ruining a third of the earth's supply of freshwater. These seem to be referring to objects on the scale of asteroids. And most curious, from v. 12 John sees a third of the sun, moon, and stars smitten, which would seem to only be possible by asteroids.

We should remember an interpretation note we made at the beginning of our Revelation study. We must apply a filter to the details of the Apocalypse to see if interpretations should be literal, figurative, or symbolic.

THE MYSTERY OF THE ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND – Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5

Thus far, John has reported the opening of six out of seven seal judgments on the earth and its people. The seventh seal is not opened until chapter 8. That seal reveals not one judgment, but seven new judgments, each successively worse, and all worse than the previous six seal judgments.

The remnant of Israel is still on the earth during this time. God allowed them to be scattered throughout the nations and peoples of the earth in 70 AD. But here at the end of time we see God has drawn them back to their land. Throughout the ages, He has kept accurate track of where and who they are by tribe. He has preserved and protected them. From each of the twelve tribes, twelve thousand Israelites have had a peculiar resolute calling on their lives. These 144,000 have remained virgin and pure in their holy devotion to God. They will likely be used to turn their own people to the truth of Jesus being their Messiah who proffered salvation for all mankind. The Bible prophesied of this day in Ezekiel 36. There God speaks of changing Israel's heart of stone to flesh, purifying them from sin, and giving them a glorious time with Christ when He returns.

Jesus revealed in Matt. 24:15, that there is a re-built Temple in Jerusalem during the seven-year Tribulation. He warned that the Temple will be defiled by the Antichrist and the Israelites of that time who are able must instantly flee to the wilderness. Rev. 12 describes Jesus' prophecy in great detail. In the wilderness God protects and feeds the escapees for the 3 ½ years leading up to the second coming of Christ. The 144,000 are likely among them. Sadly, Rev. 12 also shows that those who could not flee to safety will be at the mercy of the Antichrist. But Rev. 7 shows that no harm is permitted upon the 144,000. They are sealed in their foreheads with a seal, which is revealed in Rev. 14:1 where they are standing with Jesus, to be the name of God the Father.

In Rev. 14:2-5, these 144,000 alone are able to sing a song never sung on earth before. It is the song of the first generation of Israelites to turn to Christ. They are called the "firstfruits" (of the harvest of Israelites) unto God and to the Lamb. The historic verses of their song are unique on so many levels from the song of Gentile's who have turned to Christ.

MULTIPLE PHASES OF SAINTS GOING TO HEAVEN – Rev. 7:9-17

All the souls of the saved deceased are in heaven. In Rev. 5:9-10 the 24 representatives of all these saints praise the Lamb of God for redemption.

In Rev. 6:9-11, there is a large number of souls who were martyred for their devotion to the word of God, and the testimony of its truth. This description could include God-followers from all the ages. Their cry to God shows they are growing impatient in their desire that God wreaks judgment on their behalf. White robes are given to them, along with admonishment to hold on a while longer until their brethren on earth are slain for the same reason and join them.

In Rev. 7:9-17, either the crowd of heavenly saints in chp. 6 is further described as innumerable, or new saints have been added to them.

In chapter 7, there is a pause of judgment while John beholds the protection of the 144,000 saints, and the promise of eternal comfort to the martyred multitude. It appears there has been a significant gathering of saints from the earth before the opening of the seventh seal in chapter 8. That seal unleashes a set of harsh judgments, intended not for the saints to endure, but for a wicked race of people, who, despite the horrors they endure, are recorded by John as having no desire or impulse to repent.

THE SEVEN TRUMPET JUDGMENTS ON MAN AND EARTH

At the beginning of Revelation 8 the last seal of the Seal judgments is broken. The description of that judgment is that seven new judgments are coming, worse than the former, on both man and earth.

Thus far we have seen judgments limited in their effect on man and earth. These are part of the final consequences of Adam's sin.

When God confronted Adam for his sin, he tried to feign innocence. Honesty about sin turned God's heart back to David. Hiding his sin turned God's heart away from Saul. Adam might have fared better had he chosen honesty and humility. By comparison, that day in Eden, his guilt was the worst. The serpent's guilt brought consequences on himself and his kind; Eve's guilt brought consequences on herself and her kind; but Adam's guilt brought consequences on himself, his kind, and on the all the systems of the planet itself.

As time passes toward the end, the ravages of sin intensify. Mankind is not getting better; to do so would contradict the very nature of sin to deprave and destroy. To coordinate the depravity of sin with His time allotted for earth, God has had to sovereignly intervene and slow the tide of wickedness in the world. He raised up men to eradicate the giant offspring of the lustful sons of God. He rebooted the human race with the washing of a flood. We believe He fractured the earth into continents to keep the race of man from becoming unified in their evil. The evil that man will perpetrate on others pales in comparison to the evil he will commit when unified in defiance of God. God shortened man's lifespan to 120, then 70 years and declared His Spirit shall not always strive with man. He checked man's unified defiance of God by confusing their language and dividing them from one another. He decimated Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the surrounding plain for rampant sin that defies God's natural order. He raised up righteous men and kingdoms to restrain and set back evil nations and men. God filled people with His Spirit to preach righteousness and convicted masses to repent and turn from their evil ways. But at the end, God will be restrained no more. Revelation 14:18-20 states that the grapes (of evil) are ripe, implying that the wickedness of man can get no worse, and so they are cast into the winepress of God's wrath where they will be crushed.

The pronouncement by God of death for disobedience contained no detailed explanation to Adam or Eve. It compelled them to believe and trust God by faith, not reason. The Bible says without faith it is impossible to please God. Satan confused Eve and made contradicting God seem right. Eve's survival after eating confused Adam and made God seem wrong. Satan confused Eve, but Adam confused himself. He likely reasoned, if Eve can eat and live, so can I. The Bible says that Eve did eat and gave to Adam who was with her and he did eat. It seems like Adam's sin is greater. Eve sinned for self-improvement; she reasoned the fruit would make one wise. We don't know why Adam sinned. But we can get a sense of things from the judgment in God's response.

Adam's judgment brought consequences far beyond Eve's, which would imply appalling guilt before God. From all that is revealed in Scripture, we can only surmise that Adam's sin may have been that he ate for nothing more than senseless curiosity. We get a glance of God's heart when He sees us trade so much for so little from His response to David's lustful sin, "I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough I would have given you even more." 2 Sam. 12:8. If Adam's reasoning was more noble than curiosity, such as, "My wife ate, and to remain by her side so will I.", would not God measure that into his punishment? But instead, we see universal consequences on both man and earth heaped upon Adam's sin, implicating Adam's motive was unacceptable.

Adam must have repented a thousand times as the 930 years of his life passed by and he watch the full meaning of death coming from disobedience happen to mankind and earth: Death of body, death of soul, death of spirit, death of mind, death of strength, death of health, death of fellowship with God, death of provision from God, death of paradise on earth, death of innocence, death of justice, death of kindness, death of mercy, death of trust, death of love, death of peace, death of joy, death of patience, death of marriage, death of family, death of morality, death of knowledge, death of wisdom, death of understanding, death of resources, death of ecology, death of weather, death of God's restraint, death of eternal bliss.

We should not be surprised by the wrath of God at the end of time, no matter how harsh it seems. It is our good God righting all the wrongs of sin. Jesus made the reversal of all the consequences of Adam's sin possible. Mankind can return to God, God can return to man, we will return to Eden on a new earth, under a new heaven. Who in heaven is more grateful than Adam? He heard God say in the Garden that the Serpent would bruise a seed of his line, and that single Seed would bruise the Serpent's head. Christ's heel was bruised by Satan on Calvary and Christ's foot bruised Satan's head. But it was only a bruise. The bruise on Satan's head is the relative few in the human race that will find the straight and narrow way to life. But at the end of time, Satan will be crushed, and Adam will finally be free of the curse on man and the earth.

SEVEN ANGELS WITH SEVEN TRUMPETS

From Revelation 8:1-2, John sees the seventh seal opened, but nothing happens for a half an hour. What is it about a pause that is so unnerving? We never conclude it's a time of contemplating a calm response. We just know something really bad is coming when there's a pause first.

As a youth in a city covered with concrete and blacktop, the hot sun of summer could sandwich you between the heat coming down and the heat going up. When the strong, cool wind of a pending storm blew, all of us kids ran into the street, tilted our heads back and opened our arms to embrace it; that is, until it all came to a silent stop. With the stillness came the city alarms and people running to their houses. A tornado was on its way.

The pause in heaven readied seven angels with their trumpets. The first angel watches an eighth angel wave a censer of incense over the altar in heaven where the martyred saints are underneath crying out to God for judgment. The incense represents the prayers of these saints. When the eighth angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and casts it to earth, strange voices sound, with thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake rumbling the earth; then the angels begin to blow their trumpets one by one; each unleashing strange phenomena on earth.

Trumpet 1 – A mixture of hail, fire, and blood descend on the earth, burning a third of all trees, and killing all grass. We should also pause to consider the effects of these judgments.

Trumpet 2 – A great fiery mountain is cast into the sea turning a third of the sea to blood, killing a third of sea life, and destroying a third of all ships at sea.

Trumpet 3 – A great fiery star falls from heaven and hits the earth. Its fallout contaminates a third of the world's freshwater supply, causing many who drink it to die.

Trumpet 4 – Something like a meteor shower hits the sun, moon, and stars. A third of each is destroyed, causing it to affect the length of day and night on the earth.

PAUSE – There is a pause in heaven as an angel warns that the next three trumpets are also three woes.

THE LAST THREE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS ARE THREE WOES

From Revelation 9:1, we see an example of the literal, figurative, or symbolic “filter” we must pour details of Revelation through. In Rev. 9:1, a “star” falls to earth like the star in Rev. 8:10-11. However, the star in Rev. 8 appears to be a literal star crashing to earth and causing a toxic effect like the plant Wormwood, whose oil, being washed from its leaves by rain into the soil around it, kills any other plant trying to grow there. But the star in Rev. 9 is described as an angel, which is common in Scripture. In Rev. 1:20, the seven stars in Jesus’ hand were angels. Likewise, in Nu. 24:17, a star will come out of Jacob which is a reference to Messiah. In Judges 5:20, the stars fought from heaven in courses against king Sisera. And also, in Job 38:6-7, the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy; indicating that angels are referred to as both stars and sons of God.

Trumpet 5 – In Rev. 9:1-12, the star that falls from heaven to the earth is referred to by the pronoun “him”, which is one reason we believe he is an angel and not a literal star. The other reason we believe he is an angel is because he is given a key to open the bottomless pit. Woe to those on earth who have not God’s seal in their foreheads. If the creatures that come forth are literal, they are locust-like creatures who will not go after vegetation on the earth...they will wreak great pain on sinful man for five months. If they are symbolic, they could be attack helicopters that Satan and the Antichrist order against rebels.

CLARIFICATION ON THE GENDER OF ANGELS

Jesus explained that when we are resurrected there will be no more marriage because we will be as the angels, Matt. 22:30. This statement seems to imply angels may be non-gender and/or non-biological. All of the Bible’s pronouns for angels are in the masculine gender, which makes one wonder why nearly every picture or figure of an angel in the world today, either pagan or Catholic, is female. We also see that in every Biblical reference where angels take on human form, they are always male. In fact, in Gen. 6:2 the sons of God (fallen angels) are curious of and enamored with the daughters of men and take them as wives; evidently possessing men to do so.

Some have asked if there are two female angels in a vision an angel showed Zechariah in Zech. 5:5-11. The vision includes two women flying with the wings of a stork. Though angels are described as having wings, no angel would ever have the wings of a stork, since storks are in the list of fowl that are an abomination and forbidden for Israel to eat. Lev. 11:13, 19. Rather, these women are simply equipped to carry a basket of grain with a wicked woman sitting in the midst of it. The basket is covered with a lead lid so the two are stuck inside together. The angel told Zechariah the grain, which represents Israel, is being flown by the women to the plain of Shinar in Babylon. The wicked woman in the basket with Israel is Babylon, where Israel would dwell together with her in captivity for 70 years. Babylon is referred to as a wicked woman in Rev. 17:3-5.

The depiction of angels in the world today as female has its roots first in pagan mythology, and then from Catholic iconography, perhaps after Mary was elevated as supreme intercessor to Christ. In pagan mythology, many of the female servants and messengers of the gods, and some of the goddesses themselves are depicted with wings and armor. Catholicism seems to have adopted equivalents as saints and angels. The early Church and the Catholic church have a history of paralleled or converted pagan observances and symbols. The pagan observance of Eostre, goddess of Spring and fertility, was adapted to the resurrection of Christ, and the Wiccan triquetra symbol of the goddess of nature, was adapted to the Catholic church’s symbol of the Trinity.

Trumpet 6 – From Rev. 9:13 – 11:14, four evil angels who are bound in the Euphrates river are loosed to make it possible for an army of two hundred million to cross and wreak woe by killing one-third of mankind. The death they bring is very painful, yet the two-thirds who observe the horror will refuse to turn to God and repent.

Next, a mighty angel descends from heaven and plants one foot on land and the other on the sea and declares that the end of time has come. He then gives John a little book containing the prophetic details of the Revelation and tells him to digest it and pass it on to the world. Then John is commanded to measure a newly built Temple in Jerusalem and those that worship in it. He is also told that the Gentiles will tread the streets of Jerusalem for 3 ½ years.

Next, two witnesses from God appear in Jerusalem and prophecy the judgment of God for 3 ½ years. They will wreak woe upon people who reject God with power to demonstrate great miracles that validate they and their message are from God. They will also wreak woe on those who try to harm them. At the end of their time, the Antichrist will be allowed to take their lives and leave them dead in the street of Jerusalem 3 ½ days. During this time the world will celebrate their death, but afterward they resurrect and ascend into heaven, just as a great earthquake hits Jerusalem that destroys a tenth of the city and kills 7,000. The fear that grips the city causes many to repent. Thus, the second woe is ended.

Trumpet 7 – From Rev. 11:15 – 14:20, we see a number of things occur which precede the final seven bowl judgments. First, there is a pronouncement of praise by the host in heaven for God and Jesus taking control of and settling everything. Next, the Antichrist goes on the warpath against the Jews and anyone else who will not worship him and join him in blaspheming God. Many people will die in this campaign, mostly Christians, but some of those Jews who could not flee to the wilderness. Then John sees the rise of the Antichrist's kingdom on earth. The whole earth, except Christians, follow the Antichrist, partly out of fear, but mainly because he revived from a mortal sword wound. Next comes the False Prophet, who exalts the Antichrist and wows the world into not just following the Antichrist but worshiping him and proving their devotion by receiving his mark 666. During this time the 144,000 devout Christian Jews are sealed and likely ministering to their people hiding safely in the wilderness. Then three angels pronounce the final details of the seventh trumpet judgment. The first angel challenges the world to turn to God before the final judgments come. The second angel announces the fall of the occultic system of evil Babylon that worked in coalition with the Antichrist. The third angel warns the people of earth not to take the mark of the Antichrist. Jesus harvests this last wave of the faithful out of the earth and the wrath of God is then poured out against evil in the last judgments.

GOD'S BOWL JUDGMENTS END HIS WRATH ON MAN AND EARTH – Rev. 15 – 16

Rev. 15:1 tells us that the seven last plagues culminate the wrath of God. When seven angels appear to receive them, there is great celebration and singing in heaven. Two groups come together, each with a song. They have come out of the Great Tribulation. The one group sings the song of Moses. These would be the Jewish Christians who lived by the Law of Moses before discovering salvation through Jesus Christ. The other group sings the song of the Lamb. These would be Gentile Christians who came to the knowledge of salvation in Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Apostles and Paul. These two groups represent the last wave of converts to Christ out of the Great Tribulation. All that remains on earth are evil people who follow the False Prophet's directive to worship the Antichrist.

When the singing and praise is finished, one of the four living creatures in heaven gives the seven angels seven bowls full of the wrath of God. Rev. 16 gives the description of the seven bowl judgments.

Bowl 1 – v. 2 Grievous sores on all mankind.

Bowl 2 – v. 3 All life in the sea dies.

Bowl 3 – vv. 4-7 All freshwater turns to blood as punishment for those who shed the blood of saints.

Bowl 4 – vv. 8-9 The sun flares to scorch all men. They curse God.

Bowl 5 – vv. 10-11 A darkness is poured on the Antichrist and his cohorts, causing great pain and sores.

Bowl 6 – vv. 12-16 The Euphrates river dries up so the kings of the east can travel west to Israel for the war against Christ. Three evil spirits come forth out of both Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet. They go through all the earth calling kings and their armies to the valley of Megiddo in Israel, for the battle of Armageddon against Christ. They know He's coming soon with the armies of heaven. His weapon of destruction is a sword that proceeds out of His mouth, which may be a literal weapon of mass destruction, or may symbolically refer to the destructive power and authority of Christ's spoken word.

Bowl 7 – vv. 17-21 When the angel comes forth with the last bowl judgment, Almighty God proclaims from His throne, "It is done!" When Jesus said, "It is finished.", He was referring to all that was necessary to save the souls of man. But when His Father declared, "It is done.", He was referring to all the just retribution for the suffering of the saints, for all the evil perpetrated by man against each other, and for abuse of the earth. What follows is an earthquake that changes the face of the earth. Islands and mountains disappear. The cities of earth fall, including the greatest city on earth that is full of both the earth's wealth and debauchery. After the earthquake, stones of hail weighing around 75 lbs. fall on mankind, causing them to blaspheme God.

THE FALL OF BABYLON

What follows in Rev. 17-18 is God's long-awaited judgment on Babylon. Babylon was an ancient city in the land of the Chaldeans. It was the original seat of all things occultic, of astrology, and of the dark arts on earth. Babylon is also a term that refers to the system of these same practices all over the earth. In Revelation, it appears the term refers to both a great city and a system that works in concert with the Antichrist's kingdom. The city is described in a way that makes it seem like the capital of commerce on earth during the Tribulation. The city is also referred to as a harlot that all the merchants of the earth have had relations with for wealth, despite her crimes and degradation. They weep and mourn bitterly when God destroys her in one hour for her corruption and history of executing the saints. The system and influence of Babylon ends when 10 of the Antichrist's puppet kings destroy it.

A GLORIOUS CELEBRATION OF PRAISE! – Rev. 19

In the first six verses of chapter 19, John hears a great multitude in heaven cry out alleluia five times. Alleluia is another form of hallelujah; both mean the same thing, Praise ye God. If you break hallelujah into three parts you get hallel-u-jah. Hallel is the Hebrew word for the Passover praise chant from Psalms 113-118. This praise chant also initiated other Jewish festivals like Pentecost. The last part of the word hallelujah, “jah” is a form of “Yah”, which was short for God’s Hebrew name Yahweh. Hallelujah and alleluia both mean “praise ye God!” Following is a description of the multitude and the occasions for their great shout of praise to God.

The Multitude

The multitude that cries alleluia is the sum total of all the Old Testament faithful, and all faithful Christians of all time. At the end of Rev. chapter 18, the persecution and execution of all these righteous ones is finally complete. Satan working through the evil system called Babylon has been the source of death for countless followers of God and Jesus from the beginning of time. But now they are all gathered “safely in”. Their celebration and praise of God is a reaction to the end of evil and vicious Babylon at the end of chapter 18.

Reasons for Praise

1. vv. 1-2 The multitude gives four accolades to God for four reasons, all preceded and concluded with alleluia.

- a. The four accolades are salvation, glory, power, and honor.
- b. The four reasons are, God’s judgments are true, God’s judgments are righteous, God has finally handed out judgment on the evil system of Babylon that lured the world into hatred of God and His faithful followers.

2. v. 4 The 24 Elders around the throne of God, whom we believe represent all the converts of the 12 tribes of Israel and all the converts of the 12 Apostles, along with the four living creatures that are covered with eyes that have beheld and reported all the evil against God’s people, fall down before God and shout AMEN to what the multitude has proclaimed, a burst of exclamation and agreement that means “so be it” or “let it be”, after which they shout the third alleluia.

3. vv. 5-10 Next, a voice comes from near God’s throne by one who describes himself to John as a fellow-servant and fellow Christian. He challenges the multitude with the fourth alleluia, Praise our God. The multitude of saints respond with the fifth alleluia and new reasons for praising God.

- a. Our Lord God reigns.
- b. The marriage-like union of Christ and all the saints is complete. All Christians are given robes of fine, clean, white linen, which are symbolic of the righteousness Christ made possible for them.
- c. It is time for the joyous wedding reception, a celebration supper with Christ for all those who were called by God to His table.

4. vv. 11-21 Jesus then rises up and takes hold of a rod of iron and mounts His white horse to lead the armies of heaven to the earth. The armies will not be needed to engage battle with the army of the Antichrist and the False prophet, because Christ will overthrow them and cast them into the Lake of Fire. Christ’s armies will join Him in setting up a thousand-year reign of peace on earth. An angel shouts forth a call to another supper, but this call goes out to all carrion-eating fowls of the earth to come and eat the flesh of the slain.

HELL, THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, & THE LAKE OF FIRE – Rev. 20

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.*

Following is an explanation of places for the afterlife of both of man and angel. Much of this is revealed to us by Jesus from Luke 16:19-31, in the story of the rich man and the poor beggar Lazarus.

The Afterlife Location of Old Testament Saints was Abraham's Bosom

1. Lazarus was an Old Testament saint. Jesus said that when he died, Lazarus went to a paradise-like place of comfort called Abraham's bosom.

To better understand the terms Old Testament and New Testament, let's re-phrase them to Old Covenant and New Covenant, or Old Contract and New Contract. A covenant or contract is a binding agreement, sealed by a pledge.

In the Old Testament/Covenant contract, God effectively said, if you walk by the Law I gave through Moses I will not charge sin to your account. The seal of that covenant was the blood of an innocent sacrifice, offered up regularly for sin. The New Testament/Covenant nearly said the same, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with Him, and the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

The Old Testament/Covenant ended at the cross of Jesus, as He became the last sacrificial Lamb for sin. Since Jesus is telling about Lazarus before He went to the cross, Lazarus was under the Old Covenant, and thus at death, was relegated to Abraham's bosom.

Jesus Redeems Those in Abraham's Bosom with His Blood

As Jesus died on the cross, He delivered Himself into the hands of His Father who delivered Him to the saints in Abraham's bosom. There, He replaced the blood of animals that made them temporarily righteous, with His own blood that made them permanently righteous. Hebrews 9:22 states that without the shedding of blood there is no remission (of sin). Jesus said at the Last Supper, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood." Jesus' death on the cross initiated the New Testament/Covenant era for man through His blood.

Abraham's Bosom Emptied by Christ

It is likely that after Jesus died, it was the saints in Abraham's bosom who resurrected from their graves and walked the streets of Jerusalem, Matt. 27:50-53. So, we believe Jesus' sacrifice emptied Abraham's bosom and filled the halls of heaven. The destination of those who die in Christ is confirmed by Paul in 2 Cor. 5:8, where he reveals that now, Christians who are absent in the body are present with the Lord. We know Jesus is presently at the right hand of the Father; therefore, the dead in Christ are present with the Lord in heaven. This means Abraham's bosom is empty and likely no longer exists. But what about Hell?

The Afterlife Location of Old Testament Sinners

2. From Adam to Christ, those who rejected the guidance of a God-given conscience (Rom. 1:18-20), or the God-given Law, died as sinners and were immediately relegated to the same place where Jesus said the rich man was, Hell.

No Purgatory

Jesus did not mention the rich man stopped first at a level between Heaven and Hell that Catholics call Purgatory. Purgatory is a place where they say those who die with sins not yet purged wait in hopeful penitence for priestly absolution and ascension into heaven. But Jesus said, "the rich man died, and in Hell he lifted up his eyes", not in Purgatory.

God's One Sin Law & One Penalty

Hell presently holds all sinners until the Judgment day, which is their "day in court". The evidence of their rejection of God and His grace will be brought forth from the infallible record books, and it is the evidence, not God, that condemns them. Unlike Earth, where people pay differently for each law they break, in heaven there is but one law with one penalty, the law of sin and death, Rom. 8:2. In Ezekiel 18:4 that Law is explained, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

How Does a Soul Die?

We have a problem with the second half of the sin law, death. Regarding the rich man in Hell who was definitely not dead, Jesus described him as a living, suffering, seeing, talking, remembering soul, not a dead one. Nevertheless, his condition in Hell is described as death, and since from Rev. 20:10, 14-15 the Lake of Fire is called the second death of the soul, we may assume Hell is the first death. But the rich man was far from being dead. We conclude then that the Bible must have a different definition for the death of a soul. In fact, from the passage in Rev. 20, we see that the souls in the Lake of Fire never die.

Thus, we conclude that the soul that sinneth, it shall...dwell in a living state of eternal separation from God in a place of perpetual torment; and this is death. We also see from the passage in Rev. 20 that death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire, just after the Antichrist, False Prophet, and Satan. So, Hell is a temporary holding cell for souls, and the Lake of Fire is the permanent Penitentiary.

Hell and the Bottomless Pit are the Same

3. Curiously, from Isaiah 14:15, Hell and the bottomless Pit are described as one and the same. In fact, Isa. 14:16-20 actually describes the welcome Satan gets when he is cast into the bottomless pit.

Satan Removed from Earth for a Millennium of Peace

Rev. 20:1-3 shows us the moment Satan is chained and cast into the bottomless pit. It is so reassuring to see there is an angel stronger than Satan who can man...angelhandle him.

Satan joins those other angels in Hell who have been reserved in chains until the Day of Judgment, 2 Pet. 2:4. From the beginning of the thousand-year term for Satan's incarceration there is peace on earth. Since the new earth and new heaven follow this period, many have called it a Sabbath millennium, a time of rest and peace on the seventh day of this old earth's allotted time, and before the new "week" of eternity begins.

The saints of God help Jesus govern and rule the earth in peace. But sadly, many on earth will possess resentment to the rule of Christ. Even though Satan cannot deceive or tempt people, they still have a sin nature and a free will. When Satan is released, he becomes a "tree" of temptation to a new generation of people on earth, and many succumb. As they go to war with Christ, the battle is shortlived. God sends down fire to destroy them all. Then comes the casting of the evil trinity of Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet into the Lake of Fire, where they are tormented forever.

The White-throne Judgment Day of All

The record books of the deeds of all mankind are opened and judgment is made from them. If one's name is found in the Book of Life they will be saved. Hereafter, there will be no more death and no need for Hell, so both are cast into the Lake of Fire. Then comes the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem!

THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH – Rev. 21

In Matt. 24:35, Jesus said heaven and earth shall pass away. Hebrews 1:10-12 describes that this old earth and the present heaven shall perish; God will fold them up and change them completely. In Rev. 21:1, 5, John said the old earth and old heaven pass away, and Jesus declares He makes all things new.

God must completely do away with any remnant of the old heaven and earth because both bear the permanent stain of evil. Satan stained heaven with his prideful rebellion and war against God. Satan stained earth with rebellion against God. Adam chose to disobey God and Cain murdered Abel.

The New Jerusalem

There are two explanations of the term New Jerusalem, one is figurative, and one is literal. The figurative meaning is, New Jerusalem is the true Church, the body of all the saints, whom the Bible refers to as a pure bride adorned for her husband Jesus. We descend with Christ onto the new earth to dwell with Him and the Father forever.

The literal meaning of course is, New Jerusalem is an actual city on the new earth where God the Father and Jesus dwell, and all the nations bring their glory into it because the gates are never shut. Access to God and Jesus is never forbidden. The structure of the city is described as bearing the names of the representatives of the converted twelve tribes of Israel and the names of the representatives of the converted Gentiles of the world, who of course are the twelve Apostles.

New Bodily Form

The Scriptures teach from both Old Testament and New that all mankind will be resurrected, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting judgment, Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29, but why? Why not let us go into eternity in our soul form?

When God originally made Adam, we may assume he was as perfect as human flesh could ever be. We are not better than Adam today, we are a depraved version of him because of sin. If sin is removed from the human race, then God would certainly return us to His original plan of clothing spirit and soul with flesh. And God would certainly return to creating a physical world for fleshy, divine, people to live on.

Nearly all that we may know of our future resurrected bodily form can be learned from the account of Jesus after His resurrection, and the remarks in Revelation 21:4. There we see death and pain are removed from the human race. As a natural consequence of that, there will never be any sorrow or crying, only peace, love, and joy.

No Night

Recall from Gen. 1:3-5, that God said on the first day, "Let there be light." But every natural light to the world, the sun, the moon, and the stars, wasn't created until the fourth day. We believe God illuminated the darkness of space with the brightness of His own glorious light. This could be supported by the fact that the new Jerusalem, and likely, the new heaven and new earth have the light of God to illuminate them. But then again, there never was anything evil about the sun, moon, and stars. They were included when God looked at all His creation and said it is very good. One third of the old sun, moon, and stars are destroyed in the Tribulation period and the rest of them is dissolved with fervent heat. On a new earth of perpetual light, we would never see the moon and stars so there's no sense in re-creating them. No, it would appear we become like our Lord Jesus and the angels in eternity, never needing to slumber or sleep, and thus, never needing any night.

THE GLORIOUS STATE OF ETERNITY

Animals in Eternity?

Many have wondered if there will be animals on the new earth. I cannot see any reason why there wouldn't be, since from Isaiah 11, we see the nature and diet of animals can be changed to live in peace as Christ rules this present earth in peace. Animals were part of God's original perfect creation of this earth, and we hope they will be a wonderful part of the next.

No More Seas?

Apologies to all you ocean/beach lovers but Rev. 21:1 says there will be no more seas on the new earth. I believe this is due to the role of the seas play in separating the nations. After creating heaven and earth, we see from Gen. 1:2 that the earth was covered with darkness and deep water. Then God created land. It is likely this was one single land mass, since a holy human race would not want to be separated from one another. But we see from the tower of Babel that evil man must be separated from one another to prevent universal evil. We believe God accomplished this by first creating separate continents during the Flood. See Ps. 104:5-9. And of course, if you have separate continents you have seas between. On the new earth, humanity will be back to a perfect state of holiness, to holy love, holy joy, holy peace, holy goodness, holy wisdom, and holy unity. Seas would separate people from each other, so we will dwell on a single land mass earth.

The Tree of Life is Found

Recall that when Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden of Eden, the Tree of Life was guarded so they could not return and eat from it. From the description of the Tree of Life in Rev. 22: 1, the leaves and fruit of the tree granted healing and eternal life to Adam and Eve as long as they were sinless. In eternity, Satan and sin are gone, so access to the Tree of Life is again granted to the resurrected human race. The Tree of Life is situated in the middle of the River of Life, whose water flows from the throne of God.

God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Church Bride in New Jerusalem

In Rev. 22:3 and 17 we see God, the Lamb Jesus, the Spirit, and the Church bride in New Jerusalem. God has claimed us as His own with the stamp of His name in our foreheads. He will set many saints up around the earth as ministering servant rulers.

The Prophecy of the End Unsealed

A fellow prophet instructs John to not seal up the prophecies of the book of Revelation. God wants the world to know all about how the end comes. Jesus wants us to be blessed by this advance information so we will be ready when He comes in the Rapture. When that time comes there will be no time for the wicked to become good. Rev. 22:6-17.

Do Not Change God Word or Prophecies to Avoid the Truth

Jesus warns us in Rev. 22:18-21 not to add anything to the prophecies of Revelation, and not to take anything away. Those who add to it will have the plagues of the end added to them. Those who take away from the prophecies will have their names removed from the Book of Life.

Many today are doing both. They change the Truth into a lie to soothe the conviction of and justify their wrongs. The Holy Spirit works in the world to convince us there is right, wrong, and judgment. From Romans 1 we see a world that will not tolerate the Truth, but instead will change it into a lie, and then call the lie truth. Once they convince themselves the lies are truth, they will then say that evil is good. At this point, people are beyond correction back to God. But let us be faithful to the Truth of God's Word, as revealed to us by Him.