

The End Times

What Revelation Actually Shows Us

Jesus gave John the command to share His Revelation, attaching a promise of blessing to all who read it aloud and to all who listen with open hearts. That same encouragement stirred me to write this book, with the desire that as many as possible would grasp the truth Jesus unveils in Revelation. Too often, people fix their attention only on the wrath and judgments of the End Times. Yet Revelation actually overflows with mercy, grace, love, peace, and power. It is not simply a record of war, famine, and destruction, it is a testimony of the victory of Christ and the hope that endures for all who belong to Him.

As we journey through Revelation, keep these verses in mind:

"But He said, 'Leave the children alone! Allow the little ones to come to Me, and do not forbid or restrain or hinder them, for of such [as these] is the kingdom of heaven composed.'" Matthew 19:14

"A time will come, however, indeed it is already here, when the true (genuine) worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth (reality); for the Father is seeking just such people as these as His worshipers." John 4:23

Too often, we study Revelation with an overly analytical approach, like an attorney or scholar, seeking hidden meanings or speculating why a specific color or stone is mentioned. While these details hold significance, they are not the central message. Focusing on such minutiae can obscure the broader picture Jesus is sharing.

"You blind guides, filtering out a gnat and gulping down a camel!" Matthew 23:24

God's Kingdom is made up of those who are simple and trusting, and this is the mindset we should bring when exploring the glories revealed in Jesus' Revelation.

"In that same hour He rejoiced and gloried in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have concealed these things [relating to salvation] from the wise and understanding and learned, and revealed them to babes (the childish, unskilled, and untaught). Yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will and choice and good pleasure.'" Luke 10:21

As we study Revelation, remember that you are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God abides within you and He teaches you all things and reminds you of everything Jesus has said. You also have the mind of Christ, so there is nothing in the Bible that your Father does not want you to understand. Jesus rejoiced in the simplicity of God's Word to us, and Revelation is no exception.

"But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthenener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act

on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you." John 14:26

"For who has known or understood the mind (the counsels and purposes) of the Lord so as to guide and instruct Him and give Him knowledge? But we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah) and do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes) of His heart." 1 Corinthians 2:16

While our Father wants us to know all of His Truth and be set free by it, He has a time for it to all be revealed. This means that many of the Truth's that are shown in Revelation cannot be fully understood until we are actually in the End Times.

"And he shouted with a loud voice like the roaring of a lion; and when he had shouted, the seven thunders gave voice and uttered their message in distinct words. And when the seven thunders had spoken (sounded), I was going to write [it down], but I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up what the seven thunders have said! Do not write it down!" Revelation 10:3-4

"But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the Book until the time of the end. [Then] many shall run to and fro and search anxiously [through the Book], and knowledge [of God's purposes as revealed by His prophets] shall be increased and become great." Daniel 12:4

An End Time Anointing will come upon all of the world, and then what seems unclear now in Revelation, will become crystal clear to us then.

"But [instead] this is [the beginning of] what was spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, God declares, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [telling forth the divine counsels] and your young men shall see visions (divinely granted appearances), and your old men shall dream [divinely suggested] dreams." Acts 2:16-17

In this study, you are going to see hundreds of scriptures, and I will repeat several of them, over and over, so that the Truth's they hold may become cemented in your faith. Hopefully this study will reveal to you how seamlessly Revelation weaves together with the rest of the Bible. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever and that unchanging truth shines just as brightly in the Book of Revelation. But don't just take my word for it. Please open your Bible, and ask the Holy Spirit Himself to lead you into all truth. Remember, you are a child of the Most High, and He longs for you to understand what the End Times will truly hold, not with fear, but with the confidence of His promises.

With love,

Brad

Table of Contents

[Chapter 1 *Laying a Solid Foundation of Who You Are In Christ*](#)

[Chapter 2 God Wills That All Men Be Saved: Does He Get His Way?](#)

[Chapter 3 Will God Remove His Glorious Body From the Earth Before the End Times?](#)

[Chapter 4 What Exactly Will the End Times Look Like?](#)

[Chapter 5 Revelation 1](#)

[Chapter 6 Revelation 2](#)

[Chapter 7 Revelation 3](#)

[Chapter 8 Revelation 4](#)

[Chapter 9 Revelation 5](#)

[Chapter 10 Revelation 6](#)

[Chapter 11 Revelation 7](#)

[Chapter 12 Revelation 8](#)

[Chapter 13 Revelation 9](#)

[Chapter 14 Revelation 10](#)

[Chapter 15 Revelation 11](#)

[Chapter 16 Revelation 12](#)

[Chapter 17 Revelation 13](#)

[Chapter 18 Revelation 14](#)

[Chapter 19 Revelation 15](#)

[Chapter 20 Revelation 16](#)

[Chapter 21 Revelation 17](#)

[Chapter 22 Revelation 18](#)

[Chapter 23 Revelation 19](#)

[Chapter 24 Revelation 20](#)

[Chapter 25 Revelation 21](#)

[Chapter 26 Revelation 22](#)

[Chapter 27 Conclusion](#)

Chapter 1

Laying a Solid Foundation of Who You Are in Christ

Before we begin our study of Revelation and the truths it reveals about the End Times, let's first lay a solid foundation of who we are in Christ.

"Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

In Christ, we are new creations. We are no longer merely human; we have been born of the incorruptible seed of God. His divine nature now lives in us and guides us. We are never alone, nor are we ever separated from our Father.

"No one born (begotten) of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, for God's nature abides in him [His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him]; and he cannot practice sinning because he is born (begotten) of God." 1 John 3:9

"You have been regenerated (born again), not from a mortal origin (seed, sperm), but from one that is immortal by the ever living and lasting Word of God." 1 Peter 1:23

The glory of our new creation is that it frees us from the limitations of the flesh. Salvation does not only forgive us; it liberates us from everything that could hinder or separate us from our Father.

"So if the Son liberates you [makes you free men], then you are really and unquestionably free." John 8:36

"We know that our old (unrenewed) self was nailed to the cross with Him in order that [our] body [which is the instrument] of sin might be made ineffective and inactive for evil, that we might no longer be the slaves of sin." Romans 6:6

Being born again means that through the victory of Christ we have died to the power of sin.

"I have been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Galatians 2:20

The Greek word for salvation, *soteria*, encompasses deliverance, preservation, safety, and the fullness of Messianic blessings. Salvation can be described as deliverance from the penalty, power, presence, and even the pleasure of sin.

Being saved means we are delivered from evil, guilt, worldly ways, and God's wrath. We are new creatures, unified with Christ, and dead to sin's influence.

"Because we are members (parts) of His body." Ephesians 5:30

We are now one with Jesus, and His power flows continuously through us. Even though we still live in this world, we reflect His nature.

"In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment [with assurance and boldness to face Him], because as He is, so are we in this world." 1 John 4:17

The trials of the End Times, including the works of Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet, will not separate us from God. They will actually do the opposite and make God stronger in us.

"Who shall ever separate us from Christ's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword?" Romans 8:35

"So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; for when I am weak [in human strength], then am I [truly] strong (able, powerful in divine strength). 2 Corinthians 12:10

Our salvation isn't something that we are waiting for, it is our current possession and it is active in us today.

"Behold, now is truly the time for a gracious welcome and acceptance [of you from God]; behold, now is the day of salvation!" 2 Corinthians 6:2

Jesus is returning for a glorious Church, one without spot or blemish. During the End Times, this truth will be magnified as believers walk in the fullness of their identity in Christ, empowered by the End Time Anointing that Joel prophesied of.

"That He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless]." Ephesians 5:27

The End Time Church will be powerful and victorious, demonstrating miracles greater than those performed by Jesus before His crucifixion.

"I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father." John 14:12

Salvation unites us with Christ, empowering us to serve others as He did. It is a gift that will never be taken away.

"For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable." Romans 11:29

The peace that comes from knowing we are eternally secure in Christ will enable us to flourish during the End Times.

Chapter 2

God Wills That All Men Be Saved: Does He Get His Way?

Ask yourself this question: How successful was Jesus? By offering His life and shedding His blood, did He secure salvation for all of humanity, or just a portion? The Bible teaches us that it is God's will for all men to be saved. This is why He sent Jesus to be the ultimate sacrifice. The crucial question is, did Jesus' sacrifice accomplish what our Father willed?

"Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth." 1 Timothy 2:4

"The Lord does not delay and is not tardy or slow about what He promises, according to some people's conception of slowness, but He is long-suffering (extraordinarily patient) toward you, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

There is an absolute Truth and it is that God's will is always fulfilled. The scriptures repeatedly affirm this truth:

"In Him we also were made [God's] heritage (portion) and we obtained an inheritance; for we had been foreordained (chosen and appointed beforehand) in accordance with His purpose, Who works out everything in agreement with the counsel and design of His [own] will." Ephesians 1:11

"Declaring the end and the result from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure and purpose." Isaiah 46:10

"And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing. And He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say to Him, What are You doing?" Daniel 4:35

Our Father's will, which we are repeatedly assured will be accomplished, is for all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. The Bible also clearly teaches us that our Father will have mercy on all:

"For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]." Romans 11:32

"Blessed and happy and to be envied are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered up and completely buried." Romans 4:7

God's mercy and grace demonstrate the overwhelming power of Jesus' blood. Jesus' sacrifice was meant to secure our Father's will of not losing anyone:

"And I, if and when I am lifted up from the earth [on the cross], will draw and attract all men [Gentiles as well as Jews] to Myself." John 12:32

"Look to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear [allegiance]." Isaiah 45:22-23

On Judgment Day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. Salvation requires belief and confession, and all humanity will do this:

"For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God [acknowledge Him to His honor and to His praise]." Romans 14:11

Would there truly be glory and honor in eternity if the majority of mankind were cast into Hell? The glory of God is revealed not in mass condemnation, but in the triumph of His mercy and grace. True glory is found in the God who makes a way for the undeserving to remain in His presence, not because of their own worthiness, but because His love refuses to let them go.

"[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him." John 17:2

Jesus' sacrifice was powerful enough to secure eternal life for all mankind. Our Father's will for all to be saved was accomplished through His Son.

The apostle Paul emphasizes the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice over Adam's sin which brought death:

"Well then, as one man's trespass [one man's false step and falling away] led to condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men." Romans 5:18

If Adam's sin resulted in death for all, how much more will Jesus' obedience and sacrifice result in righteousness and life for all!

"With a view to this we toil and strive, [yes and] suffer reproach, because we have [fixed our] hope on the living God, Who is the Savior (Preserver, Maintainer, Deliverer) of all men, especially of those who believe." 1 Timothy 4:10

Some will enter eternity as the Bride of Christ—those chosen and empowered to confess Jesus as Lord in this life before His return. Others, who did not receive Him as Lord while on earth, will be welcomed as guests at the marriage feast of the Lamb. Yet in the end, according to the will of our Father, all of mankind will be present. His purpose is not partial, and His desire is that every soul finds its place in His eternal plan.

"And those servants went out on the crossroads and got together as many as they found, both bad and good, so [the room in which] the wedding feast [was held] was filled with guests." Matthew 22:10

Even those whose works are burned up will be saved and allowed to spend eternity with our Father, though they lose their reward of being the Bride of Christ:

"But if any person's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire." 1 Corinthians 3:15

Ephesians shines a light on the unfathomable grace and mercy of God. Because of the victory of Jesus, all mankind will ultimately be cleansed from evil rather than eternally destroyed by it. His success secures redemption far beyond what human minds can grasp.

"[And it is this:] In accordance with His good pleasure (His merciful intention) which He had previously purposed and set forth in Him, [He planned] for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ, [both] things in heaven and things on the earth." Ephesians 1:9-10

Chapter 3

Will God Remove His Glorious Body From the Earth Before the End Times?

Many believe that seven years before Jesus returns, He will rapture, or remove, all born-again believers from the earth. This perspective suggests that the saved will not have to endure the hardships of the End Times. However, does scripture confirm this interpretation?

"Take notice! I tell you a mystery (a secret truth, an event decreed by the hidden purpose or counsel of God). We shall not all fall asleep [in death], but we shall all be changed (transformed) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the [sound of the] last trumpet call. For a trumpet will sound, and the dead [in Christ] will be raised imperishable (free and immune from decay), and we shall be changed (transformed)." 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

The Bible teaches that not everyone will die before they are physically transformed to be like Christ.

*"Beloved, we are [even here and] now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be [hereafter], but we know that when He comes and is manifested, we shall [as God's children] resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He [really] is."
1 John 3:2*

The key question is this: when will the *last trumpet*, which signifies the physical transformation of the saints, sound?

"For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him in death]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first." 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16

"The seventh angel then blew [his] trumpet, and there were mighty voices in heaven, shouting, The dominion (kingdom, sovereignty, rule) of the world has now come into the possession and become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (the Messiah), and He shall reign forever and ever!" Revelation 11:15

The *seventh trumpet*, or the *last trumpet*, mentioned in Revelation sounds when Jesus returns physically to take control of the earth. This is when the dead in Christ will rise. The Bible also emphasizes that the living in Christ cannot precede the dead in Him. Thus, a rapture of the living saints seven years before Jesus' return contradicts scripture.

Jesus also repeatedly taught that the resurrection of the dead will occur on the *last day*:

"For this is My Father's will and His purpose, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in and cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day." John 6:40

"No one is able to come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me attracts and draws him and gives him the desire to come to Me, and [then] I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day." John 6:44

Revelation confirms that the first resurrection, which must coincide with the rapture, occurs after the Great Tribulation:

"Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and to pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been slain with axes [beheaded] for their witnessing to Jesus and [for preaching and testifying] for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast or his statue and had not accepted his mark or permitted it to be stamped on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived again and ruled with Christ (the Messiah) a thousand years. The remainder of the dead were not restored to life again until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection." Revelation 20:4-5

These believers were martyred for refusing to take the Mark of the Beast, which occurs during the final three and a half years before Jesus' return. Clearly, the Church will be present during the Last Days. If God were to rapture the living saints earlier, He would contradict His own Word that states the living cannot precede the dead in Christ.

"Then they were each given a long and flowing and festive white robe and told to rest and wait patiently a little while longer, until the number should be complete of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed as they themselves had been." Revelation 6:11

"He was further permitted to wage war on God's holy people (the saints) and to overcome them. And power was given him to extend his authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation," Revelation 13:7

When you understand the truth of who you are in Christ, fear of the End Times will be replaced by faith. God's perfect love will cast out all fear, filling you with compassion and a desire to bless even those who curse you. Throughout history, God has used His people powerfully during tribulation. Just as He used Peter, Paul, John, Stephen, and others during difficult times, He will use End Time believers mightily.

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7

"Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]." Ephesians 3:20

The Spirit within you does not retreat in fear but empowers you to glorify God in unimaginable ways. End Time believers will not be removed but will stand as lights in the darkness, testifying to the power, love, and glory of Jesus Christ. They will also be empowered with the anointing that Joel prophesied of that comes on believers in the Last Days.

Chapter 4

What Exactly Will the End Times Look Like?

When most people think of the End Times, they imagine catastrophic events: nuclear holocausts, meteors bombarding the earth, plagues killing millions, oceans turning to blood, and all vegetation dying. Some believe the sun will be darkened by dust and ash from these disasters. These perceptions often come from interpreting the Book of Revelation as purely physical rather than spiritual. However, Jesus taught us to worship our Father in spirit and truth. If every vision in Revelation is physical, how could the following verses be true?

"But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]. For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. [They will be] without natural [human] affection (callous and inhuman), relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement); [they will be] slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers), intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good."
2 Timothy 3:1-3

"For you yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the [return of the] Lord will come [as unexpectedly and suddenly] as a thief in the night. When people are saying, All is well and secure, and, There is peace and safety, then in a moment unforeseen destruction (ruin and death) will come upon them as suddenly as labor pains come upon a woman with child; and they shall by no means escape, for there will be no escape." 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3

If Revelation's events were purely physical—asteroids striking the earth, plagues killing a third of humanity, and unending disasters—how could anyone say, "Peace and safety?" In such conditions, money would lose all value, and the love of wealth would fade. Furthermore, if such global catastrophes lasted for three and a half years, everyone would be eagerly anticipating Jesus' return, not living as though nothing were amiss.

The events of Revelation must therefore primarily represent spiritual truths. Consider what the Holy Spirit inspired to be written:

"For the love of money is a root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have been led astray and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute [mental] pangs." 1 Timothy 6:10

"But woe to (alas for) you who are rich (abounding in material resources), for you already are receiving your consolation (the solace and sense of strengthening and cheer that come from prosperity) and have taken and enjoyed your comfort in full [having nothing left to be awarded you]." Luke 6:24

The Bible also teaches that the End Times will resemble the days of Noah and Lot. In those days, people were eating, drinking, marrying, building, planting, and enjoying life. Such activities suggest a time of physical prosperity, not global catastrophe.

"And [just] as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the time of the Son of Man. [People] ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, right up to the day when Noah went into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. So also [it was the same] as it was in the days of Lot. [People] ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the [very] day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed [them] all. That is the way it will be on the day that the Son of Man is revealed." Luke 17:26-30

So, why didn't Jesus plainly describe Revelation's events as spiritual attacks on mankind? The answer lies in His method of teaching:

"Then the disciples came to Him and said, Why do You speak to them in parables? And He replied to them, To you it has been given to know the secrets and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." Matthew 13:10-11

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you can discern these spiritual truths and be set free by them. God has empowered you to trust in Him rather than yourself. This trust enables you to embrace your identity as more than a conqueror through Christ, filled with His power and love.

"Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us." Romans 8:37

Now that we have established who we are in Christ, the Church's role during the Great Tribulation, God's will for all humanity to be saved, and the physically prosperous nature of the End Times, we are ready to dive into the Book of Revelation.

Chapter 5 *Revelation 1*

"[This is] the revelation of Jesus Christ [His unveiling of the divine mysteries]. God gave it to Him to disclose and make known to His bond servants certain things which must shortly and speedily come to pass in their entirety. And He sent and communicated it through His angel (messenger) to His bond servant John, who has testified to and vouched for all that he saw [in his visions], the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 1:1-2

When we were born again, we were given the mind of Christ. Through Jesus, we also received the Holy Spirit, Who teaches us all things and reveals God's purposes. Jesus calls us His friends, and as His friends, He loves to share with us what He is doing. God is not hiding anything from us; everything He is and everything He has is for you and me.

"For who has known or understood the mind (the counsels and purposes) of the Lord so as to guide and instruct Him and give Him knowledge? But we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah) and do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes) of His heart." 1 Corinthians 2:16

"But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything that I have told you." John 14:26

"I do not call you servants (slaves) any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing (working out). But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. [I have revealed to you everything that I have learned from Him.]" John 15:15

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is not meant to be feared or hidden. With the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we are empowered to know the truth, be set free by it, and share it with others. As believers, we are used to be sowers of the Word, spreading God's truth so others can be set free just as we have been.

"The sower sows the Word." Mark 4:14

The Blessing of Reading Revelation

"Blessed (happy, to be envied) is the man who reads aloud [in the assemblies] the word of this prophecy; and blessed (happy, to be envied) are those who hear [it read] and who keep themselves true to the things which are written in it [heeding them and laying them to heart], for the time [for them to be fulfilled] is near." Revelation 1:3

All of God's Word is powerful, and there is a unique blessing in sharing it. Revelation is no exception to this truth. I recall teaching a Bible study at a nursing home several years ago when a resident asked if we could study Revelation. As she spoke, I noticed she was glowing with an aura of light. I knew it was God's will.

That study marked the first time I was used to read Revelation out loud to others, and it was an incredible experience. Through it, God blessed me with greater understanding, wisdom, and peace in my relationship with Him. He gave me new insights into eternity, forgiveness, and how He uses us to accomplish His purposes. Since then, whenever God leads me into a new season or revelation, He often begins by having me share the Book of Revelation with others.

"Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples." Psalm 96:3

"For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

The Words of Revelation are alive and active, cutting through the deepest parts of our being to reveal God's truth. It is a gift to be shared, a source of blessing, and a means for believers to deepen their understanding of God's love and plans.

John to the Seven Churches

"John to the seven assemblies (churches) that are in Asia: May grace (God's unmerited favor) be granted to you and spiritual peace (the peace of Christ's kingdom) from Him Who is and Who was and Who is to come, and from the seven Spirits [the sevenfold Holy Spirit] before His throne." Revelation 1:4

The number seven holds profound significance in scripture, symbolizing God's timing, completeness, fullness, blessing, sanctification, rest, Kingship, and divine rule. Throughout Revelation, Jesus uses the number seven to emphasize the perfection and certainty of the events He reveals. This repetition reassures us of one essential truth: God is in complete control of everything that will unfold during the Last Days.

Knowing that our Father is Love provides peace amid the mysteries of the End Times. Every action He takes during the Great Tribulation will be directed by His love, mercy, forgiveness, and grace. Even His wrath reflects His redemptive purposes, confounding the wisdom of the world and demonstrating His glory.

"He who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love." 1 John 4:8

The Unchanging Nature of Love

The apostle Paul's description of love offers a glimpse into the very nature of God. Since God never changes, His love will manifest itself during the Great Tribulation in the same way it does in Heaven.

"Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient and kind. It keeps no record of wrongs, thinks the best of people, and bears all things. Love does not rejoice in injustice but rejoices in truth. Above all, love never fails. Since God is Love, everything He does is perfect and successful. Whatever our Father wills will come to pass, and His love will never falter.

"Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth." 1 Timothy 2:4

Love's Ultimate Goal

If God is Love, and Love never fails, then His desire for all men to be saved must come to fruition. Love is not a force that condemns people to eternal misery because they were wrong. Instead, it is patient and kind, believing the best of everyone and working tirelessly to bring redemption. The essence of Love is redemptive, not punitive.

This truth should frame how we approach Revelation. God's actions are never vengeful in the way humanity understands vengeance but are always rooted in His character of love. Revelation reveals His unchanging love at work, even in the most challenging times, leading humanity toward His ultimate purpose: salvation and restoration.

The saved are the Body of Christ, and Christ is God. This profound truth means that even when we are wronged or harmed by another person, including an unbeliever, our Head, Jesus, does not recognize it as harm in the way we might. This reflects the immeasurable power of God's grace and mercy. Many believe that the End Times will be a period of God avenging the mistreatment of Christians, but in reality, it is a time when God will do what is necessary to set all people free.

"For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]." Romans 11:32

In Revelation 1:4, John extends grace to the churches in Asia, which signifies his prayer for God to exert His divine influence on their souls. The Greek word for grace, *Charis*, encompasses joy, delight, favor, and loving kindness. It describes the merciful kindness by which God turns our hearts toward Christ, strengthens us, keeps us, and deepens our faith.

"Laboring together [as God's fellow workers] with Him then, we beg of you not to receive the grace of God in vain [that merciful kindness by which God exerts His holy influence on souls and turns them to Christ, keeping and strengthening them—do not receive it to no purpose]." 2 Corinthians 6:1

John wrote Revelation because Jesus revealed to him a great vision and empowered him to share it. Through this vision, Jesus addressed specific truths for each church. John's desire was for God to guide, strengthen, and bless them, recognizing that human effort alone is insufficient without divine power.

"I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing." John 15:5

At the end of Revelation 1:4, John refers to the "Seven Spirits of God," a term that symbolizes the perfect and complete work of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 11:2 outlines the sevenfold ministry of the Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, reverence for God, and obedience. These aspects of the Holy Spirit empower believers to fulfill God's calling in their lives.

"And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the reverential and obedient fear of the Lord." Isaiah 11:2

One of the first assurances Jesus provides in His Revelation is that God will preserve and empower His people through the Holy Spirit. His grace and Spirit are the means by which we become all that He has called us to be, enabling us to live and serve according to His purpose.

Jesus: The Faithful Witness and Redeemer

"And from Jesus Christ the faithful and trustworthy Witness, the Firstborn of the dead [first to be brought back to life], and the Prince (Ruler) of the kings of the earth. To Him Who ever loves us and has once [for all] loosed and freed us from our sins by His own blood." Revelation 1:5

What an incredible truth: Jesus has once and for all loosed and freed us from our sins! As children of God, we are empowered to embrace this reality with childlike faith—freely accepting and rejoicing in the wonderful gift we have been given. Rather than overanalyzing or intellectualizing this gift, let us simply celebrate it. It is significant that Revelation begins with this foundational truth, establishing the hope and victory we have in Christ before unveiling the events of the End Times.

False teachers often lead people to focus excessively on their failures and instill fear of sin and its consequences. However, the truth of the gospel sets us free. Jesus has permanently broken the power of sin over us as part of our salvation. This freedom emboldens us, even during the darkest times of the Last Days, to stand firm in faith and confidence.

"We know that our old (unrenewed) self was nailed to the cross with Him in order that [our] body [which is the instrument] of sin might be made ineffective and inactive for evil, that we might no longer be the slaves of sin." Romans 6:6

"Even so consider yourselves also dead to sin and your relation to it broken, but alive to God [living in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus." Romans 6:11

David described the power and blessedness of what Jesus has accomplished for those to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Romans 4:6-8

The Power of Our Freedom in Christ

"And you are in Him, made full and having come to fullness of life [in Christ you too are filled with the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and reach full spiritual stature]. And He is the Head of all rule and authority [of every angelic principality and power]. In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, but in a [spiritual] circumcision [performed by] Christ by stripping off the body of the flesh (the whole corrupt, carnal nature with its passions and lusts)." Colossians 2:10-11

Through Christ's sacrifice, we are filled with the fullness of God and freed from the dominion of sin. This was accomplished not by our works but by God's grace. Our old sinful nature was nailed to the cross, and through our faith in His resurrection, we were raised to a new life.

"[God] brought to life together with [Christ], having [freely] forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled and blotted out and wiped away the handwriting of the note (bond) with its legal decrees and demands which was in force and stood against us (hostile to us). This [note with its regulations, decrees, and demands] He set aside and cleared completely out of our way by nailing it to [His] cross. [God] disarmed the principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him and in it [the cross]." Colossians 2:13-15

This is the profound reality of our salvation: through Jesus' success, we are now free from sin. We can consider ourselves dead to sin because of what He has accomplished. This freedom was not earned but given to us freely. As recipients of such abundant grace, we are empowered to forgive others just as freely as we have been forgiven.

Forgiveness in the Last Days

In the Last Days, when the Church will shine in glory without spot, wrinkle, or blemish, God will use His people to exemplify this forgiveness and grace. Even as the world becomes increasingly self-centered, proud, and immoral, the Church will reflect Christ's love and mercy.

"But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]. For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. [They will be] without natural [human] affection (callous and inhuman), relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement); [they will be] slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers), intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good." 2 Timothy 3:1-3

Despite the worsening condition of humanity, God's people will demonstrate the power of His grace by forgiving and loving others at their worst. This will not be done through human effort but by the Spirit of God, Who continually empowers the Church to reflect Christ's character to the world.

A Royal Priesthood in Christ

"And formed us into a kingdom (a royal race), priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the power and the majesty and the dominion throughout the ages and forever and ever. Amen (so be it)." Revelation 1:6

As believers, we are royalty in Christ. We are called sons and daughters of God, and we share in and are part of the very glory of our Lord and Savior. This unity with God, made possible through Christ, establishes us as His royal priesthood, empowered to reflect His glory and serve in His name.

"I have given to them the glory and honor which You have given Me, that they may be one [even] as We are one." John 17:22

God's eternal plan, foreordained from the beginning, was to mold us into the image of His Son. He has chosen us, justified us, and glorified us, raising us to a heavenly state of dignity and righteousness.

"For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness], that He might become the firstborn among many brethren. And those whom He thus foreordained, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified (acquitted, made righteous, putting them into right standing with Himself). And those whom He justified, He also glorified [raising them to a heavenly dignity and condition or state of being]." Romans 8:29-30

United with Christ

Just as Jesus is both King and High Priest, so are we because we are one with Him. As His physical body on the earth, we are empowered to live as He is—walking in His authority, love, and purpose.

"Because we are members (parts) of His body." Ephesians 5:30

"In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment [with assurance and boldness to face Him], because as He is, so are we in this world." 1 John 4:17

This union with Christ gives us boldness and peace when we read and study Revelation. While many approach it with fear, we can embrace it with confidence, knowing that we are fully united with Jesus. As His Spirit dwells within us, we are assured that if we are called to be present during the Last Days, we will operate in the full power and authority of Christ.

Revelation is not a message of despair for believers but a proclamation of victory, reminding us of who we are in Christ and the glory of God's eternal plan. With the Holy Spirit as our guide, we can stand firm, knowing that our identity and destiny are secure in Him.

Behold, He is Coming

"Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall gaze upon Him and beat their

breasts and mourn and lament over Him. Even so [must it be]. Amen (so be it)."
Revelation 1:7

Clouds in scripture often symbolize the glory of God. Here, John reveals that Jesus will physically return to the earth in majestic and glorious fashion. His return will be visible to all—every eye will witness it, including those who pierced Him. Every tribe, nation, and kingdom will behold His splendor as He physically returns to take dominion over the earth.

"For just as the lightning flashes from the east and shines and is seen as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be." Matthew 24:27

"And a cloud threw a shadow upon them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My Son, the [most dear worthy] Beloved One. Be constantly listening to and obeying Him!'" Mark 9:7

"And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great (kingly) power and glory (majesty and splendor)." Mark 13:26

The truth is that Jesus is Lord over all, regardless of whether people acknowledge Him now. When He physically returns, however, everyone will recognize His authority.

"[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him." John 17:2

The World's Fear and Jesus' Love

When Jesus returns, many will fear Him, uncertain of how He will respond to their rejection of Him and their mistreatment of His followers. They will be struck by their guilt, remembering how they opposed Him and His Church. They will not immediately understand the nature of His love, a true love that does not hold onto wrongs but instead believes the best about others.

This fear will dissipate as the world comes to know the fullness of Jesus' love. Through Him and His chosen ones, they will learn the truth about grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

"Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you." Revelation 3:9

Jesus is unchanging in His nature. The same grace, mercy, and compassion He displayed during His earthly ministry will define His actions when He returns.

"Even the Father judges no one, for He has given all judgment (the last judgment and the whole business of judging) entirely into the hands of the Son." John 5:22

"Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is [always] the same, yesterday, today, [yes] and forever (to the ages)."Hebrews 13:8

"And Jesus prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And they divided His garments and distributed them by casting lots for them."Luke 23:34

Jesus forgave those who lied about Him, tortured Him, and crucified Him, even though they did not ask for forgiveness or believe they needed it. Just as He was then, He will be at His return; overflowing with grace and mercy.

Resurrection and Reign

When Jesus returns, His chosen ones will be made to be like Him. The dead in Christ will rise first, followed by the living believers, and both groups will be transformed to be physically like Jesus. Yet, there will be millions of people alive who will not experience this transformation. These individuals will become the guests of His Kingdom, and they will be served by Christ's glorified Church with the full power of God's might.

"Blessed (happy, to be envied) and holy (spiritually whole, of unimpaired innocence and proved virtue) is the person who takes part (shares) in the first resurrection! Over them the second death exerts no power or authority, but they shall be ministers of God and of Christ (the Messiah), and they shall rule along with Him a thousand years." Revelation 20:6

The return of Jesus is a glorious and victorious moment, a time when His love, authority, and justice will be fully revealed. His reign will demonstrate the power of redemption, uniting all things under His rule while showcasing the depth of His grace and mercy to the world.

The Alpha and Omega: Our Eternal Hope

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord God, He Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty (the Ruler of all). I, John, your brother and companion (sharer and participator) with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patient endurance [which are] in Jesus Christ, was on the isle called Patmos, [banished] on account of [my witnessing to] the Word of God and the testimony (the proof, the evidence) for Jesus Christ." Revelation 1:8-9

Jesus is the Ruler and Creator of everything—a truth affirmed throughout the Bible. In declaring Himself the Alpha and Omega, Jesus is not boasting but comforting us. As the eternal beginning and end of all things, He assures us of His sovereign rule over every aspect of creation. Jesus is Love. He is our Protector, Provider, and Strength, and He will be with us and we will be part of Him during the Great Tribulation.

Many people approach the End Times with fear, but the truths of Revelation are designed to dispel that fear. The cornerstone of peace is knowing that Jesus is the Ruler and Controller of all. He is

not only our Lord and Savior but also our Friend. He will never leave us or forsake us, and His power will sustain us, especially during times of trial.

*"So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities, and distresses; for when I am weak [in human strength], then am I [truly] strong (able, powerful in divine strength)."2
Corinthians 12:10*

Strength Perfected in Weakness

God will allow the world to test and attack His people during the Last Days. This to demonstrate His power through us. His strength is perfected in our weakness, and He will never allow us to face trials beyond what He has empowered us to endure.

"For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently." 1 Corinthians 10:13

John identifies himself as a partaker in tribulation. As Christians, persecution is a reality we will all face. Jesus made this clear but also gave us reason to rejoice. He has overcome the world, robbing it of its power to harm us.

"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]" John 16:33

The Joy of Persecution

Persecution should not be feared or avoided; it is a privilege. It allows us to witness God's power in action. Tribulations are opportunities for God to shine through us, to show the world His love, faithfulness, and provision. When we lose a job, face false accusations, or endure medical challenges, God's power is most evident. As the world attacks and accuses us, the Holy Spirit, the Seven Spirits of God, empowers us to bless, forgive, and thrive in the midst of adversity.

"Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops

maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us." Romans 5:3-5

The trials of the Last Days are "game time" for the Church, a time for God's glory to be revealed through His people. Far from discouraging us, persecution should inspire us to rise up in faith, demonstrating to the world that God is alive and working. Let us eagerly embrace the opportunity to reflect His light, for the world desperately needs to see our Father in action.

Empowered by the Spirit on the Lord's Day

"I was in the Spirit [rapt in His power] on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a great voice like the calling of a war trumpet." Revelation 1:10

There are moments in our lives when the Holy Spirit empowers us to extraordinary levels, allowing us to experience God's glory in profound ways. Paul was caught up to the third heaven, Stephen saw the glory of Jesus and shone like the sun as he was being stoned, and even Peter's shadow brought healing through the power of the Spirit. These miraculous accounts remind us that the same Holy Spirit lives within us and can work mightily through us as well.

"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—was caught up to the third heaven." 2 Corinthians 12:2

"So that they [even] kept carrying out the sick into the streets and placing them on couches and sleeping pads, [in the hope] that as Peter passed by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them." Acts 5:15

We should eagerly seek God's glory and His willingness to use us, just as He used our brothers and sisters in the Bible. Ask yourself, "Why not me?" Peter denied Jesus three times, yet God used him powerfully. King David committed grave sins, yet he was called a man after God's own heart. The same God Who worked through them is ready to work through you.

The Lord's Day: Beyond a Single Day

John writes that he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." While some interpret this as a reference to Sunday, the text does not specify that. Regardless of the specific day, the message is clear: God's power is not bound by days, months, or seasons. He is the God of every day, working through us continually.

"One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike [sacred]. Let everyone be fully convinced (satisfied) in his own mind." Romans 14:5

The emphasis here is not on the day but on the experience of being fully empowered by the Spirit. God is actively at work in our lives every single day, and His power is always available to us.

The Seven Churches

"Saying, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. Write promptly what you see (your vision) in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia—to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." Revelation 1:11

Once again, Jesus uses the number seven, symbolizing perfection and completion. It reminds us that all events in Revelation will occur according to God's perfect timing. While some look for deeper meanings in the names of these churches, and there could very well be, what truly matters is that they represent God's active involvement with His people at various stages of spiritual maturity.

Here are the seven churches and the meanings of their names:

- Ephesus: The desired one
- Smyrna: A highly valued spice
- Pergamum: Mixed marriage
- Thyatira: Hill graveyard
- Sardis: Those who come out
- Philadelphia: Brotherly love
- Laodicea: Law-abiding people

These churches remind us that God works with all kinds of people, meeting them where they are. Whether young in faith or seasoned in spiritual maturity, God is actively involved in our lives, nurturing and guiding us to reflect His glory.

The Seven Golden Lampstands: A Reflection of God's Glory

"Then I turned to see [whose was] the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands." Revelation 1:12

As we have discussed the number seven, representing God's perfection and perfect timing, is central to the message Jesus reveals in Revelation. Everything shown to John is complete and in perfect alignment with God's plan for the end times.

"[This is] the revelation of Jesus Christ [His unveiling of the divine mysteries]. God gave it to Him to disclose and make known to His bond servants certain things which must shortly and speedily come to pass in their entirety. And He sent and communicated it through His angel (messenger) to His bond servant John." Revelation 1:1

The golden lampstands symbolize the seven churches, each one precious and significant to Jesus. Gold represents purity and the true riches of faith, emphasizing the value and importance of these churches. At the center of these lampstands is the Light—Jesus Himself. This imagery reminds us that where Jesus is present, there is glory and divine illumination.

"As to the hidden meaning (the mystery) of the seven stars which you saw on My right hand and the seven lampstands of gold: the seven stars are the seven angels (messengers) of the seven assemblies (churches) and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." *Revelation 1:20*

Precious Despite Imperfection

In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus will address these seven churches, offering praise and harsh criticism where necessary. Yet, despite their flaws, the churches are still symbolized as golden lampstands. This profound truth reveals the power of Jesus' redemptive work. Even when the churches fall short, they remain precious to Him. Jesus continues to stand among them, using them to reflect His light and truth to the world.

This demonstrates God's unfailing purpose. Even when correction is required, the ultimate outcome is always perfection through Christ. God's grace and sovereignty ensure that all things, our successes and failures, work together for His glory and our good.

"We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose." Romans 8:28

This passage reminds us of the incredible mercy and patience of Christ. Despite the flaws and shortcomings of His people, He continues to cherish, guide, and illuminate them with His presence, ultimately bringing about His perfect will. Take comfort in this truth as we trust in His faithfulness to complete the good work He has begun in us.

The Son of Man Among the Lampstands

"And in the midst of the lampstands [One] like a Son of Man, clothed with a robe which reached to His feet and with a girdle of gold about His breast." Revelation 1:13

Gold symbolizes perfection and perfect faith, and here we see that perfection surrounds Jesus' heart. He embodies perfect faith as the Author and Finisher of our faith. This assurance is particularly significant as we consider the challenges the Church will face during the End Times. Even as the world rises against believers, Jesus will remain present, shaping and completing our faith through every trial.

"Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

Clothed in Glory and Standing Among His People

John's vision reveals Jesus clothed in a robe that reaches to His feet, a sign of His complete perfection and the glory of the Father that fully covers Him. He is standing in the midst of the lampstands, which symbolize the churches, signifying His central role and active presence among His people. Jesus stands at the center because everything exists through Him, by Him, and for Him.

"For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him." Colossians 1:16

This first chapter of Revelation emphasizes repeatedly that Jesus is in all things. This is a vital truth to remember, especially when circumstances make it seem as though Jesus is absent. His love, power, and presence are constant, even when we do not fully perceive them. Whether we or others are weak or strong in faith, it is not our own strength that matters, it is Jesus Who is the Power and Who is always with us.

Jesus' presence among the lampstands demonstrates His unchanging commitment to His Church. Regardless of imperfections or challenges, He is always there, guiding and sustaining His people.

The Purity and Power of Jesus Revealed

"His head and His hair were white like white wool, [as white] as snow, and His eyes [flashed] like a flame of fire." Revelation 1:14

The whiteness of Jesus' hair symbolizes purity and perfection. White represents His absolute holiness, while the imagery of wool recalls the provisions given to priests in the Bible. This reminds us that Jesus is our ultimate provision as we are a royal kingdom of priests. His care for us is eternal, warm, and abundant, especially during the End Times.

"The firstfruits of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the first or best of the fleece of your sheep you shall give the priest." Deuteronomy 18:4

"And formed us into a kingdom (a royal race), priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the power and the majesty and the dominion throughout the ages and forever and ever. Amen (so be it)." Revelation 1:6

The flames in Jesus' eyes represent the Holy Spirit, divine power, and righteous judgment. Jesus is a God of action, and His fiery gaze signifies that He sees all and will reconcile everything to God. Through His sacrificial love, He brings peace and restoration.

"And God purposed that through (by the service, the intervention of) Him [the Son] all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him, [the Father] made peace by means of the blood of His cross." Colossians 1:20

Jesus is unchanging. The grace, mercy, and love He demonstrated during His earthly ministry will remain the same during the Great Tribulation. His actions, even in the face of judgment, are always rooted in His desire to restore and uplift. It is essential to understand Jesus' character before delving into the judgments revealed in Revelation. He is in total control, and everything He does is for our good and His glory.

Strength and Unity in Christ

"His feet glowed like burnished (bright) bronze as it is refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters." Revelation 1:15

The bronze of Jesus' feet represents strength and stability. Bronze does not corrode, just as Jesus cannot be tarnished. He is immovable and unchanging; His love is steadfast and enduring. The sound of many waters signifies the collective voice of His people, spanning every tribe, nation, and tongue. Through His body, which is the Church, Jesus proclaims His message to the world.

"And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end." Matthew 24:14

"After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands." Revelation 7:9

This vision reassures us that Jesus' power and presence are constant. His strength undergirds His Church, and His message will reach the ends of the earth through His people. Even amid trials, Jesus' Love and His eternal plan will prevail.

The Majesty and Sovereignty of Jesus

"In His right hand He held seven stars, and from His mouth there came forth a sharp two-edged sword, and His face was like the sun shining in full power at midday." Revelation 1:16

The seven stars, often representing leaders, messages, or angels, illustrate Jesus' control over all truth and authority. By holding these stars, Jesus signifies His dominion over the events of the End

Times and the messengers who deliver His Word. His hand, which symbolizes guidance and power, assures us that everything unfolds under His sovereign will, rooted in a love that never fails.

"For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him." Colossians 1:16

The sharp two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth represents the authority and power of God's Word. It is eternal, unchanging, and decisive.

"Heaven and earth will perish and pass away, but My words will not perish or pass away." Mark 13:31

"For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

Jesus' face shines like the midday sun, a representation of the brightest light, which drives out all darkness. Jesus is the life-giving force for all creation, radiating power, glory, and victory. He has triumphed over Satan at the Cross, ensuring that He remains in complete control of all things. His eternal love and unwavering authority sustain His people, shepherding them safely through all trials.

The Peace of His Presence

"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead. But He laid His right hand on me and said, Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last." Revelation 1:17

The awe-inspiring vision of Jesus caused John to pass out, yet Jesus immediately brought him peace. Jesus' touch and words calmed John, illustrating His compassionate and personal care. Jesus assures us that His presence dispels fear and replaces it with perfect peace.

"Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." John 14:27

"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Even when John appeared lifeless, Jesus brought him back, a powerful reminder that those who seem lost or defeated are never beyond His reach. Jesus is victorious and will restore life where it is needed.

Jesus is not only the First, He is also the Last. So often we focus on Him as the First: the Head, the Creator of everything, and the One Who controls all things. But He also refers to Himself as the Last. What makes this so powerful is that the First not only dwells in the presence of God forever, the Last does as well. And if the First and the Last are both there, then everyone in the middle must be brought there too. This fulfills our Father's desire that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth.

The Keys to Death and Hades

"And the Ever-living One [I am living in the eternity of the eternities]. I died, but see, I am alive forevermore; and I possess the keys of death and Hades (the realm of the dead)." Revelation 1:18

Jesus' control over death and Hades is a profound comfort. He holds the keys, meaning Love, Compassion, Mercy, and Grace govern these realms, not Satan or any dark force. This Truth assures us that nothing in life or death is beyond our Lord's authority.

Our lives are in Jesus' hands, and nothing can take us from Him before His appointed time. Jesus' perfect love drives out all fear, granting us the confidence to face every trial.

"There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection]." 1 John 4:18

Jesus' eternal authority and love bring comfort, peace, and assurance to His people. His victory at the Cross ensures that we can trust in His power and sovereignty, no matter what lies ahead.

Revelation and the Church: Jesus' Sovereignty and Truth Revealed

"Write therefore the things you see, what they are [and signify] and what is to take place hereafter." Revelation 1:19

Jesus declares to John that everything he sees should be written and shared. This revelation is not a mystery meant to be hidden but a divine unveiling of what is, what is to come, and how God will bring cleansing to the earth. The purpose of these revelations is not to instill fear but to demonstrate God's plan for humanity, revealing His glory and power through the End Times.

John's commission emphasizes openness in sharing these truths. We, too, are empowered by the Holy Spirit to boldly proclaim God's Word. Despite challenges, God's power within us equips us to fulfill His purpose beyond anything we can imagine.

“Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]—” Ephesians 3:20

The Seven Stars and Lampstands

“As to the hidden meaning (the mystery) of the seven stars which you saw on My right hand and the seven lampstands of gold: the seven stars are the seven angels (messengers) of the seven assemblies (churches) and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” Revelation 1:20

The seven stars and lampstands are a powerful depiction of Christ's authority and intimate involvement with His Church. The stars represent angels or messengers of the churches, emphasizing that God's guidance and instruction are always at hand. The lampstands symbolize the churches themselves, showing their central role in bearing God's light to the world.

There are numerous interpretations regarding the seven churches. Some see them as seven distinct periods of church history, others as seven types of churches. However, the essential truth is that Jesus is intimately aware of their conditions, actively leading and correcting them. He is not distant; He walks among them, guiding and shaping them for His purposes.

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as there is also one hope [that belongs] to the calling you received—” Ephesians 4:4

Jesus' interaction with these churches reflects His ongoing involvement with all His people. The challenges, corrections, and encouragements given to these churches are timeless, relevant to every generation of believers. His presence among the lampstands confirms His promise to never leave or forsake His Church.

“And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that I should not lose any of all that He has given Me, but that I should give new life and raise [all them] up at the last day.” John 6:39

Jesus' Loving Discipline

As the Head of the Church, Jesus' discipline comes from His love for His people. He corrects and refines them so they can reflect His glory and fulfill His purpose. This refining is not punitive but restorative, ensuring His Church remains a beacon of light and truth.

“For the Lord corrects and disciplines everyone whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes.” Hebrews 12:6

Through this revelation, we see that Jesus is actively shaping His Church, preparing her for the challenges and glory of the End Times. His presence among the lampstands reminds us that we are never alone. Jesus is always with us, leading us with love, grace, and purpose.

Chapter 6 Revelation 2

The Letter to the Church in Ephesus: A Call to Abide in Christ

“To the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in Ephesus write: These are the words of Him Who holds the seven stars [which are the messengers of the seven churches] in His right hand, Who goes about among the seven golden lampstands [which are the seven churches]:” Revelation 2:1

The church in Ephesus, whose name means "the desired one," receives a message directly from Jesus, Who holds the power and authority over all. Located in modern-day Turkey, Ephesus was a significant Greek city. The address to the angel or messenger of the church is a direct call to its leader, reminding them that Christ is in control, not man, governments, or any spiritual opposition. Jesus alone controls all things.

This introduction establishes that Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, walks among His churches, deeply aware of their needs and perfectly equipped to lead them. His intimate involvement with the Church ensures that His purposes are fulfilled.

“For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him.” Colossians 1:16

Commendation for Labor and Discernment

“I know your industry and activities, laborious toil and trouble, and your patient endurance, and how you cannot tolerate wicked [men] and have tested and critically appraised those who call [themselves] apostles (special messengers of Christ) and yet are not, and have found them to be impostors and liars.” Revelation 2:2

Jesus acknowledges the hard work and perseverance of the Ephesians. Their rejection of false apostles and their discernment in identifying impostors reflect a strong commitment to purity and truth. However, the commendation focuses on *their* actions, what they have done, rather than highlighting how God is working through them.

This distinction is significant. When believers begin to perceive their efforts as independent of God's power, they risk becoming burdened by self-reliance. Jesus' reminder here invites them, and us, to return to the foundational truth that all fruitfulness comes from our Father's Power working through us.

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? What I am telling you I do not say on My own authority and of My own accord; but the Father Who lives continually in Me does the (His) works (His own miracles, deeds of power).” John 14:10

“Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing.” John 15:4-5

A Reminder of Dependence on God

The Ephesian church's toil and discernment were commendable, but Jesus' approach in addressing their works shifts the focus back to their need to acknowledge His abilities working through them. Without a deep, abiding relationship with Christ, even the most industrious efforts will falter. This message serves as a call to humility and reliance on God's power rather than human strength.

As we continue to study the message to Ephesus, we'll see how Jesus not only commends their strengths but also corrects their shortcomings, guiding them back to the heart of their faith. His constant presence among the lampstands assures us that He lovingly leads His Church, empowering us to bear fruit for His glory.

The Call to Endure in Love and Oneness with Christ

“I know you are enduring patiently and are bearing up for My name's sake, and you have not fainted or become exhausted or grown weary.” Revelation 2:3

Jesus commends the Ephesian church for their perseverance and endurance. Their strength, just as with us, is not of their own making. As part of the Body of Christ, they are empowered by His

indwelling presence. His Love within them provides the patience and long-suffering necessary to bear all things for His name's sake.

"I have made Your Name known to them and revealed Your character and Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them." John 17:26

"Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily." 1 Corinthians 13:4

Strength from Serving in His Power

When God uses us, His power refreshes and strengthens us. This truth is evident in Jesus' life. Even when physically tired, Jesus was rejuvenated by fulfilling His mission. As He served others, He experienced nourishment from doing our Father's will.

"Meanwhile, the disciples urged Him saying, Rabbi, eat something. But He assured them, I have food (nourishment) to eat of which you know nothing and have no idea... My food (nourishment) is to do the will (pleasure) of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish and completely finish His work." John 4:31-34

A Sobering Charge: Returning to First Love

"But I have this [one charge to make] against you: that you have left (abandoned) the love that you had at first [you have deserted Me, your first love]." Revelation 2:4

Though the Ephesians had labored so diligently, Jesus charges them with a critical shortcoming: they had forsaken their first love. This refers to the vibrant, pure devotion they had for Christ when they first came to know Him. Over time, their focus shifted from Christ working through them to their own efforts.

The Holy Spirit repeatedly reminded the Ephesians of their oneness with Christ through Paul's writings:

"And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One)." Ephesians 2:6

"But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were [so] far away, through (by, in) the blood of Christ have been brought near." Ephesians 2:13

"May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love." Ephesians 3:17

The Ephesians needed to be reminded once again of their dependence on Jesus. A church or individual cannot thrive when Christ ceases to be the foundation. Without the acknowledgment that all fruit comes from Him, exhaustion and fainting are inevitable.

The Warning and the Way Forward

Jesus' call to the Ephesians is not one of condemnation but of restoration. He wants them to return to their first love, to Him as their cornerstone. Without Christ as the center, a church's identity and power diminish over time. However, with Him as their focus, their works will be sustained by His strength, not their own.

This charge is a timeless reminder for all believers: true endurance, love, and effective ministry are possible only when we abide in Christ, recognizing that it is He who works through us for His glory.

A Call to Repentance and Dependence on the Spirit

"Remember then from what heights you have fallen. Repent (change the inner man to meet God's will) and do the works you did previously [when first you knew the Lord], or else I will visit you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you change your mind and repent." Revelation 2:5

Jesus extends a loving warning to the Ephesians, calling them to return to their first love. This is not a condemnation but a call to restoration, made possible only by the power of the Holy Spirit. True repentance is never achieved through human effort but is led by the Spirit, drawing us back into alignment with God's will.

"But it is God Who confirms and makes us steadfast and establishes us [in joint fellowship] with you in Christ, and has consecrated and anointed us [enduing us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit]; [He has also appropriated and acknowledged us as His by] putting His seal upon us and giving us His [Holy] Spirit in our hearts as the security deposit and guarantee [of the fulfillment of His promise]." 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

This warning demonstrates Jesus' deep care for His church, described as a golden lampstand. Without dependence on Him, the lampstand, the church's witness, can be removed. The church's value in Jesus' eyes is not diminished, but its ability to fulfill its purpose depends on its unity with Christ and the acknowledgment of His glory working through them.

The Role of Discipline in Restoration

"But when we [fall short and] are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined and chastened, so that we may not [finally] be condemned [to eternal punishment along] with the world." 1 Corinthians 11:32

Jesus' correction is rooted in love and designed to guide His people to the truth that will set them free. Discipline ensures that His church remains a vessel through which His Spirit can work. Churches like Ephesus that focus on human effort rather than reliance on the Spirit are reminded that their strength is not of themselves.

A Warning for Modern Churches

There are many churches today that resemble the Church of Ephesus. These churches engage in good works but subtly shift the focus from what Christ does through them, to what they do for Christ. This focus on human effort can overshadow the grace and power of the Spirit.

"So that the righteous and just requirement of the Law might be fully met in us who live and move not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the Spirit [our lives governed not by the standards and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the Holy Spirit]." Romans 8:4

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God." Romans 8:14-16

The Ephesians' struggle reminds us that only by living and moving in the Spirit can a church thrive and fulfill its calling. Jesus' warning is not about losing His love but about remaining a bright light that reflects His glory to the world. Repentance and reliance on Jesus ensure that His light continues to shine.

The Nicolaitans: A Cautionary Tale

"Yet you have this [in your favor and to your credit]: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans [what they are doing as corrupters of the people], which I Myself also detest." Revelation 2:6

This passage provides a clear and powerful reflection on the detrimental practices of the Nicolaitans, contrasting their prideful and oppressive works with the servant-hearted leadership of Christ. It underscores key lessons for the Church, both historically and in the present day, as it navigates leadership, humility, and unity.

The Nicolaitans' divisive system, which created a hierarchy separating leaders from laity, stands as a warning against pride and domination within religious communities. Their approach corrupted the spirit of equality and mutual service central to Christ's teachings, illustrating how leadership can stray into harmful practices when it prioritizes self-exaltation over servanthood.

The Example of Jesus

“Then He poured water into the washbasin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the [servant’s] towel with which He was girded.” John 13:5

Jesus, by contrast, demonstrated unparalleled humility and a heart for serving others. Through His actions, such as washing His disciples' feet, He provided a model of leadership rooted in love, empathy, and service. His life serves as a reminder that true greatness lies in lifting others up, not in asserting superiority.

Targeting Sin, Not Sinners

“When Jesus raised Himself up, He said to her, Woman, where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you? She answered, No one, Lord! And Jesus said, I do not condemn you either. Go on your way and from now on sin no more.” John 8:10-11

The distinction between hating the works of the Nicolaitans and hating the people themselves reveals God's redemptive nature. His desire to save and restore rather than condemn calls Christians to approach others with grace, seeking to address sin while extending love and compassion.

Resisting the Nicolaitan Spirit Today

“And Jesus [repeatedly and expressly] charged and admonished them, saying, Look out; keep on your guard and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod and the Herodians.” Mark 8:15

The Nicolaitan spirit, marked by pride, control, and inequality persists in various forms, even within modern religious systems. The Church is called to reject these practices, upholding humility and equality. This resistance to hierarchical division reflects the unity and mutual service that Jesus modeled and desired for His followers.

Living the Gospel Through Servanthood

Finally, this passage challenges believers to reflect the Gospel through servant-hearted actions. By rejecting pride and embracing humility, through the power of Christ that lives within us, the Church can resist the spirit of the Nicolaitans, bear witness to Christ's transformative love, and work toward the restoration and unity of all people under His rule. This servanthood is not just a call to action but a reflection of Christ's very nature, providing a powerful testimony to the world.

Listening and Overcoming in Christ

"He who is able to hear, let him listen to and give heed to what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). To him who overcomes (is victorious), I will grant to eat [of the fruit] of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." Revelation 2:7

The ability to hear and heed the Truth comes solely through God's initiative. It is by His drawing and attraction that anyone can come to understand His Word.

"No one is able to come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me attracts and draws him and gives him the desire to come to Me, and [then] I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day." John 6:44

"All whom My Father gives (entrusts) to Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will most certainly not cast out [I will never, no never, reject one of them who comes to Me]." John 6:37

This assurance offers profound hope. God will do whatever is necessary for us to listen and heed His voice. He will not let us fail, and we cannot lose the salvation He has given us.

"For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. [He never withdraws them once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call.]" Romans 11:29

Jesus' Message to Smyrna: Faith Amid Affliction

"And to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in Smyrna write: These are the words of the First and the Last, Who died and came to life again." Revelation 2:8

Smyrna, meaning "a highly valued spice," was a beautiful Greek port city known for its natural splendor and competition with Ephesus and Pergamum for power and prestige. Despite its external beauty, the believers in Smyrna faced great affliction.

Jesus reminds them that He died and came back to life, assuring them that He is fully aware of their suffering. By walking among the lampstands, He knows exactly what they are enduring and encourages them with the truth that He has deprived the world of its power to harm them.

"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]" John 16:33

Victory Through Christ

The promise to those who overcome is the right to eat from the tree of life in the paradise of God. This symbolizes eternal communion with Him. This victory is not achieved through human effort but through Christ's triumph over death. His message to Smyrna highlights His power to sustain His people amid trials, assuring them that their afflictions are not in vain.

As believers today, we are empowered to trust in His sovereignty and find courage in the truth that He is the First and the Last, Who conquered death and offers eternal life to those who listen and overcome through Him.

Strength in Affliction: The Riches of Smyrna

"I know your affliction and distress and pressing trouble and your poverty—but you are rich! and how you are abused and reviled and slandered by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." Revelation 2:9

The Church of Smyrna appeared poor by worldly standards but was rich in spiritual wealth and faith. Jesus emphasizes that earthly riches can hinder one's spiritual life, echoing His teachings that wealth often obstructs entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.

"But woe to (alas for) you who are rich (abounding in material resources), for you already are receiving your consolation (the solace and sense of strengthening and cheer that come from prosperity) and have taken and enjoyed your comfort in full [having nothing left to be awarded you]. Woe to (alas for) you who are full now (completely filled, luxuriously gorged and satiated), for you shall hunger and suffer want! Woe to (alas for) you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep and wail!" Luke 6:24-25

"Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:24

This richness of faith, not material wealth, is what will define the End Time Church. The Church will be glorious, without spot or blemish, and it will perform even greater works than Jesus. However, this will come through trials that force complete dependence on God, particularly when the world rejects believers and denies them access to its economy.

"So that no one will have power to buy or sell unless he bears the stamp (mark, inscription), [that is] the name of the beast or the number of his name." Revelation 13:17

In times of weakness, God's strength is perfected. His grace is always sufficient to empower believers to endure.

"But He said to me, My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for My strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and show themselves most effective in [your] weakness. Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me! So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; for when I am weak [in human strength], then am I [truly] strong (able, powerful in divine strength)." 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Encouragement Through Trials

"Fear nothing that you are about to suffer. [Dismiss your dread and your fears!] Behold, the devil is indeed about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested and proved and critically appraised, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be loyally faithful unto death [even if you must die for it], and I will give you the crown of life." Revelation 2:10

The "ten days" of affliction symbolizes a period of trial, as scripture often equates one day to a year. This signifies a significant period of persecution, in all likelihood not a literal ten days. For instance, the trials endured by Paul, Peter, and John far exceeded a mere ten days, making this reference symbolic of extended hardship. However, Jesus always provides the perfect amount of grace and ability for His body to not only endure the hardship but thrive during it.

"For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a

landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently." 1 Corinthians 10:13

"I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency]." Philippians 4:13

Why Not a Pre-Tribulation Rapture?

An essential question arises: If a pre-tribulation rapture exists, why weren't these believers spared from their trial? Revelation presents the entire End Times in its fullness, and these believers are clearly not raptured out of their situation. Instead, they are called to endure with the assurance that the First and the Last, Who died and rose again, will empower them.

This example highlights that God's strength and glory are revealed in our weaknesses. The promise is not escape from trials but victory through them, with Christ enabling His people to overcome and receive the crown of life. This reality calls for steadfast faith, trusting that Jesus' presence and power will sustain us in every trial.

Victory Over the Second Death

"He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). He who overcomes (is victorious) shall in no way be injured by the second death." Revelation 2:11)

For the faithful believers in Smyrna, the promise of overcoming extends beyond merely avoiding harm on Judgment Day. It signifies thriving in eternal life and inheriting blessings that far outweigh their earthly trials. Their suffering is not in vain; it is a mark of righteousness, aligning with God's promises to the meek, the persecuted, and the downtrodden.

"Blessed (happy, blithesome, joyous, spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the meek (the mild, patient, long-suffering), for they shall inherit the earth!" Matthew 5:5

"But many [who are now] first will be last [then], and many [who are now] last will be first [then]." Mark 10:31

"But even in case you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, [you are] blessed (happy, to be envied). Do not dread or be afraid of their threats, nor be disturbed [by their opposition]." 1 Peter 3:14

Suffering as a Blessing

The Kingdom of God operates on principles often contrary to worldly understanding. The hardships believers endure on earth refine them and deepen their reliance on God's strength. The more challenges the Father allows His children to face, the greater the blessings and eternal rewards they receive.

The Truth is that the harder our Father makes it for us on this earth the more blessed we are. This may not be a popular message, but it is the Truth and continually hearing it will set us free.

Suffering for righteousness fosters spiritual prosperity, a reality that reshapes how believers view trials. When these truths are internalized, they bring freedom, hope, and strength to endure, knowing that the ultimate outcome is life eternal and abundant blessings in the presence of the Lord.

The Church in Pergamum: A Call to Truth and Holiness

"Then to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in Pergamum write: These are the words of Him Who has and wields the sharp two-edged sword:" Revelation 2:12

Pergamum, meaning "mixed marriage," was a divided city located in modern-day Turkey. Known for its diversity, Pergamum briefly served as the capital of Roman Asia and had a population of approximately 200,000. The church in Pergamum was situated in a spiritually hostile environment, where cultural and religious influences clashed.

Jesus begins His message by asserting His authority over the Word of God, described as a sharp two-edged sword. This emphasizes the power and precision of the Word to discern truth and expose falsehood.

"For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

"So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void [without producing any effect, useless], but it shall accomplish that which I please and purpose, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11

Faithfulness in a Hostile Environment

"I know where you live—a place where Satan sits enthroned. [Yet] you are clinging to and holding fast My name, and you did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed (martyred) in your midst—where Satan dwells." Revelation 2:13

Jesus knew exactly what the church in Pergamum was going through because He was right there with them, empowering them to stand firm in faith despite being in a city rife with spiritual darkness. It was His power that enabled them not to deny the faith, even as they faced persecution and martyrdom, exemplified by Antipas, a faithful witness who paid the ultimate price. This is exactly how He will empower those who are part of Him on the earth during the Last Days.

"Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 1 Corinthians 15:55

A Warning Against Compromise

"Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: you have some people there who are clinging to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to set a trap and a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, [to entice them] to eat food that had been sacrificed to idols and to practice lewdness [giving themselves up to sexual vice]." Revelation 2:14

Jesus rebukes the leaders, or messengers, of the church for tolerating false teachings, specifically the doctrine of Balaam. Balaam's teachings led to idolatry and immorality, corrupting God's people. Jesus emphasizes the danger of allowing even small compromises to infiltrate the church.

"A little leaven will leaven the whole lump of dough." 1 Corinthians 5:6

Relevance for Today's Church

Modern churches, especially those in culturally diverse cities, face similar challenges. In an effort to be inclusive or avoid offense, some allow false teachings to blend with biblical truths, diluting the Gospel. Jesus warns against such compromise, emphasizing the need for leaders to uphold the truth without wavering.

"Not many [of you] should become teachers (self-constituted censors and reprovers of others), my brethren, for you know that we [teachers] will be judged by a higher

standard and with greater severity [than other people; thus we assume the greater accountability and the more condemnation]." James 3:1

Leaders must remain steadfast, refusing to adopt teachings that stray from God's Word. True success in a church is measured by its faithfulness to Christ, not by its size or popularity. This can only be accomplished by the true anointing of Jesus on a leader's life. The love a true leader will never allow anything to hinder the life's of those he has been empowered to shepherd.

The Church in Pergamum: A Call to Repentance and Faithfulness

"You also have some who in a similar way are clinging to the teaching of the Nicolaitans [those corrupters of the people] which thing I hate." Revelation 2:15

Pergamum, as a significant and influential city, naturally faced challenges related to pride and social divides. This environment gave rise to Nicolaitan teachings, which promoted a hierarchical structure that contradicted the Gospel's message of humility and equality. The Nicolaitans fostered a sense of superiority, suggesting that God's blessings were based on human merit or position.

God's Impartiality

Our Father does not show favoritism. Whether we are being disciplined or blessed, His grace remains constant in our lives. None of us are abandoned, and salvation is not contingent upon our deeds but upon God's sovereign will and work.

"Also when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward in full already." Matthew 6:5

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18

The prideful spirit of the Nicolaitans mirrors much of what we see in today's religious culture, where some profess superiority over others because of salvation or good works. Jesus modeled the opposite, a life of humility and inclusion.

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking [with others], and they say, Behold, a glutton and a wine drinker, a friend of tax collectors and [especially wicked] sinners! Yet wisdom is justified and vindicated by what she does (her deeds) and by her children." Matthew 11:19

Jesus' Call to Repentance

"Repent [then]! Or else I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword of My mouth." Revelation 2:16

The Sword of Jesus' mouth, His Word, brings grace, mercy, and truth. He does not change, and His message remains consistent across all ages. For those struggling within compromised churches, His words serve as a reminder of His control and His power to guide His faithful through the challenges.

"For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

Jesus' rebuke is not an expression of wrath toward His people but a call to purity and truth. His desire is for His chosen ones to stand firm in the face of false teachings, trusting in His ability to sustain and empower them. Jesus is not passive in our life's. If there is an issue, He addresses it. He does this because we are His body and just as your head addresses issues as soon as they arise, so does Jesus with His flesh.

Hidden Manna and the White Stone

"He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). To him who overcomes (conquers), I will give to eat of the manna that is hidden, and I will give him a white stone with a new name engraved on the stone, which no one knows or understands except he who receives it." Revelation 2:17

The hidden manna represents the sustaining, spiritual provision of Christ for His faithful. In the same way that manna nourished the Israelites in the wilderness, Jesus provides spiritual strength for those who trust Him, especially in times of trial.

The white stone, engraved with a new name, symbolizes personal acceptance, redemption, and a unique relationship with Christ. It serves as an assurance of victory for those who are empowered to remain faithful, even amidst adversity.

A Message of Hope for All Churches

The messages to the churches, including Pergamum, reveal challenges that are just as relevant today. Whether facing persecution, compromise, or forgetting their dependence on Christ, these churches reflect the struggles of believers throughout history. Yet, the overarching message is one of hope: Jesus remains with His people, working through them to accomplish His purposes.

"Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling or slipping or falling, and to present [you] unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory in triumphant joy and exultation [with unspeakable, ecstatic delight]" Jude 1:24

"And He will establish you to the end [keep you steadfast, give you strength, and guarantee your vindication; He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)." 1 Corinthians 1:8

Through correction, grace, and discipline, Jesus assures us that His plans for His people will prevail. He is with us always, refining us into His glorious image and ensuring that His grace abounds even in the face of our failings.

"But then Law came in, [only] to expand and increase the trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]. But where sin increased and abounded, grace (God's unmerited favor) has surpassed it and increased the more and superabounded," Romans 5:20

The Church in Thyatira: A Message of Encouragement and Correction

"And to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, Who has eyes that flash like a flame of fire, and Whose feet glow like bright and burnished and white-hot bronze:" Revelation 2:18

The description of Jesus in this passage highlights His power, stability, and penetrating judgment. His eyes, like a flame of fire, signify His ability to see and judge with purity and righteousness.

Jesus: Our Firm Foundation and Source of Strength

The glowing bronze feet of Jesus symbolize His unchanging nature and His ability to remain victorious in all circumstances. He is the foundation on which believers securely stand, knowing that He will always uphold them, even in trials.

"The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)." John 10:10

"Little children, you are of God [you belong to Him] and have [already] defeated and overcome them [the agents of the antichrist], because He Who lives in you is greater (mightier) than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:4

To the saved, this assurance provides peace and comfort. We know that Jesus will never leave us or forsake us, no matter what challenges we face.

"Let your character or moral disposition be free from love of money [including greed, avarice, lust, and craving for earthly possessions] and be satisfied with your present [circumstances and with what you have]; for He [God] has said, I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not, [I

will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake nor let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!] Hebrews 13:5

The Fire of His Spirit

The eyes of Jesus, filled with fire, reflect the power and purity of the Holy Spirit. This fire represents His ability to purify and empower His Church.

"The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is sound, your entire body will be full of light." Matthew 6:22

Through His fiery gaze, Jesus sees into the hearts and deeds of His Church. He understands the struggles, victories, and growth of His people.

Commendation for Thyatira's Growth

"I know your record and what you are doing, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your recent works are more numerous and greater than your first ones." Revelation 2:19

Jesus acknowledges the Church's growth in love, faith, service, and perseverance. He highlights their spiritual progress, recognizing that their recent works surpass their earlier ones. This commendation reflects the active work of Christ within His Bride, empowering her to grow and flourish.

"I have made Your Name known to them and revealed Your character and Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them." John 17:26

"Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

A Church Empowered by Christ

The message to Thyatira reminds us that Jesus is intimately involved in His Church. He is the source of love, faith, and perseverance, and He equips His people to perform greater works as they grow in Him. This encouragement, paired with His correction, ensures that the Church remains steadfast and fruitful in all circumstances.

Just as He commended Thyatira for their increasing faithfulness, Jesus empowers every believer to trust in His unshakable strength and the refining power of His Spirit to complete the work He began in them.

The Tolerance of Jezebel and Jesus' Correction

"But I have this against you: that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess [claiming to be inspired], and who is teaching and leading astray my servants and beguiling them into practicing sexual vice and eating food sacrificed to idols." Revelation 2:20

Jesus, in His infinite knowledge, established the Church of Thyatira fully aware of its shortcomings. Despite its flaws, this church remained a Golden Lampstand, a symbol of its value and purpose in His kingdom. Jesus' correction here reflects His love and commitment to refining His Church. The tolerance of Jezebel, who symbolizes false teaching and moral corruption, posed a threat to the spiritual integrity of the Church. Yet, Jesus does not abandon them; instead, He offers them correction to bring restoration.

The Loving Correction of Jesus

It's important to remember that God, in His wisdom, created man to be disobedient so that He might extend mercy to all men alike. Jesus understands this and works within our very nature, removing falsehoods and cleansing us from impurity.

"For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]." Romans 11:32

A loving parent corrects their child, not to harm, but to nurture growth and bring about greater potential. Similarly, Jesus points out the faults of the Church, not to condemn but to lead them into deeper faith and righteousness. The Church's tolerance of Jezebel was an area that needed purging for their ultimate good. Jesus' correction is an invitation for them to align with the Truth.

"So faith comes by hearing [what is told], and what is heard comes by the preaching [of the message that came from the lips] of Christ (the Messiah Himself)." Romans 10:17

"Those whom I [dearly and tenderly] love, I tell their faults and convict and convince and reprove and chasten [I discipline and instruct them]. So be enthusiastic and in earnest and burning with zeal and repent [changing your mind and attitude]." Revelation 3:19

This demonstrates that our imperfections do not limit Jesus from working through us. If something needs correction, He will accomplish it. He does not fail in completing His work in us.

"As it is written, None is righteous, just and truthful and upright and conscientious, no, not one." Romans 3:10

A Warning for Churches Today

The message to Thyatira resonates with churches today, especially those reluctant to address uncomfortable truths such as sexual immorality or other sins. Many churches prioritize inclusivity over Truth, fearing that correction might offend or reduce attendance. However, true spiritual leaders, empowered by the Holy Spirit, lovingly welcome all while addressing sin to lead people into freedom.

"Not many [of you] should become teachers (self-constituted censors and reprovers of others), my brethren, for you know that we [teachers] will be judged by a higher standard and with greater severity [than other people; thus we assume the greater accountability and the more condemnation]." James 3:1

Ignoring sin for the sake of growth or acceptance compromises the Church's integrity and fails to lead people into the abundant life Jesus offers.

Jezebel's Refusal to Repent

"I gave her time to repent, but she has no desire to repent of her immorality [symbolic of idolatry] and refuses to do so." (Revelation 2:21)

Even knowing Jezebel's hardened heart, Jesus extended grace and the opportunity for repentance. This reveals His mercy and patience, even toward those who oppose Him. However, Jezebel's unrepentance identified her as a wolf among sheep. While wolves may infiltrate religious institutions or denominations, Jesus will never allow them to overtake His true Church or harm His chosen ones.

"While I was with them, I kept and preserved them in Your Name [in the knowledge and worship of You]. Those You have given Me I guarded and protected, and not one of them has perished or is lost except the son of perdition [Judas Iscariot—the one who is now doomed to destruction, destined to be lost], that the Scripture might be fulfilled." John 17:12

This assurance gives great peace to believers. Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, protects His flock from spiritual harm and ensures that even in correction, His grace and purpose prevail.

The Judgment of Jezebel and Her Followers

"Take note: I will throw her on a bed [of anguish], and those who commit adultery with her [her paramours] I will bring down to pressing distress and severe affliction, unless they turn away their minds from conduct [such as] hers and repent of their doings." Revelation 2:22

Jesus demonstrates His zealous love for His Church through correction. Jezebel's refusal to repent did not deter Him from doing what was necessary to address the sin in Thyatira. His actions are not acts of revenge but of restoration. The discipline He administers targets the flesh, which has no lasting value, to save the spirit.

"And to keep me from being puffed up and too much elated by the exceeding greatness (preeminence) of these revelations, there was given me a thorn (a splinter) in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to rack and buffet and harass me, to keep me from being excessively exalted. Three times I called upon the Lord and besought [Him] about this and begged that it might depart from me; But He said to me, My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for My strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and show themselves most effective in [your] weakness. Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me!" 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

"It is the Spirit Who gives life [He is the Life-giver]; the flesh conveys no benefit whatever [there is no profit in it]. The words (truths) that I have been speaking to you are spirit and life." John 6:63

"You are to deliver this man over to Satan for physical discipline [to destroy carnal lusts which prompted him to incest], that [his] spirit may [yet] be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Corinthians 5:5

Paul's experience illustrates how Jesus uses discipline to refine His people. The trials of the flesh are temporary tools to fulfill His eternal purposes.

"For the Lord corrects and disciplines everyone whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes." Hebrews 12:6

The Death of Jezebel's Followers and the Recognition of God's Justice

"And I will strike her children (her proper followers) dead [thoroughly exterminating them]. And all the assemblies (churches) shall recognize and understand that I am He Who searches minds (the thoughts, feelings, and purposes) and the [inmost] hearts, and I will give to each of you [the reward for what you have done] as your work deserves." Revelation 2:23

Death is often viewed as the ultimate punishment, but the scriptures reveal a deeper purpose: correction and redemption. Even in death, Jesus' work continues. This is evident in His ministry to the spirits in prison, including those who lived during Noah's time.

"In which He went and preached to the spirits in prison, [The souls of those] who long before in the days of Noah had been disobedient, when God's patience waited during the

building of the ark in which a few [people], actually eight in number, were saved through water." 1 Peter 3:19-20

Hades is not merely a place of punishment but also of correction. If death is required to free someone from sin, Jesus will act in love to achieve their ultimate salvation. His correction also serves as a witness to the assemblies, affirming His righteous judgment.

"But if any person's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire." 1 Corinthians 3:15

Jesus' mission is to win humanity back to God. He will do whatever is necessary to ensure that all people spend eternity with Him. Some will be His Bride, others His guests, but His victory over sin and death is certain.

"Well then, as one man's trespass [one man's false step and falling away led] to condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men." Romans 5:18

A Word to the Faithful in Thyatira

"But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not explored and known the depths of Satan, as they say—I tell you that I do not lay upon you any other [fresh] burden." Revelation 2:24

Jesus acknowledges those in Thyatira who have not succumbed to the false teachings and practices symbolized by Jezebel. He reassures them that He will not place additional burdens on them, affirming His understanding of their faithfulness amidst adversity.

Satan's activity, even among God's people, is never autonomous. Any power he exercises is subject to Jesus' permission, as shown in the scriptures.

"Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has asked excessively that [all of] you be given up to him [out of the power and keeping of God], that he might sift [all of] you like grain." Luke 22:31

God's Purpose in Allowing Satan to Test His Children

Why would Jesus allow Satan to have any influence over His people? The answer lies in God's overarching plan to refine and strengthen His children. Even Satan's actions ultimately serve to glorify God and fulfill His purposes.

Satan, though a fallen being, continues to play a role in God's divine economy. By allowing him to test believers, God brings about their spiritual growth and reliance on Him. As the flesh weakens

through trials, the Spirit grows stronger, enabling believers to be used in greater ways to glorify God.

"And to keep me from being puffed up and too much elated by the exceeding greatness (preeminence) of these revelations, there was given me a thorn (a splinter) in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to rack and buffet and harass me, to keep me from being excessively exalted." 2 Corinthians 12:7

Paul's testimony exemplifies how God uses even Satan's attempts to hinder His people as a means of strengthening their faith and reliance on Him. This divine orchestration ensures that all things work together for good for those who love God.

Hold Fast and Overcome

"Only hold fast to what you have until I come. And he who overcomes (is victorious) and who obeys My commands to the [very] end [doing the works that please Me], I will give him authority and power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a sceptre (rod) of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, and [his power over them shall be] like that which I Myself have received from My Father;" (Revelation 2:25-27)

The call to "hold fast" is not a command reliant on human strength but an assurance rooted in the Holy Spirit's work within us. It is the Spirit of God Who ensures that we remain steadfast and victorious. We belong to Jesus as His Bride, and He will not lose any who have been entrusted to Him.

"And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that I should not lose any of all that He has given Me, but that I should give new life and raise [them all] up at the last day." John 6:39

"And He will establish you to the end [keep you steadfast, give you strength, and guarantee your vindication; He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)." 1 Corinthians 1:8

Our future is nothing short of glorious. Jesus promises that we will share in His authority and reign alongside Him over the nations. This is a profound privilege and a testament to His Spirit's work within us, empowering us to live victoriously and serve as He serves.

During the Great Tribulation, the world will witness the power of Jesus working abundantly through His people. In the Millennial Reign, they will see the Church ruling and serving with Him. For eternity, we will share in His glory, forever united with Him.

The Promise of the Morning Star

"And I will give him the Morning Star." Revelation 2:28

The Morning Star is Jesus Himself. This promise reminds us that we already possess Him in His fullness. He is alive within us, and we are alive in Him, having been united with Him in His death, resurrection, and life.

"Are you ignorant of the fact that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by the baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious [power] of the Father, so we too might [habitually] live and behave in newness of life. For if we have become one with Him by sharing a death like His, we shall also be [one with Him in sharing] His resurrection [by a new life lived for God]." Romans 6:3-5

"I have been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Galatians 2:20

"And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One)." Ephesians 2:6

We have Jesus now, and are one with Him, but when He returns, we will also receive glorified physical bodies, just like His.

"Beloved, we are [even here and] now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be [hereafter], but we know that when He comes and is manifested, we shall [as God's children] resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He [really] is." 1 John 3:2

A Call to Hear and Heed

"He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the [Holy] Spirit says to the assemblies (churches)." Revelation 2:29

Hearing and understanding God's Word is possible only through the work of the Holy Spirit in us. This is why we never boast in our ability to hear but instead glorify God, Who empowers us to thrive in His truth.

There are those who shy away from the Book of Revelation, but Jesus ensures His chosen ones will continue to hear and proclaim its truths. Reading and listening to this prophecy out loud brings a special blessing, strengthening the Church to endure and glorify the success of Jesus.

The Church at Sardis: A Wake-Up Call

"And to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in Sardis write: These are the words of Him Who has the seven Spirits of God [the sevenfold Holy Spirit] and the seven stars: I know your record and what you are doing; you are supposed to be alive, but [in reality] you are dead." (Revelation 3:1)

Sardis, meaning "those who come out," was a Greek city known for its strategic military presence, bustling commerce, and fertile lands. Despite its outward signs of prosperity, Jesus delivers a sobering message to this church: though they appear alive, they are spiritually dead.

Jesus begins by declaring that He holds the Seven Spirits of God, the fullness of the Holy Spirit. This is significant because He immediately follows with the indictment of their spiritual condition. Despite their death-like state, Jesus assures them of the answer to their restoration, the Perfect Spirit of God, which empowers and brings life. Jesus rose from the dead and He is more than capable of raising people from spiritual death.

The answer is never human effort or will. The only answer that will ever hold up to the tests of this world is the power of the Holy Spirit operating through us.

"And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the reverential and obedient fear of the Lord—" Isaiah 11:2

The Spirit of God is the source of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. It is the Spirit that counsels with truth, provides strength, instills reverence for God, and empowers obedience. Even though the message of Sardis had grown stale and lifeless, Jesus offers them the Spirit as the key to renewal and life.

"So faith comes by hearing [what is told], and what is heard comes by the preaching [of the message that came from the lips] of Christ (the Messiah Himself)." Romans 10:17

Hope for Restoration

The message to Sardis highlights that Jesus still walks among them and that makes Him responsible for them. Even in this terrible state they remain a Golden Lampstand, and His presence signifies that all hope is not lost. Though the message they carried had become dead, the church itself was not beyond redemption. Jesus provides the truth that they need: the life-giving power of God through His Spirit.

This reveals a powerful reality: even when the Church falters, Jesus does not abandon it. Instead, He provides correction and the resources needed for restoration.

The responsibility for the condition of Sardis lies with its messenger. Jesus is addressing the leaders, urging them to return to the truth and align their message with the Spirit of God. If the Church were truly beyond hope, it would no longer be golden, and Jesus would not be walking among them.

This is a reminder for us today. Even when our faith feels weak or stagnant, Jesus is present, providing the Spirit to bring renewal and strength. Through His Spirit, He empowers us to wake up, recognize our need, and rely on His power to breathe life into all that has grown dormant.

Wake Up and Strengthen What Remains

"Rouse yourselves and keep awake, and strengthen and invigorate what remains and is on the point of dying; for I have not found a thing that you have done [any work of yours] meeting the requirements of My God or perfect in His sight." Revelation 3:2

Jesus admonishes the Church at Sardis to awaken from their spiritual slumber and to revive what little life remains. While Sardis was actively performing works, their efforts were not meeting God's standards. Their works were rooted in human effort rather than the divine power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, they had a form of godliness but were denying its transformative power.

"For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it [their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession]. Avoid [all] such people [turn away from them]." 2 Timothy 3:5

Despite this harsh rebuke, the Church still was referred to as a Golden Lampstand. This indicates that there are true, born-again believers within the congregation, though their leadership and direction was faltering. Jesus declares that He is the God of the living, not the dead, emphasizing that even in a spiritually struggling church, life remains where His Spirit dwells.

"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living!" Matthew 22:32

The Call to Perfection Through Christ

Jesus' instructs us to "be perfect" as our Father in Heaven is perfect and to many that might seem impossible, but it is achievable because of Christ in us. Through Him, we are empowered to live in a state of godliness and maturity that reflects His perfection. This perfection is not achieved through human effort but by abiding in the power and work of Jesus.

"You, therefore, must be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity], as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:48

*"For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne."
Matthew 11:30*

Sardis was declared to be dying because their works stemmed from human effort rather than being the result of the Father's power working within them. This is evident because Jesus said, "I know your works," rather than, "I know the works of My Father within you." This distinction highlights their reliance on human strength rather than divine empowerment.

For Sardis, revival would require shifting from self-reliance to total dependence on the Holy Spirit. The Church is called not to strive in its own strength but to embrace the transformative work of Jesus, Who perfects and completes us. Through Him, the burden becomes light, and the yoke becomes easy

A Call to Repentance and Vigilance

*"So call to mind the lessons you received and heard; continually lay them to heart and obey them, and repent. In case you will not rouse yourselves and keep awake and watch, I will come upon you like a thief, and you will not know or suspect at what hour I will come."
Revelation 3:3*

Jesus urges Sardis to remember the Truth they have been taught, to hold it dear, and to return to a life of obedience and repentance. Though their works were lifeless, there were still those among them who were enabled by God to hear and respond to His Word. This demonstrates that even in spiritual decline, Jesus does not abandon His Church. Jesus will never leave us or forsake us. His gifts and His calling are irrevocable, He never withdraws them once He has given them.

"No one is able to come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me attracts and draws him and gives him the desire to come to Me, and [then] I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day." John 6:44

The Danger of Self-Focus and Dead Works

In the Last Days, Scripture warns that people will become self-centered, proud, and boastful, even while claiming to be spiritual. A church focused on self-promotion: its works, leadership, or denomination, misses the mark of true love. Love, as Jesus taught, is never boastful or self-seeking. Sardis' failure to love rendered their works dead in the sight of God.

"And the love of the great body of people will grow cold because of the multiplied lawlessness and iniquity." Matthew 24:12

"Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily." 1 Corinthians 13:4

When self-focus replaces love for God and others, the result is spiritual death. However, Jesus' love for His Church remains steadfast. He will not forsake His people, even when they stray. Instead, He allows trials to come as a means of discipline, leading to repentance and restored life.

The Transforming Power of Godly Discipline

Jesus' discipline is always for our good, designed to bring about repentance, salvation, and deliverance. Through godly sorrow, He moves His Church from lifeless works to a renewed relationship with Him. Sardis is assured that their trials are not acts of abandonment but of divine love and correction.

"For godly grief and the pain God is permitted to direct, produce a repentance that leads and contributes to salvation and deliverance from evil, and it never brings regret; but worldly grief (the hopeless sorrow that is characteristic of the pagan world) is deadly [breeding and ending in death]." 2 Corinthians 7:10

"You are to deliver this man over to Satan for physical discipline [to destroy carnal lusts which prompted him to incest], that [his] spirit may [yet] be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Corinthians 5:5

Jesus' purpose is always restoration and life. His discipline corrects, refines, and equips His Church to fulfill its calling, ensuring that His people are prepared for His return. Sardis is reminded to wake up, hold fast to the Truth, and remain vigilant, for Jesus is coming, and with Him, the fullness of His promises.

Jesus' Faithfulness Amid Spiritual Despair

"Yet you still have a few [persons'] names in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes, and they shall walk with Me in white, because they are worthy and deserving." Revelation 3:4

Even in a church as spiritually lifeless as Sardis, Jesus preserved a remnant of faithful believers. This is a testament to His unwavering commitment to His Body. Earlier, we saw Jesus' presence among His followers in Pergamum, even as they lived at the seat of Satan's influence.

Yes, though I walk through the [deep, sunless] valley of the shadow of death, I will fear or dread no evil, for You are with me; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

"I know where you live—a place where Satan sits enthroned. [Yet] you are clinging to and holding fast My name, and you did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed (martyred) in your midst—where Satan dwells." Revelation 2:13

Jesus' Grace in the Midst of Evil

No amount of evil, whether from Satan, the world, sin, or the anti-christ, can drive Jesus away from those who need Him. As darkness abounds, so does His grace. Jesus disciplines His people when they falter, but He never forsakes them. His mercy surpasses all sin and ensures restoration.

"But then Law came in, [only] to expand and increase the trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]. But where sin increased and abounded, grace (God's unmerited favor) has surpassed it and increased the more and superabounded," Romans 5:20

"So then [God's gift] is not a question of human will and human effort, but of God's mercy. [It depends not on one's own willingness nor on his strenuous exertion as in running a race, but on God's having mercy on him.]" Romans 9:16

Jesus' faithfulness ensures that no matter how dark a situation may seem, He is present, working to redeem and restore. His abundant grace and mercy continually surpass all sin, bringing hope and renewal to His people.

The Promise to the Victorious in Sardis

Thus shall he who conquers (is victorious) be clad in white garments, and I will not erase or blot out his name from the Book of Life; I will acknowledge him [as Mine] and I will confess his name openly before My Father and before His angels. He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the [Holy] Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). Revelation 3:5-6

Through Christ, we are more than conquerors, and it is solely by His grace that we are clad in white garments. Our salvation is a gift, irrevocable and eternal, secured by Jesus' finished work at the Cross.

Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us. Romans 8:37

I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, the person whose ears are open to My words [who listens to My message] and believes and trusts in and clings to and relies on Him Who sent Me has (possesses now) eternal life. And he does not come into judgment [does not incur sentence of judgment, will not come under condemnation], but he has already passed over out of death into life. John 5:24

Though some argue that names can be removed from the Book of Life, Scripture assures us that God's gifts, including salvation, are irrevocable.

For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. [He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call.] Romans 11:29

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never lose it or perish throughout the ages. [To all eternity they shall never by any means be destroyed.] And no one is able to snatch them out of My hand. John 10:28

Jesus does not erase names from the Book of Life because His work on the Cross was entirely successful. Our inclusion in the Book of Life is based on His grace, not our merit. His Spirit ensures that we will hear and respond to Him.

The Open Door of Philadelphia

And to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in Philadelphia write: These are the words of the Holy One, the True One, He Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shall shut, Who shuts and no one shall open. Revelation 3:7

Philadelphia, meaning "brotherly love," was renowned for its fertile vineyards and location on a major trade route. Jesus begins by affirming His authority and power, emphasizing that what He establishes cannot be undone.

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking under the power and influence of the [Holy] Spirit of God can [ever] say, Jesus be cursed! And no one can [really] say, Jesus is [my] Lord, except by and under the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.1 Corinthians 12:3

For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. [He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call.] Romans 11:29

Jesus assures this church that the door He has opened will remain open. This unshakeable assurance is rooted in God's sovereignty and grace. The Bride of Christ is eternally secure in His love and purpose.

And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that I should not lose any of all that He has given Me, but that I should give new life and raise [them all] up at the last day. John 6:39

Jesus' declaration to Philadelphia differs from His messages to other churches. He confidently proclaims that the door is open and will not close, providing profound peace and assurance to the faithful.

And those whom He thus foreordained, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified (acquitted, made righteous, putting them into right standing with Himself). And those whom He justified, He also glorified [raising them to a heavenly dignity and condition or state of being]. Romans 8:30

By His Spirit, we have been adopted as God's children and given a spirit of power, love, and sound judgment. This is our assurance that we will prevail and fulfill the purposes He has prepared for us.

For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! Romans 8:15

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7

A Faithful Church with a Little Power

I know your [record of] works and what you are doing. See! I have set before you a door wide open which no one is able to shut; I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept My Word and guarded My message and have not renounced or denied My name. Revelation 3:8

Jesus affirms His presence and intimate knowledge of the Church of Philadelphia, just as He is present with us. Though they have little power, He assures them that their faithfulness will lead to His mighty works. The open door symbolizes opportunities that no one can obstruct, emphasizing that it is His strength, not theirs, that matters.

He said to them, Because of the littleness of your faith [that is, your lack of firmly relying trust]. For truly I say to you, if you have faith [that is living] like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, Move from here to yonder place, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. Matthew 17:20

So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; for when I am weak [in human strength], then am I [truly] strong (able, powerful in divine strength). 2 Corinthians 12:10

This passage reminds us that during times of persecution or hardship, God's power is made perfect in our weakness. True believers will thrive in challenging times, including the Great Tribulation, as God's strength flows through them.

Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling or slipping or falling, and to present [you] unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory in triumphant joy and exultation [with unspeakable, ecstatic delight]—Jude 1:24

The Synagogue of Satan and the Power of Forgiveness

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

This verse encapsulates the power of God's love and forgiveness. Even those who persecuted and rejected Jesus will learn love from His faithful ones. It reflects the truth that love triumphs over all, and forgiveness is the hallmark of God's kingdom.

Bless those who persecute you [who are cruel in their attitude toward you]; bless and do not curse them. Romans 12:14

[Now having received the Holy Spirit, and being led and directed by Him] if you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of anyone, they are retained. John 20:23

The bowing of the wicked to the righteous does not happen in the present age. Throughout Scripture, bowing to men is discouraged. However, this acknowledgment will occur after Jesus physically returns to rule the earth. The transformation of believers into Christ-like beings will allow them to embody His nature fully.

Beloved, we are [even here and] now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be [hereafter], but we know that when He comes and is manifested, we shall [as God's children] resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He [really] is. 1 John 3:2

During the Millennial Reign and beyond, the wicked will bow to the redeemed, acknowledging that God's love was with them. This acknowledgment will be a part of their learning and transformation. This insight challenges traditional teachings about eternal punishment and reveals God's redemptive purpose, even for those who opposed Him.

The wicked will bow down before the gate of the righteous, and sinners will fall down at their gates. Proverbs 14:19

The Truth is greater than what many have been taught. Jesus' plan includes redemption and restoration, even for those who were once His enemies. Through His chosen ones, the world will see and learn of His enduring love.

Kept Through the Hour of Trial

Because you have guarded and kept My word of patient endurance [have held fast the lesson of My patience with the expectant endurance that I give you], I also will keep you [safe] from the hour of trial (testing) which is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell upon the earth. Revelation 3:10

Jesus promises to keep His people safe through the coming trials, not by removing them from the earth but by shielding their spirits and empowering them to endure. Many interpret Jesus' protection during the last days as a pre-tribulation rapture; however, Scripture teaches that

believers will remain and be used to bless those who persecute them. Even martyrdom cannot harm the spirit, which is secure in Christ's perfect love.

Take notice! I tell you a mystery (a secret truth, an event decreed by the hidden purpose or counsel of God). We shall not all fall asleep [in death], but we shall all be changed (transformed) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the [sound of the] last trumpet call. For a trumpet will sound, and the dead [in Christ] will be raised imperishable (free and immune from decay), and we shall be changed (transformed). 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him in death]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16

The seventh angel then blew [his] trumpet, and there were mighty voices in heaven, shouting, The dominion (kingdom, sovereignty, rule) of the world has now come into the possession and become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (the Messiah), and He shall reign forever and ever (for the eternities of the eternities)! Revelation 11:15

The dead in Christ will rise first at His return, followed by the transformation of the living. This event occurs at the last trumpet, marking the culmination of all things. Far from a pre-tribulation rapture, this truth underscores that trials will perfect the Church, presenting her spotless before the Lamb.

That He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless]. Ephesians 5:27

The Good Shepherd's Care

I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one may rob you and deprive you of your crown. Revelation 3:11

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, will not lose a single one of His sheep. Our salvation and rewards are secure in Him, as He takes full responsibility for His flock. This assurance gives us peace and confidence in His ability to sustain us, even in the face of trials.

But the hired servant (he who merely serves for wages) who is neither the shepherd nor the owner of the sheep, when he sees the wolf coming, deserts the flock and runs away. And the wolf chases and snatches them and scatters [the flock]. Now the hireling flees because he merely serves for wages and is not himself concerned about the sheep [cares nothing for them]. I am the Good Shepherd; and I know and recognize My own, and My own know and recognize Me— John 10:12-14

A Pillar in God's Sanctuary

He who overcomes (is victorious), I will make him a pillar in the sanctuary of My God; he shall never be put out of it or go out of it, and I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which descends from My God out of heaven, and My own new name. Revelation 3:12

The promise to the overcomer is eternal stability and belonging. The new Jerusalem, meaning "teaching of peace," symbolizes a future where God's presence is visibly known to all. As pillars in this city, believers will teach peace to those who are guests of the kingdom.

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

And those servants went out on the crossroads and got together as many as they found, both bad and good, so [the room in which] the wedding feast [was held] was filled with guests. Matthew 22:10

Our Father's purpose extends beyond saving His Bride. He uses His chosen ones to teach the Truth throughout eternity. This continual service reflects His nature and ensures that His love and wisdom are proclaimed forever.

The Open Door and Jesus' Eternal Voice

He who can hear, let him listen to and heed what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). Revelation 3:13

The open door that Jesus provides cannot be shut by any man. In Him, we are victorious, eternally kept by His power and grace. As His sheep, we will always hear His voice and follow the truth He speaks.

The sheep that are My own hear and are listening to My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me. John 10:27

Three chapters into Revelation and the central message remains simple: Jesus is sovereign, and He is with us all, no matter who we are or how we act. Revelation, far from being complicated, is a message of assurance and victory.

The Amen, the True Witness, and Creator of All

And to the angel (messenger) of the assembly (church) in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the trusty and faithful and true Witness, the Origin and Beginning and Author of God's creation: Revelation 3:14

Laodicea, meaning "people who keep laws," was a prosperous city situated on a major trade route. It was known for its wealth and its trade in black wool. Jesus tells us that as the Creator and Sustainer of all things, He holds authority and responsibility over everything that He has made.

The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Psalm 24:1

Because Jesus created all things, He governs all things for His purposes. His authority ensures that all events, including those in Revelation, serve the ultimate good of God's will—that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose. Romans 8:28

Every event in Revelation serves God's good purposes, aligning with His will to bring all to salvation. This truth is foundational as we move forward in studying the unfolding events of this prophecy.

Neither Cold nor Hot: The Lukewarm Church

I know your [record of] works and what you are doing; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! Revelation 3:15

Jesus came to free us from the bondage of legalistic service. Through the cross, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and sustained by God's grace. Salvation and sanctification are the results of Jesus' work, not our own efforts.

Having cancelled and blotted out and wiped away the handwriting of the note (bond) with its legal decrees and demands which was in force and stood against us (hostile to us). This [note with its regulations, decrees, and demands] He set aside and cleared completely out of our way by nailing it to [His] cross. Colossians 2:14

But now we are discharged from the Law and have terminated all intercourse with it, having died to what once restrained and held us captive. So now we serve not under [obedience to] the old code of written regulations, but [under obedience to the promptings] of the Spirit in newness [of life]. Romans 7:6

Laodicea's prosperity mirrors the dangers of many churches today, where the love of money and material wealth often take precedence. Such attitudes can lead to the false belief that God's favor can be earned or bought, replacing trust in His grace with a misguided reliance on human effort.

The Lukewarm Church and the Call to True Commitment

*So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth!
Revelation 3:16*

Believers are either chosen by the Father as part of the Bride of Christ or they are not. Those who only play at being part of the Church, who trust in themselves rather than in God, are always defeated. Without being rooted in Christ, they quickly wither under persecution, are consumed by worldly concerns, or lose the Truth they hear. Only those truly grafted into the Vine of Jesus bear lasting fruit.

*As for what was sown on thin (rocky) soil, this is he who hears the Word and at once welcomes and accepts it with joy; yet it has no real root in him, but is temporary (inconstant, lasts but a little while); and when affliction or trouble or persecution comes on account of the Word, at once he is caused to stumble [he is repelled and begins to distrust and desert Him Whom he ought to trust and obey] and he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the Word, but the cares of the world and the pleasure and delight and glamour and deceitfulness of riches choke and suffocate the Word, and it yields no fruit. As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the Word and grasps and comprehends it; he indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundred times as much as was sown, in another sixty times as much, and in another thirty.
Matthew 13:20-23*

The Bride of Christ cannot be lukewarm. Whatever hinders her will be pruned away by the Father, ensuring she bears richer and more excellent fruit.

Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [that stops bearing] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses and repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more and richer and more excellent fruit. John 15:2

Spiritual Poverty in the Midst of Wealth

For you say, I am rich; I have prospered and grown wealthy, and I am in need of nothing; and you do not realize and understand that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Revelation 3:17

The description of Laodicea resembles many modern churches that equate material success with spiritual health. Yet, as with many historical mega-churches, such institutions often rely on human

effort and customs to sustain themselves, leaving spiritual needs unmet. In these settings, the blind remain blind, the deaf remain deaf, and the dead are not raised to life. These churches often prioritize wealth, yet Scripture warns that the love of money only leads to ruin.

For the love of money is a root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have been led astray and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute [mental] pangs. 1 Timothy 6:10

But woe to (alas for) you who are rich (abounding in material resources), for you already are receiving your consolation (the solace and sense of strengthening and cheer that come from prosperity) and have taken and enjoyed your comfort in full [having nothing left to be awarded you]. Luke 6:24

Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 19:24

True spiritual wealth comes only from reliance on Christ. While the world may see riches as a sign of success, God desires humility and dependence on Him. The church of Laodicea serves as a warning for all to turn away from self-reliance and seek the riches of God's grace.

The Refining Love of Jesus

Therefore I counsel you to purchase from Me gold refined and tested by fire, that you may be [truly] wealthy, and white clothes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nudity from being seen, and salve to put on your eyes, that you may see. Revelation 3:18

Despite the flaws of the Laodicean church, Jesus remained with them. Their Lampstand was still golden, signifying His presence and their value to Him. Their attachment to worldly wealth and their disobedience could not negate His enduring love and responsibility for them.

For it is easier for a camel to enter through a needle's eye than [for] a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And those who heard it said, Then who can be saved? But He said, What is impossible with men is possible with God. Luke 18:25-27

Jesus uses the imagery of buying gold and salve as a parable, addressing their spiritual blindness and misplaced trust in material wealth. Salvation, however, cannot be bought or earned, it is a gift freely given by God. Many false teachings today parallel this, suggesting that God's favor can be purchased through giving or tithing. Such distortions mirror the arrogance and self-centeredness predicted for the Last Days where men will be lovers of money.

Jesus' Loving Discipline

Those whom I [dearly and tenderly] love, I tell their faults and convict and convince and reprove and chasten [I discipline and instruct them]. So be enthusiastic and in earnest and burning with zeal and repent [changing your mind and attitude]. Revelation 3:19

Jesus' discipline flows from His love. He convicts, persuades, and ultimately brings everyone to acknowledge Him as Lord. His love is not diminished by human failure; even those entrenched in rebellion will be brought to repentance and come to know the Truth. No matter how far a church strays, Jesus' victory is assured, and even the most misguided will be drawn to Him.

For the Lord corrects and disciplines everyone whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes. (Hebrews 12:6)

For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God [acknowledge Him to His honor and to His praise]. (Romans 14:11)

Jesus at the Door

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he [will eat] with Me. Revelation 3:20

To the leaders of Laodicea, Jesus calls for action, He knocks, awaiting their response. Yet, without the Spirit's power, no one can open the door themselves. This contrasts with His message to the Church of Philadelphia, where He declares that He has already opened the door. The sermons in Laodicea likely focused on human effort, on accepting Jesus, acting now, and taking personal responsibility, misplacing the emphasis on human ability rather than divine grace and empowerment.

Such messages persist in churches today, particularly those preoccupied with prosperity and wealth. These teachings place undue pressure on individuals to "choose" Jesus, failing to proclaim the freeing Truth that Jesus first chooses us and empowers us to respond. The Spirit of God places each of us in the Body of Christ, perfectly fitting us into His eternal plan.

But as it is, God has placed and arranged the limbs and organs in the body, each [particular one] of them, just as He wished and saw fit and with the best adaptation. 1 Corinthians 12:18

Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love. Ephesians 1:4

Jesus' call to Laodicea is a reminder that He remains faithful and ready to restore, even to those who have wandered far. His love is persistent, His grace is unearned, and His power is transformative.

The Promise of Victory with Christ

He who overcomes (is victorious), I will grant him to sit beside Me on My throne, as I Myself overcame (was victorious) and sat down beside My Father on His throne. He who is able to hear, let him listen to and heed what the [Holy] Spirit says to the assemblies (churches). Revelation 3:21-22

Jesus extends a powerful promise to His chosen ones: the privilege of sharing His throne. This assurance is grounded in the truth that He has already overcome, and through Him, we too are made victorious. Our victory is not dependent on human effort but on His work in us.

The ability to hear and respond to the Truth is a gift from Jesus through the Holy Spirit. He calls His Bride to listen, and when necessary, He awakens us to His voice and purpose, ensuring that we remain steadfast in Him.

And suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared [standing beside him], and a light shone in the place where he was. And the angel gently smote Peter on the side and awakened him, saying, Get up quickly! And the chains fell off his hands. Acts 12:7

The Assurance of Overcoming

Jesus' promise to those who overcome reminds us of His sovereignty and faithfulness. The challenges we face are met with His strength, and our ability to endure is a reflection of His power working within us. Just as He triumphed over sin and death, He causes us to share in His triumph, ensuring our place alongside Him.

Our hearing is not of our own doing; it is God Who enables us. Through the Holy Spirit, He ensures that His chosen ones will never be lost. Whether through gentle guidance or decisive correction, Jesus will awaken us to His Truth and lead us to eternal victory.

Chapter 8

Revelation 4

The Open Door and the Misinterpretation of Revelation 4:1

After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice which I had heard addressing me like [the calling off] a war trumpet said, Come up here, and I will show you what must take place in the future. Revelation 4:1

This verse has often been misinterpreted as evidence of a pre-tribulation rapture of the Church. However, the context does not support this idea. The Bible shows us that being taken to heaven is not unique to this passage. Paul, Elijah, and Enoch were all taken up to heaven for specific purposes unrelated to avoiding tribulation.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—was caught up to the third heaven. And I know that this man—whether in the body or away from the body I do not know, God knows— 2 Corinthians 12:2-3

And Enoch walked [in habitual fellowship] with God; and he was not, for God took him [home with Him]. Genesis 5:24

As they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire parted the two of them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 2 Kings 2:11

In this case, John was taken to heaven to receive the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This is not indicative of a pre-tribulation escape for believers but rather a unique experience to reveal God's plans.

The Church's Presence Throughout Revelation

Another false claim associated with this passage is that the Church is not mentioned again in Revelation until Chapter 20. This is not true. The Church is mentioned throughout the book, though sometimes indirectly, as Jesus reveals His relationship with His Bride during tribulation and beyond.

We are called to test all teachings against Scripture. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are equipped to discern truth from falsehood.

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you. John 14:26

Here is just a partial list of verses that do mention the Church, or believers between Revelation 4 and 19.

Revelation 5:9-10
Revelation 6:9-11
Revelation 7:3-4
Revelation 7:9-14
Revelation 12:11
Revelation 12:17
Revelation 13:7-10
Revelation 13:14-15
Revelation 18:4

The Open Door

The door in heaven symbolizes an open pathway to God, indicating no separation for His chosen ones. This door represents access, revelation, and intimacy with God.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he [will eat] with Me. Revelation 3:20

The Trumpet Call

The trumpet in prophecy signifies a proclamation for all to hear. The Truth of Revelation is not hidden but openly declared for all who will listen.

I do not call you servants (slaves) any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing (working out). But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. John 15:15

But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future]. John 16:13

The Truth About Tribulation

The idea of escaping tribulation through a pre-tribulation rapture is contrary to Scripture. The Church is empowered to endure, to grow stronger through trials, and to be a beacon of hope for the lost during dark times.

I have made Your Name known to them and revealed Your character and Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them. John 17:26

There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! 1 John 4:18

As we have studied previously, scripture explicitly disproves a pre-tribulation rapture:

Take notice! I tell you a mystery (a secret truth, an event decreed by the hidden purpose or counsel of God). We shall not all fall asleep [in death], but we shall all be changed (transformed) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the [sound of the] last trumpet call. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him in death]. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16

The seventh angel then blew [his] trumpet, and there were mighty voices in heaven, shouting, The dominion (kingdom, sovereignty, rule) of the world has now come into the possession and become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (the Messiah), and He shall reign forever and ever (for the eternities of the eternities)! Revelation 11:15

The Truth is that believers will endure tribulation, empowered by Christ, as His glorious Church is made ready to reign throughout all of history with Him.

The Throne and the Unity of God

At once I came under the [Holy] Spirit's power, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with One seated on the throne! Revelation 4:2

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things and guide us into all truth. This moment in Revelation shows us that God will go to any lengths to reveal His purposes to us. If we need to be taken into heaven, shown a vision, given a dream, or led by a sermon, the Holy Spirit ensures that we are kept and taught.

However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say it is profitable (good, expedient, advantageous) for you that I go away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you [into close fellowship with you]; but if I go away, I will send Him to you [to be in close fellowship with you]. John 16:7

One Throne, One God

John sees the throne of heaven and notes that One is seated upon it. This profound vision emphasizes the absolute unity of God. Though Jesus is seated with the Father, as described in other scriptures, John only sees one figure on the throne. This reflects the seamless unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, along with the oneness we share with them through Christ.

And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One). Ephesians 2:6

That they all may be one, [just] as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe and be convinced that You have sent Me. I have given to them the glory and honor which You have given Me, that they may be one [even] as We are one: I in them and You in Me, in order that they may become one and perfectly united, that the world may know and [definitely] recognize that You sent Me and that You have loved them [even] as You have loved Me. John 17:21-23

John's vision assures us that the door to this unity is open, and no one can shut it. This is the unshakable truth of our relationship with God through Christ.

The Peace of Oneness

This oneness with God is the foundation of our strength and peace as believers. Through our union with Christ, we are one with His authority and glory. This is not merely symbolic but a living reality that empowers us to face whatever lies ahead with confidence and joy.

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:30-32

Understanding our unity with God gives us peace and joy as we continue through Revelation. It reminds us that we are not distant observers of God's work but active participants in His plan, seated with Him in heavenly places, sharing in His glory and purpose.

The Throne and Its Radiance

And He Who sat there appeared like [the crystalline brightness of] jasper and [the fiery] sardius, and encircling the throne there was a halo that looked like [a rainbow of] emerald. Revelation 4:4

The imagery surrounding the throne of God is rich with symbolism and meaning. Jasper, with its array of colors, represents the inclusiveness of Christ's sacrifice, embracing people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. Sardius, a deep red, signifies the blood of Jesus that gives us life and purifies us to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Emerald, a vibrant green, reflects life and kingship, and the rainbow signifies peace between humanity and God. Together, these elements remind us of Jesus' complete victory and His role as our King and our Redeemer.

The brilliance and beauty of this vision also serve as a powerful prelude to the Great Tribulation. Jesus reveals His glory and authority, not to boast, but to instill confidence in us that He is in complete control of all events.

The Twenty-Four Elders

Twenty-four other thrones surrounded the throne, and seated on these thrones were twenty-four elders (the members of the heavenly Sanedrin), arrayed in white clothing, with crowns of gold upon their heads. Revelation 4:4

The presence of twenty-four elders surrounding God's throne highlights the divine order and accountability in heaven. While some speculate that these elders represent twelve Old Testament figures and twelve New Testament apostles, scripture does not confirm this directly. What is clear is their role in affirming God's actions, emphasizing that He operates with absolute justice and involvement in His creation.

But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two others, so that every word may be confirmed and upheld by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Matthew 18:16

The elders' agreement with God is not a formality but reflects the collaborative nature of God's governance. Consider instances in scripture where individuals like Abraham, Moses, and even Mary engaged with God, expressing their concerns or appeals to Him. These interactions illustrate God's openness to relationship and accountability, ensuring that His actions are righteous and inclusive.

Examples of Engagement with God

Abraham and Sodom:

Abraham boldly reasoned with God to spare Sodom if righteous individuals could be found within the city. This dialogue demonstrates God's willingness to listen and consider human appeals.

Far be it from You to do such a thing—to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as do the wicked! Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth execute judgment and do righteously? And the Lord said, If I find in the city of Sodom fifty

righteous (upright and in right standing with God), I will spare the whole place for their sake. Genesis 18:25-26

Think about how your head relates to the rest of your body. The head might decide to do something while a leg signals it needs a rest. The head listens, adjusts to help the leg, and still accomplishes its purpose. We are actual members of Jesus' flesh, so of course we have direct communication with our Head.

Moses and Israel:

When God declared His intent to punish Israel, Moses interceded, appealing to God's promises and character. Remarkably, the scripture records that God changed His mind.

Then the Lord turned from the evil which He had thought to do to His people. Exodus 32:14

Mary at the Wedding in Cana:

Even when Jesus indicated that His time to act had not come, Mary persisted, demonstrating faith in His ability to provide.

Jesus said to her, [Dear] woman, what is that to you and to Me? [What do we have in common? Leave it to Me.] My time (hour to act) has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, Whatever He says to you, do it. John 2:5

The Purpose of the Elders

The elders' proximity to the throne underscores their role as witnesses and affirmers of God's actions. Their presence assures us that God's decisions are just, collaborative, and reflective of His unchanging character. This heavenly order highlights that God's sovereignty is not isolated but engages His creation in a relationship of accountability and shared purpose.

This vision of the throne and the elders serves to remind us of the beauty, authority, and relational nature of God's kingdom. It prepares us to trust in His perfect governance as we continue to explore the events of Revelation.

The Power of the Throne

Out from the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne seven blazing torches burned, which are the seven Spirits of God [the sevenfold Holy Spirit]; Revelation 4:5

The throne of God is a place of unmatched power and revelation. Lightning represents the piercing light of truth, charged with power, while thunder symbolizes the proclamation of that truth, heard far and wide. These elements remind us that the presence of God is dynamic, unmistakable, and alive, even during the turbulent storms of the End Times.

The seven blazing torches signify the sevenfold Holy Spirit, the fullness of God's Spirit, active and present to sustain and empower His people. This is a powerful assurance for us when being told of the Last Days, as we are reminded that God's Spirit is not only present but works actively within us.

The Transparent Sea and Divine Vision

And in front of the throne there was also what looked like a transparent glassy sea, as if of crystal. And around the throne, in the center at each side of the throne, were four living creatures (beings) who were full of eyes in front and behind [with intelligence as to what is before and at the rear of them]. Revelation 4:6

The sea before the throne represents humanity, who are often depicted as a sea in prophecy. Its transparency signifies God's complete knowledge and visibility into every person and event: past, present, and future. Nothing is hidden from Him; everything is crystal clear.

The four living creatures, full of eyes, symbolize God's omniscience and control over creation. They may represent various aspects of creation: humanity, domesticated animals, wild animals, and birds. Whether symbolic or literal beings, they serve as reminders that God sees and knows all things instantaneously and intimately.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Matthew 10:29-30

This passage assures us that we are fully known and fully cared for by our Father, Who is sovereign over all creation. His care and knowledge of us does not diminish during the Great Tribulation and actually as Paul wrote, the harder things are for us the Greater our Father becomes in us.

The Four Living Creatures

The first living creature (being) was like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature [was] like a flying eagle. Revelation 4:7

The four living creatures reflect our Father's dominance and authority over all aspects of life, the lion symbolizing power and kingship, the ox representing strength and service, the man reflecting wisdom and intelligence, and the eagle embodying divine majesty and swiftness. Their many eyes confirm that nothing escapes God's sight. From eternity past to the unfolding of the End Times, our Father remains in full control.

These creatures are devoted to serving God and His purposes. They see all things and continually acknowledge God's righteousness. Our Father's control is total and unwavering. He sees the end

from the beginning, and He orchestrates all things for His purposes. This truth reassures us that nothing happens without His knowledge and permission.

*Great is our Lord and of great power; His understanding is inexhaustible and boundless.
Psalm 147:5*

Whenever our hearts in [tormenting] self-accusation make us feel guilty and condemn us. [For we are in God's hands.] For He is above and greater than our consciences (our hearts), and He knows (perceives and understands) everything [nothing is hidden from Him]. 1 John 3:20

God's Omniscience and Salvation

For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. Colossians 1:16

God's all-encompassing knowledge and sovereignty ensure that nothing can surprise or thwart His plans. This includes His plan of salvation. If we are truly chosen and grafted into Him, we cannot lose that salvation. God's gifts and calling are irrevocable.

For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. [He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call.] Romans 11:29

The idea that salvation can be lost contradicts the truth of God's omniscience and sovereignty. He does not make mistakes, and His grace is sufficient to keep us. We are eternally secure in His hands, a truth that gives us peace and confidence as we walk in His power and purpose. However difficult the Last Days may be, we are assured that our Father will not lose His grip on us.

The Worship of the Living Creatures

And the four living creatures, individually having six wings, were full of eyes all over and within [underneath their wings]; and day and night they never stop saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty (Omnipotent), Who was and Who is and Who is to come. Revelation 4:8

The living creatures continually proclaim God's holiness, acknowledging the eternal truth that He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present. Their constant declaration highlights that God's sovereignty is unshakable and eternal. They see everything and understand our complete dependence on Jesus, Whose blood empowers us to bear fruit and walk in righteousness.

Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in

Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing. John 15:4-5

The Overcoming Power of Grace

It is easy to focus on the evil described in Revelation, but the overarching truth is that Jesus has already overcome the world. Through His sacrifice, He has defeated evil and redeemed us. God's grace and mercy ensure our protection from the schemes of the enemy, replacing fear with hope.

I do not ask that You will take them out of the world, but that You will keep and protect them from the evil one. John 17:15

Christ purchased our freedom [redeeming us] from the curse (doom) of the Law [and its condemnation] by [Himself] becoming a curse for us, for it is written [in the Scriptures], Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (is crucified); Galatians 3:13

Who gave (yielded) Himself up [to atone] for our sins [and to save and sanctify us], in order to rescue and deliver us from this present wicked age and world order, in accordance with the will and purpose and plan of our God and Father— Galatians 1:14

The Worship of the Elders

And whenever the living creatures offer glory and honor and thanksgiving to Him Who sits on the throne, Who lives forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities), The twenty-four elders (the members of the heavenly Sanhedrin) fall prostrate before Him Who is sitting on the throne, and they worship Him Who lives forever and ever; and they throw down their crowns before the throne, crying out, Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and dominion, for You created all things; by Your will they were [brought into being] and were created. Revelation 4:9-11

The worship of the living creatures and the elders centers on the ultimate truth: Jesus was successful in His mission. He reigns supreme, having redeemed us through His blood and ensured that we are exactly who we are meant to be.

This worship celebrates Jesus' active role in our lives. He didn't simply save us to leave us to our own devices, He continuously sustains us, ensures our victory, and prepares us for eternity.

She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus [the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, which means Savior], for He will save His people from their sins [that is, prevent them from failing and missing the true end and scope of life, which is God]. Matthew 1:21

Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop

allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.] John 14:27

Assurance in Christ

The vision of the throne and the worship of heaven remind us that Jesus reigns in victory. His grace and peace keep us steady through every storm, and His power ensures that we will not fail. The truth of Revelation is not a story of fear but a proclamation of Jesus' sovereignty and our secure place in His kingdom.

Chapter 9

Revelation 5

The Sealed Scroll

And I saw lying on the open hand of Him Who was seated on the throne a scroll (book) written within and on the back, closed and sealed with seven seals. Revelation 5:1)

The scroll represents the complete and perfect plan of God for the End Times. Written on both the front and back, it signifies that the message is whole, nothing can be added, and nothing is missing. The seven seals emphasize divine perfection, revealing that God's message is fully comprehensive and meticulously planned.

This scroll is given by God, the source of all creation and purpose, ensuring that every detail of the End Times will fulfill His will and lead to the Millennial Reign of Christ.

[This is] the revelation of Jesus Christ [His unveiling of the divine mysteries]. God gave it to Him to disclose and make known to His bond servants certain things which must shortly and speedily come to pass in their entirety. And He sent and communicated it through His angel (messenger) to His bond servant John, Revelation 1:1

For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

The Search for One Worthy

And I saw a strong angel announcing in a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll? And [who is entitled and deserves and is morally fit] to break its seals? And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth [in the realm of the dead, Hades] was able to open

the scroll or to take a [single] look at its contents. And I wept audibly and bitterly because no one was found fit to open the scroll or to inspect it. Revelation 5:2-4

The angel's proclamation is loud and bold, reflecting the certainty and power of God's message. However, when no one is initially found worthy to open the scroll, it reveals the profound truth that only Jesus, the Lamb of God, has the authority to reveal and fulfill God's plan.

John's bitter weeping shows the hopelessness and despair that comes when God's plan is hidden. This moment reminds us that humanity cannot achieve understanding or redemption without Jesus. The scroll remains sealed because no one else in all creation possesses the moral fitness or authority to open it.

And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end. Matthew 24:14

Neither is He served by human hands, as though He lacked anything, for it is He Himself Who gives life and breath and all things to all [people]. Acts 17:25

And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever (through the endless eternities of the eternities). Amen (so be it). Philippians 4:19-20

Assurance in Christ

The scene reveals the centrality of Jesus in God's plan. He alone is worthy, and His worthiness will soon be revealed to John and to all of heaven. This serves as a reminder that all hope, understanding, and victory are found in Christ alone. Without Him, there is no access to God's ultimate purpose, but through Him, the entirety of God's plan is revealed and fulfilled.

The Worthiness of the Lamb

Then one of the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] said to me, Stop weeping! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root (Source) of David, has won (has overcome and conquered)! He can open the scroll and break its seven seals! Revelation 5:5

The elder reassures John, reminding him of the victory already accomplished by Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Jesus has triumphed over every obstacle that could separate humanity from God. His mission, to reconcile us to the Father and secure our eternal fellowship with Him, has been fulfilled perfectly. Not only is Jesus worthy to open the scroll, but He also reveals its truth to set us free.

But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthenener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything that I have told you. John 14:26

I do not call you servants (slaves) any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing (working out). But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. [I have revealed to you everything that I have learned from Him.] John 15:15

John's tears of despair are replaced with the hope found in Christ's victory. Humanity is His prize, not to be destroyed but redeemed and freed from all that opposes God's purposes. The unveiling of Revelation is about the ultimate triumph of God's love and justice.

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

The Lamb and His Perfection

And there between the throne and the four living creatures (beings) and among the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God [the sevenfold Holy Spirit] Who have been sent [on duty far and wide] into all the earth. Revelation 5:6

John now sees Jesus in the form of a Lamb that had been slain, standing as the perfect, eternal sacrifice for all of humanity. The seven horns represent complete authority and power, while the seven eyes symbolize perfect vision and knowledge through the Holy Spirit. This image reminds us that Jesus is both all-seeing and all-powerful, equipped to fulfill God's perfect will.

And not a creature exists that is concealed from His sight, but all things are open and exposed, naked and defenseless to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. Inasmuch then as we have a great High Priest Who has [already] ascended and passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [of faith in Him]. For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning. Hebrews 4:13-15

The Lamb's presence among the throne, creatures, and elders affirms His central role in God's plan. Jesus' sacrifice and His perfect knowledge ensure that no detail of God's work is ever overlooked. His perfection is not distant; it is active, personal, and deeply connected to the needs of His creation.

Through Christ's victory, we are assured that the truths revealed in Revelation will bring freedom, hope, and the fulfillment of God's perfect plan for humanity and all creation.

The Lamb's Worthiness and God's Redemptive Plan

He then went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne. And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] prostrated themselves before the Lamb. Each was holding a harp

(lute or guitar), and they had golden bowls full of incense (fragrant spices and gums for burning), which are the prayers of God's people (the saints). Revelation 5:7-8

The act of the elders bowing before Jesus affirms the unity of God and Jesus. What is to be remembered here is that we are Jesus' body, flesh of His Flesh and bone of His Bone. Remember the intimate oneness we share with Christ as His body, granting us unbroken fellowship with God. Through Christ, we are participants in His eternal plan.

In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. John 1:1

This made the Jews more determined than ever to kill Him [to do away with Him]; because He not only was breaking (weakening, violating) the Sabbath, but He actually was speaking of God as being [in a special sense] His own Father, making Himself equal [putting Himself on a level] with God. John 5:18

The golden bowls of incense containing the prayers of the saints show that our prayers are pleasing to God. However, these prayers are not for vengeance or destruction but for healing, freedom, and redemption. Jesus taught us to love and bless even our enemies, and Revelation demonstrates God answering these prayers by ultimately removing evil and restoring His creation.

Bless those who persecute you [who are cruel in their attitude toward you]; bless and do not curse them. Romans 12:14

Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you]. Luke 6:28

The Song of Redemption

And [now] they sing a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the scroll and to break the seals that are on it, for You were slain (sacrificed), and with Your blood You purchased men unto God from every tribe and language and people and nation. Revelation 5:9

The elders sing a song of triumph, not of destruction. Their joy is rooted in the knowledge that Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient for all. His blood has the power to redeem humanity from every tribe, tongue, and nation. This universal scope of salvation reflects the overwhelming success of God's plan.

Well then, as one man's trespass [one man's false step and falling away led] to condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men. For just as by one man's disobedience (failing to hear, heedlessness, and carelessness) the many were constituted sinners, so by one Man's obedience the many will be constituted righteous (made acceptable to God, brought into right standing with Him). Romans 5:18-19

After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

The elders' song celebrates God's will to save all people and bring them into the knowledge of the Truth. Jesus' blood ensures the ultimate fulfillment of this will, and the End Times are the process through which evil is purged and creation is restored.

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

The Wrath and Redemption of God

The wrath seen in Revelation is not vengeance on humanity but a purification process, removing evil and preparing the world for Christ's physical reign. This aligns with God's mercy and His desire to bring all creation into harmony with His will.

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

The song of the elders and the actions in heaven confirm the victory of Christ. Jesus' worthiness and sacrifice are the foundation of God's ultimate plan: the restoration of His creation and the eternal unity of His people with Him.

The Kingdom of Priests

And You have made them a kingdom (royal race) and priests to our God, and they shall reign [as kings] over the earth! Revelation 5:10

Through Jesus' sacrifice, His Bride, who are the saved, becomes a royal priesthood, serving as the channel through which God's truth is preached to the world. This priesthood signifies our unity with God, a unity that makes His glory and love known to all creation.

That they all may be one, [just] as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe and be convinced that You have sent Me. I have given to them the glory and honor which You have given Me, that they may be one [even] as We are one: I in them and You in Me, in order that they may become one and perfectly united, that the world may know and [definitely] recognize that You sent Me and that You have loved them [even] as You have loved Me. John 17:21-23

As priests and kings, we are destined to reign with Christ, a reign that necessitates subjects. This indicates that mankind will not be entirely destroyed but will instead be filled with people who are not part of the Bride. God's purpose is not to annihilate mankind but to liberate them from sin and evil.

Heaven's Rejoicing

Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels on every side of the throne and of the living creatures and the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin], and they numbered ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, Saying in a loud voice, Deserving is the Lamb, Who was sacrificed, to receive all the power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and majesty (glory, splendor) and blessing! Revelation 5:11-12

The heavenly host rejoices because Jesus, as the Lamb Who was slain, has been granted all power and authority, including the responsibility of judgment.

Even the Father judges no one, for He has given all judgment (the last judgment and the whole business of judging) entirely into the hands of the Son. John 5:22

This is a source of joy because Jesus' character never changes. His mission remains salvation, not condemnation.

Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is [always] the same, yesterday, today, [yes] and forever (to the ages). Hebrews 13:8

For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him. John 3:17

The Purpose of Judgment

All of Heaven celebrates because Jesus' judgment is not about destruction but purification. His work in the End Times is a continuation of His mission to redeem and restore His creation. The judgment of the End Times removes evil, setting people free and preparing the world for His reign.

The End Times are not a narrative of despair but a story of hope. They reveal Jesus' unwavering commitment to His prize, mankind, and His power to cleanse and renew all things, ensuring a future where righteousness reigns.

Universal Worship

And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth [in Hades, the place of departed spirits] and on the sea and all that is in it, crying out together, To Him Who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb be ascribed the blessing and the honor and the majesty (glory, splendor) and the power (might and dominion) forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities)! Then the four living creatures (beings) said, Amen (so be it)! And the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] prostrated themselves and worshiped Him Who lives forever and ever. Revelation 5:13-14

These verses present an extraordinary truth: all creation, including those in Hades, joins in rejoicing over Jesus' success. The question arises, why would those in Hades rejoice?

Consider this: if someone in a dire situation, such as imprisonment, hears of a victory that doesn't affect their condition, they would hardly celebrate. However, the rejoicing of those in Hades implies that Jesus' triumph directly impacts them.

The Gospel in Hades

In which He went and preached to the spirits in prison, [The souls of those] who long before in the days of Noah had been disobedient, when God's patience waited during the building of the ark in which a few [people], actually eight in number, were saved through water. 1 Peter 3:19-20

When Jesus was crucified, He spent three days in Hades, preaching to the spirits imprisoned there. This included even the most disobedient souls from the time of Noah, whose sins had necessitated the flood. Jesus did not go to mock them but to offer them freedom.

What kind of Savior would Jesus be if He proclaimed liberty that could never be theirs? His mission in Hades demonstrates the vast scope of His salvation. He preached to set them free, showing that His sacrifice extends beyond earthly boundaries.

The Success of Jesus

Jesus' triumph is so complete that it encompasses all creation: those in heaven, on earth, and even under the earth. This universal celebration is a testament to His victory over sin and death, offering freedom to all, including the departed spirits.

For Christ [the Messiah Himself] died for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous (the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty), that He might bring us to God. In His human body He was put to death, but He was made alive in the spirit. 1 Peter 3:18

Revelation reminds us that Jesus' success is not limited to a select group but is an all-encompassing victory. It sets the stage for understanding the events of the End Times through the lens of redemption, grace, and ultimate restoration.

Let this truth provide perspective as we continue exploring the unfolding events in Revelation: Jesus' mission is to restore, reconcile, and make all things new, and His success reverberates throughout creation, inspiring universal worship.

Chapter 10

Revelation 6

The Breaking of the First Seal: The White Horse

Then I saw as the Lamb broke open one of the seven seals, and as if in a voice of thunder I heard one of the four living creatures call out, Come! And I looked, and saw there a white horse whose rider carried a bow. And a crown was given him, and he rode forth conquering and to conquer. Revelation 6:1-2

As the Lamb breaks the first seal, the rider on the white horse is revealed. White symbolizes purity, and the rider's weapon, a bow, indicates power and authority from a distance. This is not a close-combat weapon, suggesting the rider's influence extends far and wide. The crown given to the rider signifies victory and divine authority.

This rider represents Jesus, operating through His Spirit, conquering sin, darkness, and every obstacle that separates humanity from God. His work is righteous and victorious, a continuation of His mission to bring truth and light to the world.

After that I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse [appeared]! The One Who was riding it is called Faithful (Trustworthy, Loyal, Incorruptible, Steady) and True, and He passes judgment and wages war in righteousness (holiness, justice, and uprightness). Revelation 19:11

He who believes in Me [who cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me] as the Scripture has said, From his innermost being shall flow [continuously] springs and rivers of living water. John 7:38

The Breaking of the Second Seal: The Red Horse

And when He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature call out, Come! And another horse came out, flaming red. And its rider was empowered to take the peace from the earth, so that men slaughtered one another; and he was given a huge sword. Revelation 6:3-4

The red horse and its rider symbolize conflict and bloodshed. The fiery red color represents anger and rage, and the sword, a weapon for close combat, shows direct and personal strife. Unlike the rider of the white horse, who operates from Heaven, the red horse's rider acts physically on the earth.

This rider represents Satan, permitted by God to remove peace from the earth. However, even this chaos is under divine control, orchestrated to fulfill God's ultimate purpose.

Then another ominous sign (wonder) was seen in heaven: Behold, a huge, fiery-red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven kingly crowns (diadems) upon his heads. Revelation 12:3

And the huge dragon was cast down and out—that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him. Revelation 12:9

Finding Peace Amid Tribulation

While Satan is allowed to create turmoil, Jesus assures His followers that peace is found in Him alone. Hardships, tribulations, and trials are used to bring about spiritual growth and reveal divine truths. These trials are not meant for destruction but for purification and sanctification.

I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.] John 16:33

Jesus allows peace to be taken from the earth to demonstrate that He alone is the source of true peace. Through the storms of life, His strength and power are made perfect in our weakness. So, while the things that bring peace on the earth will be removed, the peace that is found in Jesus will remain strong and stable.

Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. Romans 5:3

But He said to me, My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for My strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and show themselves most effective in [your] weakness. Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me! 2 Corinthians 12:9

God's Sovereign Control

The events of the End Times, including the chaos brought by the red horse, are under God's sovereign control. Nothing occurs without His permission, and everything works together for the good of those who love Him. The removal of peace highlights the importance of finding solace in Christ, Who has overcome the world on our behalf.

We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose. Romans 8:28

The Breaking of the Third Seal: The Black Horse

When He broke open the third seal, I heard the third living creature call out, Come and look! And I saw, and behold, a black horse, and in his hand the rider had a pair of scales

(a balance). And I heard what seemed to be a voice from the midst of the four living creatures, saying, A quart of wheat for a denarius [a whole day's wages], and three quarts of barley for a denarius; but do not harm the oil and the wine! Revelation 6:5-6

The black horse represents hardships and economic imbalance. The rider, holding a pair of scales, signifies the weighing and balancing of resources. During the Last Days, the world will face severe challenges where the cost of worldly sustenance will come at a great spiritual price.

This passage highlights the difficult choice humanity will face: reliance on worldly systems and allegiance to the beast or dependence on God and His provision. The apparent "price" for survival will push people to either align with God or succumb to the world.

Also he compels all [alike], both small and great, both the rich and the poor, both free and slave, to be marked with an inscription [stamped] on their right hands or on their foreheads, So that no one will have power to buy or sell unless he bears the stamp (mark, inscription), [that is] the name of the beast or the number of his name. Revelation 13:16-17

While the anti-christ and his schemes may seem unsurmountable, the thing to remember is what we will study in Chapter 7, during the Last Days an uncountable number of people will come to Christ.

After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

The Illusion of Peace and Safety

During the end times, the world will claim "peace and safety," but this false sense of security will precede sudden destruction. The hardships introduced by the black horse will not be purely physical or economic but spiritual, forcing people to confront the reality of their faith.

When people are saying, All is well and secure, and, There is peace and safety, then in a moment unforeseen destruction (ruin and death) will come upon them as suddenly as labor pains come upon a woman with child; and they shall by no means escape, for there will be no escapee. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

The Protection of the Faithful

Despite these trials, God's chosen ones will be protected. The "oil" and "wine" symbolize the Holy Spirit and the Blood of Christ. These essential provisions for spiritual life will remain untouched, as God's miraculous power sustains His people. The faithful will not only be preserved but will be used to provide for others, miraculously demonstrating God's power and faithfulness.

Who then is the faithful, thoughtful, and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household to give to the others the food and supplies at the proper time? Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is that servant whom, when his master comes, he will find so doing. I solemnly declare to you, he will set him over all his possessions. Matthew 24:45-47

I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father. John 14:12

The Balance of God's Plan

The scales carried by the rider signify a divine balance, God's justice and provision during a time of great tribulation. For the faithful, the trials of the Last Days will be an opportunity to witness the miraculous power of God working through them. The oil and wine will remain unharmed, signifying the enduring presence and work of the Holy Spirit and the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice.

Through these hardships, God will separate the true followers of Christ from those who rely on worldly systems. The faithful will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to not only endure but to thrive, providing spiritual and physical sustenance to others in a time of great need. The power of Christ working through His chosen ones will far outperform the works of Satan through the anti-christ and false prophet.

The Breaking of the Fourth Seal: The Pale Horse

When the Lamb broke open the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living creature call out, Come! So I looked, and behold, an ashy pale horse [black and blue as if made so by bruising], and its rider's name was Death, and Hades (the realm of the dead) followed him closely. And they were given authority and power over a fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword and with famine and with plague (pestilence, disease) and with wild beasts of the earth. Revelation 6:7-8

The rider of the pale horse represents death and destruction. Hades follows closely behind, symbolizing the spiritual consequences for unbelievers. However, the critical truth is that even this rider operates under Christ's authority. Jesus holds the ultimate power over death and Hades, and nothing occurs without His sovereign will.

And the Ever-living One [I am living in the eternity of the eternities]. I died, but see, I am alive forevermore; and I possess the keys of death and Hades (the realm of the dead). Revelation 1:18

Death That Brings Rejoicing

It is essential to understand why heaven rejoices as the seals are opened. The death described here is not eternal damnation but symbolic of separation from worldly systems and false beliefs. This

death allows for a greater revelation of Christ's truth, leading ultimately to restoration and redemption.

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? 1 Corinthians 15:55

If a literal fourth of the earth's population were to die in a short time, it would create global panic, undermining the "peace and safety" that people will falsely proclaim during the End Times. However, if this is a symbolic death, representing spiritual bondage, false religion, or allegiance to the world, it would go unnoticed by most, aligning with the narrative of humanity's denial and spiritual blindness.

The Hope Beyond Death

The glorious truth is that even those who suffer this death are not beyond redemption. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. Some may have to pass through Hades, a place of correction and awakening, but they are not lost forever. This understanding aligns with God's desire that all men come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.

Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

But if any person's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15

These individuals may miss the reward of being the Bride of Christ, but they will still have a place in His Kingdom as guests at the wedding feast.

And those servants went out on the crossroads and got together as many as they found, both bad and good, so [the room in which] the wedding feast [was held] was filled with guests. Matthew 22:10

God's Sovereignty Over Death

Even with the events unleashed by the pale horse, God's sovereign plan will unfold. Death and Hades are not independent forces; they serve God's purpose to purify His creation and bring humanity closer to Him. The End Times, though marked by great spiritual tribulation, are a means of refining and revealing God's ultimate victory over sin and death.

This understanding provides peace and assurance for believers. The trials of the End Times are not meant to harm God's people but to fulfill His redemptive plan for all creation. Jesus, who holds the keys of death and Hades, will ensure that His victory is complete, and His purpose is achieved.

The Breaking of the Fifth Seal: The Souls Under the Altar

When the Lamb broke open the fifth seal, I saw at the foot of the altar the souls of those whose lives had been sacrificed for [adhering to] the Word of God and for the testimony they had borne. They cried in a loud voice, O [Sovereign] Lord, holy and true, how long now before You will sit in judgment and avenge our blood upon those who dwell on the earth? Then they were each given a long and flowing and festive white robe and told to rest and wait patiently a little while longer, until the number should be complete of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed as they themselves had been. Revelation 6:9-11

The souls of the martyrs, those who have been sacrificed for the Word of God and their testimony, eagerly await Judgment Day. This anticipation provides a critical insight: these souls, fully clothed in festive white robes, desire justice, but not in a spirit of condemnation or destruction. Their longing reflects God's ultimate plan of restoration and righteousness.

Would these saints, present with God only through His grace, truly wish for eternal damnation for those who persecuted them? This would contradict the very essence of God's love and the instructions Jesus gave His followers to bless and forgive those who harm them.

Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you]. Luke 6:28

Grace That Superabounds

God's vengeance is not about eternal destruction but about the purification and restoration of His creation. His grace is far greater than sin, as scripture repeatedly affirms.

But then Law came in, [only] to expand and increase the trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]. But where sin increased and abounded, grace (God's unmerited favor) has surpassed it and increased the more and superabounded. Romans 5:20

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

The martyrs' longing for judgment aligns with God's plan to set all things right, not to destroy humanity but to destroy sin and bring redemption to all.

The Souls, Not Bodies

John sees the *souls* of the martyrs under the altar, not their resurrected bodies. This detail is significant because it refutes the notion of a pre-tribulation rapture. If the rapture had occurred, John would have seen saints in their glorified bodies receiving white robes. Instead, he sees only their souls, affirming that the resurrection and transformation of the saints occur after the events described here.

For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him in death]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16

This sequence confirms that the living saints cannot precede the dead in Christ, emphasizing the unity of the resurrection and the gathering of believers at Jesus' return.

The martyrs are told to rest and wait patiently until the number of their fellow servants and brethren is complete. This highlights God's perfect timing and His meticulous plan for redemption. The waiting period assures that all events unfold according to His divine purpose, ultimately culminating in justice, restoration, and the fulfillment of His promises.

The fifth seal reminds us that even in times of persecution, God's grace and justice remain supreme. The souls under the altar are a testament to His plan to bring salvation to all through His sovereign power and infinite mercy.

The Sixth Seal: Spiritual Realities Behind Physical Signs

When He [the Lamb] broke open the sixth seal, I looked, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun grew black as sackcloth of hair, [the full disc of] the moon became like blood. And the stars of the sky dropped to the earth like a fig tree shedding its unripe fruit out of season when shaken by a strong wind. And the sky rolled up like a scroll and vanished, and every mountain and island was dislodged from its place. Revelation 6:12-14

The imagery of the sixth seal reflects profound spiritual truths rather than physical events. A literal interpretation of these events would suggest the destruction of the earth and cessation of life, which contradicts the continuity of human activity throughout the Great Tribulation. Instead, these signs have to symbolize dramatic spiritual and societal upheavals orchestrated under God's sovereign control.

The Great Earthquake

The great earthquake represents a seismic shift in political, economic, and societal systems during the End Times. Under God's allowance, Satan empowers the anti-christ to exert dominion over the earth, disrupting the established order.

[As] I stood on the sandy beach, I saw a beast coming up out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads. On his horns he had ten royal crowns (diadems) and blasphemous titles (names) on his heads. And the beast that I saw resembled a leopard, but his feet were like those of a bear and his mouth was like that of a lion. And to him the dragon gave his [own] might and power and his [own] throne and great dominion. Revelation 13:1-2

The Sun Darkened and the Moon Turned to Blood

The sun symbolizes the Truth of Christ, while the moon represents the church, which reflects the light of the sun. The darkening of the sun and the blood-red moon depict the world's increasing rejection of Truth and the persecution of believers during the Last Days.

But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]. For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. 2 Timothy 3:1-2

Let no one deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come except the apostasy comes first [unless the predicted great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come], and the man of lawlessness (sin) is revealed, who is the son of doom (of perdition), 2 Thessalonians 2:3

Ask yourself, does the world attack faith when times are bad or when times are good? During times of war or severe economic hardship faith flourishes. However, when times are good and people have wealth and feel safe, they run to the things of the world and attack faith for sheading light on their evil actions. The same will hold true during the Last Days.

The Black Sackcloth of Hair

The black sackcloth signifies mourning and the grief of the chosen ones as they witness the suffering of others under Satan's deceptions. The church, though glorious and without blemish, will deeply mourn for those deceived by the lies of the anti-christ.

That He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless]. Ephesians 5:27

For there are many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, who walk (live) as enemies of the cross of Christ (the Anointed One). Philippians 3:18

The Falling Stars

The stars falling from the sky symbolize the fallen angels, including Satan, who are cast down to earth. Their presence intensifies the deception and chaos on the earth.

His tail swept [across the sky] and dragged down a third of the stars and flung them to the earth. Revelation 12:4

A third of the angels rebelled with Satan. These beings have been thrown to the earth and are fully committed to Satan's plans of destruction. Let's look at some verses that tell us about angels.

Do not forget or neglect or refuse to extend hospitality to strangers [in the brotherhood—being friendly, cordial, and gracious, sharing the comforts of your home and doing your

part generously], for through it some have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2

Angels are able to appear as human. They are right here among us. I would assume millions of them if a third of them have been cast down to the earth.

The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair, and they took wives of all they desired and chose...There were giants on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God lived with the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Genesis 6:2&4

We are also shown that angels are able to have physical relations with humans. So, these beings are not just hiding out in the spiritual shadows, they are physically among us. This Truth will come into great play in the coming chapters.

The Unripe Fruit

The unripe fruit represents people who have not matured in the Truth and are swayed by the lies of Satan and the anti-christ. The strong wind symbolizes the immense pressure and hatred the world will exert against the Truth, causing many to fall away.

And they have no real root in themselves, and so they endure for a little while; then when trouble or persecution arises on account of the Word, they immediately are offended (become displeased, indignant, resentful) and they stumble and fall away. Mark 4:17

The Sky Rolled Up Like a Scroll

The sky folding up represents the lies of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, false religions, pride, ego, and greed and how they will all be exposed and cease to be. Many who confess to be Christians will follow after the lies of the anti-christ. However, only the Truth will stand during the End Times, even though the things of the world will be heralded as salvation, they will only fail the people who place their trust in them.

For many will come in (on the strength of) My name [appropriating the name which belongs to Me], saying, I am the Christ (the Messiah), and they will lead many astray. Matthew 24:5

But the [Holy] Spirit distinctly and expressly declares that in latter times some will turn away from the faith, giving attention to deluding and seducing spirits and doctrines that demons teach, 1 Timothy 4:1

The Dislodged Mountains and Islands

Mountains and islands symbolize established institutions, governments, and systems. Their dislodging indicates dramatic shifts and upheavals as the anti-christ gains influence. These systems are not destroyed but are manipulated under Satan's temporary authority.

And the beast was given the power of speech, uttering boastful and blasphemous words, and he was given freedom to exert his authority and to exercise his will during forty-two months (three and a half years). Revelation 13:5

Our Father will allow the anti-christ to establish a world government during the Last Days. So, it only makes sense that the fallen angels, who are able to take on the form of a human would be the leaders and bureaucrats who operate these institutions.

The Hope of the Sixth Seal

The spiritual events of the sixth seal remind us of God's sovereignty over the End Times. While the world experiences turmoil and upheaval, these events are part of God's plan to expose lies, remove evil, and prepare for the establishment of Christ's eternal reign. The chosen ones will remain under His protection and guidance, shining as beacons of Truth amidst the chaos.

The Great Day of Wrath

Then the kings of the earth and their noblemen and their magnates and their military chiefs and the wealthy and the strong and [everyone, whether] slave or free hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. And they called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on (before) us and hide us from the face of Him Who sits on the throne and from the deep-seated indignation and wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath (vengeance, retribution, indignation) has come, and who is able to stand before it? Revelation 6:15-17

These verses depict the ultimate failure of the anti-christ's promises and systems. Despite his claims of power and security, the leaders of the world, many who will be the fallen angels, will face profound disillusionment. John sees them hiding in mountains and caves, a powerful metaphor for their desperate attempts to escape the Truth they have rejected and opposed.

The Truth is that angels do experience fear.

You believe that God is one; you do well. So do the demons believe and shudder [in terror and horror such as make a man's hair stand on end and contract the surface of his skin]! James 2:19

Those who align with the anti-christ will see the futility of his reign. Trust in his system will crumble as it is realized it cannot protect or save them from the sovereign authority of Christ. Think here also of all of the promises of artificial intelligence and technology. People are talking about placing these technologies in humans and morphing humanity into something we were not created to be. God is not going to allow His beloved creation to be destroyed.

Fear of the Wrath of the Lamb

Initially, those people who oppose Christ will fear Him when He returns. They will not yet understand His love or the purpose of His judgment. This fear is born from misunderstanding, as they mistakenly believe Jesus has come to condemn them.

For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him. John 3:17

Their terror is temporary, as the Truth of Christ's love will eventually reach them. Even the most hardened hearts will come to recognize His grace and mercy.

Learning the Truth of God's Love

The glorious Truth is that those who fear and reject Christ now will one day learn of His unending love through the witness of His Bride. These are the very people we are called to serve, even in the face of their rejection and hostility.

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

Whether through the trials of Hades, the lessons of the Millennial Reign, or the ultimate judgment, every person will come to know the Truth of Christ's victory and love.

The Universality of Christ's Sacrifice

The Love of Christ is not limited to a select few; it encompasses all of humanity. Through His obedience, Jesus will make all men righteous, delivering salvation to everyone.

Well then, as one man's trespass [one man's false step and falling away led] to condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men. Romans 5:18

God's grace is greater than all sin, and His ultimate plan is for everyone to come to the knowledge of the Truth.

The Hope in Judgment

The imagery of people hiding from Christ's wrath may seem harsh, but it reflects a deeper hope. The day of wrath is not about eternal destruction but about setting creation free from evil and establishing Christ's righteous reign.

As we move forward in Revelation, this truth will become increasingly clear: all of humanity is moving toward redemption, reconciliation, and the full revelation of God's love.

Chapter 11

Revelation 7

The Four Angels and the Control of God

After this I saw four angels stationed at the four corners of the earth, firmly holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind should blow on the earth or sea or upon any tree. Revelation 7:1

In this passage, we see a demonstration of God's absolute authority over the events of the Last Days. The four winds, representing the lies and deceit of the fallen angels, are held back until God permits their full release. Nothing happens outside of our Father's perfect timing and control.

And the stars of the sky dropped to the earth like a fig tree shedding its unripe fruit out of season when shaken by a strong wind." Revelation 6:13

This assurance reminds us that the chaos and judgment of the End Times are not random or unrestrained. God holds everything together, ensuring that every event unfolds according to His divine plan.

For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together)." Colossians 1:16-17

The Sealing of God's Servants

Then I saw a second angel coming up from the east (the rising of the sun) and carrying the seal of the living God. And with a loud voice he called out to the four angels who had been given authority and power to injure earth and sea, saying, 'Harm neither the earth nor the sea nor the trees, until we have sealed the bond servants of our God upon their foreheads. Revelation 7:2-3

Before any of the tribulations of the Last Days are unleashed, God seals His chosen ones with the Holy Spirit. This seal signifies our Father's empowerment and divine protection, ensuring that His children can fulfill their mission during this critical time.

[He has also appropriated and acknowledged us as His by] putting His seal upon us and giving us His [Holy] Spirit in our hearts as the security deposit and guarantee [of the fulfillment of His promise]. 2 Corinthians 1:22

In Him you also who have heard the Word of Truth, the glad tidings (Gospel) of your salvation, and have believed in and adhered to and relied on Him, were stamped with the seal of the long-promised Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13

This raises a compelling question: if the Church is raptured before these events, why would the sealing be necessary? If believers are already in Heaven, they would not require this protection or empowerment. Instead, the sealing demonstrates that God's chosen ones will remain on earth during the Great Tribulation, actively serving His purposes and protected by His presence.

God's Authority Over the Last Days

Notice again that the authority of the four angels to harm the earth, sea, and trees comes directly from God. Jesus emphasizes repeatedly that all events of the End Times are under the control of our Father. This truth gives us peace and hope, even as we face the reality of tribulation. If Satan were in control, fear and destruction would reign unchecked, but under God's sovereign authority, even His wrath is an act of love, removing evil and restoring righteousness.

We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose. Romans 8:28

God's judgment is not an act of reckless anger but a necessary step toward bringing His creation into the fullness of life and freedom in Christ.

Empowered to Endure

The sealing also assures us that God equips His people to withstand any trial or temptation. We are not left defenseless, even in the most challenging times. The Holy Spirit strengthens us, providing the endurance and faith we need to remain steadfast.

For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature]... and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure. 1 Corinthians 10:13

This sealing ensures that God's people will persevere, even as the world around them faces judgment. It is a reminder that His plans are always for our good, to refine us, and to use us as vessels of His grace and truth.

The Sealing of the 144,000 and the Multitude Beyond

And [then] I heard how many were sealed (marked) out of every tribe of the sons of Israel: there were 144,000. Twelve thousand were sealed (marked) out of the tribe of Judah, 12,000 of the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 of the tribe of Gad, Twelve thousand of the tribe of Asher, 12,000 of the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 of the tribe of Manasseh, Twelve thousand of the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 of the tribe of Levi, 12,000 of the tribe of Issachar, Twelve thousand of the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 of the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 of the tribe of Benjamin. Revelation 7:4-8

These verses introduce the sealing of 144,000 from the tribes of Israel. While the text specifies this number of Jews, it does not imply exclusivity. The sealing of these Jewish believers is part of the larger work of God, as seen in the preceding verse where all the bond servants of God are to be sealed. This demonstrates that the 144,000 Israelites are included in the broader sealing of God's people during the End Times.

The Prophetic Blessing of Israel's Tribes

When Israel's twelve sons were born, their mothers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, pronounced blessings over them. When these blessings are read in sequence, they form a powerful declaration:

"Praise God, He has seen my affliction, and His good fortune has come. I am happy, blessed, and to be envied, for God has seen my struggle, and He has caused me to forget all of it. I was despised, but now the Lord (Jesus) is my husband and companion. God has given me my hire and my marriage gift, by taking away my reproach. And now I am seated as a son at His right hand!"

This declaration encapsulates God's grace, mercy, and redemption, revealing the heart of His plan for all His people. It beautifully echoes the theme of victory and restoration that runs through Revelation. Jesus did not come and allow Himself to be crucified to not be victorious in the lives of His Bride.

The Uncountable Multitude

After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

This vision moves beyond the 144,000 to an innumerable multitude from every nation, tribe, and language. This multitude, attired in white robes symbolizing righteousness, shows the expansive reach of God's salvation. Even during the darkest times of the Great Tribulation, the Gospel will spread across the earth, drawing people to Christ in numbers too great to count.

The Worldwide Proclamation of the Gospel

The spread of the Gospel to all nations during the End Times is central to God's plan. His chosen ones will boldly share the truth, empowered by the Holy Spirit, even in the midst of persecution and hardship. Jesus' victory will be boldly proclaimed even in the harshest of times.

And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end. Matthew 24:14

I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father. John 14:12

This multitude, standing before the throne with palm branches in hand, reflects the earthly role of the saved in the last days. They are preparing the way for Jesus' return, just as those who waved palm branches welcomed Him during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

A Triumphal Welcome

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him. And as they went, they kept shouting, Hosanna! Blessed is He and praise to Him Who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel! John 12:13

The palm branches in Revelation 7 symbolize victory, worship, and the faithful anticipation of Jesus' return. The chosen ones, already spiritually seated with Christ in heavenly places, will actively participate in heralding His reign on earth.

And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One). Ephesians 2:6

The image of this great multitude, proclaiming Jesus with palm branches in hand, reminds us of the victorious unity of God's people, spanning every nation and generation, as they eagerly prepare for the culmination of God's plan. Jesus is super successful in everything that He does, and He came to save the lost. The evil of the Last Days will in no way hinder Jesus' purpose.

The Multitude's Cry of Salvation

In loud voice they cried, saying, [Our] salvation is due to our God, Who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb [to Them we owe our deliverance]! And all the angels were standing round the throne and round the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] and the four living creatures, and they fell prostrate before the throne and worshiped God. Amen! (So be it!) they cried. Blessing and glory and majesty and splendor and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and might [be ascribed] to our God to the ages and ages (forever and ever, throughout the eternities of the eternities)! Amen! (So be it!) Revelation 7:10-12

The overwhelming victory of salvation rings through Heaven in this passage. The vast multitude of the redeemed, so great in number that it cannot be counted, cries out in unison, acknowledging that their deliverance is solely due to God and the Lamb. This proclamation unites all of creation: angels, elders, and living creatures, in worship and gratitude.

A Celebration of Complete Salvation

The sheer number of those saved during the Last Days is a powerful testament to the unstoppable power of Christ's truth. Even in the face of persecution, torture, and death at the hands of the anti-christ, the Gospel will triumph. The victory of salvation will cause all of Heaven to erupt in rejoicing, for Jesus' sacrifice has made it possible for multitudes to be reconciled to God.

Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all men are alive [whether in the body or out of it] and they are alive [not dead] unto Him [in definite relationship to Him]. Luke 20:38

For the Son of man came to save [from the penalty of eternal death] that which was lost. Matthew 18:11

And He [that same Jesus Himself] is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for [the sins of] the whole world. 1 John 2:2

Think of the power and glory of Jesus working through us, Satan and a third of the angels are on the earth, actively seeking the destruction of mankind, and they fail.

The Universal Impact of Christ's Sacrifice

The celebration described in Revelation is not just about numbers; it is a celebration of completeness. Jesus' sacrifice is so comprehensive and effective that all of Heaven rejoices. It is unthinkable that such a celebration could take place if the majority of mankind were to face eternal separation from God. Instead, the focus is on the life and restoration that Christ brings, ensuring that none are beyond His reach.

Heaven's Unified Worship

The united cry of "Amen!" from all of Heaven reflects the absolute agreement among all of creation about the greatness of God's plan of salvation. Blessing, glory, honor, and power are ascribed to God, not for His sake alone but as a reflection of His love and justice poured out on behalf of His creation. This passage reinforces the unshakable truth that salvation belongs to God, and it is His to give abundantly.

I, even I, am He Who blots out and cancels your transgressions, for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Isaiah 43:25

As we continue through Revelation, this truth gives us hope: the Last Days will not end in despair but in overwhelming victory for Christ and His redeemed creation. Heaven's celebration assures us that the trials of the Great Tribulation are not in vain but are part of God's glorious plan to bring all things under the rule of His love.

The Great Multitude in White Robes

Then, addressing me, one of the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] said, Who are these [people] clothed in the long white robes? And from where have they come? I replied, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they who have come out of the great tribulation (persecution), and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are [now] before the [very] throne of God and serve Him day and night in His sanctuary (temple); and He Who is sitting upon the throne will protect and spread His tabernacle over and shelter them with His presence. They shall hunger no more,

neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun smite them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb Who is in the midst of the throne will be their Shepherd, and He will guide them to the springs of the waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Revelation 7:13-17

These verses reveal the true focus of the Great Tribulation: redemption and revival. While much attention is often given to the anti-christ and the challenges he tries to instill during the Last Days, the overwhelming truth is that God's love will triumph, resulting in an unparalleled harvest of souls. From every tribe, tongue, and nation, countless individuals will be saved, emerging from the tribulation as overcomers washed in the blood of the Lamb.

The revival of the Last Days is a powerful testimony to the unchanging nature of God's love:

He who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love. 1 John 4:8

Even in the darkest moments of human history, God's light shines brightest, as His strength is perfected in our weakness:

But He said to me, My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for My strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and show themselves most effective in [your] weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9

God's Perfect Plan Amid Tribulation

During the Great Tribulation, the anti-christ will be permitted to exert control over the world's systems, including the economy, preventing the chosen ones from buying or selling. However, this separation from worldly dependence will allow the Bride of Christ to bear unprecedented fruit, unhindered by the cares of this world:

The love of money is a root of all evil; it is through this craving that some have been led astray and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute [mental] pangs. 1 Timothy 6:10

This separation from the world's systems will fulfill God's call for His people to live distinct, holy lives, dependent solely on Him:

So, come out from among [unbelievers], and separate (sever) yourselves from them, says the Lord, and touch not [any] unclean thing; then I will receive you kindly and treat you with favor. 2 Corinthians 6:17

Protected in the Midst of the Storm

God's people are not removed from the tribulation, but they are protected within it. Just as Jesus prayed for His disciples, He prays for us, asking the Father not to remove us from the world but to keep us safe from evil:

I do not ask that You will take them out of the world, but that You will keep and protect them from the evil one. John 17:15

Yet the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen [you] and set you on a firm foundation and guard you from the evil [one]. 2 Thessalonians 3:3

The multitudes clothed in white robes testify to God's ability to preserve His people, even in the midst of persecution. They hunger and thirst no more because the Lamb is their Shepherd, guiding them to the springs of living water. Their tears are wiped away because they Jesus has empowered them to overcome through the blood of Christ and the word of their testimony.

A Glorious Truth of Hope

This vision of a great multitude reminds us of God's ultimate purpose: to bring all people to Himself. The Last Days are not merely about judgment but about redemption, reconciliation, and the triumph of God's love. Even in tribulation, the message of Revelation is one of hope, assurance, and victory. As we are shepherded through trials, we can trust that God's presence will protect and shelter us, guiding us to the waters of life and wiping away every tear.

And God purposed that through (by the service, the intervention of) Him [the Son] all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him, [the Father] made peace by means of the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20

The Lamb's victory is our victory, and His love ensures that we are never alone.

Chapter 12

Revelation 8

The Silence in Heaven

When He [the Lamb] broke open the seventh seal, there was silence for about half an hour in heaven. Revelation 8:1

The silence following the breaking of the seventh seal is a profound and holy moment. This pause in the activity of heaven mirrors the silence observed during Temple worship when incense was offered before God. It is a sacred acknowledgment that the prayers of the saints have risen before Him, mingling with His mercy and power.

The Significance of Silence

In the Jewish Temple, the altar of incense stood before the veil, directly in front of the Mercy Seat where God met with His people. The incense represented the prayers of the faithful, rising as a fragrant offering to God. In this heavenly scene, the silence signifies that God is receiving these prayers with full attention, preparing to act in response to them.

You shall put the altar [of incense] in front and outside of the veil that screens the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the Testimony (the Law, the tables of stone), where I will meet with you. Exodus 30:6

This moment of silence underscores the intimate connection between the prayers of the saints and the merciful presence of God. It is not a silence of neglect but one of deep reverence and expectation.

Prayers as Incense

Scripture consistently portrays prayers as a sweet-smelling incense offered to God. They are an expression of dependence, faith, and love, reaching His throne and becoming part of His plan to accomplish His purposes on the earth.

Let my prayer be set forth as incense before You, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Psalm 141:2

And all the throng of people were praying outside [in the court] at the hour of incense [burning]. Luke 1:10

A Throne of Mercy

Notably, the altar of incense was positioned before the Mercy Seat, not a throne of judgment or wrath. This detail emphasizes that God's heart is for mercy, grace, and reconciliation. True, Spirit-led prayers reflect this same heart, seeking not vengeance but mercy, even for those who have wronged us.

But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:44-45

Prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit are aligned with the heart of God, lifting others up in love and seeking restoration, even for those lost in sin.

God Hears and Acts

The silence in heaven is a reminder that God hears every prayer. He does not dismiss our cries but receives them with the utmost care and reverence. As the seventh seal is broken, the silence reflects a holy acknowledgment of the prayers of His people and the divine response being prepared.

This moment in Revelation reminds us that our prayers are powerful and precious to God. They ascend as incense before His throne, mingling with His mercy and moving His heart to act on

behalf of His creation. It is a testament to the intimate relationship between God and His people, showing us that His justice and mercy are always intertwined.

The Seven Trumpets: Announcing God's Perfect Message

*Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.
Revelation 8:2*

In this verse, Jesus reveals the perfection and power of the message of the End Times. The number seven, symbolic of completeness and perfection, emphasizes that what follows is part of God's flawless plan. The trumpets, loud and resounding, serve to announce a great king or signify the beginning of a battle. Here, they proclaim the fulfillment of God's purposes, drawing attention to His sovereignty and ultimate victory.

Trumpets and the Proclamation of Truth

The trumpets signify the global declaration of God's message during the Last Days. Despite the turmoil and persecution of the Great Tribulation, the Truth of Jesus Christ will be proclaimed boldly and powerfully. This proclamation will be so effective that countless individuals from every nation, tribe, and tongue will turn to Christ, washing their robes in His blood and becoming part of His eternal family.

*After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.
Revelation 7:9*

This vast multitude will not come to salvation by their own strength or effort but through the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's chosen preachers and servants. The Great Tribulation will be a time of immense revival, as Spirit-filled believers are used to declare the gospel across the earth, empowered by God Himself.

The Role of Holy Spirit-Filled Preachers

Scripture asks how people can believe unless they hear the message, and how they can hear without preachers. During the Great Tribulation, God will raise up His servants, ordinary men empowered by His Spirit, to share the gospel with boldness and love. These preachers will be equipped by the sufficiency of Christ, not relying on their own strength but fully dependent on His Spirit.

But how are people to call upon Him Whom they have not believed [in Whom they have no faith, on Whom they have no reliance]? And how are they to believe in Him [adhere to, trust in, and rely upon Him] of Whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? Romans 10:14

Not that we are fit (qualified and sufficient in ability) of ourselves to form personal judgments or to claim or count anything as coming from us, but our power and ability and

sufficiency are from God. [It is He] Who has qualified us [making us to be fit and worthy and sufficient] as ministers and dispensers of a new covenant [of salvation through Christ], not [ministers] of the letter (of legally written code) but of the Spirit; for the code [of the Law] kills, but the [Holy] Spirit makes alive. 2 Corinthians 3:5-6

The Power of the Holy Spirit in the Last Days

The trumpets of Revelation 8:2 are a reminder that God's Word will not return void to Him. The Holy Spirit will empower believers to declare the gospel with such authority that it will penetrate even the hardest hearts. This global revival, occurring in the midst of intense persecution and tribulation, will be a testimony to the victory of Christ and the enduring power of His love.

As we continue to study the events of Revelation, let us hold onto this truth: that even in the darkest of times, God's light will shine brighter, His Word will be proclaimed louder, and His salvation will reach farther than we can imagine.

The Prayers of the Saints and the Power of God

And another angel came and stood over the altar. He had a golden censer, and he was given very much incense (fragrant spices and gums which exhale perfume when burned), that he might mingle it with the prayers of all the people of God (the saints) upon the golden altar before the throne. And the smoke of the incense (the perfume) arose in the presence of God, with the prayers of the people of God (the saints), from the hand of the angel. So the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and cast it upon the earth. Then there followed peals of thunder and loud rumblings and blasts and noises, and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. Revelation 8:3-5

This passage reveals how much our prayers mean to God. They are like a sweet aroma, pleasing and precious, ascending before His throne. Just as an earthly father delights in speaking with his children, our Heavenly Father cherishes the time we spend in communion with Him. He desires to hear our thoughts, needs, and desires, and He responds not just with love but with power.

The angel takes the prayers, mingled with incense, and fills the censer with fire from the altar, a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the power of God. This divine fire is then cast upon the earth, showing us that our prayers move Heaven to act.

Prayers of Love and Transformation

True, Holy Spirit-led prayers are rooted in love, not in seeking vengeance or destruction, even for those who oppose us. Jesus Himself exemplified this on the cross when He prayed for forgiveness for those crucifying Him. This same love should inspire our prayers during times of tribulation, trusting that God will work all things for good.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34

The fire cast upon the earth is not a fire of destruction but one of transformation. It represents the power of the Holy Spirit working to convict, awaken, and change hearts, even amidst persecution. This is why the gospel will flourish during the Last Days, with countless lives saved despite the efforts of the anti-christ to suppress the Truth.

And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power. 1 Corinthians 2:4

The Power of God Through His People

The persecution believers face during the End Times will not hinder the gospel; instead, it will amplify it. God will work supernaturally through His people to declare His Truth with boldness and effectiveness. The Holy Spirit within us will empower us to endure and to share the Good News in ways beyond our imagination.

Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]. Ephesians 3:20

This passage reminds us that even in the darkest times, God's light will shine brightly through His chosen ones. His power will not only sustain us but will work mightily through us to bring salvation to the world. The church of the Last Days will be far more successful than Satan and the anti-christ he empowers.

Encouragement for Believers

As we face trials, we can take heart knowing that our prayers are powerful and that God is actively working through them. The events of the End Times will not be a defeat for the Church but a triumphant season of revival and transformation. The fire of the Holy Spirit will sweep across the earth, bringing salvation to countless lives, even in the midst of persecution.

Let this truth strengthen you: no matter the opposition, the gospel will prevail, and God's purposes will be accomplished.

The First Trumpet: Symbolism and Truth

Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. The first angel blew [his] trumpet, and there was a storm of hail and fire mingled with blood cast upon the earth. And a third part of the earth was burned up and a third of the trees was burned up and all the green grass was burned up. Revelation 8:6-7

The description of hail, fire, and blood falling upon the earth paints a vivid image of judgment and turmoil. However, as with much of Revelation, this is symbolic rather than literal. The events described do not depict a natural disaster but rather a spiritual reality. A literal destruction of one-

third of the earth would make the continuation of life impossible. Instead, this storm represents the clash between good and evil during the Great Tribulation.

If a third of the earth were destroyed there would be no need to take the mark of the beast to buy and sell because there would be nothing to buy or sell.

Hail and Fire: Judgment and the Holy Spirit

Hail often symbolizes divine judgment in scripture, while fire represents the purifying power of the Holy Spirit. This combination shows that during the Last Days, God's judgment will purify and set people free from the grip of evil.

He who spares his rod [of discipline] hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines diligently and punishes him early. Proverbs 13:24

This is not a judgment of condemnation but one of correction, designed to remove sin and evil from creation.

The Meaning of Blood

Blood, the symbol of life and sacrifice, reminds us of the victory won by Jesus on the cross. During the Tribulation, the power of Jesus' blood will be at work, cleansing and saving countless souls.

And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Revelation 12:11

The Trees and Grass Burned Up

Trees: Leaders and Authorities

In biblical prophecy, trees often symbolize great leaders or influential people. The burning of one-third of the trees indicates a shaking of the world's leadership structures. As the anti-christ's government rises, many existing leaders will fall, being replaced with the fallen angels, and the consolidation of power that our Father permits will become evident.

The tree that you saw, which grew [great] and was strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which was visible to all the earth... It is you, O king. Daniel 4:20-22

Grass: Human Weakness and Fragility

Grass represents humanity's frailty and the fleeting nature of worldly systems. The burning of all the grass signifies the collapse of worldly systems and institutions. Governments, wealth, and societal constructs will fail to provide security during the Last Days. The anti-christ's and false prophets' government will be a complete and total failure.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Isaiah 40:8

This destruction is not a sign of hopelessness but a call to trust in Jesus as the only source of true security and peace.

The Anti-Christ's Kingdom: A Kingdom Built on Sand

The anti-christ's promises will seem great, but his kingdom will ultimately fail. Built on lies and deceit, it will crumble under the weight of God's truth.

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance. John 10:10

The burning grass and trees remind us that the foundation of the anti-christ's reign is like sand, unstable and destined for collapse.

And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was the fall of it. Matthew 7:27

Hope Amid Judgment

The imagery of the first trumpet demonstrates God's power to cleanse and purify. While the world's systems fail, countless souls will turn to Jesus, recognizing Him as the only source of salvation and life.

This is not a message of despair but one of hope. The fire of the Holy Spirit will burn brightly, refining and drawing people to the Truth. Though the anti-christ's reign will cause turmoil, God's ultimate purpose will prevail, and His love will reach even the hardest hearts.

The Second Trumpet: The Great Mountain Cast into the Sea

The second angel blew [his] trumpet, and something resembling a great mountain, blazing with fire, was hurled into the sea. And a third of the sea was turned to blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea perished, and a third of the ships were destroyed Revelation 8:8-9

Mountains in prophecy often symbolize kingdoms or leaders. Here, the great mountain represents the anti-christ, whose rise to power is permitted by God and fueled by Satan's influence. The blazing fire signifies the anti-christ's destructive nature, as he spreads deception and chaos.

The beast that you saw [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is going to come up out of the Abyss (the bottomless pit) and proceed to go to perdition Revelation 17:8

The anti-christ's emergence from the Abyss reflects his demonic origin, and yet, even with all his power, he remains within God's sovereign control. His actions, though devastating, serve God's ultimate purpose.

A Third of the Sea Turns to Blood

The sea turning to blood symbolizes the corruption brought by Satan to a third of the angels who have been cast down to the earth. While many angels followed him, it is significant that only a third are said to have fallen under his deception, meaning three quarters of the angels are still loyal and empowered to bring about the will of our Father. Satan and the fallen angels are not only outnumbered, they do not have the power of Christ working for them.

And the beast that I saw resembled a leopard, but his feet were like those of a bear and his mouth was like that of a lion. And to him the dragon gave his [own] might and power and his [own] throne and great dominion Revelation 13:2

A Third of the Ships Are Destroyed

Ships represent commerce in prophecy. The destruction of a third of the ships signifies the disruption of the free market as the anti-christ consolidates power and takes over commerce. Despite this, the Last Days will still be marked by material prosperity, as people focus on worldly wealth and pleasures.

But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]. For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters 2 Timothy 3:1-2

The false sense of security during the last days, fueled by economic stability, will embolden people to indulge in selfishness and sin, unaware of the spiritual consequences. Revelation later describes people exchanging gifts in celebration, highlighting their misplaced priorities.

And those who dwell on the earth will gloat and exult over them and rejoice exceedingly, taking their ease and sending presents [in congratulation] to one another, because these two prophets had been such a vexation and trouble and torment to all the dwellers on the earth Revelation 11:10

Warnings Against Trusting in Worldly Wealth

The anti-christ's promises will seem grand but will ultimately fail, exposing the futility of placing faith in temporary things like wealth, power, and human institutions. These earthly treasures cannot provide true peace or security.

But woe to (alas for) you who are rich (abounding in material resources), for you already are receiving your consolation (the solace and sense of strengthening and cheer that come from prosperity). Woe to (alas for) you who are full now (completely filled, luxuriously gorged and satiated), for you shall hunger and suffer want! Luke 6:24-25

The second trumpet serves as a stark reminder of the dangers of relying on worldly systems and leaders. Even in the midst of turmoil, God's sovereignty remains unshaken, and His truth continues

to draw people to salvation. The anti-christ's reign will be brief, and the kingdom of God will prevail eternally.

The Third Trumpet: The Bitter Waters

The third angel blew [his] trumpet, and a huge star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it dropped on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water—And the name of the star is Wormwood. A third part of the waters was changed into wormwood, and many people died from using the water, because it had become bitter. Revelation 8:10-11

This star, called Wormwood, symbolizes Satan, who has been cast out of heaven and is now attempting to corrupt and destroy mankind. Yet, even with this influence, it is important to note that only a third of the waters, representing worldly institutions, are affected. This shows that while our Father allows Satan to gain control over a sizeable part of worldly power, the majority, seventy-five percent, will not follow after Satan or his leader, the anti-christ.

And the huge dragon was cast down and out—that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him. Revelation 12:9

The Bitter Effects of Deception

The bitterness described reflects the spiritual and emotional state of those who trust in the lies of Satan. Many people, even those with worldly success and wealth, become embittered when their lives fail to bring them the peace and happiness they expect. This will be amplified in the Last Days, as those who align themselves with the anti-christ realize that their choices have brought them bitterness rather than fulfillment.

Think of how many people today, despite their material wealth, live with a sense of dissatisfaction and misery. In the Last Days, this bitterness will spread widely, as a third of humanity becomes ensnared by the deception of Satan. They will refuse to take responsibility for their choices and instead blame the chosen ones of God.

For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. 2 Timothy 3:2

God's Purpose in Judgment

The imagery of bitterness and destruction in Chapter Eight illustrates the consequences of following Satan and the anti-christ. However, it also reveals God's ultimate purpose: to expose and bring an end to the lies that have enslaved humanity. These judgments are not meant to destroy humanity but to cleanse and prepare the way for Christ's reign.

God's vengeance is directed at the systems and powers that have deceived His creation, not at the people He loves. Even in judgment, God's love and desire for redemption remain central.

For the Lord disciplines and corrects those whom He loves, and He punishes every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes. Hebrews 12:6

The Fourth Trumpet: The Darkened Light

Then the fourth angel blew [his] trumpet, and a third of the sun was smitten, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that [the light of] a third of them was darkened, and a third of the daylight [itself] was withdrawn, and likewise a third [of the light] of the night was kept from shining. Revelation 8:12

This trumpet reveals the spiritual war waged against Christ and His chosen ones during the Last Days. The sun, moon, and stars, which represent Christ, His church, and His messengers, are darkened by a third. This symbolizes the denial of Christ's light by a third of the church, even amidst the overwhelming evidence of His glory and presence.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, God declares, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [telling forth the divine counsels], and your young men shall see visions (divinely granted appearances), and your old men shall dream [divinely suggested] dreams. Acts 2:17

The world will soon witness an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit, yet a third of the church and the world will harden their hearts, denying the truth of Christ. Consider the fallen angels—there are literally millions of them on the earth, and they possess the ability to appear human. Naturally, they will deny Christ and actively oppose the will of God, but their efforts will ultimately fail. Even now, many of them are at work within churches, but in the Last Days our Father will no longer permit this. The hot will become hotter, the cold will become colder, and the false will be spewed out of His mouth.

So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth! Revelation 3:16

The Church Under Attack

The moon, which reflects the light of the sun, represents the church that is illuminated and empowered by Christ. Its darkening signifies the attacks and persecution the church will face during this time. Jesus forewarned that His followers would endure tribulation, hatred, and even martyrdom for bearing His name.

Then they will hand you over to suffer affliction and tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended and repelled and will begin to distrust and desert [Him Whom they ought to trust and obey] and will stumble and fall away and betray one another and pursue one another with hatred. Matthew 24:9-10

The governments and rulers of the nations, along with a third of the church, all controlled by the fallen angels and anti-christ will actively oppose the truth of Christ. Yet, this opposition will not prevail against two thirds of the church. The truth of Christ will continue to flourish, leading to an uncountable number of people being saved during this time.

The Bible clearly warns that before the return of Jesus there will be a great falling away of false believers. And where better for a fallen angel to dwell than in the midst of a church? They come disguised as children of light, but their true intent is destruction. They may look like sheep, but in reality they are wolves, sowing confusion and leading others away from the truth of Christ.

Let no one deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come except the apostasy comes first [unless the predicted great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come], and the man of lawlessness (sin) is revealed, who is the son of doom (of perdition), 2 Thessalonians 2:3

Think of when the anti-christ, who is permitted to perform signs and who speaks as no one has ever spoken is allowed by God to come into power. False believers will flock to him, not only to be part of something but to avoid persecution. They will believe that it cannot be the anti-christ because they have placed their hope in the lie of a pre-tribulation rapture. They will think that they cannot be here when the anti-christ is, so they will follow after him just as they follow after those who sooth their itching ears now.

For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, 2 Timothy 4:3

Endurance in Persecution

The persecution faced by believers will mirror the suffering of Christ. As Jesus was hated and persecuted, so too will His followers be hated by the systems of the world. However, the light of Christ will continue to shine even in the darkest times.

Remember that I told you, A servant is not greater than his master [is not superior to him]. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word and obeyed My teachings, they will also keep and obey yours. But they will do all this to you [inflict all this suffering on you] because of [your bearing] My name and on My account, for they do not know or understand the One Who sent Me. John 15:20-21

Despite the efforts of the anti-christ and his followers to extinguish the light, the truth will persist, and the glory of God will continue to transform lives. The church will endure, strengthened by the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The Eagle's Warning

Then I [looked and I] saw a solitary eagle flying in midheaven, and as it flew I heard it crying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the rest of the trumpet blasts which the three angels are about to sound! Revelation 8:13

The solitary eagle flying in midheaven symbolizes a clear and powerful message that will be heard across the entire earth: *Jesus is Lord*. The eagle, known for its strength and majesty, represents the resounding truth that cannot be ignored during the End Times. Positioned in midheaven, the eagle's cry will reach every corner of the world, declaring the coming woes for those who trust in the lies of the anti-christ as God's plan unfolds.

This aligns with the prophecy that God will pour out His Spirit upon all mankind, ensuring that the truth is revealed to all. The cry of the eagle is not merely a warning but also a proclamation of God's sovereignty and love, even amidst tribulation.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, God declares, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [telling forth the divine counsels], and your young men shall see visions (divinely granted appearances), and your old men shall dream [divinely suggested] dreams. Acts 2:17

The Message of the Last Days

During the final three and a half years before Jesus' return, the power and truth of God will be undeniable. His chosen ones will be used in miraculous ways, demonstrating His glory and calling the world to repentance. Yet, despite the evident deceitfulness and evil of the anti-christ and his government, many will follow darkness instead of light.

The [basis of the] judgment (indictment, the test by which men are judged, the ground for the sentence) lies in this: the Light has come into the world, and people have loved the darkness rather than and more than the Light, for their works (deeds) were evil. John 3:19

The allure of wealth, power, and self-interest will blind many to the truth. As Paul warned, the perilous times of the End Days will be marked by a love of evil over good, and selfishness will reign supreme.

Yet even in the midst of the evil that will mark the Last Days, God's will remains unshaken: that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Our Father works in all things to ensure that Jesus is successful in saving all of those entrusted to Him. Not one of those given to Christ will be lost, for the power and purpose of God cannot fail.

And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that I should not lose any of all that He has given Me, but that I should give new life and raise [them all] up at the last day. John 6:39

[Besides this evidence] it was also established and plainly endorsed by God, Who showed His approval of it by signs and wonders and various miraculous manifestations of [His] power and by imparting the gifts of the Holy Spirit [to the believers] according to His own will. Hebrews 2:4

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

A Universal Impact

The End Times will affect everyone on earth. The saved will face persecution, yet they will witness an unprecedented revival as countless people come to salvation. Meanwhile, those who follow the anti-christ will face disappointment and despair, including the fallen angels, as the false promises of the beast fail to bring satisfaction or peace.

This period will serve as both a warning and an opportunity for redemption, as God's truth shines brighter than ever, calling all to turn away from the darkness and embrace the light of Christ. The eagle's cry serves as a poignant reminder that while the woes are great, the grace and salvation of God remain even greater.

Chapter 13

Revelation 9

The Fifth Trumpet: The Abyss Opened

Then the fifth angel blew [his] trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth; and to the angel was given the key of the shaft of the Abyss (the bottomless pit). Revelation 9:1

The fallen star represents Satan, who was cast out of Heaven along with a third of the angels who rebelled against God. Despite his rebellion, Satan has never operated independently of God's authority. Here, he is given a key to the Abyss, symbolizing that his actions during the End Times are permitted and controlled by God to fulfill His purposes.

The kings of the earth took their stand in array [for attack] and the rulers were assembled and combined together against the Lord and against His Anointed (Christ, the Messiah). For in this city there actually met and plotted together against Your holy Child and Servant Jesus, Whom You consecrated by anointing, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and peoples of Israel, To carry out all that Your hand and Your will and purpose had predestined (predetermined) should occur. Acts 4:26-28

Smoke from the Abyss

He opened the long shaft of the Abyss (the bottomless pit), and smoke like the smoke of a huge furnace puffed out of the long shaft, so that the sun and the atmosphere were darkened by the smoke from the long shaft. Then out of the smoke locusts came forth on the earth, and such power was granted them as the power the earth's scorpions have. Revelation 9:2-

The smoke symbolizes God's Divine Anger against the evils of the world. It represents the darkness and chaos that will spread as Satan is allowed to unleash demonic forces from the Abyss. These forces are not targeting people directly but the corrupt systems and institutions that they trust in: money, government, and other false saviors, that have led humanity astray.

God's wrath is not aimed at destroying people but at the things that have enslaved them. God's wrath is His active removal of evil to bring about ultimate restoration and freedom.

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

As it is written, None is righteous, just and truthful and upright and conscientious, no, not one. Romans 3:10

The Scorpion-Like Locusts

The beings released from the Abyss are compared to scorpions. Scorpions are pests whose stings cause pain but are rarely deadly. This imagery shows how those who place their trust in the anti-christ and his systems will be tormented with disappointment and frustration. Their false saviors will bring no peace or satisfaction, only anguish.

These locust-like beings symbolize the judgment on those who reject God's truth, trusting instead in the anti-christ's lies. Their torment will not come from physical death but from the emptiness and futility of following after the world's corrupt systems.

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). John 10:10

Even in judgment, God's purpose remains redemptive, to reveal the futility of worldly trust and to turn hearts back to Him. The Last Days will be marked by the contrast between the temporary pain of trusting in the world and the eternal joy of trusting in Christ.

Protection for the Sealed

They were told not to injure the herbage of the earth nor any green thing nor any tree, but only [to attack] such human beings as do not have the seal (mark) of God on their foreheads. They were not permitted to kill them, but to torment (distress, vex) them for five months; and the pain caused them was like the torture of a scorpion when it stings a person. Revelation 9:4-5

If these events were literal, the command not to harm the herbage or trees would be unnecessary, as earlier judgments would have already devastated the physical earth. Instead, the herbage and trees symbolize those who are rooted in Christ and thriving under His protection. The sealed ones, believers who are chosen to endure the Last Days, will not be harmed by the torments unleashed on the earth.

The power and presence of the Holy Spirit within the End Time Church will ensure that God's wrath is reserved for the systems of the world and those who reject His truth. Even in a world dominated by the anti-christ, the Church will be a beacon of provision, protection, and hope.

For God has not appointed us to [incur His] wrath [He did not select us to condemn us], but [that we might] obtain [His] salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). 1 Thessalonians 5:9

Who then is the faithful, thoughtful, and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household to give to the others the food and supplies at the proper time? Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is that servant whom, when his master comes, he will find so doing. Matthew 24:45-46

Seeking Death and Finding None

And in those days people will seek death and will not find it; and they will yearn to die, but death evades and flees from them. Revelation 9:6

This verse reveals that even in the midst of torment, God retains control over life and death. Only Christ holds the keys to death and Hades, and He alone decides when death will occur.

And the Ever-living One [I am living in the eternity of the eternities]. I died, but see, I am alive forevermore; and I possess the keys of death and Hades (the realm of the dead). Revelation 1:18

The seeming contradiction, earlier we were told a third of the earth would die, and now we are told people will seek death but not find it, further underscores the figurative nature of these visions. These judgments are not physical but also spiritual and emotional. The torment described is the result of misplaced trust in the anti-christ's promises, leading to profound despair.

The Deception of Earthly Wealth

The bitter truth of the Last Days is that earthly wealth and prosperity, far from bringing peace and satisfaction, will instead foster greed, selfishness, and despair. The love of money will blind people to the truth and choke out the Word of God in their lives.

As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the Word, but the cares of the world and the pleasure and delight and glamour and deceitfulness of riches choke and suffocate the Word, and it yields no fruit. Matthew 13:22

But those who crave to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish (useless, godless) and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction and miserable perishing. 1 Timothy 6:9

Hope Amidst Torment

Even in the chaos of the Great Tribulation, God's purposes are redemptive. The torment allowed during this time is not aimed at destruction but at revealing the futility of trusting in worldly systems. Through these trials, many will recognize their need for Christ and turn to Him for salvation.

The Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, will stand firm, demonstrating the provision and protection of God to a world in desperate need of hope.

The Locusts Resembling Horses for Battle

The locusts resembled horses equipped for battle. On their heads was something like golden crowns. Their faces resembled the faces of people. They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. Their breastplates (scales) resembled breastplates made of iron, and the [whirring] noise made by their wings was like the roar of a vast number of horse-drawn chariots going at full speed into battle. Revelation 9:7-9

These locust-like beings symbolize demonic forces, divinely permitted to torment those who follow the anti-christ. Described as strong and fast, like horses equipped for battle, they will carry out their mission with relentless power. Their crowns, resembling gold, suggest a false authority or success that may deceive those who lack the discernment provided by the Holy Spirit.

Their appearance, with faces like humans and hair like women, highlights their deceptive and alluring nature. They may seem attractive or appealing at first, drawing people in with their lies. Yet, their true nature is revealed by their lion-like teeth and breastplates of iron, showing their destructive and unyielding mission to spread torment and falsehood.

Deceptive but Defeated

These demonic beings may manifest physically, as people, or spiritually, working through deception and possession. Their goal will be to spread Satan's lies, aligning themselves with the anti-christ.

Do not forget or neglect or refuse to extend hospitality to strangers [in the brotherhood—being friendly, cordial, and gracious, sharing the comforts of your home and doing your part generously], for through it some have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2

Whether these beings are physical, spiritual, or both, their mission is clear: to torment and deceive a third of mankind who align themselves with the anti-christ. However, they will have no power over those sealed by God. The Seal of God, which is the Holy Spirit, protects believers physically, spiritually, and mentally, shielding them from these torments.

The Seal of God and Spiritual Discernment

The Seal of God is not merely a mark of protection but also enlightenment through the Holy Spirit. Believers will be empowered to discern truth from lies and identify these demonic forces and their deceptive message.

Beloved, do not put faith in every spirit, but prove (test) the spirits to discover whether they proceed from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world. 1 John 4:1

For this reason we also, from the day we heard of it, have not ceased to pray and make [special] request for you, [asking] that you may be filled with the full (deep and clear) knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom [in comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God] and in understanding and discernment of spiritual things— Colossians 1:9

During the Great Tribulation, the Church will stand as a powerful beacon of truth. Equipped by the Holy Spirit, the chosen ones will expose these lies and bring hope to a world desperately in need of redemption. This spiritual wisdom and discernment will be vital for navigating the deceptive and tumultuous times of the End Days.

The Tails of Scorpions: Spreading Deception

They have tails like scorpions, and they have stings, and in their tails lies their ability to hurt men for [the] five months. Revelation 9:10

The tails of these beings symbolize the followers of Satan who spread his lies and enforce his oppressive rule. Just as a scorpion's sting is in its tail, the harmful impact of these demonic forces lies in those who carry out their agenda. Think of an authoritarian regime where informants betray their own families for the sake of personal gain or survival. Such deception and division will dominate the Last Days.

Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child; and children will take a stand against their parents and will have them put to death. Matthew 10:21

The King Over the Abyss

Over them as king they have the angel of the Abyss (of the bottomless pit). In Hebrew his name is Abaddon [destruction], but in Greek he is called Apollyon [destroyer]. The first woe (calamity) has passed; behold, two others are yet to follow. Revelation 9:11-12

Abaddon, or Apollyon, symbolizes Satan's dominion over these destructive forces. However, it is crucial to remember that Satan operates only within the boundaries set by God. The key to the Abyss was given to the fallen angel by God's authority, reminding us that even destruction serves a divine purpose.

The Sixth Trumpet: Releasing the Four Angels

Then the sixth angel blew [his] trumpet, and from the four horns of the golden altar which stands before God I heard a solitary voice, Saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Liberate the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. Revelation 9:13-14

The golden altar of incense represents the prayers of the saints, showing that the release of the four angels is an answer to our prayers, which is for Jesus to be revealed and the evil of the world to be destroyed. We pray for our enemies, not that they are destroyed, but that they are set free. The solitary voice heard signifies unity in the heavenly realm, where all agree on the necessity of these events to set mankind free.

And [Bezalel] made the incense altar of acacia wood; its top was a cubit square and it was two cubits high; the horns were one piece with it. He overlaid it with pure gold, its top, its sides round about, and its horns; also he made a rim around it of gold. Exodus 37:25-26

The Prayer for Love Fulfilled Through Judgment

True Christian prayers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, seek love in all its forms: mercy, forgiveness, and truth. The release of the four angels will bring discomfort and hardship, but these trials are part of God's process to reveal His love and bring humanity to repentance. The ultimate result will be the recognition of Jesus as Lord by all.

And above all these [put on] love and enfold yourselves with the bond of perfectness [which binds everything together completely in ideal harmony]. Colossians 3:14

The suffering endured during these times will lead to a greater revelation of God's mercy. Even those who do not bear the Seal of God will ultimately bow their knees and confess that Jesus is Lord, fulfilling God's plan for mercy on all.

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

Also to enlighten all men and make plain to them what is the plan [regarding the Gentiles and providing for the salvation of all men] of the mystery kept hidden through the ages and concealed until now in [the mind of] God Who created all things by Christ Jesus. Ephesians 3:9

In the unfolding of the sixth trumpet, we see not only judgment but the ultimate expression of God's love and mercy. Every hardship, every trial, serves the greater purpose of bringing all creation into alignment with God's perfect will.

The Liberation of the Four Angels

So the four angels who had been in readiness for that hour in the appointed day, month, and year were liberated to destroy a third of mankind. The number of their troops of cavalry was twice ten thousand times ten thousand (200,000,000); I heard what their number was. Revelation 9:15-16

These four angels, or messengers, have been kept in readiness for a divinely appointed time. Their liberation emphasizes that God is in complete control of the timing and scope of His judgments. These angels represent false messages or ideologies, released to deceive and destroy. Yet, even in this destruction, we have seen the mercy of God, as an uncountable number of people will not follow these lies. This rejection of the anti-christ and his false teachings highlights the resilience of the Truth and the power of the Gospel during the Great Tribulation.

To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter or purpose under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1

Man's steps are ordered by the Lord. How then can a man understand his way? Proverbs 20:24

The Middle East as the Origin of Falsehood

The Middle East, long a region marked by strife, serves as a symbolic and literal source of many of the lies that have plagued humanity. Consider the destructive impact of false religions, corrupt leaders, and the manipulation of resources like oil. For centuries, millions have suffered under regimes that enriched a few while oppressing the masses. In their desperation for relief, many will be susceptible to the deceptions of the anti-christ.

False Christs (Messiahs) and false prophets will arise and show signs and [work] miracles to deceive and lead astray, if possible, even the elect (those God has chosen out for Himself). Mark 13:22

These false ideologies, whether rooted in religion, politics, or economics, will fuel the anti-christ's rise. His promises of unity and peace will deceive many, but ultimately, his power will fail to secure the loyalty of the majority of mankind.

The 200 Million Troops: Followers, Not Armies

The 200 million troops are often interpreted as a literal military force, possibly from a nation like China. However, maintaining such a large army would be logistically improbable. A more likely interpretation is that this number represents a massive group of radicalized followers of the anti-christ. These individuals, deceived by promises of power or relief from suffering, will spread his message and carry out his agenda.

The Middle East, with its history of radicalized factions and religious extremism, provides a plausible setting for such a movement. Yet, even if these followers number in the hundreds of millions, they still represent only a fraction of the world's population. The majority will resist or reject the anti-christ's lies.

And the beast was given the power of speech, uttering boastful and blasphemous words, and he was given freedom to exert his authority and to exercise his will during forty-two months (three and a half years). Revelation 13:5

Salvation and Resistance in the Last Days

Despite the power and influence of the anti-christ, the Gospel will continue to be preached throughout the world. The failures of the anti-christ will provide countless opportunities for salvation. His inability to fully unify the world or maintain control highlights the sovereignty of God and the triumph of the Gospel.

And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end. Matthew 24:14

The Great Tribulation will not only be a time of judgment but also a time of unprecedented revival. Many who have been deceived will find the Truth, and the power of God will prevail even in the darkest of times. The vast number of people resisting the anti-christ shows that, even in the face of immense pressure, the light of Christ will continue to shine.

The Vision of the Horses and Their Riders

And in [my] vision the horses and their riders appeared to me like this: the riders wore breastplates the color of fiery red and sapphire blue and sulphur (brimstone) yellow. The heads of the horses looked like lions' heads, and from their mouths there poured fire and smoke and sulphur (brimstone). Revelation 9:17

The 200 million followers of the anti-christ will project an appearance of power and authority, symbolized by their warhorses. Their breastplates, vivid in fiery red, sapphire blue, and sulphur yellow, suggest that their message will be highly visible and attract attention. They will boldly promote their doctrines, attempting to draw people away from Christ and towards trust in human systems, governments, and the anti-christ. The smoke from their mouths represents the destruction their message brings, a cloud of deception designed to obscure the truth of God.

The lion-like heads of the horses symbolize ferocity and unity, much like a pride of lions that works together in attacks. These followers of the anti-christ will seem strong and unified, but their aggression will ultimately serve God's purpose. Their attacks will expose the lies of the anti-christ, leading many to the truth of Christ, even in the face of persecution.

The Death of a Third of Mankind

A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues—by the fire and the smoke and the sulphur (brimstone) that poured from the mouths of the horses. For the power of the horses to do harm is in their mouths and also in their tails. Their tails are like serpents, for they have heads, and it is by means of them that they wound people. Revelation 9:18-19

This "death" is spiritual, not physical. If one-third of the world's population were physically killed, society would collapse, making it impossible for the events described in Revelation to unfold as they do. Instead, this represents a spiritual death, where a third of humanity will reject God and embrace the lies of the anti-christ. Their hearts will become hardened, separating them from the truth and the life found in Christ. However, never forget, that Jesus will not ultimately lose any

that He has been given, and He has been given all. These people will have to go through Hades, but just like with the people from Noah's time, Jesus will set them free.

In which He went and preached to the spirits in prison, [The souls of those] who long before in the days of Noah had been disobedient, when God's patience waited during the building of the ark in which a few [people], actually eight in number, were saved through water. 1 Peter 3:19-20

This spiritual death aligns with the conditions of the Last Days, where people will love themselves, their wealth, and their pleasures more than God. It is a time when spiritual deception will thrive, but it will also be a time of great revival, with countless others turning to Christ.

The Message and Its Followers

The power of the horses lies both in their mouths and their tails. The mouths represent the message of the anti-christ—one that glorifies humanity, government, and the anti-christ himself while rejecting Christ. The tails, likened to serpents with heads, represent the followers and fallen angels of this message who spread lies and lead others astray.

This imagery emphasizes the destructive impact of false teachings and blind allegiance. The message and its proponents will wound people spiritually, leading them away from God's truth.

Let them alone and disregard them; they are blind guides and teachers. And if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a ditch. Matthew 15:14

Despite this spiritual destruction, the light of Christ will continue to shine through His chosen ones. The lies of the anti-christ will not overcome the Gospel, and even in the midst of this great deception, salvation will abound. Many will turn to Christ, finding life and truth in Him as they reject the false promises of the anti-christ.

Humanity's Unrepentance in the Face of Judgment

And the rest of humanity who were not killed by these plagues even then did not repent of [the worship of] the works of their [own] hands, so as to cease paying homage to the demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor move. And they did not repent of their murders or their practice of magic (sorceries) or their sexual vice or their thefts. Revelation 9:20-21

The imagery here illustrates a profound spiritual truth: even when faced with the consequences of sin and the evidence of God's power, many will remain unrepentant. If these events were literal, massive physical destruction, widespread death, and devastation, humanity would likely be too paralyzed with fear to cling to their idols or continue in rebellion. Yet the text emphasizes their persistent worship of material things and engagement in sinful practices, suggesting a deeper spiritual blindness.

This unrepentance points to the stubbornness of the human heart when it is separated from God. It reflects humanity's reliance on the works of their hands: money, technology, and institutions, which have become modern idols. Even when these things fail, people often double down on their trust in them instead of turning to God. The thing that allows them to do so is because they have the resources to not need God. With all of my heart I do believe that the Last Days will be prosperous and people will have abundance. If they didn't, they would seek out God and others. They would not be arrogant and prideful if they lacked the resources needed for survival.

The Nature of Spiritual Death

The deaths described earlier in Revelation are best understood as spiritual rather than physical. A third of humanity "killed" by the plagues signifies those who have fallen away from God due to the deception of the anti-christ and the seductive power of sin. These individuals are spiritually dead, yet Christ's redemptive power remains available even for them.

This passage underscores the incredible mercy of Jesus. Even those who are spiritually dead are not beyond His reach. Christ has already demonstrated His power to redeem the lost, as seen in His descent into Hades to preach to the spirits in prison. Jesus will succeed in saving all of the Lost.

Persistent Idolatry and Sin

The persistent worship of idols, gold, silver, and other material things, represents humanity's misplaced trust in wealth, power, and self-sufficiency. Despite the failure of these things to provide true security or fulfillment, people continue to pursue them, blinded by pride and deception.

The continued practice of sorcery, sexual immorality, and theft reflects humanity's refusal to abandon sin, even when its destructive consequences are evident. These behaviors are not just physical actions but reflect the deeper rebellion of the heart against God. These actions also thrive in times of worldly abundance, not in times of great physical trial.

A Call to Hope

Even in the face of such rebellion, God's plan is not one of eternal condemnation but redemption. The imagery in Revelation is not merely about judgment; it is about refining, purifying, and ultimately restoring creation. While many will reject God during these times, countless others will turn to Him, and His mercy will abound.

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

But then Law came in, [only] to expand and increase the trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]. But where sin increased and abounded, grace (God's unmerited favor) has surpassed it and increased the more and superabounded, Romans 5:20

Jesus' message to John serves as a sobering reminder of the consequences of sin but also highlights the hope found in Christ. Even in the darkest times, His light shines, offering redemption to all who will turn to Him.

Chapter 14

Revelation 10

The Mighty Angel and the Promise of Hope

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, robed in a cloud, with a [halo like a] rainbow over his head; his face was like the sun, and his feet (legs) were like columns of fire. He had a little book (scroll) open in his hand. He set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land Revelation 10:1-2

This passage is a powerful reminder that God will not abandon humanity, even during the Great Tribulation. The imagery of the mighty angel demonstrates God's enduring presence and His unwavering commitment to bring truth and salvation to all mankind.

The angel's stance, with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, symbolizes that the message of salvation will reach every corner of the earth, touching both the multitudes represented by the sea and the nations symbolized by the land. This represents the global scope of God's redemptive plan during the final days.

God's Spirit will be poured out with great power during this time. The pillars of fire signify the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, Who will work through the chosen ones to proclaim truth and perform mighty works.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, God declares, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [telling forth the divine counsels] and your young men shall see visions (divinely granted appearances), and your old men shall dream [divinely suggested] dreams. Acts 2:17

The Covenant of the Rainbow

The rainbow over the angel's head serves as a symbol of God's covenant with humanity, a promise of mercy and assurance that He will not destroy the earth again. It emphasizes that even amidst judgment, God's ultimate plan is restoration, not annihilation.

And God said to Noah, This [rainbow] is the token or sign of the covenant or solemn pledge which I have established between Me and all flesh upon the earth. Genesis 9:17

If the End Times were solely about destruction, there would be no need for the rainbow, a reminder of God's grace. Instead, this detail underscores the truth that God's judgments are meant to purify, redeem, and restore His creation, not to utterly destroy it.

A Message of Strength and Establishment

The angel's appearance, radiant as the sun and standing on pillars of fire, reflects the strength and permanence of God's Word and Spirit. His message will endure, empowering the chosen ones to remain steadfast and faithful.

But it is God Who confirms and makes us steadfast and establishes us [in joint fellowship] with you in Christ, and has consecrated and anointed us [enduing us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit]; 2 Corinthians 1:21

Even in the midst of tribulation, God's power will establish His people, ensuring their strength and vindication until the return of Christ.

And He will establish you to the end [keep you steadfast, give you strength, and guarantee your vindication; He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). 1 Corinthians 1:8

This vision is a powerful encouragement for believers to trust in God's redemptive plan. It reminds us that the trials of the Great Tribulation will not overshadow the greater truth of God's mercy, presence, and ultimate victory. The rainbow, the Spirit-filled fire, and the global proclamation of the gospel all point to His unwavering love and His unshakable promise to redeem His creation.

The Seven Thunders and God's Timing

And he shouted with a loud voice like the roaring of a lion; and when he had shouted, the seven thunders gave voice and uttered their message in distinct words. And when the seven thunders had spoken (sounded), I was going to write [it down], but I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up what the seven thunders have said! Do not write it down! Revelation 10:3-4

The mystery of the seven thunders emphasizes God's sovereign control over the timing and unfolding of the events in the Last Days. These thunders likely reveal details that pinpoint the exact sequence or timing of Christ's return, a revelation God has deliberately chosen to conceal from humanity until the Last Days.

The Mystery of the Thunders

John clearly hears a message in the distinct voices of the seven thunders, yet he is forbidden to record it. This secrecy underscores a recurring biblical theme: the precise timing of end-time events remains known only to God the Father.

He said to them, It is not for you to become acquainted with and know what time brings [the things and events of time and their definite periods] or fixed years and seasons (their critical niche in time), which the Father has appointed (fixed and reserved) by His own choice and authority and personal power. Acts 1:17

By sealing the words of the thunders, God ensures that His return remains unexpected, forcing believers to walk by faith, not by sight.

For you yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the [return of the] Lord will come [as unexpectedly and suddenly] as a thief in the night. 1 Thessalonians 5:2

The Divine Mystery Preserved

The refusal to reveal the contents of the seven thunders also reminds us of the incomprehensibility of God's plans. As finite beings, we cannot fully grasp the depths of His purposes, and some aspects of His design must remain veiled until the appointed time.

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9

This mystery invites us to trust in God's wisdom and perfect timing, resting in the assurance that He will bring all things to completion according to His sovereign will.

The Voice Like a Roaring Lion

The loud voice of the angel, likened to the roar of a lion, demonstrates the authority and power of God's message during the Last Days. A lion's roar is unmistakable, commanding attention and proclaiming dominion. This imagery highlights the urgency and authority of the message being delivered, even as some details remain sealed.

God's decision to keep the words of the seven thunders hidden reflects His wisdom in protecting us from knowledge we are not yet prepared to handle. This serves as a reminder that our focus should remain on living faithfully and sharing the gospel, rather than attempting to decipher exact dates or events.

But of that day or that hour not a [single] person knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Mark 13:32

This mystery ultimately calls us to a posture of trust and readiness, always prepared for His return, yet content in the knowledge that His timing is perfect. It is also important to remember that John heard these Thunders and understood them, but was forbidden from writing them down.

The Angel's Declaration and God's Hidden Mystery

Then the [mighty] angel whom I had seen stationed on sea and land raised his right hand to heaven (the sky), And swore in the name of (by) Him Who lives forever and ever, Who created the heavens (sky) and all they contain, and the earth and all that it contains, and the sea and all that it contains. [He swore] that no more time should intervene and there should be no more waiting or delay, But that when the days come when the trumpet call of the seventh angel is about to be sounded, then God's mystery (His secret design, His hidden purpose), as He had announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets, should be fulfilled (accomplished, completed). Revelation 10:5-7

The angel's declaration is one of finality: the time has come for God's hidden mystery to be revealed. This mystery, long foretold by the prophets, encapsulates the fullness of God's plan for humanity—a plan rooted in His love and desire to save all.

The Mystery of God's Purpose

God's hidden purpose, as revealed throughout Scripture, is His intention to save and reconcile all people to Himself.

Lest you be self-opinionated (wise in your own conceits), I do not want you to miss this hidden truth and mystery, brethren: a hardening (insensibility) has [temporarily] befallen a part of Israel [to last] until the full number of the ingathering of the Gentiles has come in. Romans 11:25

Who gave Himself as a ransom for all [people, a fact that was] attested to at the right and proper time. 1 Timothy 2:6

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

This mystery will be fulfilled when the seventh trumpet sounds, bringing to completion the work of Christ and the redemption of creation.

The Little Scroll: Sweet and Bitter

Then the voice that I heard from heaven spoke again to me, saying, Go and take the little book (scroll) which is open on the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land. So I went up to the angel and asked him to give me the little book. And he said to me, Take it and eat it. It will embitter your stomach, though in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey. So I took the little book from the angel's hand and ate and swallowed it; it was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but once I had swallowed it, my stomach was embittered. Revelation 10:8-10

The little scroll represents the message of God's love and salvation through Christ. Its size reflects the simplicity of the message:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39

The message is sweet, as it speaks of God's mercy, grace, and the ultimate victory of Christ. Yet it turns bitter when consumed, reflecting the sorrow of seeing humanity's failure to embrace this simple truth.

The Sweetness of God's Love

The initial sweetness of the scroll comes from the overwhelming beauty of God's love:

I have made Your Name known to them and revealed Your character and Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them. John 17:26

Above all things have intense and unfailing love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins [forgives and disregards the offenses of others]. 1 Peter 4:8

The Bitterness of Rejection

However, the message becomes bitter as John digests it. The bitterness stems from the grief of witnessing humanity's persistent rejection of God's love and the suffering that results.

Think of the brokenness caused by greed, betrayal, and self-reliance. Consider the heartache of seeing governments oppress, people suffer, and nations turn to false saviors. This is the source of the bitterness: the simplicity of God's love contrasted with humanity's refusal to embrace it.

Jesus is the only way and His yoke is easy and His burden is light, and yet so many fail to follow the Truth that will set them free.

God's Mystery Revealed

The ultimate purpose of the little scroll, and the entire narrative of Revelation, is to reveal that God's redemptive plan is both simple and complete. Though the journey is marked by sorrow and resistance, the end will declare the total victory of Christ and the salvation of all mankind.

For the whole Law [concerning human relationships] is complied with in the one precept, You shall love your neighbor as [you do] yourself. Galatians 5:14

This is the enduring truth of the little scroll, sweet and bitter, yet ultimately triumphant.

A Fresh Prophecy for All

Then they said to me, You are to make a fresh prophecy concerning many peoples and races and nations and languages and kings. Revelation 10:11

The angel commissions John to deliver a fresh prophecy, a renewed declaration of God's ultimate plan for salvation and redemption. This prophecy is not limited to a select group; it is a message for all peoples, races, nations, and kings. It is the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, proclaimed to the entire world as a testimony before His return. During the Last Days there will be a renewed and powerful declaration of the Truth.

A Prophecy of Grace and Salvation

The fresh prophecy is not about human works, laws, or religious systems. It is the simple yet profound truth of Christ's success in securing salvation for all people. This truth is rooted in God's love and mercy, not in human effort or merit.

For it is by grace [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation]. Ephesians 2:8-9

The Simplicity of Salvation

Human pride resists the simplicity of salvation through Christ. Many want to earn their way to heaven, boasting in their own efforts. But salvation is a gift from God, freely given through the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave His [One and] only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him [as Savior] shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

The fresh prophecy proclaims this truth, challenging the lies of self-reliance and works-based righteousness. It declares that salvation is complete in Christ, a message that leads to humility and gratitude.

Every Knee Shall Bow

This prophecy ultimately points to the day when every knee will bow before Jesus, acknowledging His Lordship. His victory will be undeniable, and all creation will glorify Him.

For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God [acknowledge Him to His honor and to His praise]. Romans 14:11

The Global Scope of the Prophecy

The angel emphasizes that this prophecy must reach *many peoples and races and nations and languages and kings*. The scope of the message is universal, demonstrating God's desire for all to be saved.

And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end. Matthew 24:14

A Rejoicing Creation

The fresh prophecy is a call to share the good news of Christ's complete victory, a truth so powerful that all creation rejoices over Him. The message is one of hope, love, and redemption, a light shining in the darkness of the Great Tribulation.

And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth [in Hades, the place of departed spirits] and on the sea and all that is in it, crying out together, To Him Who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb be ascribed the blessing and the honor and the majesty (glory, splendor) and the power (might and dominion) forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities)! Revelation 5:13

The prophecy is clear: Jesus has done what is needed for all men to be saved, and His love will ultimately prevail.

Chapter 15

Revelation 11

Measuring the Sanctuary of God

A reed [as a measuring rod] was then given to me, [shaped] like a staff, and I was told: Rise up and measure the sanctuary of God and the altar [of incense], and [number] those who worship there. Revelation 11:1

John is given a reed, shaped like a shepherd's staff, to measure the sanctuary of God. A staff is a symbol of guidance, care, and authority, representing our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks and lays down His [own] life for the sheep. John 10:11

Now may the God of peace [Who is the Author and the Giver of peace], Who brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood [that sealed, ratified] the everlasting agreement (covenant, testament). Hebrews 13:20

Measuring with Jesus

The act of measuring symbolizes assessment and ownership. John is using the measure of Jesus to define the sanctuary of God and the altar of incense. This act points to Jesus as the standard by which all is measured and all is fulfilled.

But that when the days come when the trumpet call of the seventh angel is about to be sounded, then God's mystery (His secret design, His hidden purpose), as He had announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets, should be fulfilled (accomplished, completed). Revelation 10:7

The hidden mystery of God is the full scope of His redemptive plan through Christ, that all men will be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. This is why John measures the worshippers—ultimately, all creation will glorify God.

And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth [in Hades, the place of departed spirits] and on the sea and all that is in it, crying out together, To Him Who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb be ascribed the blessing and the honor and the majesty (glory, splendor) and the power (might and dominion) forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities)! Revelation 5:13

We are eleven chapters into Revelation and the message just keeps pointing us to Jesus and His success. It really hasn't been a complicated message so far, especially when you tie it into what we are told in the other Books of the Bible.

The Sanctuary of God

The sanctuary of God is not a physical structure. Through Christ, we become the dwelling place of God, His living sanctuary.

Do you not discern and understand that you [the whole church at Corinth] are God's temple (His sanctuary), and that God's Spirit has His permanent dwelling in you [to be at home in you, collectively as a church and also individually]? 1 Corinthians 3:16

Then I heard a mighty voice from the throne and I perceived its distinct words, saying, See! The abode of God is with men, and He will live (encamp, tent) among them; and they shall be His people, and God shall personally be with them and be their God. Revelation 21:3

This measurement is a testimony of Jesus' success in making humanity the dwelling place of God.

The Altar of Incense

John is also instructed to measure the altar of incense, which represents the prayers of the saints. This is showing us that Jesus' work ensures that our prayers are effective, pure, and pleasing to God.

And I will do [I Myself will grant] whatever you ask in My Name [as presenting all that I Am], so that the Father may be glorified and extolled in (through) the Son. John 14:13

Our prayers ascend to God as a sweet-smelling offering, purified and empowered by Jesus.

Jesus' Abundant Victory

What we see in this act of measuring is the fullness of Jesus' victory. Through His sacrifice, He has secured life, grace, and mercy for all. His measure is perfect, and His work ensures that all things align with God's ultimate plan of redemption.

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). John 10:10

This passage is a beautiful reminder that Jesus is the center of all, the measure of truth, and the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.

Measuring the Temple: Excluding the Outer Court

But leave out of your measuring the court outside the sanctuary of God; omit that, for it is given over to the Gentiles (the nations), and they will trample the holy city underfoot for , months (three and one-half years). Revelation 11:2

God permits the outer court, symbolic of those outside the sanctuary, to be trampled by the nations for three and a half years. This corresponds to the period of the Great Tribulation, when the anti-christ with Satan and the fallen angels will attack the chosen ones of God.

It is important to remember that Jesus has been given authority over all mankind, and nothing lies outside His rule. Our Father also teaches us that His mercy is extended to all people alike, for His desire is that none be lost. When we think about those who are not measured, it becomes clear that it is the fallen angels, those who disguise themselves as human, who stand apart. Yet even in their deception, they cannot escape the sovereignty of Christ, for His authority is complete and His victory is sure.

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

Love for Those Who Persecute

During this time, God's chosen ones will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to bless and pray for those who persecute them.

Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you]. Luke 6:28

These prayers, rooted in love and grace, will play a significant role in bringing many of these people to the truth.

The Hope for Those Outside

Even those who persecute the saints are not beyond God's redemptive plan. Some may have to pass through Hades, as those in Noah's day did, but they will ultimately be reconciled to God. While, the fallen angels and Satan, will be cast into the Lake of Fire and destroyed.

But if any person's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15

Jesus' success on the cross has already secured the right for all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

And [He designed] to reconcile to God both [Jew and Gentile, united] in a single body by means of His cross, thereby killing the mutual enmity and bringing the feud to an end. Ephesians 2:16

And God purposed that through (by the service, the intervention of) Him [the Son] all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him, [the Father] made peace by means of the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20

The Two Witnesses: Messengers of Grace

And I will grant the power of prophecy to My two witnesses for 1,260 (42 months; three and one-half years), dressed in sackcloth. These [witnesses] are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth. Revelation 11:3-4

The Great Tribulation will be a time of unparalleled spiritual activity. Despite the turmoil caused by the anti-christ, the Word of God will flourish, and countless people will come to salvation during this time.

After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

And it shall come to pass in the last days, God declares, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [telling forth the divine counsels] and your young men shall see visions (divinely granted appearances), and your old men shall dream [divinely suggested] dreams. Acts 2:7

Who Are the Two Witnesses?

The two witnesses are described as *the two olive trees and the two lampstands*. This symbolism is drawn from *Zechariah 4*, where Zerubbabel and Joshua are referred to as the two anointed ones. These men led Israel out of Babylonian captivity and were empowered by the Spirit of God to rebuild the temple, demonstrating that God's purposes are accomplished *not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit* (Zechariah 4:6).

Then said he, These are the two sons of oil [Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the prince of Judah, the two anointed ones] who stand before the Lord of the whole earth [as His anointed instruments]. Zechariah 4:14

I believe that the two witnesses in Revelation are literal individuals raised up by God during the End Times to deliver His message with miraculous power. Their ministry will be one of intercession, humility, and perseverance, as demonstrated by their sackcloth attire, symbolizing mourning and a heart for the lost. They obviously will not be the only witnesses empowered, but I believe they will be two powerful leaders of the Message of Christ.

Delivering People from Babylon

The two witnesses will be empowered to lead many out of spiritual Babylon, which represents the world's corrupt systems of government, economics, and religion. Their ministry will shine a light on the deception of the anti-christ and call people to repentance and salvation.

And their dead bodies [will lie exposed] in the open street (a public square) of the great city which is in a spiritual sense called [by the mystical and allegorical names of] Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. Revelation 11:8

The fact that the two witnesses are later killed and lie in the streets confirms why I believe in their literal existence. The Word of God itself cannot be killed, as it is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword (*Hebrews 4:12*). Therefore, these witnesses must be physical representatives of God's truth, distinct from symbolic interpretations.

Humility and Intercession

The witnesses' sackcloth attire reveals their mission: to intercede for those deceived by the anti-christ, rather than to confront them arrogantly. Their ministry will focus on seeking the salvation of the lost, embodying the heart of God's love and mercy.

Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

Their presence during the Great Tribulation will be a testimony to God's unrelenting grace and power. Even as Satan works through the anti-christ and false prophet, these two anointed leaders will boldly proclaim the truth of God's Word, offering hope and salvation to all who will listen.

The Two Witnesses: Empowered by the Spirit

And if anyone attempts to injure them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their enemies; if anyone should attempt to harm them, thus he is doomed to be slain. Revelation 11:5

The fire pouring from the mouths of the two witnesses represents the power of the Holy Spirit, which speaks truth and brings judgment. This fire is not physical destruction but the Word of God spoken with authority and power, which pierces the hearts of men and exposes rebellion.

Many people tend to think negatively about the idea of being “slain,” imagining it as a horrible physical death. Yet when we look at it through God’s perspective, it takes on a completely different meaning. When the Truth of Christ came to you, wasn’t your old self slain and done away with? Scripture tells us that in the Last Days, an uncountable multitude will be saved. That also means an uncountable multitude of old selves will be slain—sinful natures put to death so that new life in Christ may rise.

But when they deliver you up, do not be anxious about how or what you are to speak; for what you are to say will be given you in that very hour and moment. Matthew 10:19

I have been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me. Galatians 2:20

The two witnesses, like Jesus, and all of us, are under God’s sovereign control. Their time on earth and their ministry are divinely appointed, and they will not be harmed until their purpose is fulfilled.

For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. Colossians 1:16

The Power to Oppose

These [two witnesses] have power to shut up the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying (their prediction of events relating to Christ’s kingdom and its speedy triumph); and they also have power to turn the waters into blood and to smite and scourge the earth with all manner of plagues as often as they choose. Revelation 11:6

The two witnesses are given authority to disrupt and expose the anti-christ’s corrupt government and economic system. Their power mirrors the plagues in Egypt, which demonstrated God’s supremacy over Pharaoh. The reference to shutting the sky, turning water into blood, and causing plagues signifies God’s judgment upon the systems of the world that oppose His truth.

Consider what Paul told the Corinthians to do with the individual who was in a relationship with his father’s wife.

You are to deliver this man over to Satan for physical discipline [to destroy carnal lusts which prompted him to incest], that [his] spirit may [yet] be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Corinthians 5:5

During the Last Days the power of Satan will be used to do the exact same thing as what Paul wrote to do, destroy the lusts of the flesh, so that an uncountable number of people can be saved.

Shutting the Sky

The imagery of the sky rolling up like a scroll and vanishing (Revelation 6:14) represents the collapse of the world's economic and political systems. The two witnesses are empowered to hasten this collapse, further demonstrating the futility of trusting in earthly power and wealth.

And the sky rolled up like a scroll and vanished, and every mountain and island was dislodged from its place. Revelation 6:14

Their ministry will bring misery to those who follow the anti-christ, as they will clearly see that the promises of his government are empty. The two witnesses will be used to show the world that salvation, peace, and security can only come through Jesus Christ.

Divine Authority

The power of the two witnesses is not their own but comes from God. They will use this authority not for personal gain or vengeance but to glorify God and draw people to the truth. Their actions, while harsh to the unrepentant, are acts of divine mercy, shaking people from their delusion and turning them toward salvation.

For the word of God is living and active and full of power [making it operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as the division of soul and spirit. Hebrews 4:12

Through the ministry of these two witnesses, the world will see God's hand at work, and many will be brought to repentance and salvation even during the darkest times of the Great Tribulation.

The Martyrdom of the Two Witnesses

But when they have finished their testimony and their evidence is all in, the beast (monster) that comes up out of the Abyss (bottomless pit) will wage war on them, and conquer them and kill them. Revelation 11:7

The two witnesses are divinely protected until their mission is complete. As Jesus alone holds the keys of death, their lives and ministry are in His control. They will not be harmed or killed until God's purpose through them is fulfilled.

And the Ever-living One [I am living in the eternity of the eternities]. I died, but see, I am alive forevermore; and I possess the keys of death and Hades (the realm of the dead). Revelation 1:18

Are not two little sparrows sold for a penny? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's leave (consent) and notice. Matthew 10:29

The beast that rises from the Abyss, who empowers the anti-christ, will be granted authority to kill them. This beast is not human but a demonic entity that may work through human agents or possess a physical body to deceive the world.

Their Bodies Exposed

And their dead bodies [will lie exposed] in the open street (a public square) of the great city which is in a spiritual sense called [by the mystical and allegorical names of] Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. Revelation 11:8

The spiritual reference to Sodom and Egypt highlights the moral corruption and oppression of the anti-christ's kingdom. Sodom represents sin and moral decay, while Egypt represents bondage and oppression. This is a symbolic depiction of the world system under the anti-christ, where truth and righteousness are crucified, just as Jesus was.

The two witnesses will face public humiliation as their bodies are left exposed, a tactic meant to dishonor them and dissuade others from following their message. However, their apparent defeat will only serve to glorify God, as His power will soon be revealed in their resurrection.

This passage clearly identifies the location as Jerusalem, referencing it as the city where Jesus was crucified. Though spiritually described as Sodom and Egypt due to its corruption during the Great Tribulation, the historical and spiritual significance of Jerusalem remains central.

Resurrection at Jesus' Return

The timing of their resurrection corresponds with Jesus' return. This is a significant point because the two witnesses rise after three and a half days, symbolizing their triumph over death and the beginning of the final victory over evil.

Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, Come up here! And in the sight of their enemies, they went up to heaven in a cloud. Revelation 11:12

Their resurrection and ascension mirror Jesus' own resurrection and ascension, further validating their witness and God's power.

The Mount of Olives: The Initial Return of Jesus

And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from the east to the west by a very

great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south. Zechariah 14:4

The prophetic text in Zechariah confirms that Jesus' return will begin at the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. The resurrection of the two witnesses coincides with this event, highlighting their central role in the final proclamation of God's truth.

Why Their Death and Resurrection in Jerusalem Matters

1. **Jerusalem's Centrality:** Throughout scripture, Jerusalem is at the heart of God's plan for humanity. The witnesses' death and resurrection in Jerusalem underscore its significance as the epicenter of both judgment and redemption.
2. **A Visible Testimony:** The global attention on their death and subsequent resurrection serves as an undeniable sign of God's power, directly challenging the anti-christ's rule and deception.
3. **A Glorious Prelude:** The witnesses' resurrection preludes Jesus' second coming, setting the stage for His reign from Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom.

Encouragement in the Witnesses' Mission

The death and resurrection of the two witnesses are not a defeat but a fulfillment of God's purpose. Their ministry, completed in the city where Jesus triumphed over death, points to the ultimate victory of Christ over all evil.

For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling: "This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it." Psalm 132:13-14

Their resurrection and ascension will be a powerful moment of vindication, demonstrating the culmination of God's redemptive plan and heralding the final establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

The World's Response

For three and a half days men from the races and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and will not allow them to be put in a tomb. Revelation 11:9

The global audience watching their deaths signifies the widespread reach of the anti-christ's influence and the technological advancements of the time, allowing people from all over the world to witness this event.

Despite their deaths, the Word of Truth will continue to prevail during the Great Tribulation. The two witnesses' death will seem like a victory to the anti-christ and his followers, but it will also serve as a reminder of God's ultimate control.

And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end. Matthew 24:14

The Church's Testimony

Even in the face of persecution and death, God's chosen ones will demonstrate love and forgiveness. The power of the Gospel will shine through their actions as they bless those who curse them and serve their enemies, reflecting the love of Christ.

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. Proverbs 25:21

This period of intense opposition will not hinder the spread of the Gospel but will amplify it, drawing many to the truth of Christ and His Kingdom. The seeming triumph of the anti-christ will be short-lived, as God's ultimate victory is assured.

The Death of the Witnesses

And those who dwell on the earth will gloat and exult over them and rejoice exceedingly, taking their ease and sending presents [in congratulation] to one another, because these two prophets had been such a vexation and trouble and torment to all the dwellers on the earth. Revelation 11:10

The world's reaction to the death of the two witnesses speaks volumes about the power and influence they will have during the Great Tribulation. The fallen angels who support the anti-christ and those who oppose Jesus will not simply be relieved, they will celebrate. Their gloating and exchanging of gifts reveal the depth of the conviction they felt under the testimony of these witnesses.

The effectiveness of their ministry is further evidenced by this response. These two will disrupt the false peace promised by the anti-christ, continually exposing his lies and declaring the truth of God.

Then they will hand you over to suffer affliction and tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. Matthew 24:9

The fact that there will be physical resources and inclination to send gifts confirms that the events of Revelation are spiritual in nature. If the physical world were in total ruin, there would be no capacity for such acts of celebration. Instead, this is a reflection of spiritual blindness and misplaced priorities.

The Resurrection of the Witnesses

But after three and a half days, by God's gift the breath of life again entered into them, and they rose up on their feet, and great dread and terror fell on those who watched them. Then [the two witnesses] heard a strong voice from heaven calling to them, 'Come up here!' And before the very eyes of their enemies, they ascended into heaven in a cloud. Revelation 11:11-12

At the appointed time, God will breathe life back into the two witnesses, demonstrating His absolute authority over life and death. Their resurrection serves as a powerful declaration that the truth cannot be silenced. This event will strike terror into those who celebrated their deaths, as they will see undeniable proof of God's power.

The timing of this resurrection aligns with the return of Christ. It is during this moment that all of the dead in Christ will rise, followed by the living believers, and we will all be transformed to be like Christ.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord! 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

This resurrection reminds us of the transformative power of Christ. Believers are promised that we will be like Him, sharing in His glory.

Beloved, we are [even here and] now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be [hereafter], but we know that when He comes and is manifested, we shall [as God's children] resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He [really] is. 1 John 3:2

The ascension of the witnesses mirrors Jesus' own ascension, fulfilling the promise given by the angels that He would return in the same way He departed.

Who said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing into heaven? This same Jesus, Who was caught away and lifted up from among you into heaven, will return in [just] the same way in which you saw Him go into heaven. Acts 1:11

The Earthquake and the Glorification of God

And at that [very] hour there was a tremendous earthquake and one tenth of the city was destroyed (fell); seven thousand people perished in the earthquake, and those who remained were filled with dread and terror and were awe-struck, and they glorified the God of heaven. The second woe (calamity) has passed; now the third woe is speedily to come. Revelation 11:13-14

What finally brings people to this recognition is witnessing the glory of the risen and ascended witnesses, not just the two, but all of the dead in Christ as well as those who are living. When the undeniable power and presence of God are displayed through His chosen ones, the reality of Christ becomes unavoidable.

People don't glorify God simply because of destruction or calamity. The visible manifestation of God's power and love turns fear into awe and recognition. The resurrection and ascension of the

two witnesses serve as the ultimate testimony to the truth of Jesus, shaking even the hardest of hearts and compelling acknowledgment of the God of heaven.

When He comes to be glorified in His saints [on that day He will be made more glorious in His consecrated people], and [He will] be marveled at and admired [in His glory reflected] in all who have believed. 2 Thessalonians 1:10

The Transition to the Final Woe

These events signal the conclusion of the second woe, with the third woe quickly approaching. The timeline of the Great Tribulation is compressed into just three and a half years, and these final events happen swiftly. The rapid succession of these judgments underscores the imminence of Christ's return and the establishment of His Kingdom.

The final woe will reveal God's ultimate victory over evil and the complete fulfillment of His plan. As Jesus assumes control of the earth, His love will transform fear into joy, and His peace will replace chaos. I pray that you are seeing that the Great Tribulation is not just be about judgment of worldly evils but about restoration.

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14

The Seventh Trumpet and the Reign of Christ

The seventh angel then blew [his] trumpet, and there were mighty voices in heaven, shouting, 'The dominion (kingdom, sovereignty, rule) of the world has now come into the possession and become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (the Messiah), and He shall reign forever and ever (for the eternities of the eternities)!' Then the twenty-four elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin], who sit on their thrones before God, prostrated themselves before Him and worshiped, exclaiming, 'To You we give thanks, Lord God Omnipotent, [the One] Who is and [ever] was, for assuming the high sovereignty and the great power that are Yours and for beginning to reign. Revelation 11:15-17

When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, it signals the glorious return of Jesus. This moment marks the culmination of God's redemptive plan as the dominion of the world fully transitions into the possession of Christ. Heaven erupts in praise as the rule and sovereignty of Jesus are openly established for all to see.

This event also initiates the resurrection and transformation of all who belong to Christ. The dead in Christ will rise first as He is descending, followed by those who are alive and remain. Together, we will reign with Him as priests and kings, reflecting His glory and fulfilling His eternal purpose.

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny and disown and reject Him, He will also deny and disown and reject us. 2 Timothy 2:12

And You have made them a kingdom (royal race) and priests to our God, and they shall reign [as kings] over the earth! Revelation 5:10

The Millennial Reign

This seventh trumpet heralds the establishment of Christ's millennial reign. Those who have been empowered to be faithful witnesses to Christ, even unto death, will share in His authority to rule. This reign will demonstrate the fulfillment of God's promises, as His kingdom brings justice, peace, and restoration to the earth.

Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and to pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been slain with axes [beheaded] for their witnessing to Jesus and [for preaching and testifying] for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast or his statue and had not accepted his mark or permitted it to be stamped on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived again and ruled with Christ (the Messiah) a thousand years. Revelation 20:4

Blessed are those who partake in the first resurrection. They will reign with Christ for a thousand years. This reign will reflect the perfection of God's justice and mercy as the redeemed share in His glory.

Blessed (happy, to be envied) and holy (spiritually whole, of unimpaired innocence and proved virtue) is the person who takes part (shares) in the first resurrection! Over them the second death exerts no power or authority, but they shall be ministers of God and of Christ (the Messiah), and they shall rule along with Him a thousand years. Revelation 20:6

The Seventh Trumpet: The End of Corruption and the Victory of Christ

And the heathen (the nations) raged, but Your wrath (retribution, indignation) came, the time when the dead will be judged and Your servants the prophets and saints rewarded—and those who revere (fear) Your name, both low and high and small and great—and [the time] for destroying the corrupters of the earth. Then the sanctuary of God in heaven was thrown open, and the ark of His covenant was seen standing inside in His sanctuary; and there were flashes of lightning, loud rumblings (blasts, mutterings), peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a terrific hailstorm. Revelation 11:18-19

As the seventh trumpet sounds, the world witnesses the culmination of God's plan. The nations rage in defiance, knowing their time has ended, as the anti-christ's kingdom recognizes the imminent return of Christ. This is not just a battle of humanity but a spiritual war, as the anti-christ, a being from the Abyss, fully understands the futility of his rebellion.

The beast that you saw [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is going to come up out of the Abyss (the bottomless pit) and proceed to go to perdition. And the inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been recorded in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they look at the beast, because he [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is [yet] to come. Revelation 17:8

The Corrupters of the Earth

The "corrupters of the earth" represent the spiritual and systemic forces of wickedness that have influenced humanity. This includes satanic deception, the fallen angels, corrupt governments, false religions, greed, and fear. These forces have blinded mankind to the Truth, but their defeat is imminent.

For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere. Ephesians 6:12

God's wrath is not aimed at humanity itself but at these forces that enslave and deceive. His plan is to set mankind free from corruption. Even those who die in rebellion will ultimately come to know the Truth and be set free, whether in this life or after passing through Hades.

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

But if any person's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15

The Sanctuary of God

The sanctuary of God represents His chosen people. Through Christ's victory, believers have become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, revealing His covenant to the world. When Christ returns, the world will witness God's presence in His people, sparking a revelation of His love and Truth.

Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own. 1 Corinthians 6:19

Then I heard a mighty voice from the throne and I perceived its distinct words, saying, 'See! The abode of God is with men, and He will live (encamp, tent) among them; and they shall be His people, and God shall personally be with them and be their God.' Revelation 21:3

The revelation of God's covenant living in His people will lead even those who once opposed Him to acknowledge His love and truth.

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

The World's Transformation

The earthquake, thunder, and hail represent the upheaval that will accompany Christ's return. These events signify the complete removal of evil and corruption. False systems of government, religion, and economic oppression will crumble as the Kingdom of Christ is established.

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall gaze upon Him and beat their breasts and mourn and lament over Him. Even so [must it be]. Amen (so be it). Revelation 1:7

This moment is not merely destructive, it is redemptive. The reign of Christ will bring peace, justice, and love to a restored creation.

There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection]. 1 John 4:18

Chapter 16

Revelation 12

The Woman Clothed with the Sun

And a great sign (wonder)—[warning of future events of ominous significance] appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and with a crownlike garland (tiara) of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and she cried out in her birth pangs, in the anguish of her delivery. (Revelation 12:1-2)

This great sign represents the Church, the body of believers who have been redeemed by Christ. Some interpret this woman as the Nation of Israel, but Israel as a nation rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Instead, it is the believers, those who bear His name, the true Jews who have suffered for their faith and who are represented in this passage.

For he is not a [real] Jew who is only one outwardly and publicly, nor is [true] circumcision something external and physical. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and [true] circumcision is of the heart, a spiritual and not a literal [matter]. His praise is not from men but from God. Romans 2:28-29

Then they will hand you over to suffer affliction and tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. Matthew 24:9

And you will be hated (despised) by everyone because [you bear] My name and for its sake. Luke 21:17

The Twelve Stars and the Sun

The crown of twelve stars symbolizes the twelve apostles, who laid the foundation of the Church and point to the perfect government God will establish through His people in eternity. The woman being clothed with the sun signifies that believers are covered by Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, Who shines in full power. The moon under her feet represents the Church, built on the foundation of Christ, which stands as His reflection of Jesus in the world.

And You have made them a kingdom (royal race) and priests to our God, and they shall reign [as kings] over the earth! Revelation 5:10

In His right hand He held seven stars, and from His mouth there came forth a sharp two-edged sword, and His face was like the sun shining in full power at midday. Revelation 1:16

And I tell you, you are Peter [Greek, Petros—a large piece of rock], and on this rock [Greek, petra—a huge rock like Gibraltar] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it [or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it]. Matthew 16:18

The Anguish of Delivery

The anguish described in this passage reflects the trials and persecution the Church endures as it brings forth the message of Christ to the world. The Church's mission involves spiritual struggle and sacrifice, yet through it, God's plan for redemption and His eternal government is fulfilled.

The Fiery-Red Dragon

Then another ominous sign (wonder) was seen in heaven: Behold, a huge, fiery-red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven kingly crowns (diadems) upon his heads. His tail swept [across the sky] and dragged down a third of the stars and flung them to the earth. And the dragon stationed himself in front of the woman who was about to be delivered, so that he might devour her child as soon as she brought it forth." Revelation 12:3-4

In this passage, the fiery-red dragon represents Satan. The seven heads symbolize seven kingdoms, while the ten horns represent ten leaders who will come under the authority of the anti-christ, who derives his power from Satan. The seven crowns indicate that these kingdoms will serve Satan's purposes during the Last Days. Importantly, this vision underscores that Satan is only able to act within the bounds permitted by God.

Satan's Limited Power

Satan's rebellion and the fall of a third of the angels with him demonstrate his persistent desire to thwart God's plan. However, even in rebellion, Satan remains a servant of God, bound to His sovereign will. As the Bible repeatedly shows, Satan can only act when God grants permission:

Saying, Harm neither the earth nor the sea nor the trees, until we have sealed the bond servants of our God upon their foreheads. Revelation 7:3

For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. Colossians 1:16

Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has asked excessively that [all of] you be given up to him [out of the power and keeping of God], that he might sift [all of] you like grain. Luke 22:31

Satan's Failure and God's Sovereignty

Satan's attempt to destroy Jesus at His birth was another example of his ultimate failure. God warned Joseph in a dream to flee with Mary and the child to Egypt, ensuring Jesus' safety. This demonstrates that nothing catches God by surprise; everything occurs under His sovereign control:

Now after they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, Get up! [Tenderly] take unto you the young Child and His mother and flee to Egypt; and remain there till I tell you [otherwise], for Herod intends to search for the Child in order to destroy Him. Matthew 2:13

We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose. Romans 8:28

Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them. Psalm 139:16

The Ten Rulers and the Anti-Christ

The dragon's ten horns point to the ten rulers who will form an alliance in the Last Days. These rulers will grant their authority to the anti-christ, who will rule for a brief period before Jesus returns:

And they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one still exists [and is reigning]; the other [the seventh] has not yet appeared, and when he does arrive, he must stay [but] a brief time. And as for the beast that [once] was, but now is no more, he [himself] is an eighth ruler (king, head), but he is of the seven and belongs to them, and he goes to perdition. Also, the ten horns that you observed are ten rulers (kings) who have as yet received no royal dominion, but together they are to receive power and authority as rulers for a single hour, along with the beast. Revelation 17:10-12

Historically, the five fallen kingdoms were the Babylonian, Greek, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Persian empires. The Roman Empire was the sixth kingdom during John's time. The seventh kingdom will

be a coalition of ten rulers who will come together before the anti-christ takes power. Their alliance, centered around Europe and the Middle East, will only last a short time, aligning with the brief reign of the anti-christ during the Great Tribulation:

Saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Liberate the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. Revelation 9:14

Who the ten rulers will be is all speculation at this point in time. However, when the message of the Seven Trumpets is allowed to be revealed, their identities will be clearly understood by the Church. There is an end time anointing that has yet to be poured out on the earth. This will transpire when the angel takes the censor full of fire from the altar and pours it out on the earth.

And another angel came and stood over the altar. He had a golden censer, and he was given very much incense (fragrant spices and gums which exhale perfume when burned), that he might mingle it with the prayers of all the people of God (the saints) upon the golden altar before the throne. And the smoke of the incense (the perfume) arose in the presence of God, with the prayers of the people of God (the saints), from the hand of the angel. So the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and cast it upon the earth. Then there followed peals of thunder and loud rumblings and blasts and noises, and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. Revelation 8:3-5

It is also important to keep the presence of fallen angels in mind when considering the rulers of this world. Observe how governments operate today, regardless of your personal leanings, it is evident that many leaders act in ways that defy common sense. However, when you recognize that many of these are fallen angels seeking to thwart the plans of our Father and bring humanity into bondage, their actions become far more understandable.

And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will [be the very ones to] hate the harlot (the idolatrous woman); they will make her cheerless (bereaved, desolate), and they will strip her and eat up her flesh and utterly consume her with fire. Revelation 17:16

God's Purpose Through the Dragon

Though the dragon seeks to devour and destroy, he ultimately fulfills God's sovereign plan. His actions, though meant for evil, will be used to glorify God and bring about His purposes. This highlights the truth that even in the most challenging circumstances, God's people can trust in His control and His eternal plan for good.

The Male Child

And she brought forth a male Child, One Who is destined to shepherd (rule) all the nations with an iron staff (scepter), and her Child was caught up to God and to His throne. Revelation 12:5

The male Child is Jesus Christ, born out of faith, love, hope, and mercy. Though the nation of Israel largely rejected Him, those who truly loved God and sought His will allowed the Savior to be born. Jesus will not only rule the nations with an iron scepter but will also set humanity free from the bondage of sin. His rule will bring life and freedom, fulfilling the promises of God:

She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus [the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, which means Savior], for He will save His people from their sins [that is, prevent them from failing and missing the true end and scope of life, which is God]. Matthew 1:21

“The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). John 10:10

The Woman in the Wilderness

And the woman [herself] fled into the desert (wilderness), where she has a retreat prepared [for her] by God, in which she is to be fed and kept safe for 1,260 days (42 months; three and one-half years). Revelation 12:6

The woman, representing the Church, will find refuge in the wilderness during the Great Tribulation. The wilderness symbolizes a place of separation and divine protection. While rejected by the world and its governments, the Church will be supernaturally provided for by God and empowered to minister to others during the Last Days. Despite being barred from participating in the anti-christ's economic system, the Church will miraculously provide for those in need:

So that no one will have power to buy or sell unless he bears the stamp (mark, inscription), [that is] the name of the beast or the number of his name. Revelation 13:17

Who then is the faithful, thoughtful, and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household to give to the others the food and supplies at the proper time? Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is that servant whom, when his master comes, he will find so doing. Matthew 24:45-46

This verse also challenges the notion of a pre-tribulation rapture. If believers were removed from the earth, would the wilderness described here be necessary? The wilderness is not a heavenly abode but rather a place on earth where God will sustain His Church amidst persecution and rejection, further underscoring His power and provision during the Last Days.

The War in Heaven

Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels went forth to battle with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought. But they were defeated, and there was no room found for them in heaven any longer. And the huge dragon was cast down and out—that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him. Then I heard a strong (loud) voice in heaven, saying, Now it has come—

the salvation and the power and the kingdom (the dominion, the reign) of our God, and the power (the sovereignty, the authority) of His Christ (the Messiah); for the accuser of our brethren, he who keeps bringing before our God charges against them day and night, has been cast out! Revelation 12:7-10

The victory of Christ over sin and death was so complete that it also resulted in Satan's expulsion from Heaven. Through the shedding of His blood, Jesus rendered Satan powerless to accuse the saints. Satan, once the accuser who stood before God to condemn humanity, is no longer in Heaven, having been cast down to earth along with the angels who followed him.

This powerful truth is echoed in Paul's letter to the Romans:

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect [when it is] God Who justifies [that is, Who puts us in right relation to Himself]? Who shall come forward and accuse or impeach those whom God has chosen? Will God, Who acquits us? Who is there to condemn [us]? Will Christ Jesus (the Messiah), Who died, or rather Who was raised from the dead, Who is at the right hand of God actually pleading as He intercedes for us? Romans 8:33-34

The Power of the Blood of Christ

The ultimate defeat of Satan highlights the immeasurable power of the blood of Christ. Through His sacrifice, Jesus removed sin as a barrier between humanity and God, reconciling His creation to Himself forever. This is why there is no longer any need for sacrifice, and God no longer remembers the sins of His redeemed:

Thus David congratulates the man and pronounces a blessing on him to whom God credits righteousness apart from the works he does: Blessed and happy and to be envied are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered up and completely buried. Romans 4:6-7

He then goes on to say, And their sins and their lawbreaking I will remember no more. Now where there is absolute remission (forgiveness and cancellation of the penalty) of these [sins and lawbreaking], there is no longer any offering made to atone for sin. Hebrews 10:17-18

God's love and mercy are so profound that He sent Himself, in the form of His Son, to ensure that His creation would never be separated from Him. The war in Heaven reflects not only the defeat of Satan but also the eternal victory of God's plan of redemption, bringing salvation and power into the lives of His creation.

Victory Through the Blood of the Lamb

And they have overcome (conquered) him by means of the blood of the Lamb and by the utterance of their testimony, for they did not love and cling to life even when faced with death [holding their lives cheap till they had to die for their witnessing]. Revelation 12:11

The victory over Satan is achieved through the power of the blood of Jesus and the testimony of His followers. This triumph is not rooted in human strength but in divine empowerment. During the End Times, just as with today, believers will stand firm in their faith, even when faced with death, because of the unshakable empowerment of the Holy Spirit within them.

Empowered to Endure

Our Father promises that He will not allow us to face more than we can bear. He ensures that in moments of trial, especially during the Great Tribulation, He will provide the strength and faith needed to overcome, even if it means laying down our lives for His name.

Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us. Romans 8:37

For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Strengthened to the End

God's promises include not only deliverance from temptation but also the guarantee of steadfastness. His power sustains His chosen ones, ensuring that their faith remains unshaken. The testimony of their lives, empowered by the Holy Spirit, reflects His glory until the very end.

And He will establish you to the end [keep you steadfast, give you strength, and guarantee your vindication; He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). 1 Corinthians 1:8

Through His love and faithfulness, God ensures that the victory won by the blood of the Lamb is experienced fully by His people. This victory is a testament to His glory and the eternal hope found in Him.

Satan's Wrath and the Church's Triumph

Therefore be glad (exult), O heavens and you that dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in fierce anger (fury), because he knows that he has [only] a short time [left]! And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the

earth, he went in pursuit of the woman who had given birth to the male Child. Revelation 12:12-13

These verses are rich with symbolic imagery. The sea represents groups of people who will align with the anti-christ, deceived by his false promises and power. The earth signifies those who resist aligning with him but still do not turn to Christ for salvation. Both groups are warned of Satan's wrath, as he seeks to inflict harm in his desperation, knowing his time is short.

Believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit, Satan is unable to harm us, and his anger towards us makes no difference. Our Father may allow us to be martyred, but Satan has no power to harm what truly matters, our spirits.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God [do not offend or vex or sadden Him], by Whom you were sealed (marked, branded as God's own, secured) for the day of redemption (of final deliverance through Christ from evil and the consequences of sin). Ephesians 4:30

There will be people who align themselves with the Antichrist, yet they will not take his mark. Scripture makes it clear that those who receive the mark will share in his judgment of eternal punishment, which means some will follow his ways outwardly without fully surrendering to him. Our Father has declared that He desires all men to be saved, and He works everything according to His will. Because of this, even though many may not rise up against the Antichrist, they will also not fully commit themselves to him, leaving room for God's mercy and salvation to reach them.

Then another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a mighty voice, Whoever pays homage to the beast and his statue and permits the [beast's] stamp (mark, inscription) to be put on his forehead or on his hand, He too shall [have to] drink of the wine of God's indignation and wrath, poured undiluted into the cup of His anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no respite (no pause, no intermission, no rest, no peace) day or night—these who pay homage to the beast and to his image and whoever receives the stamp of his name upon him. Revelation 14:9-11

This is why I believe that only the fallen angels are the ones who take the mark of the beast. Many may pay homage to him, but I believe our Father will protect His cherished creation, mankind, from actually fully committing and taking the mark.

Satan's Limited Power

Satan will aggressively pursue the Church, represented as the woman in this passage. However, his power remains under God's sovereign control. Like in the story of Peter, Satan must first seek permission from God before acting against His people. This ensures that even Satan's schemes ultimately fulfill God's purposes and result in the good of His chosen ones.

Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has asked excessively that [all of] you be given up to him [out of the power and keeping of God], that he might sift [all of] you like grain. Luke 22:31

We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose. Romans 8:28

Victory in Christ

Though Satan's fury will be great, the Church's victory is already secured through Christ. God's people will be sustained, protected, and empowered to endure even the fiercest attacks, knowing that the enemy's time is limited and his defeat is certain. Satan's pursuit will only further highlight the glory and power of God working through His people.

The Woman's Divine Protection

But the woman was supplied with the two wings of a giant eagle, so that she might fly from the presence of the serpent into the desert (wilderness), to the retreat where she is to be kept safe and fed for a time, and times, and half a time (three and one-half years, or 1,260 days). Revelation 12:14

For the second time in this chapter, Jesus emphasizes His unfailing protection for His Church. The imagery of two wings of a giant eagle reflects divine strength and provision, symbolizing God's power to deliver His people from the serpent's attacks. Just as an eagle lifts its young to safety, so God carries His Church to a place of refuge, ensuring her preservation during the most trying times.

But no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall show to be in the wrong. This [peace, righteousness, security, triumph over opposition] is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. Isaiah 54:17

Our Father took care of the Israelites who showed no faith in Him while they were in the wilderness for forty years. How much more will God take care of those who are empowered to place their full confidence in Jesus and who are actually part of Him?

Faithful in the Storm

God's promise is clear: while the serpent will rage, his efforts against the Church will ultimately fail. The wings of the eagle remind believers that our strength and security come not from our own efforts but from the power of Christ working within us. This assurance gives the Church courage to stand firm, even in the face of tribulation, knowing that God's protection is perfect and His purpose unstoppable.

The Serpent's Attack and the Earth's Rescue

Then out of his mouth the serpent spouted forth water like a flood after the woman, that she might be carried off with the torrent. But the earth came to the rescue of the woman, and the ground opened its mouth and swallowed up the stream of water which the dragon had spouted from his mouth. Revelation 12:15-16

The water spouted from the serpent's mouth symbolizes an overwhelming torrent of lies, deceit, and persecution aimed at the Church by the fallen angels and those who follow the anti-christ. Satan's intent is to drown the Church in confusion and destruction, but God's provision ensures her survival. The earth, representing those not aligned with the anti-christ, will come to the Church's aid, showing that God will even use unbelievers to fulfill His purposes and protect His people.

He who receives and welcomes and accepts a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he who receives and welcomes and accepts a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. Matthew 10:41

An Uncountable Harvest

Even in the midst of the dragon's fury, the Great Tribulation will result in an unprecedented harvest of souls for the Kingdom of God. Those who reject the anti-christ will not only resist his schemes but will also help the Church endure. This aligns with the earlier vision of a multitude from every nation standing before the throne of God in victory.

After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

The Dragon's Wrath Against the Faithful

So then the dragon was furious (enraged) at the woman, and he went away to wage war on the remainder of her descendants—[on those] who obey God's commandments and who have the testimony of Jesus Christ [and adhere to it and bear witness to Him]. Revelation 12:17

Satan's rage is evidence of his failure. Unable to destroy or even do any real harm to the Church, he turns his attention to attacking individual believers who remain steadfast in their faith. Yet, even this wrath will serve God's purposes, as it will refine the Church and highlight the triumph of Christ's power in His people.

Satan and the anti-christ will do exactly what they have been destined to do and that is fail. Our Father's Wrath will destroy the evil of Satan and His Love will cover the multitude of sins.

Victory Through Christ

Despite Satan's desperate attempts, Jesus' victory is already secured. The dragon's efforts will not thwart the Church but will instead result in the ultimate failure of evil and the complete triumph of God's Kingdom.

Chapter 17

Revelation 13

The Beast from the Sea

[As] I stood on the sandy beach, I saw a beast coming up out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads. On his horns he had ten royal crowns (diadems) and blasphemous titles (names) on his heads. Revelation 13:1

Jesus begins Chapter 13 by revealing the anti-christ's End Time government. The imagery of the beast standing on a sandy beach is significant. Sand symbolizes instability, a foundation that cannot endure. The anti-christ's government will appear strong and promising but will ultimately collapse because it is not built on the Truth of Christ. His promises will be lies, and his system will lack the integrity to stand.

And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a stupid (foolish) man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great and complete was the fall of it. Matthew 7:26-27

Blasphemous Titles and Deception

The crowns on the beast's horns carry blasphemous titles, symbolizing that the rulers of this government will take credit for works that belong to God alone. They will deceive people by performing signs and wonders, creating the illusion of godliness. This is why the anti-christ is not called the anti-god, he will seek to counterfeit Christ's power and authority and he will use the fallen angels to try and deceive the world.

For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it [their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession]. Avoid [all] such people [turn away from them]. 2 Timothy 3:5

A Kingdom of Self-Worship

Those who follow the anti-christ will embrace a heightened form of pride and self-worship. They will place their faith in human ability and power, rejecting God's Truth. The anti-christ's system will glorify mankind, denying the transformative power of Christ. This self-centered ideology will attract many, but it will ultimately lead to failure.

For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, 2 Timothy 4:3

The Call to Discernment

Jesus provides this vision to encourage His followers to discern the Truth during the End Times. The anti-christ's government may appear successful and miraculous, but it will be inherently unstable, built on the lies of human achievements, such as AI technology. Those who stand on the firm foundation of Christ will see through the deception and remain steadfast in the Truth.

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is [already] laid, which is Jesus Christ [the Messiah, the Anointed One]. 1 Corinthians 3:11

The Beast Resembling a Leopard

And the beast that I saw resembled a leopard, but his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth was like that of a lion. And to him the dragon gave his [own] might and power and his [own] throne and great dominion. Revelation 13:2

Jesus reveals the composition of the anti-christ's End Time government through the imagery of a beast that unites features of a leopard, bear, and lion. These animals symbolize the territories and characteristics of historical empires. The leopard represents the swift and strategic conquests of the Greek Empire, the bear reflects the strength and persistence of the Persian Empire, and the lion symbolizes the grandeur and dominance of the Babylonian Empire. Together, they foreshadow a coalition spanning from Europe to Iran that will comprise the anti-christ's regime.

Despite its seemingly formidable nature, this kingdom will be fundamentally flawed because it operates in the full power of man. A being who has been created to fail at everything he has ever planned to do. It will seek to mimic divine authority, yet its foundation will be rooted in deception and rebellion against God. While the anti-christ's government may rise to global prominence, its reign will ultimately be brought to ruin by Christ, Who has already defeated Satan through the cross.

[God] disarmed the principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him and in it [the cross]. Colossians 2:15

Since, therefore, [these His] children share in flesh and blood [in the physical nature of human beings], He [Himself] in a similar manner partook of the same [nature], that by [going through] death He might bring to nought and make of no effect him who had the power of death—that is, the devil— Hebrews 2:14

Satan's False Power

The dragon, a representation of Satan, gives the beast its power and dominion. This demonstrates the extent of Satan's influence in the End Times but also his limitations. Though the anti-christ's government will perform signs and wonders to deceive the nations, it remains a counterfeit of God's true Kingdom. The anti-christ is not called the "anti-God" because his purpose is to imitate Christ, Who lives within us, twisting the truth to lead people astray. Yet, believers need not fear, for Christ has already disarmed the powers of evil and guaranteed victory for His people.

I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.] John 16:33

A Kingdom Without True Authority

As Satan's servant, the anti-christ will rule with pride and self-exaltation, drawing followers into a kingdom based on human worship and arrogance. This system will reject God's Truth, glorifying human achievement while denying the power of Christ's redemption. Its promises of stability and prosperity will crumble, leaving only destruction in its wake.

Christ's followers are empowered to stand firm in these times, discerning the lies of the anti-christ's kingdom. While many in the world will be drawn to the anti-christ's counterfeit miracles and governance, those rooted in the unshakable foundation of Christ will endure, recognizing the futility of Satan's schemes. It will all have a very religious feel about it, but it will all focus on man and manmade things.

I do not ask that You will take them out of the world, but that You will keep and protect them from the evil one. John 17:15

The Wounded Head of the Beast

And one of his heads seemed to have a deadly wound. But his death stroke was healed; and the whole earth went after the beast in amazement and admiration. Revelation 13:3

Before the anti-christ ascends to full power, it will appear as though he has been killed. However, as we have studied, the anti-christ is not human but a being from the Abyss. This suggests he will possess the body of a human leader who will have been assassinated. While the world believes this leader has miraculously survived, it will, in truth, be the entity permitted by God to rise from the Abyss, taking over the body.

The beast that you saw [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is going to come up out of the Abyss (the bottomless pit) and proceed to go to perdition. And the inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been recorded in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they look at the beast, because he [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is [yet] to come. Revelation 17:8

The deception will lead the world to worship both the dragon, satan, and the beast. They will marvel at the beast's perceived invincibility, declaring, "*Who is a match for the beast, and, Who can make war against him?*" *Revelation 13:4*. This moment marks the height of the anti-christ's influence, as Satan's power allows him to perform great signs and persuade many.

False Peace and Sudden Destruction

The anti-christ's reign will be marked by promises of peace and security. However, these promises will be hollow, masking the destruction that will follow. Many will willingly surrender their freedoms for the illusion of safety, entrusting their lives to a system rooted in lies. Scripture warns us of this false peace:

When people are saying, All is well and secure, and, There is peace and safety, then in a moment unforeseen destruction (ruin and death) will come upon them as suddenly as labor pains come upon a woman with child; and they shall by no means escape, for there will be no escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Under the anti-christ's rule, a third of the world will follow him, violently opposing those who resist. In an attempt to destroy God's creation Satan will require mankind to take his mark to buy or sell.

So that no one will have power to buy or sell unless he bears the stamp (mark, inscription), [that is] the name of the beast or the number of his name. Revelation 13:17

Who Takes the Mark

The Bible has to all fit together, Revelation does not stand on its own. Remember what we studied before we jumped into Revelation: God wants all men saved and God always works things out to make His will come to pass.

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

In Him we also were made [God's] heritage (portion) and we obtained an inheritance; for we had been foreordained (chosen and appointed beforehand) in accordance with His purpose, Who works out everything in agreement with the counsel and design of His [own] will, Ephesians 1:11

We are told that whoever takes the mark of the beast will be tortured with fire and brimstone. We are also told that God will work out His will of having all men saved. How can these two things be reconciled?

Let them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will say to the reapers, Gather the darnel first and bind it in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my granary. Matthew 13:30

Do not forget or neglect or refuse to extend hospitality to strangers [in the brotherhood—being friendly, cordial, and gracious, sharing the comforts of your home and doing your part generously], for through it some have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2

There are spiritual beings on this earth, we are told that they may very well appear to be human and we will be unaware of them being spiritual. We have seen that when Satan was cast to the earth that a third of the angels were cast down with him.

The only way that I have ever been able to reconcile these verses is that the fallen angels will be the only ones who take the mark of the beast. If a human could take it, they would be doomed to eternal separation from God and He would not have worked out His will for all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth.

Then another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a mighty voice, Whoever pays homage to the beast and his statue and permits the [beast's] stamp (mark, inscription) to be put on his forehead or on his hand, He too shall [have to] drink of the wine of God's indignation and wrath, poured undiluted into the cup of His anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no respite (no pause, no intermission, no rest, no peace) day or night—these who pay homage to the beast and to his image and whoever receives the stamp of his name upon him. Revelation 14:9-10

The Bible has to all fit together, if it doesn't, how could we believe any of it? I know that I keep repeating this thought process, but I want you to be able to grasp that Jesus wins, and for a third of mankind to be eternally destroyed, He would not win.

Nor is the free gift at all to be compared to the effect of that one [man's] sin. For the sentence [following the trespass] of one [man] brought condemnation, whereas the free gift [following] many transgressions brings justification (an act of righteousness). Romans 5:16

Jesus, the True Source of Peace

The peace that the world seeks through the anti-christ's system will never come to fruition. True peace is found only in Jesus Christ, Who holds the keys to life and salvation. He is a jealous Savior who will not permit man-made systems to satisfy the human heart.

I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me. John 14:6

Only through Jesus' tender mercy and loving-kindness can humanity find light in the darkness and walk in the way of peace:

Because of and through the heart of tender mercy and loving-kindness of our God, a Light from on high will dawn upon us and visit [us] to shine upon and give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to direct and guide our feet in a straight line into the way of peace. Luke 1:78-79

"Zeal (the fervor of love) for Your house will eat Me up. [I will be consumed with jealousy for the honor of Your house.]" (John 2:17).

Christ's zeal for His people is a testament to His love and authority. While the anti-christ's reign will attempt to captivate the world with lies, believers can rest in the assurance that Jesus alone is the true and eternal King.

The Beast Given Power to Speak

And the beast was given the power of speech, uttering boastful and blasphemous words, and he was given freedom to exert his authority and to exercise his will during forty-two months (three and a half years). Revelation 13:5

It is remarkable how often Scripture emphasizes that the leaders of the End Times hold power only because God allows it. Here, we see that even the anti-christ must be granted the power of speech by our Father. This underscores an essential truth: every action the anti-christ takes will ultimately fulfill God's divine plan.

As believers, our confidence during the Last Days is rooted not in the rhetoric of worldly leaders but in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the assurance that guided Paul, as he wrote:

And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them]. 1 Corinthians 2:4

Strength Through the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit will sustain and unite God's people, even in the face of persecution or martyrdom. Far from being a point of despair, being excluded from the world's systems, including its economy, will become an opportunity to rely more fully on Christ's strength. In Him, we grow stronger, experiencing His sustaining power and perfect provision.

Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling or slipping or falling, and to present [you] unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory in triumphant joy and exultation [with unspeakable, ecstatic delight]. Jude 1:24

Even in the darkest moments, God promises to establish us, giving us steadfastness and strength until the end. His grace guarantees our vindication and makes us guiltless before Him:

And He will establish you to the end [keep you steadfast, give you strength, and guarantee your vindication; He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). 1 Corinthians 1:8

The Blphemous Words of the Beast

And he opened his mouth to speak slanders against God, blaspheming His name and His abode, [even vilifying] those who live in heaven. Revelation 13:6

When Jesus was on earth, He warned the Pharisees and scribes about the sin of blasphemy. Interestingly, these individuals did not deny God's existence; their error was attributing the works of God to someone else. This same principle applies to the anti-christ, who will blaspheme God by denying His power and glorifying himself.

And everyone who makes a statement or speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit [that is, whoever intentionally comes short of the reverence due the Holy Spirit], it will not be forgiven him [for him there is no forgiveness]. Luke 12:10

The anti-christ will likely appear very religious, promoting ideas such as free will, self-determination, and human potential. He will speak persuasively, glorifying man and denying God's power working through His people. However, his kingdom will be built on sand, lacking Christ as its cornerstone, and everything he promises will fail.

The Persecution of the Saints

He was further permitted to wage war on God's holy people (the saints) and to overcome them. And power was given him to extend his authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. And all the inhabitants of the earth will fall down in adoration and pay him homage, everyone whose name has not been recorded in the Book of Life of the Lamb that was slain [in sacrifice] from the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:7-8

God allows the anti-christ to wage war on the saints, but this does not mean he has ultimate power. Jesus alone holds the keys to death and Hades, ensuring that no one will be martyred unless permitted by the Father. Even in martyrdom, believers are empowered by God to endure and remain victorious.

And the Ever-living One [I am living in the eternity of the eternities]. I died, but see, I am alive forevermore; and I possess the keys of death and Hades (the realm of the dead). Revelation 1:8

A third of humanity will be destroyed by the anti-christ, as foretold in earlier revelations:

So the four angels who had been in readiness for that hour in the appointed day, month, and year were liberated to destroy a third of mankind. Revelation 9:15

And a third of the sea was turned to blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea perished, and a third of the ships were destroyed. Revelation 8:9

The Book of Life of the Lamb

Jesus makes an important distinction in Revelation 13:8. Those who pay respect to the anti-christ are not missing from the Book of Life but specifically from the *Book of Life of the Lamb*. The *Lamb's Book of Life* contains the names of Jesus' Bride, those who share an intimate relationship with Him and will rule alongside Him. While others may be included in the general Book of Life, they will not enjoy the closeness reserved for the Bride of Christ.

This distinction should bring hope, as it shows that even those who follow the anti-christ can still be redeemed. God's desire is for all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth:

Just as You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

The Nature of Blasphemy and God's Mercy

The only unforgivable sin mentioned in the Bible is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, so taking the mark of the beast has to be the same sin. However, Scripture never clearly defines this sin, which is significant. If God does not explicitly outline it, we can trust that He protects His children from committing it. God's love for His children is like that of a parent protecting their own—He ensures their safety even in their weakness.

On the Cross, Jesus forgave those who crucified Him, even though they were warned of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. If they had committed an unforgivable sin, there would have been no need for Jesus to ask for their forgiveness.

And Jesus prayed, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And they divided His garments and distributed them by casting lots for them. Luke 23:34

Many interpret Revelation as foretelling the eternal destruction of most of humanity, but God's love and mercy extend even to the worst of us. His wrath during the End Times is not about the destruction of humanity but about destroying the forces of evil that hinder us, setting humanity free from all bondage. God's grace is powerful enough to redeem even those who appear beyond saving.

It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. 1 Corinthians 13:5

The Call for Patience and Faith

If anyone is able to hear, let him listen: Whoever leads into captivity will himself go into captivity; if anyone slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Herein is [the call for] the patience and the faith and fidelity of the saints (God's people). Revelation 13:9-10

Jesus is returning for a glorious Church, one that reflects His perfection and power. During the Last Days, our Father will use us to perform the works Jesus did and even greater ones, as promised. However, this will provoke hatred from those who follow the anti-christ. While the world may attack and persecute us, the perfection of Christ within us will empower us to respond with love and blessing, rather than retaliation.

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is honest and proper and noble [aiming to be above reproach] in the sight of everyone. Romans 12:17

See that none of you repays another with evil for evil, but always aim to show kindness and seek to do good to one another and to everybody. 1 Thessalonians 5:15

Victory Through Christ

Even in the face of persecution, believers are more than conquerors through Christ. His love and strength enable us to endure all things, remaining steadfast and faithful. Our victory is not in fighting back but in demonstrating the surpassing power of God's love and grace.

Who shall ever separate us from Christ's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword? Even as it is written, For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we are regarded and counted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us. Romans 8:35-37

The Second Beast: The False Prophet

Then I saw another beast rising up out of the land [itself]; he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke (roared) like a dragon. He exerts all the power and right of control of the former beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell upon it to exalt and deify the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed, and to worship him. Revelation 13:11-12

The anti-christ's government will not stand alone; it will be supported by another great power. This second beast, called the false prophet, will use its influence to promote the anti-christ and compel the world to worship him.

Consider America in this context. America wields two significant powers: economic strength and military might. These two horns of power align with the imagery of the second beast, which looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. While the American people are largely Christian, its government often operates in ways that contradict Christian values. It is not difficult to envision

how a government like America's could support a leader who appears capable of uniting Europe and the Middle East under a common cause.

The Miracles of the False Prophet

He performs great signs (startling miracles), even making fire fall from the sky to the earth in men's sight. And because of the signs (miracles) which he is allowed to perform in the presence of the [first] beast, he deceives those who inhabit the earth, commanding them to erect a statue (an image) in the likeness of the beast who was wounded by the [small] sword and still lived. And he is permitted [also] to impart the breath of life into the beast's image, so that the statue of the beast could actually talk and cause to be put to death those who would not bow down and worship the image of the beast. Revelation 13:13-15

As with so many events in Revelation, Jesus reveals that the false prophet operates only under the authority God allows. This highlights the sovereignty of God, even in the darkest moments of the End Times.

O Lord [pleads Jeremiah in the name of the people], I know that [the determination of] the way of a man is not in himself; it is not in man [even in a strong man or in a man at his best] to direct his [own] steps. Jeremiah 10:23

The false prophet's ability to perform miracles and signs will deceive many. His command to erect a statue in honor of the first beast will culminate in a shocking display of power: the statue will appear to come to life, speak, and enforce the worship of the anti-christ. However, this is not mere technological trickery, which humanity has grown accustomed to in theme parks or shopping centers. The deception is far more profound and spiritual in nature.

The Resurrection of the Anti-Christ

The imagery of the first beast being wounded by the small sword and yet living leads to a significant insight. I believe the human leader who becomes the host for the anti-christ will suffer a public assassination, likely caught on camera for the world to witness. The severity of this event will leave no doubt about his apparent death.

Our Father, in His sovereign plan, will allow the being from the Abyss to possess this man's body, creating the illusion of a miraculous resurrection. This event will shock the world and inspire widespread awe and worship of the beast. It is this breathtaking deception, seemingly defying death, that will elevate the anti-christ's power and influence to unprecedented heights.

The Mark of the Beast

Also he compels all [alike], both small and great, both the rich and the poor, both free and slave, to be marked with an inscription [stamped] on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that no one will have power to buy or sell unless he bears the stamp (mark, inscription), [that is] the name of the beast or the number of his name. Revelation 13:16-17

The false prophet will be the one to enforce the mark of the beast, tying it directly to economic activity. America's vast economic and technological power positions it as one of the few nations capable of imposing such a universal restriction on commerce. This mark will not be a random number like a social security number but a specific identifier: the name of the beast or the number associated with him.

The false prophet will also attempt to compel everyone to receive the mark of the beast, both the great and the small, the rich and the poor. America has long presented itself as a nation that welcomes all, and the mark of the beast will likely be promoted as a way to make everyone "equal," with no distinction or preference shown to anyone.

Pride in Taking the Mark

Jesus reveals that the mark will be prominently displayed on foreheads or hands, signifying the pride in aligning with the beast. The fallen angels who take the mark will not hide it; instead, they will openly boast about their allegiance. This is consistent with the behavior of those who follow the anti-christ during the End Times, as they will be characterized by arrogance, self-centeredness, pride, and greed.

But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]. For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. 2 Timothy 3:1-2

The Number of the Beast: 666

Here is [room for] discernment [a call for the wisdom of interpretation]. Let anyone who has intelligence (penetration and insight enough) calculate the number of the beast, for it is a human number [the number of a certain man]; his number is 666. Revelation 13:18

For centuries, people have tried to decode the identity of the beast by interpreting the number 666. However, Scripture reminds us that the anti-christ will not be revealed until our Father determines the time.

Let no one deceive or beguile you in any way, for that day will not come except the apostasy comes first [unless the predicted great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come], and the man of lawlessness (sin) is revealed, who is the son of doom (of perdition), who opposes and exalts himself so proudly and insolently against and over all that is called God or that is worshiped, [even to his actually] taking his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming that he himself is God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

The anti-christ's identity is secondary because his essence is not rooted in humanity but in the being from the Abyss who will possess him. The man's actions before possession will be irrelevant, as his role will only begin once God allows him to be revealed.

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

What to Look For

Rather than obsess over the identity of the anti-christ, Jesus instructs us to focus on the signs He told would come to the Apostles. The ultimate marker of the End Times will not be lawlessness or deception, but the global proclamation of the Gospel.

And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end. Matthew 24:14

The End Times will be heralded by the Father's power working mightily through His chosen ones. When you see believers performing the works of Jesus, and even greater works, then you will know the time is near. Rather than fear or speculation, let us focus on living in God's power and spreading His Kingdom throughout the earth.

Chapter 18

Revelation 14

The Lamb and the 144,000

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 [men] who had His name and His Father's name inscribed on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of great waters and like the rumbling of mighty thunder; the voice I heard [seemed like the music] of harpists accompanying themselves on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne [of God] and before the four living creatures and before the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin]. No one could learn [to sing] that song except the 144,000 who had been ransomed (purchased, redeemed) from the earth. These are they who have not defiled themselves by relations with women, for they are [pure as] virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These are they who have been ransomed (purchased, redeemed) from among men as the firstfruits for God and the Lamb. No lie was found to be upon their lips, for they are blameless (spotless, untainted, without blemish) before the throne of God. Revelation 14:1-5

We are told that these 144,000 are those who have been redeemed from the earth and are called the firstfruits of Christ. This number must be symbolic because it represents the Bride of Christ. If only 144,000 out of billions of people are redeemed, it would portray Jesus as a failure as Savior, and He is anything but.

But God's free gift is not at all to be compared to the trespass [His grace is out of all proportion to the fall of man]. For if many died through one man's falling away (his lapse, his offense), much more profusely did God's grace and the free gift [that comes] through

the undeserved favor of the one Man Jesus Christ abound and overflow to and for [the benefit of] many. Romans 5:15

The success of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross ensures salvation for all who believe. This symbolic number represents His redeemed Bride, set apart and pure. Earlier in Revelation, we saw the 144,000 Jewish Chosen Ones alongside a multitude from every nation that no one could count:

After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

Mount Zion: The Dwelling Place of God

The 144,000 stand with Jesus on Mount Zion, the habitation of God. While there is a physical Mount Zion in Jerusalem, the term also symbolizes God's dwelling place. Scripture repeatedly reveals that God's true habitation is within His people.

Sing praises to the Lord, Who dwells in Zion! Declare among the peoples His doings! Psalm 9:11

For thus it stands in Scripture: Behold, I am laying in Zion a chosen (honored), precious chief Cornerstone, and he who believes in Him [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Him] shall never be disappointed or put to shame. 1 Peter 2:6

Jesus answered, If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My word [obey My teaching]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home (abode, special dwelling place) with him. John 14:23

The Identity of the Chosen Ones

These chosen ones bear the name of the Lamb and His Father on their foreheads, signifying their unwavering allegiance to Christ. In the last days, a stark contrast will be evident between the followers of Christ and those who align with the Antichrist. This distinction, often referred to as "the mark," will clearly reveal who belongs to whom. While some believe this mark may be physical, it is more likely symbolic of spiritual devotion and allegiance. Christians will refuse to participate in the anti-christ's economy and reject his authority, demonstrating their steadfast faith. During this time, there will be no room for lukewarm faith, as Jesus has made abundantly clear:

I know your [record of] works and what you are doing; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth! Revelation 3:15-16

The purity of the 144,000 is symbolic of their spiritual faithfulness, as they are not defiled by false religions or idolatry. Their relationship with Christ is depicted as a marital union, where they follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

Because we are members (parts) of His body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is very great, but I speak concerning [the relation of] Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:30-32

A Symbol of Faithfulness

John writes that the Chosen Ones have not defiled themselves with women, which must be understood symbolically. The Bible frequently portrays unfaithfulness to God through the imagery of adultery, while marriage is celebrated as a blessing. Most of God's faithful servants, including Peter, Abraham, David, and Moses, were married. Scripture further emphasizes the importance of marriage for church leadership:

Now a bishop (superintendent, overseer) must give no grounds for accusation but must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, circumspect and temperate and self-controlled; [he must be] sensible and well behaved and dignified and lead an orderly (disciplined) life; [he must be] hospitable [showing love for and being a friend to the believers, especially strangers or foreigners, and be] a capable and qualified teacher. 1 Timothy 3:2

The purity of the Chosen Ones represents their unwavering faithfulness to Christ, not their marital status. As His Bride, they are blameless and spotless before the throne of God, made pure by His sacrifice.

Jesus and His Bride

John sees the Lamb standing with His Bride because Jesus will never leave us. Even in the End Times, He will use His followers to accomplish extraordinary works. The blood of Christ ensures that His Chosen Ones are blameless and pure, empowered to remain steadfast through trials and tribulations.

So that He may strengthen and confirm and establish your hearts faultlessly pure and unblamable in holiness in the sight of our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) with all His saints (the holy and glorified people of God)! Amen, (so be it)! 1 Thessalonians 3:13

The Angel with the Eternal Gospel

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, with an eternal Gospel (good news) to tell to the inhabitants of the earth, to every race and tribe and language and people. Revelation 14:6

Jesus foretold that the Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached to all nations as a definitive sign of the End Times. In Revelation 14:6, we see this prophecy being fulfilled. The angel flying in midair symbolizes the universal reach of the Gospel, bringing the good news to every race, tribe, language, and people.

This chapter began with a vision of the Chosen Ones standing with Christ, pure and victorious. Now, we see the thunderous power of the Gospel continuing to be proclaimed during the Great Tribulation, emphasizing that even in times of judgment, God's offer of salvation remains open to all.

And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end. Matthew 24:14

The Call to Worship the Creator

And he cried with a mighty voice, Revere God and give Him glory (honor and praise in worship), for the hour of His judgment has arrived. Fall down before Him; pay Him homage and adoration and worship Him Who created heaven and earth, the sea and the springs (fountains) of water. Revelation 14:7

The Gospel's message remains unchanging: Jesus is alive, and through Him, humanity can have an eternal relationship with God. The angel's declaration is a powerful call to revere and worship the Creator, recognizing Him as the source of life and salvation, even as His judgment begins to unfold on the forces of evil.

For God is my witness, Whom I serve with my [whole] spirit [rendering priestly and spiritual service] in [preaching] the Gospel and [telling] the good news of His Son, how incessantly I always mention you when at my prayers. Romans 1:9

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel (good news) of Christ, for it is God's power working unto salvation [for deliverance from eternal death] to everyone who believes with a personal trust and a confident surrender and firm reliance, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16

The Fall of Babylon

Then another angel, a second, followed, declaring, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She who made all nations drink of the [maddening] wine of her passionate unchastity [idolatry]. Revelation 14:8

During the Great Tribulation, the world's economy and the anti-christ's governmental system, Babylon, will crumble rapidly. Despite the obvious collapse, the fallen angels, and those who follow the anti-christ, will stubbornly deny it, attacking anyone who points out the truth. These beings follow the father of lies, and they will continue to lie about the true condition of the anti-christ's kingdom. The fallen angels whole purpose is to attempt to thwart Jesus' plan of redemption.

History provides us with similar examples. Before the Great Depression or the economic collapse of 2008, the masses were oblivious to impending disaster. People were celebrating, living their lives, and making plans, until everything suddenly fell apart.

However, as believers, we have the Holy Spirit. We will be forewarned and prepared for what is coming. More than that, God will use His Chosen Ones during the End Times to provide both physical and spiritual sustenance, even without access to the ability to buy or sell.

You also must be ready therefore, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him. Who then is the faithful, thoughtful, and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household to give to the others the food and supplies at the proper time? Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is that servant whom, when his master comes, he will find so doing. Matthew 24:44-46

I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father. John 14:12

The Power of the Kingdom

The message of the Kingdom will not simply be preached; it will be demonstrated in power through the Holy Spirit. In a time of great spiritual darkness, God's people will walk in His supernatural authority, stirring hearts and minds with undeniable proof of His truth.

And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them]. 1 Corinthians 2:4

Babylon: The World's System

Babylon is not merely a religious institution; it represents the world's way of operating, a system driven by money, technology, human effort, and self-reliance rather than the glory of God. People trust in governments, financial systems, and other man-made institutions, all of which are fueled by the love of money.

For the love of money is a root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have been led astray and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute [mental] pangs. 1 Timothy 6:10

The Chosen Ones: Messengers of the Kingdom

During the End Times, the Chosen Ones will stand apart, refusing the mark of the beast or the approval of the anti-christ's system. Yet, they will be sought after by millions as vessels of truth and hope. Through them, the message of the Kingdom will be proclaimed, not in word alone, but in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely (without pay) you have received, freely (without charge) give. Matthew 10:8

The Holy Spirit will work through God's people, stirring hearts and persuading minds to embrace the Truth that sets them free. Even as Babylon falls, the Kingdom of God will advance, bringing salvation and restoration to all who turn to Him.

The Wrath of God and the Mark of the Beast

Then another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a mighty voice, Whoever pays homage to the beast and his statue and permits the [beast's] stamp (mark, inscription) to be put on his forehead or on his hand, He too shall [have to] drink of the wine of God's indignation and wrath, poured undiluted into the cup of His anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. Revelation 14:9-10

During the Last Days, God will use His people to preach boldly against taking the mark of the beast. At that time, the Seven Thunders will be understood and believers will clearly recognize the anti-christ and understand what his mark represents. Despite promises of peace and security, those beings who take the mark will find only torment and misery.

Then out of the smoke locusts came forth on the earth, and such power was granted them as the power the earth's scorpions have. They were told not to injure the herbage of the earth nor any green thing nor any tree, but only [to attack] such human beings as do not have the seal (mark) of God on their foreheads. Revelation 9:3-4

And in those days people will seek death and will not find it; and they will yearn to die, but death evades and flees from them. Revelation 9:6

The Smoke of Their Torment

And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no respite (no pause, no intermission, no rest, no peace) day or night—these who pay homage to the beast and to his image and whoever receives the stamp of his name upon him. Revelation 14:11

Many interpret this as evidence of eternal suffering in Hell for humans who take the mark of the beast. However, consider the implications of such an idea. If Jesus were to witness eternal torment, would it not be a reminder of failure to save all mankind? Scripture declares that Jesus came to save the world and that He was given authority over all flesh. If eternal suffering were the outcome for these people, how could His mission be considered complete?

But God's free gift is not at all to be compared to the trespass [His grace is out of all proportion to the fall of man]. For if many died through one man's falling away (his lapse, his offense), much more profusely did God's grace and the free gift [that comes] through the undeserved favor of the one Man Jesus Christ abound and overflow to and for [the benefit of] many. Romans 5:15

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

What Does "The Smoke of Their Torment" Mean?

The smoke of their torment represents the elimination of everything that hinders humanity from fully enjoying a relationship with God. Just as chaff is burned when separated from the wheat, so too will sin and rebellion be dealt with during God's judgment.

His winnowing shovel (fork) is in His hand to thoroughly clear and cleanse His [threshing] floor and to gather the wheat and store it in His granary, but the chaff He will burn with fire that cannot be extinguished. Luke 3:17

Interestingly, the torment is described as occurring "day and night," yet Revelation will later tell us that day and night will cease to exist:

And there shall be no more night; they have no need for lamplight or sunlight, for the Lord God will illuminate them and be their light, and they shall reign [as kings] forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities). Revelation 22:5

And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, for the splendor and radiance (glory) of God illuminate it, and the Lamb is its lamp. Revelation 21:23

The Wedding Feast and the Guests

These scriptures show that if humans are actually able to take the mark of the beast they will suffer on earth and be thrown into Hades to await the second resurrection. Yet, when they are raised from the dead, they will bow their knees and confess that Jesus is Lord, entering eternity not as the Bride of Christ but as honored guests.

And those servants went out on the crossroads and got together as many as they found, both bad and good, so [the room in which] the wedding feast [was held] was filled with guests. Matthew 22:10

Jesus' parable of the Wedding Feast emphasizes that only one guest was cast out, not many or most. This aligns with Jesus' words in John 17:

"While I was with them, I kept and preserved them in Your Name [in the knowledge and worship of You]. Those You have given Me I guarded and protected, and not one of them has perished or is lost except the son of perdition [Judas Iscariot—the one who is now doomed to destruction, destined to be lost], that the Scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12

God's Redemptive Plan

Taking the mark of the beast will absolutely bring misery, but when we view Scripture as a whole, it is clear that if humans are able to take the mark their misery cannot be eternal. God's ultimate plan is to redeem and restore humanity, even those who rebel, to the glory of His grace.

The Call for Steadfastness of the Saints

Here [comes in a call for] the steadfastness of the saints [the patience, the endurance of the people of God], those who [habitually] keep God's commandments and [their] faith in Jesus. Revelation 14:12

Why does Jesus emphasize patience when speaking about the suffering of those who take the mark of the beast? If their punishment were eternal, the call might simply be to accept it. Instead, we are urged to be patient, which reflects the heart of Christ and His Bride. A true believer, deeply transformed by Grace and Mercy, does not desire eternal punishment for anyone but hopes for redemption and restoration.

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

Thus David congratulates the man and pronounces a blessing on him to whom God credits righteousness apart from the works he does: Blessed and happy and to be envied are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered up and completely buried. Romans 4:6-7

Believe me, I understand how it sounds when I write that only fallen angels are able to take the mark of the beast. I really do. But I also believe the Bible must fit together. If humans can take that mark and be excluded from salvation, it would contradict our Father's will that all be saved. How then could we honestly accept the rest of Scripture? This is the only way I've found peace with these passages.

The Blessing of Dying in Christ

Then I heard further [perceiving the distinct words of] a voice from heaven, saying, Write this: Blessed (happy, to be envied) are the dead from now on who die in the Lord! Yes, blessed (happy, to be envied indeed), says the Spirit, [in] that they may rest from their labors, for their works (deeds) do follow (attend, accompany) them! Revelation 14:13

For those who die in Christ, there is always a blessing. This truth remains unchanged, even during the End Times. Death in the Lord is not the end but a victorious passage into eternal glory, where works done in Christ's Power continue to bear fruit.

And when this perishable puts on the imperishable and this that was capable of dying puts on freedom from death, then shall be fulfilled the Scripture that says, Death is swallowed up (utterly vanquished forever) in and unto victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? Now sin is the sting of death, and sin exercises its power [upon the soul] through [the abuse of] the Law. But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory [making us conquerors] through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

Isn't Everyone in Christ?

The glorious truth about death is this: in a very real sense, all of humanity exists in Christ. He is the Source of all things, and by Him, all things are held together. His Love, Grace, and Mercy extend to all creation, and His victory on the Cross ensures that all men are ultimately blessed by His work.

Yet for us there is [only] one God, the Father, Who is the Source of all things and for Whom we [have life], and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through and by Whom are all things and through and by Whom we [ourselves exist]. 1 Corinthians 8:6

For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together). Colossians 1:16-17

Jesus' work on the Cross was not partial or limited but fully successful. His power, love, and grace will ultimately bring about the redemption of all. His victory is universal, ensuring that all men will be blessed and transformed by what He accomplished.

The Son of Man on the Cloud

Again I looked, and behold, [I saw] a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud One resembling a Son of Man, with a crown of gold on His head and a sharp scythe (sickle) in His hand. Revelation 14:14

How glorious it is to be reminded of Jesus' sovereignty during the darkest moments of the world's history! While the earth endures the worst of the Great Tribulation, we are shown the One who holds ultimate authority over life and death: Jesus Christ.

And the Ever-living One [I am living in the eternity of the eternities]. I died, but see, I am alive forevermore; and I possess the keys of death and Hades (the realm of the dead). Revelation 1:18

Neither the anti-christ, the false prophet, nor Satan control death, even during the End Times. Jesus, in His love and grace, remains the sole authority. His mission was clear from the beginning, to save sinners and redeem humanity:

The saying is sure and true and worthy of full and universal acceptance, that Christ Jesus (the Messiah) came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost. 1 Timothy 1:15

The Harvest of the Earth

And another angel came out of the temple sanctuary, calling with a mighty voice to Him Who was sitting upon the cloud, Put in Your scythe and reap, for the hour has arrived to gather the harvest, for the earth's crop is fully ripened. So He Who was sitting upon the

*cloud swung His scythe (sickle) on the earth, and the earth's crop was harvested.
Revelation 14:15-16*

These verses depict the glorious moment when the saints are caught up into the clouds to meet Jesus. This event coincides with the resurrection of the Two Witnesses and precedes the climactic battle of Armageddon.

For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him in death]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord! 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

This is also the moment the Two Witnesses, who were slain, are resurrected and ascend to heaven, filling the earth with awe and dread:

But after three and a half days, by God's gift the breath of life again entered into them, and they rose up on their feet, and great dread and terror fell on those who watched them. Then [the two witnesses] heard a strong voice from heaven calling to them, Come up here! And before the very eyes of their enemies they ascended into heaven in a cloud. Revelation 11:11-12

The Winepress of God's Wrath

Then another angel came out of the temple [sanctuary] in heaven, and he also carried a sharp scythe (sickle). And another angel came forth from the altar, [the angel] who has authority and power over fire, and he called with a loud cry to him who had the sharp scythe (sickle), Put forth your scythe and reap the fruitage of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are entirely ripe. So the angel swung his scythe on the earth and stripped the grapes and gathered the vintage from the vines of the earth and cast it into the huge winepress of God's indignation and wrath. And [the grapes in] the winepress were trodden outside the city, and blood poured from the winepress, [reaching] as high as horses' bridles, for a distance of 1,600 stadia (about 200 miles). Revelation 14:17-20

The Gathering at Armageddon

This passage depicts the physical gathering of the fallen angels to the great battle of Armageddon. This is a sobering moment, where God's judgment is poured out in its fullness against the forces that have tried to deceive and destroy those who He created to have fellowship with.

Jesus spoke of this gathering in Luke:

I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding together; one will be taken and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left. Then they asked Him, Where, Lord? He said to them, Wherever the dead body is, there will the vultures or eagles be gathered together. Luke 17:34-37

Revelation further elaborates on the demonic deception that gathers the rulers of the earth to this final confrontation:

And I saw three loathsome spirits like frogs, [leaping] from the mouth of the dragon and from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet. For really they are the spirits of demons that perform signs (wonders, miracles). And they go forth to the rulers and leaders all over the world, to gather them together for war on the great day of God the Almighty. Revelation 16:13-14

And they gathered them together at the place which in Hebrew is called Armageddon." Revelation 16:16

The Final Judgment at Armageddon

At Armageddon, Christ will execute judgment with the sword of His Word, and the armies of the beast will be destroyed. The imagery of the winepress and the blood flowing as high as the horses' bridles symbolizes the complete and overwhelming defeat of evil.

And the rest were killed with the sword that issues from the mouth of Him Who is mounted on the horse, and all the birds fed ravenously and glutted themselves with their flesh. Revelation 19:21

This vivid description reminds us of the certainty of God's justice. While the forces of darkness gather in rebellion, they ultimately fulfill the sovereign plan of God. The battle of Armageddon is not a struggle between equal powers but the final, decisive demonstration of Christ's victory.

Chapter 19

Revelation 15

The Seven Angels and the Seven Plagues

Then I saw another wonder (sign, token, symbol) in heaven, great and marvelous [warning of events of ominous significance]: There were seven angels bringing seven plagues (afflictions, calamities), which are the last, for with them God's wrath (indignation) is completely expressed [reaches its climax and is ended]. Revelation 15:1

The End Times as revealed by Jesus are not presented in strict chronological order. Instead, Revelation builds upon itself, each vision adding layers of understanding. The seven plagues align

with the seven seals, seven thunders, and seven trumpets, showing the completeness and divine perfection of God's plan.

These events are not random acts of destruction but expressions of God's love and justice. They serve to cleanse creation, removing evil and preparing the way for mankind's ultimate freedom in Christ.

The Glassy Sea and the Victorious Saints

Then I saw what seemed to be a glassy sea blended with fire, and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his statue and from the number corresponding to his name were standing beside the glassy sea, with harps of God in their hands. And they sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, Mighty and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God the Omnipotent! Righteous (just) and true are Your ways, O Sovereign of the ages (King of the nations)! Revelation 15:2-3

The glassy sea, mingled with fire, symbolizes the perfection of the Chosen Ones through the Blood of Christ and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. They stand purified, without spot or blemish, filled with His glory and holiness.

But it is from Him that you have your life in Christ Jesus, Whom God made our Wisdom from God, [revealed to us a knowledge of the divine plan of salvation previously hidden, manifesting itself as] our Righteousness [thus making us upright and putting us in right standing with God], and our Consecration [making us pure and holy], and our Redemption [providing our ransom from eternal penalty for sin]. 1 Corinthians 1:30

So that He may strengthen and confirm and establish your hearts faultlessly pure and unblamable in holiness in the sight of our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) with all His saints (the holy and glorified people of God)! Amen, (so be it)! 1 Thessalonians 3:13

The fire represents the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which empowers and purifies believers:

I indeed baptize you in (with) water because of repentance [that is, because of your changing your minds for the better, heartily amending your ways, with abhorrence of your past sins]. But He Who is coming after me is mightier than I, Whose sandals I am not worthy or fit to take off or carry; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Matthew 3:11

The Song of Moses and the Lamb

The Chosen Ones sing both the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb, signifying the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ. Together, they acknowledge that all things come from Jesus and that nothing can be accomplished apart from Him.

I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing. John 15:5

This beautiful moment reflects the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan, bringing together people from every background into one glorious Bride, perfected by the Lamb and filled with His Spirit.

There is [now no distinction] neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

All Nations Will Reverence and Glorify Jesus

Who shall not reverence and glorify Your name, O Lord [giving You honor and praise in worship]? For You only are holy. All the nations shall come and pay homage and adoration to You, for Your just judgments (Your righteous sentences and deeds) have been made known and displayed. Revelation 15:4

Isn't this verse glorious? Before we are shown the culmination of God's wrath against evil, we are reminded of the Bride's assurance that all men will ultimately reverence Jesus. This means all will be saved from the Lake of Fire.

Paul beautifully explains this truth:

Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation. Romans 10:9-10

All nations will confess the greatness of Jesus, not out of fear or compulsion but from a deep love and appreciation for the blessings they see that He brings. Even those who once hated Him will come to recognize His grace, mercy, and glory.

Nations in Eternity

It's amazing to note that when Jesus returns, there will still be nations! Scripture reveals that these nations will walk by the light of God's glory, bringing their splendor and majesty into His eternal kingdom.

And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, for the splendor and radiance (glory) of God illuminate it, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations shall walk by its light and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory. And its gates shall never be closed by day, and there shall be no night there. They shall bring the glory (the splendor and majesty) and the honor of the nations into it. Revelation 21:23-26

In this eternal kingdom, the nations will be healed and restored by the tree of life:

Through the middle of the Broadway of the city; also, on either side of the river was the tree of life with its twelve varieties of fruit, yielding each month its fresh crop; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing and the restoration of the nations. Revelation 22:2

Rulership in Eternity

Jesus' parables also reveal that those who have been faithful will receive rulership over cities in His kingdom:

The second one also came and said, Lord, your mina has made five more minas. And he said also to him, And you will take charge over five cities. Luke 19:18-19

This glimpse into eternity suggests a vibrant, active life where believers play significant roles in the restoration and flourishing of creation.

What Eternity Will Be Like

As we continue studying Revelation, especially in the final chapters, we will gain a deeper understanding of what eternity will truly be like. It won't be limited to a small group of believers sitting on clouds playing harps. There will be people, guests, nations, and even new life, all living under the reign of Christ.

Remember what we studied in Revelation 3: those who were of Satan will come to learn love from the Bride of Christ. Eternity will be a time of dynamic engagement, teaching, healing, and guiding others in the fullness of God's kingdom.

Let's allow these truths to shape our anticipation of the glorious future awaiting us in Christ!

The Testimony of the Sanctuary

After this I looked and the sanctuary of the tent of the testimony in heaven was thrown open, and there came out of the temple sanctuary the seven angels bringing the seven plagues (afflictions, calamities). They were arrayed in pure gleaming linen, and around their breasts they wore golden girdles. Revelation 15:5-6

Jesus reveals the purity and power of His testimony in the Last Days. The tent of the testimony being thrown open signifies that the truth of God will be proclaimed without hindrance, in the full power of the Holy Spirit. The seven angels, arrayed in pure white linen with gold girdles over their hearts, symbolize the holiness and righteousness of the messengers carrying out God's divine plan.

This powerful image reflects the promise made in Acts:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, God declares, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [telling forth the divine

counsels] and your young men shall see visions (divinely granted appearances), and your old men shall dream [divinely suggested] dreams. Acts 2:17

The Spirit's Work in the Last Days

During the Last Days, God's Spirit will empower His people to preach and prophesy with extraordinary boldness and clarity. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit will surpass anything humanity has experienced before, leading to the salvation of an uncountable number of people.

Our Father will use His Chosen Ones in ways that exceed human imagination. This divine empowerment will showcase His love, mercy, and sovereignty, bringing many to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. The purity and power of His testimony will transform lives on an unprecedented scale.

The Seven Golden Bowls of Wrath

And one of the four living creatures [then] gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath and indignation of God, Who lives forever and ever (in the eternities of the eternities). And the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory (the radiance, the splendor) of God and from His might and power, and no one was able to go into the sanctuary until the seven plagues (afflictions, calamities) of the seven angels were ended. Revelation 15:7-8

Once again, Revelation emphasizes that the events of the Last Days are entirely directed and controlled by our Father. Jesus repeatedly reminds us of this truth to instill confidence and peace in our hearts. God's Kingdom is like little children, and we are continually reassured that our loving Father is in control of everything, even the unfolding of His righteous judgment.

The Glory and Power of Jesus' Testimony

The heavenly sanctuary being filled with smoke from God's glory and power is a breathtaking image of His majesty. The fact that no one can enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues are completed demonstrates God's desire for a complete cleansing. This divine act of purification ensures that all His people will enter together, fully redeemed and glorified.

Isn't it comforting to see God's patience and perfection in this process? As Revelation 6:11 reminds us, God's plan is intentional and complete:

Then they were each given a long and flowing and festive white robe and told to rest and wait patiently a little while longer, until the number should be complete of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed as they themselves had been. Revelation 6:11

Chapter 20

Revelation 16

The Command to Pour Out the Bowls of Wrath

Then I heard a mighty voice from the temple sanctuary saying to the seven angels, Go and empty out on the earth the seven bowls of God's wrath and indignation. Revelation 16:1

The seven bowls of wrath represent our Father's perfect and purposeful indignation against the evil forces that have attempted to destroy humans. To understand this, consider the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The father's disappointment in his son did not drive him to seek revenge or destruction; instead, he allowed the son to face the consequences of his actions. The father's wrath was expressed in allowing the son to experience hardship, ultimately leading him to realize that life in his father's house was far better than anything the world could offer.

But the father said to his bond servants, Bring quickly the best robe (the festive robe of honor) and put it on him; and give him a ring for his hand and sandals for his feet. And bring out that [wheat-]fattened calf and kill it; and let us revel and feast and be happy and make merry. Luke 15:22-23

God's wrath is not about eternal separation but about eternal reconciliation. It will allow humanity to see that His Kingdom is the only true source of peace, joy, and love. Just as the prodigal son was welcomed and celebrated upon his return, God's ultimate victory will be revealed when all of mankind acknowledges Him on Judgment Day.

The First Bowl: Painful Sores

So the first [angel] went and emptied his bowl on the earth, and foul and painful ulcers (sores) came on the people who were marked with the stamp of the beast and who did homage to his image. Revelation 16:2

The fallen angels are able to appear as people and they absolutely can be tormented. They sow discord and lies, so it only makes sense that our Father would bring torment to their mouths.

And behold, they shrieked and screamed, What have You to do with us, Jesus, Son of God? Have You come to torment us before the appointed time? Matthew 8:29

The world's false system that the fallen angels try to instill will ultimately be exposed for what it is, incapable of delivering the peace and fulfillment that only God's Kingdom provides.

The Second Bowl of Wrath

The second [angel] emptied his bowl into the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a corpse [thick, corrupt, ill-smelling, and disgusting], and every living thing that was in the sea perished. Revelation 16:3

As we have studied before in prophetic imagery, the sea often represents a group of people or beings. This plague reveals the fate of those angels who have sided with Satan and who will take

the mark of the beast: they will suffer for their choice. The mark signifies rejection of God's Kingdom, and as a result, they forfeit the reward spending eternity with Christ.

Then another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a mighty voice, Whoever pays homage to the beast and his statue and permits the [beast's] stamp (mark, inscription) to be put on his forehead or on his hand, He too shall [have to] drink of the wine of God's indignation and wrath, poured undiluted into the cup of His anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. Revelation 14:9-10

There are going to be billions of people who do not take the mark of the beast and who also do not believe in Jesus as their Lord during the Last Days. These people will suffer under the failed leadership of the anti-christ and false prophet. We know that these people exist, because Jesus told us that during His Millennial Reign that we will rule with Him.

And he shall rule them with a sceptre (rod) of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, and [his power over them shall be] like that which I Myself have received from My Father; Revelation 2:27

Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and to pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been slain with axes [beheaded] for their witnessing to Jesus and [for preaching and testifying] for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast or his statue and had not accepted his mark or permitted it to be stamped on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived again and ruled with Christ (the Messiah) a thousand years. Revelation 20:4

The Second Trumpet Connection

This plague corresponds to the Second Trumpet in Revelation 8, where a blazing mountain is cast into the sea, turning a third of it to blood and destroying life within it. Both the trumpet and the bowl emphasize the consequences of rejecting God's truth and choosing the world's lies:

The second angel blew [his] trumpet, and something resembling a great mountain, blazing with fire, was hurled into the sea. And a third of the sea was turned to blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea perished, and a third of the ships were destroyed. Revelation 8:8-9

God's Redemptive Purpose

Even in this judgment, God's ultimate purpose is redemption of mankind. Jesus' victory will extend to all, as every knee bows and every tongue confesses Him as Lord. The mercy and grace of God ensure that His Kingdom will be filled with His redeemed, rejoicing in His glory for all eternity.

The Third Bowl of Wrath

Then the third [angel] emptied out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they turned into (became) blood. Revelation 16:4

This third plague parallels the Third Trumpet, where a burning star called Wormwood fell on the rivers and springs of water. In prophetic imagery, the rivers and springs represent people who feed into the larger “sea” of humanity following after the anti-christ. This plague symbolizes the spread of Satan’s lies and deceptions through the anti-christ and false prophet during the Last Days.

The third angel blew [his] trumpet, and a huge star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it dropped on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water— And the name of the star is Wormwood. A third part of the waters was changed into wormwood, and many people died from using the water, because it had become bitter." Revelation 8:10-11

A third of the population will follow these lies, contributing to the anti-christ’s government, but their efforts will fail. The rivers and springs turning to blood reveal that the systems and people who empower his regime will not sustain it. However, it is important to remember that two thirds of the world will not follow after the lies of the anti-christ and an uncountable number of those will actually come to believe in Jesus as Lord and be saved.

The Angel of the Waters Declares God’s Justice

And I also heard the angel of the waters say, Righteous (just) are You in these Your decisions and judgments, You Who are and were, O Holy One! Because they have poured out the blood of Your people (the saints) and the prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. Such is their due [they deserve it]! And [from] the altar I heard [the] cry, Yes, Lord God the Omnipotent, Your judgments (sentences, decisions) are true and just and righteous! Revelation 16:5-7

If literal rivers and springs turned to blood, they would be undrinkable and unfit for sustaining life. Symbolically, this shows that the anti-christ’s supporters, those who operate in the shadows to enforce his will, will fail to uphold his government. The system they seek to empower will collapse because it is built on pride, lies, and human arrogance, a foundation of sand.

Totalitarian regimes rely on hidden enforcers and complicit individuals, but in the End Times, their efforts will falter. The anti-christ’s kingdom will be unsustainable, as only a third of mankind will follow him, while two-thirds will refuse his mark.

When the [uncompromisingly] righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked man rules, the people groan and sigh. Proverbs 29:2

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18

The Pride and Destruction of the Last Days

The misery of the Last Days will stem from the pride and arrogance of those who follow the anti-christ. Their egos and inflated self-worth will blind them to the truth, leading to destruction. When their promised “peace” and “equality” fail, their frustration will boil over into hostility, lashing out at those who disagree.

Yet even as the world groans under their pride, God’s justice and sovereignty remain steadfast. His judgments are true, righteous, and purposeful, revealing the futility of any system that denies Him.

There will be many who follow after the antichrist, showing him honor and giving him their support. Yet even in this, our Father’s hand is not removed. In His mercy, He will not allow them to cross the final line of receiving the mark. For it is written that those who both worship the beast and take his mark are eternally doomed. God, in His faithfulness, will not allow His will to be overturned, but will preserve those whom He has chosen, keeping them from destruction.

Then another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a mighty voice, Whoever pays homage to the beast and his statue and permits the [beast’s] stamp (mark, inscription) to be put on his forehead or on his hand, Revelation 14:9

The Fourth Bowl: Scorching Heat

Then the fourth [angel] emptied out his bowl upon the sun, and it was permitted to burn (scorch) humanity with [fierce, glowing] heat (fire). People were severely burned (scorched) by the fiery heat, and they reviled and blasphemed the name of God, Who has control of these plagues, and they did not repent of their sins [felt no regret, contrition, and compunction for their waywardness, refusing to amend their ways] to give Him glory. Revelation 16:8-9

If the sun were physically causing such destruction, humanity would likely cry out to God for help. However, the symbolic nature of this plague reveals something deeper: the failure of humanity’s manmade systems of governance and power. As these systems collapse, rather than turn to God in repentance, people will curse Him, blaming Him for their misery.

This pattern can already be seen in today’s world. When godly truth exposes the flaws of worldly systems, whether in laws, policies, or ideologies, those in power often lash out, attacking faith and denying responsibility, even as their governance brings destruction and suffering.

They tie up heavy loads, hard to bear, and place them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves will not lift a finger to help bear them. Matthew 23:4

The Role of the Two Witnesses

This judgment connects to the ministry of the Two Witnesses, who will be empowered by God to disrupt the anti-christ’s efforts. They will perform acts that frustrate Satan’s agenda, shutting up the sky and unleashing plagues. Their actions, though righteous, will be portrayed as evil by those who refuse to see the truth.

These [two witnesses] have power to shut up the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying (their prediction of events relating to Christ's kingdom and its speedy triumph); and they also have power to turn the waters into blood and to smite and scourge the earth with all manner of plagues as often as they choose. Revelation 11:6

However, their work is not about vengeance. God's eternal truths remain unchanged. Jesus taught us not to return evil for evil, and His Word emphasizes the importance of love and forgiveness. The actions of these witnesses will be acts of love, breaking down Satan's strongholds and exposing his lies. Through their ministry, God will be working to destroy evil while ultimately bringing peace, freedom, and restoration.

Heaven and earth will perish and pass away, but My words will not perish or pass away. Mark 13:31

You have heard that it was said to the men of old, You shall not kill, and whoever kills shall be liable to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the court. But I say to you that everyone who continues to be angry with his brother or harbors malice (enmity of heart) against him shall be liable to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the court. Matthew 5:21-22

God's Love and Justice

The scorching heat of this bowl reflects the consequences of pride and rebellion. Humanity's rejection of God's ways and embrace of Satan's deceptions will lead to ruin, yet even in this judgment, God's justice is righteous and redemptive. The collapse of these systems will ultimately reveal their futility, pointing to the only true solution: God's Kingdom.

God's actions, whether through the Two Witnesses, the plagues, or other judgments, are always rooted in His love. They are meant to expose lies, shatter strongholds, and draw people into the truth that brings freedom.

The Fifth Bowl: Darkness on the Kingdom of the Beast

Then the fifth [angel] emptied his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was [plunged] in darkness; and people gnawed their tongues for the torment [of their excruciating distress and severe pain]. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their anguish and their ulcers (sores), and they did not deplore their wicked deeds or repent [for what they had done]. Revelation 16:10-11

The fallen angels who take the mark of the beast and those who place their faith in the anti-christ will suffer greatly. Today, we already see the futility of trusting in the lies of Satan ingrained in human institutions. Whether liberal or conservative, people are often disappointed by what governments deliver. The anti-christ will take this to another level, his eloquent words and promises will inspire hope, but his reign will bring only failure, disappointment, and misery.

Cleansing Through Hades

For those who pay homage to the lies and deceits of the anti-christ and die, the path to truth will come through the refining fires of Hades. Though they will suffer, God's ultimate purpose is redemptive, not eternal destruction. Just as Scripture tells us that some works will be burned away yet the individual will be saved, so too will these souls eventually come to know the truth.

But if any person's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15

This aligns with what Peter writes about Jesus preaching to the souls in prison—those who were disobedient during Noah's time:

In which He went and preached to the spirits in prison, [The souls of those] who long before in the days of Noah had been disobedient, when God's patience waited during the building of the ark in which a few [people], actually eight in number, were saved through water. 1 Peter 3:19-20

God's Justice and Mercy

Those who align with the anti-christ will drink from the cup of God's indignation and wrath, experiencing torment and suffering for their rebellion. However, God's justice is never without His redemptive purpose. Their suffering will not be eternal; it will be the refining fire that brings them to acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

Then another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a mighty voice, Whoever pays homage to the beast and his statue and permits the [beast's] stamp (mark, inscription) to be put on his forehead or on his hand, He too shall [have to] drink of the wine of God's indignation and wrath, poured undiluted into the cup of His anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. Revelation 14:9-10

The Ultimate Hope

Even in the darkness of the anti-christ's reign, God's plan remains sovereign. His wrath is not for eternal destruction but for cleansing and redemption. Though those who follow after the anti-christ will suffer for their rebellion, they will ultimately come to the truth, bow their knees, and confess Jesus as Lord. God's mercy will triumph, and His Kingdom will be established in fullness.

The Sixth Bowl: The Drying of the Euphrates

Then the sixth [angel] emptied his bowl on the mighty river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to make ready a road for [the coming of] the kings of the east (from the rising sun). Revelation 16:12

This event parallels the Sixth Trumpet, where four angels bound at the Euphrates River are released to deceive and destroy a third of mankind. These angels, empowered by Satan, will draw the people of the Middle East into the anti-christ's deception, causing suffering and destruction.

Then the sixth angel blew [his] trumpet, and from the four horns of the golden altar which stands before God I heard a solitary voice, Saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Liberate the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. So the four angels who had been in readiness for that hour in the appointed day, month, and year were liberated to destroy a third of mankind. Revelation 9:13-15

The water of the Euphrates represents the people who will follow after the anti-christ. The drying up of the river symbolizes the removal of barriers that will allow the armies of the east, who are those gathered by the three loathsome spirits, to march to their ultimate destination for destruction—Armageddon.

Demonic Deception and Gathering for War

And I saw three loathsome spirits like frogs, [leaping] from the mouth of the dragon and from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet. For really they are the spirits of demons that perform signs (wonders, miracles). And they go forth to the rulers and leaders all over the world, to gather them together for war on the great day of God the Almighty. Revelation 16:13-14

Here we see demonic spirits, sent from the dragon (Satan), the beast (anti-christ), and the false prophet, performing signs and miracles to gather the fallen angels. These forces will gather the armies of the world to fight against Jesus as He returns.

Jesus spoke of this event in the Gospels:

Whoever tries to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve and quicken it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding together; one will be taken and the other will be left. Luke 17:33-35

When the disciples asked where these people would be taken, Jesus' answer pointed to the gathering for judgment at Armageddon:

Then they asked Him, Where, Lord? He said to them, Wherever the dead body is, there will the vultures or eagles be gathered together. Luke 17:3

This matches the description in Revelation 19, where the armies deceived by Satan and the anti-christ will face final judgment:

And the rest were killed with the sword that issues from the mouth of Him Who is mounted on the horse, and all the birds fed ravenously and glutted themselves with their flesh. Revelation 19:21

Miraculous Deception and the Gathering at Armageddon

It appears that these three demonic spirits will miraculously “take” the fallen angels who live amongst us and many of whom have become the leaders of the world and their armies to gather for war against Christ. This should not surprise us, as Jesus foretold that wonders and false miracles would occur in the End Times:

And the beast was seized and overpowered, and with him the false prophet who in his presence had worked wonders and performed miracles by which he led astray those who had accepted or permitted to be placed upon them the stamp (mark) of the beast and those who paid homage and gave divine honors to his statue. Both of them were hurled alive into the fiery lake that burns and blazes with brimstone. Revelation 19:20

The Return of Jesus Like a Thief

Behold, I am going to come like a thief! Blessed (happy, to be envied) is he who stays awake (alert) and who guards his clothes, so that he may not be naked and [have the shame of being] seen exposed! And they gathered them together at the place which in Hebrew is called Armageddon. Revelation 16:15-16

For Jesus to return “like a thief,” those who follow after the anti-christ must be completely unaware of His imminent return. Despite their suffering from the short comings of their government and the failures of the anti-christ’s rule, they will not anticipate that the end is at hand.

At this time, the world will actually be celebrating the death of the Two Witnesses, believing that their demise signals the anti-christ’s final success. Instead, they will be deceived and miraculously gathered by demonic spirits to Armageddon, where their power will be utterly destroyed.

The Seventh Bowl: It Is Done

Then the seventh [angel] emptied out his bowl into the air, and a mighty voice came out of the sanctuary of heaven from the throne [of God], saying, It is done! [It is all over, it is all accomplished, it has come!] And there followed lightning flashes, loud rumblings, peals of thunder, and a tremendous earthquake; nothing like it has ever occurred since men dwelt on the earth, so severe and far-reaching was that earthquake. Revelation 16:17-18

The pouring out of the seventh bowl signals the completion of God’s judgment. A mighty voice declares, “*It is done!*”—the same finality spoken by Jesus on the Cross when He secured salvation for all mankind. Now, His return will bring an undeniable transformation to the entire earth.

John sees lightning flashes, hears thunder, and feels a tremendous earthquake, signs of the undeniable presence and power of Christ as He physically returns to establish His rule over all creation.

For just as the lightning flashes from the east and shines and is seen as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matthew 24:27

The Rule of Christ and the Saints

When Jesus returns, His rule will be absolute, and those who have overcome through Him will rule alongside Him. The promise of authority over the nations will be fulfilled for the faithful, as Christ shares His inheritance with His Bride.

And he who overcomes (is victorious) and who obeys My commands to the [very] end [doing the works that please Me], I will give him authority and power over the nations; And he shall rule them with a sceptre (rod) of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, and [his power over them shall be] like that which I Myself have received from My Father; And I will give him the Morning Star. Revelation 2:26-28

John further reveals the role of the saints in Revelation 20:

Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and to pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been slain with axes [beheaded] for their witnessing to Jesus and [for preaching and testifying] for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast or his statue and had not accepted his mark or permitted it to be stamped on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived again and ruled with Christ (the Messiah) a thousand years. Revelation 20:4

The Fulfillment of God's Kingdom

The return of Jesus will mark the culmination of all prophecy, establishing His Kingdom on earth and fulfilling His promises to His Bride. Those who were empowered with the Holy Spirit and remained faithful, refusing the mark of the beast, and those who were raised from the dead, will rule alongside Him in His glorious Kingdom. This reign will be characterized by justice, peace, and the absolute authority of Christ, shared with those who overcame through His power.

The Fall of Babylon and the Cities of the Nations

The mighty city was broken into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And God kept in mind mighty Babylon, to make her drain the cup of His furious wrath and indignation. Revelation 16:19

In this powerful moment, the institutions, cities, and nations of the earth will fall under the absolute rule of Jesus Christ. However, His wrath is not directed at the people, but at the systems, political, economic, and spiritual, that have enslaved, deceived, and oppressed humanity. The fury of God's

indignation will be poured out upon the strongholds of Babylon, the world's symbol of corruption and rebellion.

She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus [the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, which means Savior], for He will save His people from their sins [that is, prevent them from failing and missing the true end and scope of life, which is God]. Matthew 1:21

Three Categories of Humanity

When Jesus returns, humanity will fall into three distinct categories:

1. **The Saved – The Bride of Christ:** Those empowered to believe, who followed Christ faithfully and are now ruling and reigning with Him. They are the Bride, fully redeemed and glorified in Him.

Beloved, we are [even here and] now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be [hereafter], but we know that when He comes and is manifested, we shall [as God's children] resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He [really] is. 1 John 3:2

2. **Those Who Welcome Jesus' Rule:** These are individuals who did not take the mark of the beast and who accept Jesus as King when He returns.
3. **Those Who Reject Jesus:** Even among those who do not take the mark of the beast, there will be individuals who resist Christ's authority.

Rebellion at the End of the Millennial Reign

The rebellion of those who reject Jesus' rule will not be limited to His initial return. At the end of the Millennial Reign, after 1,000 years of Christ's perfect governance, Satan will be released for a short time, and some will once again choose to follow him. This final rebellion demonstrates the persistent nature of humanity's fallen pride and the need for Christ's absolute rule.

And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his place of confinement, And he will go forth to deceive and seduce and lead astray the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth—Gog and Magog—to muster them for war; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they swarmed up over the broad plain of the earth and encircled the fortress (camp) of God's people (the saints) and the beloved city; but fire descended from heaven and consumed them. Revelation 20:7-9

Ruling with a Rod of Iron

This is why Jesus promises that His Bride will rule with Him “with a rod of iron.” Even after His return, there will still be those who resist His ways and cling to the desires of the world. The rule of Christ will bring justice, peace, and order, but it will also require firm governance to ensure that evil cannot take root again.

And he who overcomes (is victorious) and who obeys My commands to the [very] end [doing the works that please Me], I will give him authority and power over the nations; And he shall rule them with a sceptre (rod) of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, and [his power over them shall be] like that which I Myself have received from My Father. Revelation 2:26-27

God's Victory Over Babylon

The fall of Babylon signifies the ultimate triumph of God's Kingdom over the systems of the world. Jesus' return will shatter every stronghold of rebellion, bringing justice and restoration. While some will resist, His victory will be complete, and His Bride will reign with Him in righteousness and glory.

The Earth Shaken and Hailstones of Judgment

And every island fled and no mountains could be found. And great (excessively oppressive) hailstones, as heavy as a talent [between fifty and sixty pounds], of immense size, fell from the sky on the people; and men blasphemed God for the plague of the hail, so very great was [the torture] of that plague. Revelation 16:20-21

At the return of Jesus, the entire earth will undergo a transformation. The imagery of islands fleeing and mountains disappearing symbolizes the complete removal of all earthly systems, governments, and authorities that are not aligned with Christ. There will be no rulers, nations, or institutions left that operate outside of His authority. Christ's Kingdom will reign supreme, and the world will finally be united under Him.

The hailstones of immense size reflect God's undeniable judgment, shattering all remaining vestiges of pride and rebellion. For those who still cling to worldly ways, the collapse of their systems will bring immense stress and torment.

Even in this, some will blaspheme God, unable to accept the magnitude of the change. These individuals will still desire government, business, and worldly power as they have known it, and the dramatic shift to Christ's perfect rule will expose their unwillingness to surrender.

The Absolute Authority of Christ

This passage vividly illustrates that Jesus' return will not just bring spiritual restoration but will also transform the physical and political realities of the earth. All human pride, autonomy, and systems will be shaken to their core and removed from power. No nation, ruler, or institution will stand apart from Him.

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue [frankly and openly] confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:10-11

For those who have placed their hope in earthly systems, yet who did not take the mark of the beast, this will be a time of great upheaval. But for the Bride of Christ, it will be a time of fulfillment, joy, and restoration as His Kingdom is established in fullness.

Chapter 21

Revelation 17

The Judgment of the Great Harlot

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls then came and spoke to me, saying, Come with me! I will show you the doom (sentence, judgment) of the great harlot (idolatress) who is seated on many waters, [She] with whom the rulers of the earth have joined in prostitution (idolatry) and with the wine of whose immorality (idolatry) the inhabitants of the earth have become intoxicated. Revelation 17:1-2

What is the one evil that seeks to seduce all of mankind? The answer is the love of money. Scripture makes this clear:

For the love of money is a root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have been led astray and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute [mental] pangs. 1 Timothy 6:10

Jesus Himself warned about the dangers of wealth and its ability to deceive:

Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go into the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 19:24)

Earthly wealth, with its greed, jealousy, lies, and deception, is the *Great Harlot*. Nothing else has seduced humanity so thoroughly, drawing people away from God and enslaving them to materialism and pride.

The Woman and the Scarlet Beast

And [the angel] bore me away [rapt] in the Spirit into a desert (wilderness), and I saw a woman seated on a scarlet beast that was all covered with blasphemous titles (names), and he had seven heads and ten horns. Revelation 17:3

Here, Jesus reveals the connection between the Great Harlot, earthly wealth, and the anti-christ's End Time government. The beast represents the anti-christ's regime, empowered by Satan, while the woman represents the greed and materialism that will fuel this system.

The anti-christ, aided by the false prophet, will attempt to take total control of the world's wealth, requiring people to take his mark to engage in commerce:

So that no one will have power to buy or sell unless he bears the stamp (mark, inscription), [that is] the name of the beast or the number of his name. Revelation 13:17

The Beast Released and the Power of Man

John is taken to the wilderness to see this vision because the beast, representing Satan's ultimate rebellion against God, will be released from the Abyss. His reign will come swiftly, lasting only three and a half years, yet he will draw humanity's attention to the power of man as never before.

The beast is covered with blasphemous titles because Satan's agenda has always been to deceive man into trusting in himself rather than in God. This deception began in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve to eat from the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and blessing and calamity you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. Genesis 2:17

But the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die, For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil and blessing and calamity. Genesis 3:4-5

Satan's goal has always been to elevate human pride, convincing man that he can be his own god, relying on his own strength and knowledge rather than submitting to the truth and authority of God. This lie will reach its full expression during the anti-christ's reign, as the beast and the Great Harlot work together to deceive the nations.

The Fall of the Harlot

Though the Great Harlot, earthly wealth and materialism, will seduce the rulers and inhabitants of the earth, it will ultimately be judged and destroyed. Jesus will expose the deception, overthrow the anti-christ's system, and establish His righteous rule over all creation.

The Adornment and Judgment of Babylon

The woman was robed in purple and scarlet and bedecked with gold, precious stones, and pearls, [and she was] holding in her hand a golden cup full of the accursed offenses and the filth of her lewdness and vice. And on her forehead there was inscribed a name of mystery [with a secret symbolic meaning]: Babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes (idolatresses) and of the filth and atrocities and abominations of the earth. Revelation 17:4-

5

What Jesus reveals here is the prosperity of the End Times. The woman's luxurious adornment, her purple and scarlet robes, gold, precious stones, and pearls, represents the wealth and materialism that will define the anti-christ's rule and the world's system. This prosperity will fuel widespread moral corruption, as earthly comfort often leads humanity away from God.

During prosperous times, it becomes far easier for people to indulge in selfishness, arrogance, and sin. In contrast, hardship often forces people to rely on each other for survival. The apostle Paul warned of this in his description of the last days:

But understand this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]. For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. [They will be] without natural [human] affection (callous and inhuman), relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement); [they will be] slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers), intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good.,2 Timothy 3:1-3

In this state of moral decay, the world will increasingly oppose God's truth and turn against His people.

The Persecution of God's People

I also saw that the woman was drunk, [drunk] with the blood of the saints (God's people) and the blood of the martyrs [who witnessed] for Jesus. And when I saw her, I was utterly amazed and wondered greatly. Revelation 17:6

The woman's intoxication with the blood of the saints symbolizes how the pursuit of wealth and power has always led to hatred of God's chosen ones. The fear of Christ's authority and the perceived threat to earthly wealth will drive the persecution of believers during the End Times.

This pattern is seen throughout history. In Acts, the silversmith Demetrius stirred up anger against Paul and the Gospel because the truth threatened their trade in idols:

But as time went on, there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way [of the Lord]. For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of [the goddess] Artemis [Diana], brought no small income to his craftsmen. These he called together, along with the workmen of similar trades, and said, Men, you are acquainted with the facts and understand that from this business we derive our wealth and livelihood. Acts 19:23-25

The same dynamic occurred during Jesus' ministry when the religious leaders feared the loss of their power and influence:

If we let Him alone to go on like this, everyone will believe in Him and adhere to Him, and the Romans will come and suppress and destroy and take away our [holy] place and our nation [our temple and city and our civil organization]. John 11:48

The Wealth of Babylon: A Tool of Deception

Earthly wealth has always been a tool of seduction, drawing people into idolatry and away from God. In the End Times, this idolatry will culminate in the system of Babylon, where materialism, greed, human technology, and pride will reach their peak. The love of wealth will drive the persecution of the saints and fuel humanity's rebellion against Christ.

Yet Jesus will expose and judge Babylon, bringing its power and deception to an end. His justice will reveal the futility of placing faith in earthly systems and wealth. Jesus will set the world free and accomplish His whole purpose of saving the lost. The Last Days are not about Jesus getting even, its redemption.

The Mystery of the Woman and the Beast

But the angel said to me, Why do you wonder? I will explain to you the [secret symbolic meaning of the] mystery of the woman, as well as of the beast having the seven heads and ten horns that carries her. Revelation 17:7

Jesus does not leave us in the dark about the events of the End Times. He either has or will reveal everything we need to know, including the identity of the ten leaders, the seven nations, the anti-christ, and the false prophet. Through His Word and the Holy Spirit, we are given clarity and peace, even if we are called to live through the Great Tribulation.

I do not call you servants (slaves) any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing (working out). But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. [I have revealed to you everything that I have learned from Him.] John 15:15

This is the revelation of Jesus Christ [His unveiling of the divine mysteries]. God gave it to Him to disclose and make known to His bond servants certain things which must shortly and speedily come to pass in their entirety. And He sent and communicated it through His angel (messenger) to His bond servant John. Revelation 1:1

But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you. John 14:26

The Origin and Fate of the Beast

The beast that you saw [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is going to come up out of the Abyss (the bottomless pit) and proceed to go to perdition. And the inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been recorded in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they look at the beast, because he [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is [yet] to come. Revelation 17:8

The beast, empowered by Satan, originates from the Abyss and will be cast directly into the Lake of Fire when Jesus returns:

And the beast was seized and overpowered, and with him the false prophet who in his presence had worked wonders and performed miracles by which he led astray those who had accepted or permitted to be placed upon them the stamp (mark) of the beast and those who paid homage and gave divine honors to his statue. Both of them were hurled alive into the fiery lake that burns and blazes with brimstone. Revelation 19:20

The fact that the beast and false prophet are thrown directly into the Lake of Fire, bypassing Hades and the judgment of Judgment Day, reveals that they are not human. This further aligns with Revelation 13:14, where the anti-christ's miraculous "survival" after a head wound is presented to deceive the world:

And because of the signs (miracles) which he is allowed to perform in the presence of the [first] beast, he deceives those who inhabit the earth, commanding them to erect a statue (an image) in the likeness of the beast who was wounded by the [small] sword and still lived. Revelation 13:14

The Inhabitants of the Earth

Who are the inhabitants of the earth whose names are *not* written in the Book of Life? These cannot be humans because Jesus did not fail in His mission to save all men and bring them to the knowledge of the truth. Instead, these beings are the fallen angels who followed Satan. Their names were never recorded in the Book of Life.

And the huge dragon was cast down and out—that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him. Revelation 12:9

These fallen angels, cast out of heaven, will marvel that Satan, who was once defeated, is now allowed to wield power on earth once again. They will believe they have another chance to rise against God, but this will lead to their ultimate and final defeat.

Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels went forth to battle with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought. But they were defeated, and there was no room found for them in heaven any longer. Revelation 12:7-8

The Futile Marvel of the Fallen

These inhabitants, the fallen angels and spiritual rebels, will marvel at the beast, deceived into believing that Satan's power is rising again. However, their end is already sealed. The beast, the false prophet, and their followers will be overthrown when Christ returns, and God's victory will be complete.

The Seven Heads and the Identity of the Anti-Christ

This calls for a mind [to consider that is packed] with wisdom and intelligence [it is something for a particular mode of thinking and judging of thoughts, feelings, and purposes]. The seven heads are seven hills upon which the woman is sitting; Revelation 17:9

The mention of *seven hills* has long been associated with the city of Rome, a city famously surrounded by seven hills. This connection provides insight into the possible role of the anti-christ during the Last Days. I personally believe that the anti-christ may hold the position of the last Pope. While I humbly acknowledge that I could be wrong, this belief is based on the patterns and symbols our Father reveals throughout His Word.

The Pope historically held immense power, once considered the most influential figure on earth. However, this power was taken away, particularly during Napoleon's reign. For such a figure to rise again to global prominence and wield power over nations would indeed cause the world to marvel.

The beast that you saw [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is going to come up out of the Abyss (the bottomless pit) and proceed to go to perdition. And the inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been recorded in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they look at the beast, because he [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is [yet] to come. Revelation 17:8

The Fallen Angels and Satan's Resurgence

The pattern of "*once was, now is not, and yet to come*" also reflects the spiritual battle that has raged since creation. Satan once had great influence over humanity before Christ defeated him through His death and resurrection. However, in the Last Days, our Father will allow Satan to regain temporary power and deceive the nations. This resurgence will cause the fallen angels, whose names are not in the Book of Life because it was created for mankind, to believe they have achieved victory.

And the huge dragon was cast down and out—that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him. Revelation 12:9

These beings will marvel at what they perceive as their triumph, unaware that their ultimate defeat is near.

The Miraculous Head Wound and Possession

One of the key events that will cause the world to follow the anti-christ is his miraculous "healing" after suffering a head wound. I believe this event could involve the assassination of the final Pope, whose body will be allowed to be possessed by the creature released from the Abyss. This aligns with Revelation 13, where we are shown the deceptive signs and miracles performed to convince the world to worship the beast:

And because of the signs (miracles) which he is allowed to perform in the presence of the [first] beast, he deceives those who inhabit the earth, commanding them to erect a statue (an image) in the likeness of the beast who was wounded by the [small] sword and still lived. Revelation 13:14

The resurrection-like appearance of the anti-christ will deceive the nations, leading many to worship his image. However, what they are truly worshipping is not the man who died but the demonic being that now inhabits his flesh.

The Triumph of God's Plan

As startling as these events may seem, we can rest in the knowledge that all of this occurs under the sovereign will of God. The anti-christ's rise to power, the resurgence of Satan, and the deception of the nations are all part of God's perfect plan to cleanse the earth and establish His eternal Kingdom.

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

In the end, the anti-christ and the forces of evil will be completely defeated, and Christ will reign in righteousness and glory forever. The deception that has affected so much of the world will be destroyed and the Light of Truth will set it free.

The Seven Kings and the Rise of the Eighth

And they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one still exists [and is reigning]; the other [the seventh] has not yet appeared, and when he does arrive, he must stay [but] a brief time. Revelation 17:10

When Jesus gave John His Revelation, five great empires had already fallen: the Egyptian Empire, the Babylonian Empire, the Assyrian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, and the Grecian Empire. The Roman Empire was still reigning during John's time.

The seventh kingdom, I believe, represents the United States. Historically speaking, America is young, having only risen to power in the 1900s. In comparison to the previous empires, the U.S. has existed for a very brief time and will remain historically "young" when Jesus returns.

The Eighth King: The Beast

And as for the beast that [once] was, but now is no more, he [himself] is an eighth ruler (king, head), but he is of the seven and belongs to them, and he goes to perdition. Revelation 17:11

The anti-christ will rise as the ruler of the eighth kingdom. He will be a demonic being who possesses the body of the last Pope, making him the final and most deceptive world leader. This

eighth kingdom will unite the remnants of the previous empires, Roman, Assyrian, Grecian, Persian, Egyptian, and Babylonian, and will be supported by the United States, symbolized as the false prophet.

Then I saw another beast rising up out of the land [itself]; he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke (roared) like a dragon. He exerts all the power and right of control of the former beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell upon it to exalt and deify the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed, and to worship him. Revelation 13:11-12

The Ten Leaders and the Coalition of Power

Also the ten horns that you observed are ten rulers (kings) who have as yet received no royal dominion, but together they are to receive power and authority as rulers for a single hour, along with the beast. Revelation 17:12

The anti-christ will form a coalition of ten leaders, a temporary union of power that will only last for a short time. The specifics of who these leaders are or which nations they represent will not be revealed until the Great Tribulation. It is important not to focus on identifying these individuals or nations prematurely.

Instead, the sign of the End Times to look for is the Gospel of the Kingdom being preached to the whole world with power and demonstration. The details of the Last Days, including the identity of the ten leaders and other specifics, remain sealed, hidden within the message of the *Seven Thunders*:

And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end. Matthew 24:14

And he shouted with a loud voice like the roaring of a lion; and when he had shouted, the seven thunders gave voice and uttered their message in distinct words. And when the seven thunders had spoken (sounded), I was going to write [it down], but I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up what the seven thunders have said! Do not write it down!" Revelation 10:3-4

Daniel also saw this distant vision of the anti-christ's power and deception but was instructed to seal it up until its appointed time:

And through his policy he shall cause trickery to prosper in his hand; he shall magnify himself in his heart and mind, and in their security he will corrupt and destroy many. He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes, but he shall be broken and that by no [human] hand. The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told you is true. But seal up the vision, for it has to do with and belongs to the [now] distant future. Daniel 8:25-26

The Final Fulfillment of God's Plan

The rise of the anti-christ and his coalition of power will not surprise those who are led by the Spirit, for Jesus has revealed these things to His followers. While the specifics remain sealed until the appointed time, the Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to all nations, and Christ will ultimately defeat the anti-christ and his system, bringing His perfect rule to the earth.

The Ten Leaders and Their Defeat

These have one common policy (opinion, purpose), and they deliver their power and authority to the beast. They will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will triumph over them; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings—and those with Him and on His side are chosen and called [elected] and loyal and faithful followers. Revelation 17:13-14

During the Great Tribulation, ten leaders will unite in an attempt to rule the world under the authority of the anti-christ. At least two of these rulers, the anti-christ and the false prophet, will be demonic beings, evidenced by the fact that they are thrown directly into the Lake of Fire without first being judged on Judgment Day as all men will be. It is probable that all ten leaders will be demonic entities allowed by God to rule for a brief period.

Yet the glorious truth is this: their efforts will utterly fail. Jesus, the Lamb of God, will triumph over them. His power and authority will expose their weakness, and those who are chosen, called, and faithful, His Bride, will stand with Him in victory.

And the beast was seized and overpowered, and with him the false prophet who in his presence had worked wonders and performed miracles by which he led astray those who had accepted or permitted to be placed upon them the stamp (mark) of the beast and those who paid homage and gave divine honors to his statue. Both of them were hurled alive into the fiery lake that burns and blazes with brimstone. Revelation 19:20

The anti-christ's reign will seem powerful for a time, but the reality is that his rule comes from Satan, who is ultimately defeated. The fallen angels and the rebellious beings who follow him will marvel at this resurgence of power, but it will come to nothing:

The beast that you saw [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is going to come up out of the Abyss (the bottomless pit) and proceed to go to perdition. And the inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been recorded in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they look at the beast, because he [once] was, but [now] is no more, and he is [yet] to come. Revelation 17:8

The Waters and the Multitudes

And [the angel further] said to me, The waters that you observed, where the harlot is seated, are races and multitudes and nations and dialects (languages). Revelation 17:15

Throughout Revelation, *waters* are used symbolically to represent people, nations, multitudes, and languages. Here, the waters demonstrate that the Great Harlot, which is earthly wealth and

materialism, has captivated people from every nation and tongue. The love of money transcends cultures, languages, and religions, uniting the world in a shared idolatry.

While nations may differ in customs, beliefs, and values, the pursuit of wealth and power is universal. This is why Jesus warns us repeatedly about the dangers of placing our trust in earthly treasures:

For the love of money is a root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have been led astray and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute [mental] pangs. 1 Timothy 6:10

The Final Victory of Christ

The unity of the ten leaders under the anti-christ's rule and the global pursuit of wealth will ultimately be judged and destroyed by Jesus. The Lamb will reign supreme, and His faithful Bride will stand with Him in glory. His victory will bring the peace to the world that all of creation longs for.

For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship]. Romans 8:19

The forces of evil may seem overwhelming, but they are temporary and powerless before the eternal authority of Jesus Christ, the *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*.

The Destruction of the Harlot by the Beast

And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will [be the very ones to] hate the harlot (the idolatrous woman); they will make her cheerless (bereaved, desolate), and they will strip her and eat up her flesh and utterly consume her with fire. Revelation 17:16

The ten leaders and the beast will despise the harlot, the global system of wealth and materialism, despite relying on it for their power. This hatred is rooted in their desire for total control. They need wealth to sustain their rule, yet they detest the idea of people having personal wealth or any independence apart from them.

Jesus illustrated this dynamic when He showed the harlot riding on the beast. It makes perfect sense when we look at history and the patterns of oppressive governments. Every dictatorship and communist regime seeks to strip its people of wealth and freedom. These systems claim to provide for the people, yet their policies ultimately destroy prosperity and concentrate power in the hands of a few. The beast's government during the Great Tribulation will operate in the same way.

God's Sovereign Will

For God has put it into their hearts to carry out His own purpose by acting in harmony in surrendering their royal power and authority to the beast, until the prophetic words (intentions and promises) of God shall be fulfilled. Revelation 17:17

Even in their rebellion, the ten leaders and the beast fulfill God's will. People often talk about free will, but the truth is that there is only *one* free will—God's. Even those who deny God's existence or oppose Him are unknowingly led by His sovereign plan.

Scripture confirms this truth repeatedly:

Man's steps are ordered by the Lord. How then can a man understand his way? Proverbs 20:24

O Lord [pleads Jeremiah in the name of the people], I know that [the determination of] the way of a man is not in himself; it is not in man [even in a strong man or in a man at his best] to direct his [own] steps. Jeremiah 10:23

Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them. Psalm 139:16

For in this city there actually met and plotted together against Your holy Child and Servant Jesus, Whom You consecrated by anointing, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and peoples of Israel, To carry out all that Your hand and Your will and purpose had predestined (predetermined) should occur. Acts 4:27-28

Even in their wickedness, the beast and the ten leaders will carry out God's perfect plan, bringing about the fulfillment of His prophetic Word.

The Great City of Worldly Wealth

And the woman that you saw is herself the great city which dominates and controls the rulers and the leaders of the earth. Revelation 17:18

What is the one thing that dominates and controls every leader on earth? It is money.

Earthly rulers, whether elected officials or dictators, depend on wealth to maintain their power. Even the strongest dictatorships require money to fund armies, secure loyalty, and sustain their governments. Without wealth, their rule quickly collapses. They hate the idea of capitalism and worldly wealth, but they need it. This is why the Harlot is shown as riding the beast, because money ultimately controls even the vilest leadership.

Unlike churches, faiths, or individuals, which vary across nations, the love of money is the one universal influence that unites and controls all leaders. This is why Paul warned that:

For the love of money is a root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have been led astray and have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many acute [mental] pangs. 1 Timothy 6:10

The harlot, representing the world's system of wealth and greed, has long seduced the nations and their leaders. Yet in the end, the very system they trusted will be destroyed by the beast, and its collapse will pave the way for the triumph of Christ's eternal Kingdom.

Chapter 22

Revelation 18

The Fall of Babylon

Then I saw another angel descending from heaven, possessing great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his radiance and splendor. And he shouted with a mighty voice, She is fallen! Mighty Babylon is fallen! She has become a resort and dwelling place for demons, a dungeon haunted by every loathsome spirit, an abode for every filthy and detestable bird. For all nations have drunk the wine of her passionate unchastity, and the rulers and leaders of the earth have joined with her in committing fornication (idolatry), and the businessmen of the earth have become rich with the wealth of her excessive luxury and wantonness. Revelation 18:1-3

When Babylon, which represents the world's economic and governmental systems, falls, the earth will be illuminated by the truth of God as Jesus physically returns and begins His rule. His light will reveal the corruption, greed, and deception that have enslaved humanity for centuries. Babylon has always been a symbol of the love of money, earthly power, and idolatry, a system that has led nations, leaders, and businessmen into spiritual unfaithfulness.

Our Father's truth will set the world free:

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in). Matthew 6:24

The Corruption of Earthly Systems

History reveals that every nation has pursued wealth, greed, and power, yet these pursuits have always brought destruction. Even religious institutions have not been exempted. Many worldly churches preach poverty to their followers while their leaders live in mansions, contradicting Jesus' teachings. Christ called His followers to reject earthly wealth in favor of true treasure in Heaven:

Jesus answered him, If you would be perfect [that is, have that spiritual maturity which accompanies self-sacrificing character], go and sell what you have and give to the poor,

and you will have riches in heaven; and come, be My disciple [side with My party and follow Me]. Matthew 19:21

The deceitfulness of riches blinds and suffocates the Word of God, leading to fruitlessness. The pursuit of wealth distracts people from their true purpose, living in the freedom, peace, and abundance of God's Kingdom:

Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless. Mark 4:19

The Inevitable Collapse of Babylon

The fall of Babylon marks the end of the world's corrupt systems. Its destruction will expose the emptiness of the love of money and reveal the futility of placing trust in earthly riches. True wealth is not found in possessions or power but in the eternal treasures of God's Kingdom.

The Call to Come Out of Babylon

I then heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out from her, my people, so that you may not share in her sins, neither participate in her plagues. For her iniquities (her crimes and transgressions) are piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her wickedness and [her] crimes [and calls them up for settlement]. Revelation 18:4-5

Jesus is returning for a glorious Church, perfected by His power and presence. To prepare us, He empowers us to come out of Babylon, the world's corrupt systems of greed, materialism, and idolatry. The End Time Church will not partake in these sins or rely on the world's economy. Instead, we will be glorified by the power of the Holy Spirit, fully equipped to serve and bless others in ways we have never experienced before. Our economy will be one of faith, which will empower us to be as Jesus. The Power of God will supply our every need in abundance, so that we will be found giving to others when Jesus returns.

The world will hate us for rejecting its systems, and the anti-christ will attempt to force his mark upon us. Yet the Holy Spirit will empower us to stand firm, boldly rejecting the mark and testifying to the Truth of Christ's Kingdom.

Who then is the faithful, thoughtful, and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household to give to the others the food and supplies at the proper time? Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is that servant whom, when his master comes, he will find so doing. I solemnly declare to you, he will set him over all his possessions. Matthew 24:45-47

Greater Works Through Christ's Power

The End Time Church will not be weak or fearful. Instead, we will walk in the power and authority of Christ, doing even greater works than Jesus did while He was on earth. This is not by our own strength but through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us. We will be used supernaturally to provide both physical and spiritual nourishment to those in need, glorifying God in all things.

I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father. John 14:12

Our Father's power working through us will enable us to exceed anything we can ask, think, or imagine. The glory of the End Time Church will be a testimony to the greatness of God and His eternal Kingdom:

Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]—Ephesians 3:20

The Promise of Victory

Though Babylon's systems may dominate the world, the Church will rise in the power of Christ, living apart from its corruption. The Bride of Christ will not rely on worldly provisions but will be fully sustained and glorified by the power of God.

The Judgment of Babylon

Repay to her what she herself has paid [to others] and double [her doom] in accordance with what she has done. Mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed [for others]. To the degree that she glorified herself and reveled in her wantonness [living deliciously and luxuriously], to that measure impose on her torment and anguish and tears and mourning. Since in her heart she boasts, I am not a widow; as a queen [on a throne] I sit, and I shall never see suffering or experience sorrow— Revelation 18:6-7

This passage reveals the deep arrogance and pride of Babylon, the world's economic, political, and social systems, during the Last Days. Despite the judgment and warnings from God, the institutions of the world will still boast of their power, wealth, and security.

How could this arrogance exist if the world is in complete chaos: if waters are unusable, the earth is struck by plagues, and meteors are falling from the sky? The only way the anti-christ and his followers could still proclaim their invincibility is by holding onto great worldly possessions and wealth, believing these will shield them from suffering. Their focus on material prosperity blinds them to the spiritual doom that awaits them.

Jesus directly warned of the danger of such prideful reliance on earthly wealth:

For you say, I am rich; I have prospered and grown wealthy, and I am in need of nothing; and you do not realize and understand that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Revelation 3:17

And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many good things laid up, [enough] for many years. Take your ease; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself merrily. But God said to him, You fool! This very night [a] they [the messengers of God] will demand your soul of you; and all the things that you have prepared, whose will they be? So it is with the one who continues to lay up and hoard possessions for himself and is not rich [in his relation] to God [this is how he fares]. Luke 12:19-21

The people who place their trust in the ways of Babylon will believe they are thriving, yet their false sense of security will only deepen their spiritual poverty. The very things they trust in: wealth, luxury, and self-sufficiency, will lead to their destruction.

The False Comfort of Worldly Wealth

Jesus also gave a sobering warning to those who trust in their riches, reminding us that material prosperity offers no lasting reward. Wealth may bring temporary comfort, but it cannot deliver eternal peace or salvation:

But woe to (alas for) you who are rich (abounding in material resources), for you already are receiving your consolation (the solace and sense of strengthening and cheer that come from prosperity) and have taken and enjoyed your comfort in full [having nothing left to be awarded you]. Luke 6:24

The institutions of Babylon will declare, “*I am not a widow; as a queen I sit, and I shall never see suffering.*” This boast reflects their belief that they are untouchable, their confidence rooted in wealth and power rather than in God. Yet this very pride will be their downfall, as God’s judgment will expose the emptiness of their claims and the fragility of their systems.

The Call to Spiritual Awakening

In the Last Days, Babylon’s arrogance will be a warning to the faithful. We are called not to rely on worldly systems, possessions, or wealth but to trust in Christ alone. Those who boast in their own strength and treasures will be humbled, while those who seek the true riches of God’s Kingdom will be exalted.

The Sudden Destruction of Babylon

So shall her plagues (afflictions, calamities) come thick upon her in a single day, pestilence and anguish and sorrow and famine; and she shall be utterly consumed (burned up with fire), for mighty is the Lord God Who judges her. Revelation 18:8

The destruction of the world’s system of governments and commerce will happen swiftly and decisively when Jesus returns. Just as judgment came suddenly in the days of Noah and Lot, so

too will the end of Babylon's reign be sudden and complete. Humanity will be caught unaware, consumed with its routines of eating, drinking, marrying, and building, believing life will continue as it always has. Then, in a single moment, judgment will come.

And [just] as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the time of the Son of Man. [People] ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, right up to the day when Noah went into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. So also [it was the same] as it was in the days of Lot. [People] ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; But on the [very] day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed [them] all. That is the way it will be on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. Luke 17:26-30

The World's Leaders and Merchants Mourn

And the rulers and leaders of the earth who joined her in her immorality (idolatry) and luxuriated with her will weep and beat their breasts and lament over her when they see the smoke of her conflagration. They will stand a long way off, in terror of her torment, and they will cry, Woe and alas, the great city, the mighty city, Babylon! In one single hour how your doom (judgment) has overtaken you! And earth's businessmen will weep and grieve over her because no one buys their freight (cargo) any more. Revelation 18:9-11

The leaders and businessmen of the earth will mourn, not because of their sin or rebellion against God, but because their source of wealth and power has been destroyed. Their fear will be driven by the collapse of commerce and worldly systems, not by repentance.

Their mourning reflects the emptiness of their priorities. They placed their trust in Babylon's wealth, and now they are left with nothing.

Hope for the Billions Who Remain

While the anti-christ's followers will face destruction, *two-thirds* of the earth will refuse his mark. Billions of people will be alive when Jesus returns, these will be the people who rejected the beast but were not the Bride of Christ. These people will be left wondering how the world will move forward. Notice that we are told that they stand a long way away. They were not the fallen angels or those who took the mark, those people were gathered to Armageddon and destroyed. These people are still here, separated from the destruction of Babylon, even though they trusted in Babylon.

This is where the Bride of Christ, those of us who rule and reign with Jesus, will be used mightily. We will teach, guide, and serve those who remain, leading them into the truth of God's Kingdom.

Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and to pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been slain with axes [beheaded] for their witnessing to Jesus and [for preaching and testifying] for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast or his statue and had not accepted

his mark or permitted it to be stamped on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived again and ruled with Christ (the Messiah) a thousand years. Revelation 20:4

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

The Bride of Christ will play a crucial role during the Millennial Reign, as we rule with Jesus, bringing truth, healing, and restoration to a world shattered by Babylon's collapse.

A Call to Faithfulness

The destruction of Babylon reminds us not to place our trust in earthly systems, wealth, or power. Jesus empowers His Church to remain steadfast, knowing that His Kingdom will prevail. The Bride of Christ will stand victorious, fully empowered to lead and bless the nations in the age to come.

The Fall of Babylon's Wealth

Their merchandise is of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls; of fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet [stuffs]; all kinds of scented wood, all sorts of articles of ivory, all varieties of objects of costly woods, bronze, iron, and marble; Of cinnamon, spices, incense, ointment and perfume, and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, fine flour and wheat; of cattle and sheep, horses and conveyances; and of slaves (the bodies) and souls of men! The ripe fruits and delicacies for which your soul longed have gone from you, and all your luxuries and dainties, your elegance and splendor are lost to you, never again to be recovered or experienced! The dealers who handled these articles, who grew wealthy through their business with her, will stand a long way off, in terror of her doom and torment, weeping and grieving aloud, and saying, Alas, alas for the great city that was robed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, bedecked and glittering with gold, with precious stones, and with pearls! Because in one [single] hour all the vast wealth has been destroyed (wiped out). And all ship captains and pilots, navigators and all who live by seafaring, the crews and all who ply their trade on the sea, stood a long way off, And exclaimed as they watched the smoke of her burning, What city could be compared to the great city! Revelation 18:12-18

The fall of Babylon signals the end of a corrupt world system where wealth, trade, and resources are hoarded and exploited for just personal gain. Notice that the items listed: gold, silver, fine linen, spices, and even human lives, are not inherently evil. These goods will not disappear; what will be destroyed is the greed, exploitation, and self-indulgence that have corrupted their use. The mourners in this passage weep, once again from a long way away from Babylon's destruction, not because the items themselves are gone, but because their *means of profiting* from these things has been wiped away in a single hour.

When Jesus returns and takes physical rule of the earth, the systems of commerce that thrive on inequality, greed, and suffering will cease. Instead, everything will be freely available to all under Christ's perfect reign. This will be a time when humanity can truly grow in the image of Christ, no longer weighed down by the corruption of Babylon's economy.

A World of Abundance in Christ's Kingdom

Jesus promised that the good things of this earth would still exist in His Kingdom, but they will be shared freely and abundantly. Even something as simple as wine will not be lost but enjoyed in a renewed and superior form, as Christ Himself declared:

I say to you, I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it with you new and of superior quality in My Father's kingdom. Matthew 26:29

Under Jesus' reign, there will be no need to hoard or exploit resources, for God will supply every need:

And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

A New Way of Living

The destruction of Babylon is not the end of creation's beauty but the end of humanity's corrupted systems. The riches of the earth, gold, silver, spices, and fruits, will be enjoyed in their purest form, without greed or selfish ambition. Christ's Kingdom will be marked by abundance, generosity, and joy, as God's people experience life as it was always meant to be.

The Collapse of Babylon's Wealth

And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and grieved, exclaiming, Woe and alas, for the great city, where all who had ships on the sea grew rich [through her extravagance] from her great wealth! In one single hour she has been destroyed and has become a desert! Revelation 18:19

The destruction of Babylon, the world's systems built on greed and the love of money, will signal the end of an era of corruption. The way of living where wealth is hoarded, exploited, and used as a tool of oppression will be completely done away with when Jesus returns. For those who do not yet know the Truth, this collapse will be frightening. But this is not the end; it is the beginning of freedom. Jesus came to set people free and give them abundant life:

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). John 10:10

Those who once worried about material needs, what to eat, drink, or wear, will learn to trust fully in God's provision. Jesus reassures us that our heavenly Father knows our needs and will supply them:

Therefore do not worry and be anxious, saying, What are we going to have to eat? or, What are we going to have to drink? or, What are we going to have to wear? For the Gentiles (heathen) wish for and crave and diligently seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows well that you need them all. Matthew 6:31-32

Rejoicing in Freedom

Rejoice (celebrate) over her, O heaven! O saints (people of God) and apostles and prophets, because God has executed vengeance for you upon her! Revelation 18:20

How could God's people rejoice if billions of souls were eternally destroyed? The truth is that God's judgment will not be about eternal destruction but about removing the systems and evils that have enslaved humanity for so long. We will rejoice because the very thing that caused so much suffering, the greed, deception, and exploitation of Babylon, will be gone forever.

This victory will ultimately bring joy to all creation, as it eagerly awaits freedom from corruption. The entire created order will celebrate the triumph of God's Kingdom:

For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship]. Romans 8:19

John's vision also reveals the universal praise that will rise to God when all things are set right. Every created being, on earth, in heaven, and even under the earth, will acknowledge and rejoice in the Lamb's victory:

And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth [in Hades, the place of departed spirits] and on the sea and all that is in it, crying out together, To Him Who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb be ascribed the blessing and the honor and the majesty (glory, splendor) and the power (might and dominion) forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities)! Revelation 5:13

The Ultimate Restoration

The fall of Babylon is not an act of senseless destruction but one of divine restoration. Jesus will remove the systems of greed and exploitation to make way for His Kingdom of abundance, truth, and justice. All creation will be freed, and all people will come to know and experience the overflowing life that Jesus alone can give.

The Final Destruction of Babylon

Then a single powerful angel took up a boulder like a great millstone and flung it into the sea, crying, With such violence shall Babylon the great city be hurled down to destruction and shall never again be found. And the sound of harpists and minstrels and flute players and trumpeters shall never again be heard in you, and no skilled artisan of any craft shall ever again be found in you, and the sound of the millstone shall never again be heard in you. And never again shall the light of a lamp shine in you, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall never be heard in you again; for your businessmen were the great and prominent men of the earth, and by your magic spells and poisonous charm all nations were led astray (seduced and deluded). And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all those who have been slain (slaughtered) on earth. Revelation 18:21-24

John, who had witnessed friends, family, and fellow disciples slaughtered by Babylon's corruption, is given a profound assurance: Babylon will be utterly destroyed and never allowed to return. The powerful image of a millstone hurled into the sea signifies the permanence of its fall. Every sound, every light, and every vestige of Babylon's former glory will vanish, never to rise again.

The reign of Babylon's influence, its greed, deception, and bloodshed, will come to an abrupt and final end. The world's systems, which seduced nations and caused so much suffering, will be no more.

A World Without Babylon

"And never again shall the light of a lamp shine in you, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall never be heard in you again; for your businessmen were the great and prominent men of the earth, and by your magic spells and poisonous charm all nations were led astray."

The light and life that Babylon once claimed as its own will be extinguished. The earthly wealth, entertainment, and achievements that were built on lies and exploitation will disappear forever. Babylon's businessmen, described as the "great men" of the earth, will no longer hold sway over humanity with their charm and manipulation.

Jesus' triumph ensures that the lies and seduction of Babylon will never again deceive the nations. This is a promise of freedom and restoration:

For God is not a God of confusion and disorder but of peace and order. 1 Corinthians 14:33

Justice for the Saints

And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all those who have been slain (slaughtered) on earth.

Babylon's destruction is also a vindication for all who have suffered for the Truth, those who were martyred for their faith and silenced by the world's systems. Jesus' justice will bring healing and restoration to His saints. The blood of the innocent will no longer cry out; it will be avenged, and the world will be made right.

This vision was not only a comfort to John but a comfort to us as well. It reassures us that every evil system, every power that stands against God, and every form of corruption will be permanently removed when Jesus takes His rightful place as King.

The Final Victory

The destruction of Babylon is a declaration of Christ's absolute and eternal victory. What once enslaved humanity will be removed forever, making way for God's perfect Kingdom of truth,

justice, and peace. Never again will the saints suffer at the hands of corruption. Never again will evil prevail.

This is our hope and assurance: the Lamb reigns, and His Kingdom will have no end.

Chapter 23

Revelation 19

Hallelujah! The Victory of God

After this I heard what sounded like a mighty shout of a great crowd in heaven, exclaiming, Hallelujah (praise the Lord)! Salvation and glory (splendor and majesty) and power (dominion and authority) [belong] to our God! Because His judgments (His condemnation and punishment, His sentences of doom) are true and sound and just and upright. He has judged (convicted, pronounced sentence, and doomed) the great and notorious harlot (idolatress) who corrupted and demoralized and poisoned the earth with her lewdness and adultery (idolatry). And He has avenged (visited on her the penalty for) the blood of His servants at her hand. Revelation 19:1-2

Jesus is the Word of God, and He is eternal and unchanging.

In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. John 1:1

Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is [always] the same, yesterday, today, [yes] and forever (to the ages). Hebrews 13:8

Because Jesus never changes, His nature as Love (1 John 4:8) remains constant. He does not eternally condemn those who have harmed us. Instead, His justice brings correction and discipline, but never eternal destruction for the person. What Jesus will destroy are the systems and deceptions that have corrupted the earth and enslaved humanity: false religion, oppressive governments, and the idolatry of wealth. These systems, represented by the great harlot, are what poison mankind's peace, joy, and safety.

The Nature of God's Justice

God's justice is restorative, not vindictive. He disciplines to correct, not to condemn forever. Even in judgment, His purpose is to bring freedom and reconciliation. As His followers, we are empowered to reflect His heart of mercy and grace, even towards those who have caused us harm:

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. Proverbs 25:21

Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you]. Luke 6:28

Freedom Through Christ

The great rejoicing in heaven is not over the destruction of people but over the destruction of the corrupt systems that led people astray. Babylon with its greed, deception, and idolatry will be no more. The blood of God's servants will be avenged, but not through hatred or eternal punishment. It will be through the victory of Jesus, who restores what was lost and sets all things right.

This is the nature of God's judgment: it is true, just, and filled with the love that never fails.

Rejoicing Over Babylon's Fall

And again they shouted, Hallelujah (praise the Lord)! The smoke of her [burning] shall continue to ascend forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities). Then the twenty-four elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] and the four living creatures fell prostrate and worshiped [paying divine honors to] God, Who sits on the throne, saying, Amen! Hallelujah (praise the Lord)! Then from the throne there came a voice, saying, Praise our God, all you servants of His, you who reverence Him, both small and great! Revelation 19:3-5

The repeated rejoicing over Babylon's destruction emphasizes God's final victory over the corrupt systems of the world. It is significant that the focus of this celebration is not the punishment of people but the removal of evil that enslaved humanity.

We, who are saved by grace, know our own unrighteousness apart from Christ:

As it is written, None is righteous, just and truthful and upright and conscientious, no, not one. Romans 3:10

How could we ever rejoice if billions were eternally condemned? The joy comes from God's perfect justice and love prevailing, freeing creation from corruption.

The Marriage of the Lamb

After that I heard what sounded like the shout of a vast throng, like the boom of many pounding waves, and like the roar of terrific and mighty peals of thunder, exclaiming, Hallelujah (praise the Lord)! For now the Lord our God the Omnipotent (the All-Ruler) reigns! Let us rejoice and shout for joy [exulting and triumphant]! Let us celebrate and ascribe to Him glory and honor, for the marriage of the Lamb [at last] has come, and His bride has prepared herself. Revelation 19:6-7

The return of Jesus marks the glorious moment when the Bride of Christ, His church, is revealed and united fully with Him. All of creation has longed for this day, a day of freedom and redemption:

For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship]. Romans 8:19

John also previously witnessed an innumerable multitude standing before the throne, clothed in white:

After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

Notably, this passage makes it clear that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb begins at Jesus' return. This truth contrasts with teachings of a pre-tribulation rapture, where some believe the wedding feast occurs beforehand. Here, Scripture firmly situates the celebration at Christ's second coming, aligning with His ultimate triumph over evil.

The Bride Adorned in Righteousness

She has been permitted to dress in fine (radiant) linen, dazzling and white—for the fine linen is (signifies, represents) the righteousness (the upright, just, and godly living, deeds, and conduct, and right standing with God) of the saints (God's holy people). Revelation 19:8

At His return, those chosen to be His Bride will be made perfect and transformed to reflect Him fully:

Beloved, we are [even here and] now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be [hereafter], but we know that when He comes and is manifested, we shall [as God's children] resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He [really] is. 1 John 3:2

We are not just His people but His body, united with Him in a way that fulfills God's eternal plan:

Because we are members (parts) of His body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is very great, but I speak concerning [the relation of] Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:30-32

A Glorious Transformation

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is not just a celebration of Christ's victory but of our transformation. His Bride, clothed in righteousness and glory, will be revealed to the world. It is the culmination of God's redemptive plan, a moment of unimaginable joy, as creation finally witnesses the fullness of Christ's love for His people.

The Invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Then [the angel] said to me, Write this down: Blessed (happy, to be envied) are those who are summoned (invited, called) to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me [further], These are the true words (the genuine and exact declarations) of God. Revelation 19:9

For any wedding feast to be joyful, there must be more than just the bride and groom in attendance. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is no different—it will be filled with guests. As we studied earlier, only a third of humanity will be destroyed by the actions of the anti-christ and false prophet, which means two-thirds of mankind will remain alive when Jesus returns. Not all of those alive at that time will have been empowered to believe and confess Jesus as Lord before His return and thus be part of His Bride. These people will be the guests at the feast.

And those servants went out on the crossroads and got together as many as they found, both bad and good, so [the room in which] the wedding feast [was held] was filled with guests. Matthew 22:10

The beautiful truth is this: whether we are the Bride or the guests, all who are called to attend the feast will be blessed. It is a celebration of redemption, grace, and the full culmination of God's love for His creation.

Worship Belongs to God Alone

Then I fell prostrate at his feet to worship (to pay divine honors) to him, but he [restrained me] and said, Refrain! [You must not do that!] I am [only] another servant with you and your brethren who have [accepted and hold] the testimony borne by Jesus. Worship God! For the substance (essence) of the truth revealed by Jesus is the spirit of all prophecy [the vital breath, the inspiration of all inspired preaching and interpretation of the divine will and purpose, including both mine and yours]. Revelation 19:10

John's reaction reminds us of a crucial truth: worship is reserved for God alone. Even angels, as glorious as they are, are servants of God. Any leader, figure, or being that allows or demands worship is not of God.

This is beautifully echoed in Peter's encounter with Cornelius:

As Peter arrived, Cornelius met him, and falling down at his feet he made obeisance and paid worshipful reverence to him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Get up; I myself am also a man. Acts 10:25-26

True worship exalts only God, and this moment highlights the central theme of all prophecy: the testimony of Jesus Christ. His truth is the breath and inspiration of all divine revelation. When we understand this, our worship is rightly directed toward the One who is worthy: our Savior and King.

The Rider on the White Horse

After that I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse [appeared]! The One Who was riding it is called Faithful (Trustworthy, Loyal, Incorruptible, Steady) and True, and He passes judgment and wages war in righteousness (holiness, justice, and uprightness). His eyes [blaze] like a flame of fire, and on His head are many kingly crowns (diadems); and He has a title (name) inscribed which He alone knows or can understand. He is dressed in a robe dyed by dipping in blood, and the title by which He is called is The Word of God. And the troops of heaven, clothed in fine linen, dazzling and clean, followed Him on white horses. Revelation 19:11-14

Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He never changes. If Jesus came into the world to save sinners, how could He then return to eternally destroy the same sinners? This would contradict both His nature and His mission.

Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is [always] the same, yesterday, today, [yes] and forever (to the ages). Hebrews 13:8

The saying is sure and true and worthy of full and universal acceptance, that Christ Jesus (the Messiah) came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost. 1 Timothy 1:15

The purpose of Jesus' return is not to war against sinners but to defeat evil, Satan, and the forces that enslave and destroy mankind. The Great Tribulation is part of Jesus' mission to cleanse the earth and humanity from sin and the spiritual forces of darkness.

For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere. Ephesians 6:12

The name inscribed on Jesus, known only to Him, reflects His ultimate authority as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There are things that only Jesus can do to secure our Father's creation. It is a name beyond human comprehension because only He can embody its fullness.

And on His garment (robe) and on His thigh He has a name (title) inscribed, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Revelation 19:16

The Bride's Transformation and the Return of Christ

At Jesus' return, those who have died in Him will be raised first. Then those who are alive and belong to Him will be transformed and caught up to meet Him in the clouds. Together, as one body, the Bride of Christ, we will return with Him to defeat evil at Armageddon.

For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him in death]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord! 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

The majesty of this event will be undeniable. The Son of Man will appear in the clouds with great power and glory, and every eye will see Him.

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great (kingly) power and glory (majesty and splendor). Mark 13:26

When Jesus returns, He will not only conquer evil but also usher in a Kingdom of peace, righteousness, and eternal joy. His victory will fulfill every promise, and we, the Bride, will reign with Him forever.

The Word of God and the Return of Christ

From His mouth goes forth a sharp sword with which He can smite (afflict, strike) the nations; and He will shepherd and control them with a staff (scepter, rod) of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath and indignation of God the All Ruler (the Almighty, the Omnipotent). Revelation 19:15

The sharp, two-edged sword that proceeds from Jesus' mouth is the Word of God. It is not a physical weapon but an unstoppable and living truth that penetrates deeply to set people free and bring forth righteousness.

For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

When Jesus returns, the fullness of God's truth will be spoken and understood by the entire earth. Evil will be subdued, and mankind will thrive under the peace and justice of God's Kingdom.

And it shall be that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox;

and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy Mount [Zion], says the Lord. Isaiah 65:24-25

On His garment and His thigh is written a title of ultimate authority:

And on His garment (robe) and on His thigh He has a name (title) inscribed, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Revelation 19:16

When Jesus returns, there will be no doubts left. The entire world will see, understand, and acknowledge that He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The Great Supper of God and Armageddon

Then I saw a single angel stationed in the sun's light, and with a mighty voice he shouted to all the birds that fly across the sky, Come, gather yourselves together for the great supper of God, that you may feast on the flesh of rulers, the flesh of generals and captains, the flesh of powerful and mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all humanity, both free and slave, both small and great! Then I saw the beast and the rulers and leaders of the earth with their troops mustered to go into battle and make war against Him Who is mounted on the horse and against His troops. Revelation 19:17-19

This scene reveals the gathering, of the fallen angels who took the mark of the beast and a third of mankind who paid homage to the beast, at Armageddon. Those who side with the anti-christ will be people of all social classes: rulers, the powerful, the rich, and the poor. These individuals will be gathered to face God's judgment, which will remove them from the earth.

Jesus explained this event when speaking of the separation during the End Times:

I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding together; one will be taken and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left. Then they asked Him, Where, Lord? He said to them, Wherever the dead body is, there will the vultures or eagles be gathered together. Luke 17:34-37

The "taking" here is not a rapture but a removal of those who follow the beast to Armageddon. The imagery of birds feasting reflects the end of those who aligned themselves with satanic power, rejecting God's truth and love.

Jesus' return will bring justice and restoration. Those who are His, the Bride, will rule with Him, while the systems and powers of the world that caused so much suffering will be utterly destroyed.

It's important to remember that those humans who side with the Antichrist will not be able to take his mark, for if they could, it would thwart the Father's determined will that all be saved. They will die and be cast into Hades, but on the Last Day they will be raised; then, by God's sovereign mercy, they will bow their knees and confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord. After that confession they will remain with us as guests for all eternity.

The Final Defeat of the Beast and the False Prophet

And the beast was seized and overpowered, and with him the false prophet who in his presence had worked wonders and performed miracles by which he led astray those who had accepted or permitted to be placed upon them the stamp (mark) of the beast and those who paid homage and gave divine honors to his statue. Both of them were hurled alive into the fiery lake that burns and blazes with brimstone. Revelation 19:20

The anti-christ and the false prophet are not human; they are demonic beings empowered by Satan. This is why they are thrown directly into the Lake of Fire, bypassing Hades entirely. Unlike mankind, who must face judgment, these entities are immediately judged and eternally condemned.

And just as it is appointed for [all] men once to die, and after that the [certain] judgment, Hebrews 9:27

We were already told that the anti-christ would come up out of the Abyss, affirming his demonic nature:

But when they have finished their testimony and their evidence is all in, the beast (monster) that comes up out of the Abyss (bottomless pit) will wage war on them, and conquer them and kill them. Revelation 11:7

Their eternal punishment is just, as they have led countless people astray. However, the fate of their followers is different.

The Sword of Christ's Word and the Fate of Those Deceived

And the rest were killed with the sword that issues from the mouth of Him Who is mounted on the horse, and all the birds fed ravenously and glutted themselves with their flesh. Revelation 19:21

The "sword" here is not a physical weapon but the Word of God, which brings ultimate truth, judgment, and righteousness. Those who followed the anti-christ are not cast into the Lake of Fire with him; instead, they are killed and sent to Hades to await the second resurrection. This is a significant and hopeful Truth because it shows that these individuals will ultimately confess Jesus as Lord and enter eternity as guests of the Bride.

Making known to us the mystery (secret) of His will (of His plan, of His purpose). [And it is this:] In accordance with His good pleasure (His merciful intention) which He had previously purposed and set forth in Him, [He planned] for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ, [both] things in heaven and things on the earth. Ephesians 1:9-10

This unity includes all of creation, heaven, earth, and even those who were once in Hades. We are shown a glorious scene of universal worship where every created being will acknowledge the greatness of God and the Lamb:

And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth [in Hades, the place of departed spirits] and on the sea and all that is in it, crying out together, To Him Who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb be ascribed the blessing and the honor and the majesty (glory, splendor) and the power (might and dominion) forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities)! Revelation 5:13

A Hopeful Truth

This passage offers incredible hope. Even those deceived during the Great Tribulation will not face eternal destruction. They will be raised, confess Jesus as Lord, and find their place in eternity, though not as the Bride of Christ, but as honored guests. This speaks to the overwhelming success of Jesus' redemptive work and the eternal mercy of God.

Chapter 24

Revelation 20

Then I saw an angel descending from heaven; he was holding the key of the Abyss (the bottomless pit) and a great chain was in his hand. And he gripped and overpowered the dragon, that old serpent [of primeval times], who is the devil and Satan, and [securely] bound him for a thousand years. Then he hurled him into the Abyss (the bottomless pit) and closed it and sealed it above him, so that he should no longer lead astray and deceive and seduce the nations until the thousand years were at an end. After that he must be liberated for a short time. Revelation 20:1-3

At Jesus' return, Satan is not immediately cast into the Lake of Fire but is instead securely bound and imprisoned in the Abyss for a thousand years. His influence over the nations is completely removed during this time, and mankind will experience peace under the perfect and righteous reign of Christ.

And He shall judge between many peoples and shall decide for strong nations afar off, and 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 any more. Micah 4:3

And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatted domestic animal together; and a little child shall lead them. Isaiah 11:6

The question arises: Why doesn't our Father cast Satan into the Lake of Fire immediately? While Scripture doesn't provide an explicit answer, one explanation is that our Father's plan unfolds in

His perfect timing. The Millennial Reign serves a purpose in the grand design of redemption, and Satan will still be used briefly before the final, eternal restoration.

And He Who is seated on the throne said, See! I make all things new. Also He said, Record this, for these sayings are faithful (accurate, incorruptible, and trustworthy) and true (genuine). Revelation 21:5

During the thousand years, while much of life will continue as it is, the reign of Christ will transform the world, demonstrating the perfect harmony of God's Kingdom on earth. The complete renewal of heaven and earth, however, will come after the Millennial Reign.

The Reign of Christ and His Bride

Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and to pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been slain with axes [beheaded] for their witnessing to Jesus and [for preaching and testifying] for the Word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast or his statue and had not accepted his mark or permitted it to be stamped on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived again and ruled with Christ (the Messiah) a thousand years. Revelation 20:4

Those of us who have been chosen and empowered to confess Jesus as Lord in this life will reign alongside Him during the Millennial Reign. However, this reign will not be one of earthly domination, but one of servanthood and Love, just as Christ Himself demonstrated.

We will teach the Truth and reveal the Love of God to those who have not yet fully understood it. Jesus showed us what it means to lead: true greatness is found in serving others. As Christ's Bride, we will serve, bless, and care for the nations, even those who once rejected or persecuted us.

But Jesus called them to [Him] and said to them, You know that those who are recognized as governing and are supposed to rule the Gentiles (the nations) lord it over them [ruling with absolute power, holding them in subjection], and their great men exercise authority and dominion over them. But this is not to be so among you; instead, whoever desires to be great among you must be your servant, And whoever wishes to be most important and first in rank among you must be slave of all. Mark 10:42-44

This time will be a glorious season of restoration and renewal, with Christ at the center and His Bride serving in perfect unity with Him. The Millennial Reign will reveal the fullness of God's Kingdom on earth, preparing creation for its final, eternal transformation.

The First Resurrection and the Blessing of the Saints

The remainder of the dead were not restored to life again until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Revelation 20:5

Judgment Day will occur after the Millennial Reign of Christ, not immediately upon Jesus' return. Whether the "thousand years" is literal or symbolic, it emphasizes a significant, extended period

of time. As Scripture reveals, “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” 2 Peter 3:8. This thousand-year reign demonstrates God’s patience, His divine timing, and the complete fulfillment of His redemptive plan.

The First Resurrection

Blessed (happy, to be envied) and holy (spiritually whole, of unimpaired innocence and proved virtue) is the person who takes part (shares) in the first resurrection! Over them the second death exerts no power or authority, but they shall be ministers of God and of Christ (the Messiah), and they shall rule along with Him a thousand years. Revelation 20:6

The first resurrection refers to the raising of believers at Jesus’ return. We will be blessed because we will be made to be just like Jesus: perfect, glorified, and eternally free from judgment. The glorious Truth is that Jesus said that those who believe in Him have already passed from death to life and will not come into condemnation, we enjoy a lot of what Jesus is right now.

I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, the person whose ears are open to My words [who listens to My message] and believes and trusts in and clings to and relies on Him Who sent Me has (possesses now) eternal life. And he does not come into judgment [does not incur sentence of judgment, will not come under condemnation], but he has already passed over out of death into life. John 5:24

As members of Christ’s Body, we will rule alongside Him during the Millennial Reign. We will serve, bless, and teach those who remain, as we have been called to govern with love and righteousness.

Do you not know that the saints (the believers) will [one day] judge and govern the world? And... Do you not know also that we [Christians] are to judge the [very] angels and pronounce opinion between right and wrong [for them]? 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

Satan’s Final Rebellion

And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his place of confinement, and he will go forth to deceive and seduce and lead astray the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth—Gog and Magog—to muster them for war; their number is like the sand of the sea. Revelation 20:7-8

At the end of the Millennial Reign, Satan will be briefly released from the Abyss. Jesus allows this final rebellion to cleanse the earth completely and demonstrate God’s justice and sovereignty. Many people, despite living under Christ’s perfect rule for such a long period of time, will still choose rebellion. However, not everyone will follow Satan. There will be billions who remain loyal to Jesus, a testament to His Kingdom’s enduring impact.

And he shall rule them with a sceptre (rod) of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces. Revelation 2:27

Satan's Final Attempt at Defeating Jesus

And they swarmed up over the broad plain of the earth and encircled the fortress (camp) of God's people (the saints) and the beloved city; but fire descended from heaven and consumed them. Revelation 20:9

Satan's final attempt to lead the nations into rebellion will fail. God's fire will descend and consume the rebellion entirely. This act serves as the final cleansing of sin and evil before God makes all things new. Why our Father does it this way, I honestly do not know. But the Potter has the right over His clay.

Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same mass (lump) one vessel for beauty and distinction and honorable use, and another for menial or ignoble and dishonorable use? Romans 9:21

Satan Thrown into the Lake of Fire

Then the devil who had led them astray [deceiving and seducing them] was hurled into the fiery lake of burning brimstone, where the beast and false prophet were; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (through the ages of the ages). Revelation 20:10

At last, Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Unlike popular misconceptions, Satan does not *rule* over Hell—he is not its king. Instead, the Lake of Fire is his place of torment and defeat, a final end for his rebellion.

This marks the ultimate victory of Christ: Satan, the beast, and the false prophet, along with all sin and corruption, will be removed from mankind forever.

He will tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath and indignation of God the All Ruler. Revelation 19:15

The Millennial Reign will demonstrate the full glory of Christ's rule, and this final act of cleansing ensures eternal peace as we prepare for the renewal of all creation.

The Judgment of the Dead

I [also] saw the dead, great and small; they stood before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged (sentenced) by what they had done [their whole way of feeling and acting, their aims and endeavors] in accordance with what was recorded in the books. And the sea delivered up the dead who were in it, death and Hades (the state of death or disembodied existence) surrendered the dead in them, and all were tried and their cases determined by what they had done [according to their motives, aims, and works]. Revelation 20:12-13

This moment reveals the resurrection of the dead and their judgment before the Great White Throne. Notably, those who were part of the first resurrection, the Bride of Christ, are absent here

because they are not subject to judgment. The living who did not join Satan's rebellion after his release are also not mentioned, affirming that this judgment applies only to the dead who were held in death and Hades.

Jesus taught us that works cannot save anyone, as salvation comes only through faith in Him, empowered by the Holy Spirit:

Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe... you will be saved. Romans 10:9

So why are the works of the dead judged here? The answer lies in the role of works in determining their place in eternity. Although salvation comes solely by grace, works reflect a person's heart, actions, and motives. This judgment establishes a hierarchy among the guests in eternity.

Truly I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. Matthew 10:15

Jesus also reveals that "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first" (Luke 13:30), underscoring that even those with the lowest standing will still be welcomed as guests. Though they may not enjoy the same reward as the Bride of Christ, they will be loved, cherished, and supported for all eternity.

The End of Death and Hades

Then death and Hades (the state of death or disembodied existence) were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14

The second death signifies the final and complete destruction of death and Hades, both will no longer serve any purpose. At this point, God's work of redemption will be fully accomplished, and there will be no more separation, decay, or death.

And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be anguish (sorrow and mourning) nor grief nor pain anymore, for the old conditions and the former order of things have passed away. Revelation 21:4

When all things are made new, the victory of Christ over sin, death, and the grave will be absolute and eternal.

The Book of Life and the Final Judgment

And if anyone's [name] was not found recorded in the Book of Life, he was hurled into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:15

We are told that if anyone's name is not written in the Book of Life, they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. But consider this: Did Jesus ever declare that there will be names missing from the Book of Life? He did not. It remains a conditional statement, but nowhere does Scripture say that

names will be excluded. We are repeatedly however shown that Jesus saved all men, that God wants all men, and that God always gets his way.

Jesus Came to Save All Mankind

And He [that same Jesus Himself] is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for [the sins of] the whole world. 1 John 2:2

The next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said, Look! There is the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

For the Son of Man came to save [from the penalty of eternal death] that which was lost. Matthew 18:11

The dead will be raised, the books will be opened, and they will be judged. Their works and motives will be measured, and all will be found guilty. But their sentence will be grace, just as ours has been.

God's Judgment Is Rooted in Mercy

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

How could we, as judges alongside Christ, ever condemn others to eternal Hell when we ourselves were only saved by grace? It is God's mercy that triumphs over judgment. When the dead see Jesus as He is, they will bow their knees and confess Him as Lord. Would Heaven rejoice if God had them confess Jesus, only to cast them into eternal torment?

Guests of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Those who are judged will not be part of the Bride of Christ, but they will remain as guests in eternity. They will be last, but they will still be with us, welcomed by grace.

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

But many [who are now] first will be last [then], and many [who are now] last will be first [then]. Mark 10:31

The One Who Is Lost

Jesus does tell us of *one* person who will not remain. In His parable of the Wedding Feast, only one guest is cast out, not many, not most, just one.

And he said, Friend, how did you come in here without putting on the [appropriate] wedding garment? And he was speechless. Matthew 22:12

This aligns with what Jesus reveals about Judas Iscariot.

While I was with them, I kept and preserved them in Your Name [in the knowledge and worship of You]. Those You have given Me I guarded and protected, and not one of them has perished or is lost except the son of perdition [Judas Iscariot—the one who is now doomed to destruction, destined to be lost], that the Scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12

God's Desire for All to Be Saved

Jesus declares in *John 17:2* that He has been given power over *all flesh*, over all mankind. Out of all people, He said only Judas is lost.

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

Yet, even here, I must be honest, I hope I am wrong. I hope that even Judas may one day be saved. God's heart is for all men to come to salvation, and He has allowed me to desire the same.

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

Chapter 25

Revelation 21

Then I Saw a New Heaven and a New Earth

Then I saw a new sky (heaven) and a new earth, for the former sky and the former earth had passed away (vanished), and there no longer existed any sea. Revelation 21:1

Right after Judgment Day, our Father will make everything new. The earth as we know it will change, and so will the skies and atmosphere. Everyone who has ever lived will know God, and He will be present with all of us. The physical world will change to match the power, glory, and splendor of the spiritual world.

God's Abode with Men

Then I heard a mighty voice from the throne and I perceived its distinct words, saying, 'See! The abode of God is with men, and He will live (encamp, tent) among them; and they shall be His people, and God shall personally be with them and be their God. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be

anguish (sorrow and mourning) nor grief nor pain any more, for the old conditions and the former order of things have passed away. Revelation 21:3-4

We are told that when our Father comes to physically dwell with us, His abode will be amongst men. Think about the word "men," we are not told that God will dwell only with the saints, or the Bride, or the saved. Jesus tells us that God will dwell with men. Remember, the Bride has been changed to be just like Jesus before this time, we are no longer men, but new creatures in Christ.

Beloved, we are [even here and] now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be [hereafter], but we know that when He comes and is manifested, we shall [as God's children] resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He [really] is.

1 John 3:2

Neither for these alone do I pray [it is not for their sake only that I make this request], but also for all those who will ever come to believe in (trust in, cling to, rely on) Me through their word and teaching, That they all may be one, [just] as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe and be convinced that You have sent Me. John 17:22-23

New Creations in Christ

Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

The Truth that I want you to understand is that as believers, we are now new creatures in Christ. According to our Father's Word, we are no longer men, just as Jesus is no longer a man. We are new creations. We are as Jesus is, even though we are in this world.

What Jesus is showing us here is that there are going to be other people in eternity. As we have studied several times, we will have guests, and those guests will still be men. Jesus shows us that our Father will come and dwell among men. As the Truth teaches us, when Jesus returns, His believers will no longer be men. The Bride of Christ, or the saved, will have been transformed to be something other than men a thousand years earlier when Jesus initially returned.

And now, Father, glorify Me along with Yourself and restore Me to such majesty and honor in Your presence as I had with You before the world existed. John 17:5

God Will Wipe Away All Tears

Understanding why the term men is so important is because Jesus tells us that our Father will wipe the tears away from men. This means there has to still be men, or mankind, around in eternity for Him to do this. Our tears will have been wiped away a thousand years earlier when we became as our Lord.

The Bible tells us in Jesus' parable of the Marriage Supper that there will be guests in eternity. It is easy to believe that for those men, who will be on the new earth as our guests, there will be no tears, fear, anguish, grief, pain, or sorrow. It's easy to believe that all things will be new for our guests who are on the new earth.

The Fate of the Lake of Fire

What about the Lake of Fire, or Hell? The Bible never teaches us that people are changed to be something other than men if they are thrown into Hell. If people are thrown into the Lake of Fire, they will still be men, and as verse 3 tells us, our Father will physically dwell with men. We are not told that He will dwell with only righteous men, or saved men, we are told that God will dwell with all men.

So let me ask you this: how can there be people, or men, in Hell, or the Lake of Fire, to be tormented forever if sorrow, pain, anguish, mourning, and grief have been done away with and all of the old things have passed away?

Such people will pay the penalty and suffer the punishment of everlasting ruin (destruction and perdition) and eternal exclusion and banishment from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. 2 Thessalonians 1:9

The Truth is that there are not going to be billions of people being eternally tormented in Hell. If someone is thrown into the Lake of Fire, they will simply cease to be, just as the scriptures tell us. Our Father is Omnipotent, and if someone is thrown into Hell, they will be cast out of His presence, so they have to cease to be, because our Father is everywhere.

Judas: The Sole Exception

Jesus tells us that only one was cast out of the Wedding Feast, and He goes on to tell us that the only one that He lost was Judas.

And he said, 'Friend, how did you come in here without putting on the [appropriate] wedding garment?' And he was speechless (muzzled, gagged). Matthew 22:12

While I was with them, I kept and preserved them in Your Name [in the knowledge and worship of You]. Those You have given Me I guarded and protected, and not one of them has perished or is lost except the son of perdition [Judas Iscariot—the one who is now doomed to destruction, destined to be lost], that the Scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12

As I wrote before, I hope that I am wrong, but if Judas is thrown into the Lake of Fire, he will just cease to be, just like death and Hades will cease to be. The Truth is that there are not going to be billions of people being eternally tormented in Hell.

All This Will Be Made New

And He Who is seated on the throne said, See! I make all things new. Also He said, Record this, for these sayings are faithful (accurate, incorruptible, and trustworthy) and true (genuine). Revelation 21:5

Death and Hades will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, along with Satan on Judgment Day. All suffering and anguish will end when our Father returns. Think if there were people who were eternally suffering in Hell as we are enjoying all of the blessings of eternity? Could you enjoy that? Would that be new and wonderful? Do you really believe that our Father would enjoy that? Do you really believe that we could have unspeakable joy and peace as we know people are being tormented for ever and ever?

Right now, the only people who take joy in others' suffering while they celebrate are the wicked, dictators, oppressors, and tyrants, the very individuals we go to war to remove. Sadly, this is how many envision eternity. But that idea is unthinkable! The truth is, where sin abounds, our Father's grace much more abounds. The truth is that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, and the New Earth and the New Jerusalem will be filled with guests.

But then Law came in, [only] to expand and increase the trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]. But where sin increased and abounded, grace (God's unmerited favor) has surpassed it and increased the more and superabounded, Romans 5:20

Think of what so many believe Judgment Day will be like. They believe that our Father will force everyone to bow to Him, tell Him that He is Great, acknowledge Jesus as Lord, and then He will send those who He had just raised from Hades to Hell to be tormented for ever after they confess this. This is the way that dictators, like Kim Jung Un of North Korea, act. That is what Hitler did. This is what all tyrants do. Our Father is Love and Love does not act like that. Grace will do far more than most in religion believe it will.

Blessed and happy and to be envied are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered up and completely buried. Blessed and happy and to be envied is the person of whose sin the Lord will take no account nor reckon it against him. Romans 4:7-8

The Generosity of Jesus

And He [further] said to me, It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I [Myself] will give water without price from the fountain (springs) of the water of Life. He who is victorious shall inherit all these things, and I will be God to him and he shall be My son. Revelation 21:6-7

Jesus is our Shepherd, our Head, and our Vine. He ever lives to serve us, to provide for us, and to fulfill His promise of giving us water freely. His generosity is what makes Him the greatest.

Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity) those who come to God through Him, since He is always living to make petition to God and intercede with Him and intervene for them. Hebrews 7:25

With a view to this we toil and strive, [yes and] suffer reproach, because we have [fixed our] hope on the living God, Who is the Savior (Preserver, Maintainer, Deliverer) of all men, especially of those who believe (trust in, rely on, and adhere to Him). 1 Timothy 4:10

He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. Matthew 23:11

The Free Gift of Grace

Jesus gives all things to us freely. Grace is no exception; it is a free gift, impossible to earn. Jesus always gave grace without a price. He healed those who would later scream for His crucifixion, fed those who did not believe Him, and forgave those who killed Him. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, He never changes. Jesus was victorious, and He has control over all flesh.

All things have been entrusted and delivered to Me by My Father; and no one fully knows and accurately understands the Son except the Father, and no one fully knows and accurately understands the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son deliberately wills to make Him known. Matthew 11:27

The Inheritance of All Things

For He [the Father] has put all things in subjection under His [Christ's] feet. But when it says, All things are put in subjection [under Him], it is evident that He [Himself] is excepted Who does the subjecting of all things to Him. However, when everything is subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also subject Himself to [the Father] Who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all [be everything to everyone, supreme, the indwelling and controlling factor of life]. 1 Corinthians 15:27-28

Jesus has inherited all things, and mankind is included in His inheritance.

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

The Unchanging Nature of Jesus

The truth is, Jesus never changes.

Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is [always] the same, yesterday, today, [yes] and forever (to the ages). Hebrews 13:8

In the Gospels, did Jesus ever damn a person? He did not. Where sin abounded, His grace abounded even more. This character trait of Jesus will not change on Judgment Day.

Well then, as one man's trespass [one man's false step and falling away led] to condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men. Romans 5:18

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

The Success of Jesus

And those servants went out on the crossroads and got together as many as they found, both bad and good, so [the room in which] the wedding feast [was held] was filled with guests. Matthew 22:10

Jesus was exceedingly successful, and all of mankind is, and will be, the benefactors of His success.

The Reality of the Second Death

But as for the cowards and the ignoble and the contemptible and the cravenly lacking in courage and the cowardly submissive, and as for the unbelieving and faithless, and as for the depraved and defiled with abominations, and as for murderers and the lewd and adulterous and the practicers of magic arts and the idolaters (those who give supreme devotion to anyone or anything other than God) and all liars (those who knowingly convey untruth by word or deed)—[all of these shall have] their part in the lake that blazes with fire and brimstone. This is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

If we just read this verse alone, it sounds like Hell will be filled with billions of people. But let's look at what the Bible tells us about Judgment Day.

Every Knee Shall Bow

For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God [acknowledge Him to His honor and to His praise]. Romans 14:11

We are taught that to be saved, a person must believe in their heart and confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord. Our Father's Word teaches us that on Judgment Day, everyone will do this.

Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

We are shown in Revelation 3 that those of the synagogue of Satan will come and learn from us. Those who were raised from the dead will clearly see the New Heaven and the New Jerusalem. They will clearly see Jesus and our Father, making it easy for all to believe and confess what they believe.

God's Mercy on All

For God has consigned all men to disobedience so that He may have mercy on all men alike. Romans 11:32

Well then, as one man's trespass [one man's false step and falling away led] to condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men. Romans 5:18

If any man's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15

So, how can all these verses be true, and yet people still have their part in the Lake of Fire?

The Winnowing Process

His winnowing fan (shovel, fork) is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear out and clean His threshing floor and gather and store His wheat in His barn, but the chaff He will burn up with fire that cannot be put out. Matthew 3:12

Chaff is the dry, scaly casing that covers the seed. The chaff is useless for food, so it is cleared away, leaving only the useful part of the plant. Chaff is part of the wheat; it is not something separate. All wheat has chaff.

We all, at one time or another, have been cowards. We have all looked at another person and lusted, which Jesus equates with adultery. We have all been angry with another person, which Jesus equates with murder. We have all lied at some point. These are the things mentioned in Revelation 21:8. So, what keeps us from all being thrown into the Lake of Fire? Grace is what saves us from Hell, and Grace is freely given by Jesus. Some of us realize this now, and some will realize it on Judgment Day, but we all will recognize the Truth. The part that these people will have in the Lake of Fire is their dead works, their chaff, not their whole person.

The Bride and the Guests

Eternity, or the Wedding Feast, will be filled with the Bride of Christ and with our guests. We all have a part in the Lake of Fire because we all have works, or chaff, that will be cleared from us and thrown into it. We won't be thrown into Hell; just our evil works will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

Not all of us will be the Bride of Christ. Some of us will be guests, but Jesus will give eternal life to all that He has been given, and He has been given all of us.

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

The Bride of the Lamb

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven final plagues (afflictions, calamities) came and spoke to me. He said, Come with me! I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. Revelation 21:9

I have heard it preached that the New Jerusalem is the Bride. I will be honest, I have a hard time believing that when our Father makes all things new, there will be a physical city where we dwell. That's how we live now, but when God comes to physically be with us, He will make all things new. This makes me believe that the city is a parable describing those who are the Bride of Christ.

A Spiritual Dwelling

I do not believe that we will be given a physical mansion to live in, as some interpret John 14:2 to teach. We are going to be just like Jesus when He returns, as 1 John 3:2 teaches. Think about that, and then ask yourself this: does Jesus have a mansion that He lives in? Does Jesus need a physical dwelling place? I think John 14 is a spiritual reference that means we dwell in a large place, or we dwell everywhere, just as Jesus does. I believe that we will dwell in the hearts, minds, and souls of mankind, just as Jesus does. I believe that we will be interacting with all people just as Jesus interacts with all, and I do not believe that there are going to be a bunch of physical mansions for us. I honestly believe Heaven is going to be beyond anything that we can imagine.

In My Father's house there are many dwelling places (homes). If it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going away to prepare a place for you. John 14:2

Beyond Worldly Expectations

I could be wrong, but I think that what our Father has for us is far greater than the worldly physical things that we are told to avoid. There may be a physical city our guests can come to, but that is the kind of thing that people do now. So, I tend to believe that the New Jerusalem is a spiritual thing described to us in physical terms. The New Jerusalem may be the Bride or simply the power and glory of our Father.

The Holy City: New Jerusalem

Then in the Spirit He conveyed me away to a vast and lofty mountain and exhibited to me the holy (hallowed, consecrated) city of Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. Clothed in God's glory [in all its splendor and radiance]. The luster of it resembled a rare and most precious jewel, like jasper, shining clear as crystal. Revelation 21:10-11

The city will have our Father's glory in it. The New Jerusalem will be a great place, but our Father's glory transcends a physical city. His glory is everywhere, all of the time, and when He returns, it will be with all men.

Jasper: A Symbol of Diversity

Jasper has several colors in it. This jewel symbolizes that Jesus' sacrifice has allowed people from every tribe, tongue, and nation to become His Bride. The city, or God's glory, will welcome all people, regardless of where they come from, to enter and experience its splendor.

Crystal Clarity: Nothing Hidden

The New Jerusalem is also described as crystal clear. There will be nothing hidden there. Our Father desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth, and this happens in the New Jerusalem.

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

All Nations Enlightened

We are shown that all nations and all peoples will be enlightened when our Father makes everything new. When He comes, everyone will know the Truth, and the Truth will set them free.

And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free. John 8:32

Beyond Earthly Expectations

I have always been taught that this New City is a physical place. As a child in church, we would sing, "Just build my mansion, just over that hill side," but I think it will be far different than anything we were ever taught. The glory of our Father will transcend our earthly imaginations and expectations, and the New Jerusalem will be more magnificent than anything we could envision.

The Walls and Gates of the New Jerusalem

It had a massive and high wall with twelve [large] gates, and at the gates [there were stationed] twelve angels, and [on the gates] the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were written: On the east side three gates, on the north side three gates, on the south side three gates, and on the west side three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation [stones], and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Revelation 21:12-14

We are shown that the New Jerusalem will have a massive and high wall. Walls are built to define an area, making it clear whether someone is inside or outside. In the context of the New Jerusalem, this means knowing whether one is within our Father's glory or outside of it. Walls provide safety,

and the massive nature of this wall symbolizes the unparalleled protection and security found in our Father's presence.

I do not ask that You will take them out of the world, but that You will keep and protect them from the evil one. John 17:15

The Symbolism of Three Gates

The city's walls feature three gates on each side. The number three is significant in the Bible, appearing 467 times, symbolizing completeness and representing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This arrangement emphasizes the completeness of our Father's protection and righteousness on all sides. When our Father makes all things new, completeness will define everyone's life.

Gates serve two purposes: allowing entry or keeping out. In the New Jerusalem, our Father will fully welcome people into His righteousness and provision while perfectly keeping out unrighteousness. There will no longer be moments of sin, as there were with Adam and Eve. His perfection will prevail eternally.

The Symbolism of Twelve Foundation Stones

The number twelve, appearing 187 times in the Bible and 22 times in Revelation, represents perfection, authority, and governance. It symbolizes our Father's power and His perfect government, as seen in the 12 Tribes of Israel, the 12 Apostles, and the 12 Stars in the Bride's Crown (Revelation 12). After Judgment Day, perfection will become the standard, as all will experience the reality of God dwelling among them.

Perfect Governance in Eternity

Jesus shows us that there will be a perfect government in place for eternity. All people will be treated fairly and lovingly under His rule. When our Father makes all things new, there will be no more tears, anguish, hatred, sorrow, pain, or suffering. Instead, His perfect righteousness and love will reign forever.

The Measurements of the New Jerusalem

And he who spoke to me had a golden measuring reed (rod) to measure the city and its gates and its wall. The city lies in a square, its length being the same as its width. And he measured the city with his reed—12,000 stadia (about 1,500 miles); its length and width and height are the same. He measured its wall also—144 cubits (about 72 yards) by a man's measure [of a cubit from his elbow to his third fingertip], which is [the measure] of the angel. The wall was built of jasper, while the city [itself was of] pure gold, clear and transparent like glass. Revelation 21:15-18

The angel's staff, made of gold, symbolizes perfection. Its shape, resembling a shepherd's hook, reveals that in eternity all men will be shepherded and protected by Jesus. Our Father's ways are

perfect, and His perfection will be experienced by all people when He makes all things new. The way He measures us is always through Grace, which is undeserved yet freely given to perfect us.

The Unchanging Nature of God

John observes that the city's width, length, and height are all equal, signifying that our Father never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The sheer size of 1,500 miles emphasizes the enormity of the New Jerusalem. Though the number 1,500 does not hold specific prophetic significance elsewhere in the Bible, its magnitude illustrates the vastness of our Father's power and Grace, extending to every nation, tongue, and tribe.

After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

The Protective Wall of Jasper

Our Father's wall, representing His protection, will free all men from the power, penalty, pleasure, and presence of sin. This protection ensures eternal safety for all guests on the new earth. The wall's construction from jasper, a multicolored stone, reflects the inclusiveness of Jesus' sacrifice, welcoming people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. The New Jerusalem will be filled with a diversity of people, those who were good in this lifetime and even those who were bad, because the Blood of Christ is that successful.

And those servants went out on the crossroads and got together as many as they found, both bad and good, so [the room in which] the wedding feast [was held] was filled with guests. Matthew 22:10

The Wedding Feast and the One Excluded

In Jesus' parable of the Wedding Feast, only one guest is excluded from eternity. As previously studied, that individual is Judas.

But when the king came in to view the guests, he looked intently at a man there who had on no wedding garment. And he said, Friend, how did you come in here without putting on the [appropriate] wedding garment? And he was speechless (muzzled, gagged). Then the king said to the attendants, Tie him hand and foot, and throw him into the darkness outside; there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Matthew 22:11-13

While I was with them, I kept and preserved them in Your Name [in the knowledge and worship of You]. Those You have given Me I guarded and protected, and not one of them has perished or is lost except the son of perdition [Judas Iscariot—the one who is now doomed to destruction, destined to be lost], that the Scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12

Why does Jesus only mention one person without the appropriate wedding garment in His parable? Many teach that Matthew 22:14 (“For many are called, but few are chosen”) means numerous people will be cast out of the new earth. However, Jesus explicitly identifies only one man in His parable. Considering the other verses studied, it seems evident that only one is excluded. And as I’ve said before, I hope even this one might even find grace.

Many Called, Few Chosen

For many are called (invited and summoned), but few are chosen. Matthew 22:14

To reconcile Matthew 22:14 with all of the other verses, it becomes clear that many are called to be the Bride of Christ, but only a few are chosen by the Father to fulfill this role. Nevertheless, the wedding celebration of eternity will include many guests, including those who were called but not chosen, both good and bad. The jasper wall, with its multicolored representation, reminds us that our Father’s protection extends to all, encompassing the diversity of those who are redeemed through Christ.

And [besides] we ourselves have seen (have deliberately and steadfastly contemplated) and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son [as the] Savior of the world. 1 John 4:14

If anyone hears My teachings and fails to observe them [does not keep them, but disregards them], it is not I who judges him. For I have not come to judge and to condemn and to pass sentence and to inflict penalty on the world, but to save the world. John 12:47

The Foundations of the New Jerusalem

The foundation [stones] of the wall of the city were ornamented with all of the precious stones. The first foundation [stone] was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony (or white agate), the fourth emerald. Revelation 21:19

As we have studied, jasper contains several colors, symbolizing Jesus’ sacrifice, which welcomes people from every tribe, tongue, and nation to be His Bride. The wall, representing God’s protection, extends to all people, not just a select few. The foundation of our Father’s protection and mercy is inclusive, meant for everyone.

The Plentiful Foundation

A significant truth about jasper is that it is abundant. The foundation of the eternal wall reflects this abundance, with countless people from every tribe, nation, and tongue, a number as vast as the sands of the sea, welcomed and protected by our Father. While the Bride may be few in number by comparison, the guests will be plentiful.

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

Sapphire: Excellence and Beauty

When Moses witnessed the works of God, he saw sapphire:

And they saw the God of Israel [that is, a convincing manifestation of His presence], and under His feet it was like pavement of bright sapphire stone, like the very heavens in clearness. Exodus 24:10

Sapphire, primarily blue but also containing green, grey, pink, and violet hues, symbolizes excellence and beauty. It is a very hard stone, reflecting the enduring and unchanging nature of God's promises. In eternity, all things will become new, and the former causes of death and pain will be eradicated.

Death and Hades will have been thrown into the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:13

And He [further] said to me, These statements are faithful (accurate, incorruptible, and trustworthy) and true (genuine). Revelation 21:5

Chalcedony: A Bright Reflection

Chalcedony, known for brightening under sunlight, reminds us that in eternity, life will be lived for others, not for ourselves. Everyone will be illuminated by the Light of Christ and we will all be better and brighter because of it.

He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. Matthew 23:11

Emerald: The Purest Faith

Emerald represents the purest faith, and in eternity, Jesus will perfectly fulfill His role as the Author and Finisher of faith.

Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity) those who come to God through Him, since He is always living to make petition to God and intercede with Him and intervene for them. Hebrews 7:25

Faith Rooted in Love

In eternity, everyone present will have come to the Father through Jesus' sacrifice. His act of love will lead every knee to bow and every tongue to confess the Truth, setting us all free. Jesus' love will guide us to live in faith that seeks the well-being of others, fulfilling the ultimate purpose of love.

The Stones and Pearls of the New Jerusalem

The fifth onyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprased, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each separate gate being built of one solid pearl. And the main street (the broadway) of the city was of gold as pure and translucent as glass. (Revelation 21:20-21)

Our Father has consistently used stones as symbols of His relationship with His people. Just as the 12 stones were placed in the breastplate of Aaron, representing the 12 Patriarchs of Israel, the foundation stones of the wall in the New Jerusalem represent God's love, forgiveness, and devotion for people from all nations and tribes.

So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he goes into the Holy Place, to bring them in continual remembrance before the Lord. Exodus 28:29

And onyx stones and other stones to be set for the ephod and the breastplate. Exodus 35:9

To be honest, our Father has never really had me dwell on the specific meanings of each stone. I am positive that there is glorious symbolism and power with them because that is how our Father works. I have prayed about it and tried to study, but for whatever reason, He has not revealed anything to me that I feel led to share. So, I looked on the internet to see what the generally accepted symbolism of each of these stones means:

Onyx: Power and Resolution

Sardis: Royalty and Riches

Chrysolite: Faith and Abundance

Beryl: Beauty and Preciousness

Topaz: Happiness

Chrysoprased: Only mentioned once in Bible Revelation 21:20, I couldn't find a symbolic meaning

Jacinth: Wisdom & Protection

Amethyst: Divine Protection

The Symbolism of Stones in the Priesthood

Our Father placed stones in Aaron's priestly garments to represent the 12 Patriarchs of Israel. This act symbolized remembrance and mercy during judgment. When Aaron entered the Holy of Holies, our Father forgave the children of Israel, foreshadowing the forgiveness Jesus secured for all of humanity on the Cross. Similarly, the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem represent forgiveness for all peoples, tongues, and tribes, underscoring God's unending love and grace.

The Sayings of the Twelve Sons of Israel

As we studied earlier, when the 12 sons of Jacob were born, their mothers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoke sayings about each child. Together, these sayings reflect the glory of God's work and His plan for redemption. Let us revisit these proclamations:

"Praise God, He has seen my affliction, and His good fortune has come. I am happy, blessed, and to be envied, for God has seen my struggle and He has caused me to forget all of it. I was despised, but now the Lord (Jesus) is my husband and companion. God has given me my hire and my marriage gift, by taking away my reproach. And now I am seated as a son at His right hand."

The Symbolism of the Pearl

The Pearls and Gates of the New Jerusalem

The twelve gates are made out of pearls. In the Bible, pearls are precious, and they are often used when discussing salvation.

Again the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is a dealer in search of fine and precious pearls, Who, on finding a single pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it. Matthew 13:45-46

Do not give that which is holy (the sacred thing) to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before hogs, lest they trample upon them with their feet and turn and tear you in pieces. Matthew 7:6

The Symbolism of Pearls

Think of how a pearl is made. A single grain of sand irritates the oyster, and from that irritation, something very precious is formed. The gates of the Holy City, crafted from pearls, symbolize the trials and hardships that lead to something glorious. The trials Christians have always faced, marked by persecution and affliction, will ultimately give rise to the beauty and glory of eternity.

So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities, and distresses; for when I am weak [in human strength], then am I [truly] strong (able, powerful in divine strength). 2 Corinthians 12:10

The Product of Trials and Hardships

Trials and suffering are not without purpose. Just as pearls are the product of irritation and transformation, so too are the saints perfected through their trials. The gates of the New Jerusalem remind us that salvation and entry into God's eternal kingdom come through enduring and overcoming hardship through the power of Christ.

Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and [tried integrity]). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] [joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us. Romans 5:3-5

The Temple of the New Jerusalem

I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Omnipotent [Himself] and the Lamb [Himself] are its temple. Revelation 21:22

We are told here that our Father is Omnipotent. Showing us that He is in control of all things and is everywhere, all the time. This is a foundational Truth because the Bible also tells us that those thrown into the Lake of Fire will be cast out of our Father's presence:

Such people will pay the penalty and suffer the punishment of everlasting ruin (destruction and perdition) and eternal exclusion and banishment from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. 2 Thessalonians 1:9

This means that anything cast into the Lake of Fire must cease to exist. Otherwise, our Father, and Jesus Who is One with Him, would not be Omnipotent.

The Lamb as the Temple

We are told that the Lamb is the Temple. This means that we will all dwell in Jesus, and His Spirit will consume and unify everyone.

Yet for us there is [only] one God, the Father, Who is the Source of all things and for Whom we [have life], and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through and by Whom are all things and through and by Whom we [ourselves exist]. 1 Corinthians 8:6

For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together). Colossians 1:16-17

For it was an act worthy [of God] and fitting [to the divine nature] that He, for Whose sake and by Whom all things have their existence, in bringing many sons into glory, should make

the Pioneer of their salvation perfect [should bring to maturity the human experience necessary to be perfectly equipped for His office as High Priest] through suffering. Hebrews 2:10

The Success of Jesus

The question then is: How successful was Jesus, and how many sons will He bring into glory?

Well then, as one man's trespass [one man's false step and falling away led] to condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men. Romans 5:18

The Word reveals just how glorious the New Jerusalem's Temple will be. A mere physical building could never glorify the magnitude of what Jesus has accomplished for all men. Ask yourself, would Jesus be a successful savior if only a small fraction of His creation was able to spend eternity with Him? That doesn't make any sense at all. For Jesus to be a success what He accomplished has to dwarf what Adam did and amen, His sacrifice has.

The Light of the New Jerusalem

And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, for the splendor and radiance (glory) of God illuminate it, and the Lamb is its lamp. Revelation 21:23

In prophecy, as we have discussed several times, the sun often represents the Truth and Jesus, while the moon represents His church. However, in this verse, the sun and moon seem to refer to the literal celestial bodies, as Jesus is both needed and celebrated in eternity, and we will all be His church.

The Nations in the Light of Jesus

The nations shall walk by its light and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory. Revelation 21:24

We are shown that the nations will walk by the Light of Jesus. Notice the plural, nations. This indicates that there will still be nations in eternity. The Bride, as the leaders of the earth, will serve as servants to their guests, just as Jesus demonstrated servanthood. Israel's structure of 12 Tribes serves as a foreshadowing of God's eternal design for nations within unity.

Blessed (happy, to be envied) and holy (spiritually whole, of unimpaired innocence and proved virtue) is the person who takes part (shares) in the first resurrection! Over them the second death exerts no power or authority, but they shall be ministers of God and of Christ (the Messiah), and they shall rule along with Him a thousand years. Revelation 20:6

Reigning as Servants

The second one also came and said, Lord, your mina has made five more minas. And he said also to him, And you will take charge over five cities. Luke 19:18-19

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny and disown and reject Him, He will also deny and disown and reject us. 2 Timothy 2:12

For if because of one man's trespass (lapse, offense) death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive [God's] overflowing grace (unmerited favor) and the free gift of righteousness [putting them into right standing with Himself] reign as kings in life through the one Man Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One). Romans 5:17

And You have made them a kingdom (royal race) and priests to our God, and they shall reign [as kings] over the earth! Revelation 5:10

As rulers, the saints will also serve. Jesus taught that true greatness is found in servitude:

He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. Matthew 23:11

The Nations as Guests

The nations of the world will be our guests. As Jesus explained in the parable of the Wedding Feast, the celebration will be filled with both good and bad guests, Matthew 22:10. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord on Judgment Day.

While some may lose the reward of being the Bride of Christ, they will still be saved, having passed through fire. This reflects the mercy and grace of God.

But if any person's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15

The Eternal Open Gates

And its gates shall never be closed by day, and there shall be no night there. Revelation 21:25

Jesus reveals that the gates of the New Jerusalem will never be used to keep anyone out. If the New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ, meaning us, then these references are spiritual in nature. This makes perfect sense, for we are filled with the love of Christ and will be teaching and serving those who become our guests. We will bless those who once cursed us, serve those who once hated us, and help them see that we were loved by Christ and that He also loves them. This is a reminder that in eternity, everyone is welcome to share in the glory of God.

Night, representing darkness, sin, death, sorrow, and pain, will no longer exist after Judgment Day. With these dangers eliminated, the gates, which lead to an intimate and direct relationship with

Christ will remain open to all, all of the time. What Jesus is showing us here is that absolute victory of the Cross for all men.

Then death and Hades (the state of death or disembodied existence) were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be anguish (sorrow and mourning) nor grief nor pain any more, for the old conditions and the former order of things have passed away. Revelation 21:4

The Glory of the Nations

They shall bring the glory (the splendor and majesty) and the honor of the nations into it. Revelation 21:26

What is our glory?

For you are [indeed] our glory and our joy! 1 Thessalonians 2:20

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

Our glory will be in serving our guests and seeing them come to the knowledge of the Truth that sets them free. Our glory lies in sharing the victory and provision of our Father with both the good and the bad, allowing all to experience His boundless love.

The Lamb's Book of Life

But nothing that defiles or profanes or is unwashed shall ever enter it, nor anyone who commits abominations (unclean, detestable, morally repugnant things) or practices falsehood, but only those whose names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life. Revelation 21:27

We are clearly shown that nothing unclean will enter the New Jerusalem, only those who have been washed clean by the Blood of Christ.

For this is My blood of the new covenant, which [ratifies the agreement and] is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Matthew 26:28

Jesus' Blood washes not just a few but all of us. The children of Israel called for Jesus' Blood to be on them and their children, and our Father answered their request.

And all the people answered, Let His blood be on us and on our children! Matthew 27:25

This is a glorious truth: Jesus' Blood cleanses us all.

Whom God put forward [before the eyes of all] as a mercy seat and propitiation by His blood [the cleansing and life-giving sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation, to be received] through faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over and ignored former sins without punishment. Romans 3:25

How much more surely shall the blood of Christ, Who by virtue of [His] eternal Spirit [His own preexistent divine personality] has offered Himself as an unblemished sacrifice to God, purify our consciences from dead works and lifeless observances to serve the [ever] living God? Hebrews 9:14

Grace Abounds

For God has consigned (penned up) all men to disobedience, only that He may have mercy on them all [alike]. Romans 11:32

None of us is good or righteous on our own. As it is written:

None is righteous, just and truthful and upright and conscientious, no, not one. Romans 3:10

Even Jesus, while on earth, acknowledged that only God is good:

Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me [essentially and perfectly morally] good? No one is [essentially and perfectly morally] good—except God only. Luke 18:19

Salvation is by Grace alone. None of us can claim goodness or righteousness, yet we are allowed to partake in the benefits of perfection because of Jesus' Blood. His love covers a multitude of sins and secures eternity for all whom He has been given charge over.

[Just as] You have granted Him power and authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. John 17:2

All Things Made New

Some of us will be Jesus' Bride, and some will be His guests, but all will dwell with the Father, fulfilling His desire for all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth. Because salvation is entirely by Grace and none of us can achieve goodness on our own, it follows that all men's names are written in the Book of Life. While our roles may differ, Jesus' success ensures that all will be there.

When our Father comes to dwell with men, the former things will pass away, and all things will become new. Jesus' love will cover a multitude of sins, and where sin once abounded, Grace will abound even more.

Chapter 26

Revelation 22

The River of Life

Then he showed me the river whose waters give life, sparkling like crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Revelation 22:1

The Holy Spirit is the river that gives life, flowing to everyone in eternity. His power and abilities will be enjoyed by all, not just the Bride of Christ, ensuring eternal refreshment and sustenance.

He who believes in Me [who cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me] as the Scripture has said, From his innermost being shall flow [continuously] springs and rivers of living water. But He was speaking here of the Spirit, Whom those who believed (trusted, had faith) in Him were afterward to receive. For the [Holy] Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (raised to honor). John 7:38-39

The Tree of Life and the Nations

Through the middle of the Broadway of the city; also, on either side of the river was the tree of life with its twelve varieties of fruit, yielding each month its fresh crop; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing and the restoration of the nations. Revelation 22:2

This verse highlights that there will still be people, or guests, in eternity. The Bride of Christ, or the saved, will have been raised and transformed to be just like Jesus a thousand years prior to this part of John's vision. Having already received glorified bodies, they will not need healing or restoration.

However, there will be others who still have flesh and live in eternity. These individuals will continue to marry, have children, and depend on the constant provision of Christ's power. The Tree of Life's continual production of fruit signifies this eternal sustenance. Its leaves provide healing and restoration, ensuring the well-being of those who remain in need of God's care and power.

The Eternal Service to God

There shall no longer exist there anything that is accursed (detestable, foul, offensive, impure, hateful, or horrible). But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall worship Him [pay divine honors to Him and do Him holy service]. Revelation 22:3

The way we will serve our Father in eternity is by eternally serving our guests. Everything that could mislead or harm them will have been cast into the Lake of Fire on Judgment Day. As servants

of God, we will guide, lead, and provide everything needed for the guests to live full and complete lives.

Think of a great wedding reception. The bride and groom provide great food, drink, and entertainment for their guests. They make the guest feel welcome and special. This is how we will act in eternity. A great wedding is one where the guests are served and loved.

A Continuing Creation

It is likely that children will be born continually in eternity. Consider this: when Jesus returns, there will be married couples on earth who neither took the mark of the beast nor accepted Jesus as their Lord. These individuals will live and thrive during the Millennial Reign of Christ. They will also not follow after Satan when he is released before Judgment Day. Scripture never depicts the living being judged—only the dead are judged, as shown in Revelation:

Then I saw a great white throne and the One Who was seated upon it, from Whose presence and from the sight of Whose face earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. I [also] saw the dead, great and small; they stood before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged (sentenced) by what they had done [their whole way of feeling and acting, their aims and endeavors] in accordance with what was recorded in the books. And the sea delivered up the dead who were in it, death and Hades (the state of death or disembodied existence) surrendered the dead in them, and all were tried and their cases determined by what they had done [according to their motives, aims, and works]. Revelation 21:11-13

These individuals will continue to marry and have children. Eternity will not be static; it will be dynamic and filled with growth, adventure, and new life. Our Father created mankind for fellowship, and a static eternity filled only with just the Bride would lack the richness of constant growth and discovery.

A Universe Without Limits

Why does the universe continue to expand? Why is the New Jerusalem 1,500 miles high? These questions hint at God's design for an eternity of continued growth and purpose. Mankind will continue, and we will reign alongside Jesus forever. If the universe weren't expanding, it would eventually fill up.

And You have made them a kingdom (royal race) and priests to our God, and they shall reign [as kings] over the earth! Revelation 5:10

And there shall be no more night; they have no need for lamplight or sunlight, for the Lord God will illuminate them and be their light, and they shall reign [as kings] forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities). Revelation 22:5

The Eternal Illumination of God

They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no more night; they have no need for lamplight or sunlight, for the Lord God will illuminate them and be their light, and they shall reign [as kings] forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities). Revelation 22:4-5

Our guests will clearly know that our Father is in us because they will experience His Glory and Power through us. This is why we are shown that God's Name will be on our foreheads. We will be as Jesus is and will ever live to serve our guests, which will include those raised from the dead and those who never died.

The Glory of our Father will illuminate everything in eternity. His Power, Love, Provision, Joy, and Peace will be continuously experienced by everyone. Even those who are last will enjoy His blessings.

The Certainty of Prophecy

And he [of the seven angels further] said to me, These statements are reliable (worthy of confidence) and genuine (true). And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His messenger (angel) to make known and exhibit to His servants what must soon come to pass. And behold, I am coming speedily. Blessed (happy and to be envied) is he who observes and lays to heart and keeps the truths of the prophecy (the predictions, consolations, and warnings) contained in this [little] book. Revelation 22:6-7

We cannot help but be blessed because Jesus, Who is the Word, continually lives in us. He draws us to His Revelation and leads us to share it and rejoice over it.

I have made Your Name known to them and revealed Your character and Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them. John 17:26

Blessed (happy, to be envied) is the man who reads aloud [in the assemblies] the word of this prophecy; and blessed (happy, to be envied) are those who hear [it read] and who keep themselves true to the things which are written in it [heeding them and laying them to heart], for the time [for them to be fulfilled] is near. Revelation 1:3

God's Timing and Purpose

A thousand years is like one day to our Father, so speed is a relative term. Our peace lies in knowing that none of this will occur until our Father determines it is the right time. This will not happen until the full number of people He has chosen are born and redeemed.

Nevertheless, do not let this one fact escape you, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. 2 Peter 3:8

Lest you be self-opinionated (wise in your own conceits), I do not want you to miss this hidden truth and mystery, brethren: a hardening (insensibility) has [temporarily] befallen a part of Israel [to last] until the full number of the ingathering of the Gentiles has come in. Romans 11:25

The Command to Worship God Alone

And I, John, am he who heard and witnessed these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell prostrate before the feet of the messenger (angel) who showed them to me, to worship him. But he said to me, Refrain! [You must not do that!] I am [only] a fellow servant along with yourself and with your brethren the prophets and with those who are mindful of and practice [the truths contained in] the messages of this book. Worship God! Revelation 22:8-9

We studied this Truth before, but it is worth revisiting: beware of anyone or anything, other than our Father, that requires you to bow before them. If a worldly or religious leader expects you to bow, they are acting contrary to the will of God.

As Peter arrived, Cornelius met him, and falling down at his feet he made obeisance and paid worshipful reverence to him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Get up; I myself am also a man. Acts 10:25-26

The Unsealed Prophecy

And he [further] told me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book and make no secret of them, for the time when things are brought to a crisis and the period of their fulfillment is near. Revelation 22:10

There is a blessing in sharing the Revelation of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to share it effectively and lovingly. Our Father is Love, and His Perfect Love eliminates fear.

There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection]. 1 John 4:18

The Holy Spirit, as our Comforter, equips us to proclaim the message of Revelation, reminding us of the teachings of Jesus and guiding us in truth.

But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you. John 14:26

God's Sovereignty Over Righteousness

He who is unrighteous (unjust, wicked), let him be unrighteous still; and he who is filthy (vile, impure), let him be filthy still; and he who is righteous (just, upright, in right standing with God), let him do right still; and he who is holy, let him be holy still. Revelation 22:11

This passage reveals that our Father is in total control of everyone's lives. If we are called and chosen to be the Bride of Christ, our Father will cause us to be righteous and holy. Those not chosen cannot achieve holiness on earth. God holds all power, and a person is born again only by His will. This is why Jesus had John write these things:

Who owe their birth neither to bloods nor to the will of the flesh [that of physical impulse] nor to the will of man [that of a natural father], but to God. [They are born of God!] John 1:13

For many are called (invited and summoned), but few are chosen. Matthew 22:14

For both He Who sanctifies [making men holy] and those who are sanctified all have one [Father]. For this reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Hebrews 2:11

We Are Holy Because God Works in Us

And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall heed My ordinances and do them. Ezekiel 36:27

It is a reason for pride and exultation to which our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world [generally] and especially toward you, with devout and pure motives and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God (the unmerited favor and merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, and keeps, strengthens, and increases them in Christian virtues). 2 Corinthians 1:12

We are God's workmanship, created to do good works that He predestined for us:

For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live]. Ephesians 2:10

Preaching the Truth of God's Sovereignty

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

Preaching the Truth that sets people free involves declaring what our Father does through us, not what we must do. Telling people what they have to do only leads to frustration and a superficial form of godliness that denies God's true power. The Truth is that God is in control, and His grace empowers and transforms lives. Our Father is limitless, human nature and flesh never hinder His capabilities of causing us to have life and have it in abundance.

Grace and Judgment

Behold, I am coming soon, and I shall bring My wages and rewards with Me, to repay and render to each one just what his own actions and his own work merit. Revelation 22:12

For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8-9

Grace is a free gift that surpasses any work we could do. Even our righteous actions do not earn salvation, but Grace pays us anyway. Through Grace, Jesus has set us free, and this freedom allows us to judge with Him.

Do you not know that the saints (the believers) will [one day] judge and govern the world? 1 Corinthians 6:2

Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and to pass sentence was entrusted. Revelation 20:4

As those set free solely by Grace, we must ask: How could we judge anyone guilty when we ourselves are saved not by works but by the superabounding Grace of Jesus Christ?

Our Father is Love, and Love only thinks the best of everyone.

Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. 1 Corinthians 13:7

The Alpha and the Omega

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last (the Before all and the End of all). Revelation 22:13

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, and His work on the Cross was supremely successful.

Well then, as one man's trespass [one man's false step and falling away led] to condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men. Romans 5:18

Jesus will reward people based on His Grace towards their works. On Judgment Day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess the Truth. It is this Truth that sets all of us free and this is what people will be judged on.

Cleansing Garments for the Tree of Life

Blessed (happy and to be envied) are those who cleanse their garments, that they may have the authority and right to [approach] the tree of life and to enter through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:14

How does a person cleanse their garments?

Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation. Romans 10:9-10

On Judgment Day, all will be present: the transformed Bride of Christ, changed a thousand years earlier to be just like Jesus; the living who did not follow Satan after his release; and the dead who will be raised from Hades.

For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God [acknowledge Him to His honor and to His praise]. Romans 14:11

At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:10-11

A person washes their garments by confessing Jesus as Lord. On Judgment Day, everyone will confess this Truth, making their garments clean. Our Father's ultimate desire will be fulfilled, everyone will be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth.

Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

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

The Final Removal of Evil

[But] without are the dogs and those who practice sorceries (magic arts) and impurity [the lewd, adulterers] and the murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and deals in falsehood (untruth, error, deception, cheating). Revelation 22:15

All evil will be eradicated on Judgment Day, thrown into the Lake of Fire. The old order of things will pass away, and everything will be made new.

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be anguish (sorrow and mourning) nor grief nor pain any more, for the old conditions and the former order of things have passed away. And He Who is seated on the throne said, See! I make all things new. Also He said, Record this, for these sayings are faithful (accurate, incorruptible, and trustworthy) and true (genuine). And He [further] said to me, It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I [Myself] will give water without price from the fountain (springs) of the water of Life. Revelation 21:4-6

Death and Hades will be destroyed, and Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire. The chaff, which is the sin and evil of humanity, will be removed, leaving the people themselves cleansed. While works will be tested and burned if unworthy, the person will be saved through fire.

But if any person's work is burned up [under the test], he will suffer the loss [of it all, losing his reward], though he himself will be saved, but only as [one who has passed] through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15

The Assurance of Jesus

I, Jesus, have sent My messenger (angel) to you to witness and to give you assurance of these things for the churches (assemblies). I am the Root (the Source) and the Offspring of David, the radiant and brilliant Morning Star. Revelation 22:16

Jesus' nature remains consistent. When He walked the earth, He did not torture or demand worship; instead, He blessed those who cursed Him and forgave those who harmed Him. His approach in the Last Days will be no different. He will cleanse the earth and its people, setting them free rather than eternally destroying them. People will see Jesus for Who He is and they will freely accept and acknowledge Him as Lord of all. His love is restorative, even when it involves discipline.

For the Lord corrects and disciplines everyone whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes. (Hebrews 12:6)

The Invitation to Come

The [Holy] Spirit and the bride (the church, the true Christians) say, Come! And let him who is listening say, Come! And let everyone come who is thirsty [who is painfully conscious of his need of those things by which the soul is refreshed, supported, and strengthened]; and whoever [earnestly] desires to do it, let him come, take, appropriate, and drink the water of Life without cost. Revelation 22:17

Notice who calls the people to come: Jesus and the Bride. The Bride does not call herself to her own Wedding Feast; she calls her guests. On Judgment Day, when people are raised from Hades

and behold our Father, Jesus, and the Bride they will undoubtedly have their full attention fixed on what is before them. Everyone will be fully enlightened, bow their knees, and confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord, setting them free through the Truth.

Thirsty Souls on Judgment Day

Do you think those raised from Hades will be thirsty?

And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have pity and mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame. Luke 16:24

Those raised from Hades will need comfort and refreshment. They will join the Bride after realizing they have been judged and set free by Grace. The people who did not follow Satan will already have been comforted and served by Jesus before Judgment Day. Thus, the only ones needing comfort and refreshing will be those raised from Hades.

Take note! I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and learn and acknowledge that I have loved you. Revelation 3:9

The Unchanging Nature of Jesus

Jesus never changes. He is always the same in thought, action, and love. Heaven and earth will pass away, but His Word will remain forever.

Bless those who persecute you [who are cruel in their attitude toward you]; bless and do not curse them. Romans 12:14

But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Romans 12:20

But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44

Judging with Grace

Do you not know that the saints (the believers) will [one day] judge and govern the world? And if the world [itself] is to be judged and ruled by you, are you unworthy and incompetent to try [such petty matters] of the smallest courts of justice? 1 Corinthians 6:2

If Jesus never changes, and His Word is eternal, how could we judge people to eternal destruction in Hell? As saints who will judge alongside Jesus, our judgments will reflect His Grace, Truth, and Love. Jesus' nature is restorative, not condemning, and as His Bride, we will embody the same.

The Warning Against Altering the Prophecy

I [personally solemnly] warn everyone who listens to the statements of the prophecy [the predictions and the consolations and admonitions pertaining to them] in this book: If anyone shall add anything to them, God will add and lay upon him the plagues (the afflictions and the calamities) that are recorded and described in this book. And if anyone cancels or takes away from the statements of the book of this prophecy [these predictions relating to Christ's kingdom and its speedy triumph, together with the consolations and admonitions or warnings pertaining to them], God will cancel and take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the city of holiness (purity and hallowedness), which are described and promised in this book. Revelation 22:18-19

These scriptures have often been cited as proof that a person can lose their salvation. However, the Truth is that no one who has been truly grafted into the Vine would ever take away or add to this prophecy. If such a thing were possible, it would imply that our Father made a mistake in grafting them into the Vine in the first place. God knows the beginning and the end and cannot be deceived.

Believing that someone could be grafted into the Vine with an unrighteous heart would mean God was fooled, and He is never fooled. These verses simply serve as a solemn warning not to tamper with the Truth of Jesus' words, which are meant to set us free. Even when people killed, tortured, and lied about Jesus, the Word of God, He forgave them. Similarly, those who unintentionally misinterpret Revelation will also be forgiven. Our Father never changes.

The Blessing of Revelation

Many shy away from studying Revelation, but it is a book of profound Truth and blessings. When our Father empowers us to share and study this prophecy with others, we are deeply blessed.

Blessed (happy, to be envied) is the man who reads aloud [in the assemblies] the word of this prophecy; and blessed (happy, to be envied) are those who hear [it read] and who keep themselves true to the things which are written in it [heeding them and laying them to heart], for the time [for them to be fulfilled] is near. Revelation 1:3

The sower sows the Word. Mark 4:14

Revelation is the Word of God, and our Father empowers us to sow His Word. It is this Word that sets us all free.

The Final Promise and Benediction

He Who gives this warning and affirms and testifies to these things says, Yes (it is true). [Surely] I am coming quickly (swiftly, speedily). Amen (so let it be)! Yes, come, Lord Jesus! The grace (blessing and favor) of the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) be with all the saints (God's holy people, those set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively His). Amen (so let it be)! Revelation 22:20-21

The final words of Revelation affirm the swift and certain return of Jesus. His promise brings hope and anticipation to the Bride and all the saints, as we eagerly await the fulfillment of His Word.

This closing benediction reminds us of the unending grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which sustains and blesses His holy people. His favor ensures that we remain exclusively His, empowered to walk in His Truth and Love as we await His glorious return.

Chapter 27

Conclusion

After going through Revelation verse by verse, I hope that you see it is not a complicated book. All it truly teaches us is that our Father loves us so much that He will cleanse us all from evil.

Moreover, Jesus never changes. The love and mercy He demonstrated while walking the earth will remain consistent, even during the Great Tribulation. Jesus is Lord, and He will fulfill our Father's will of bringing all to salvation and leading everyone to the knowledge of the Truth.

Love, Brad

