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Introduction to Revelation

This evening we are **going to be getting into the book of Revelation. I want to give you some background in regards to the book of Revelation, as well as an overview of the book and the material that is coming.**

The Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation. He was the last surviving of the original 12 apostles. He lived about 25-30 years beyond the other original apostles. The Apostle John, the last surviving of the Twelve, wrote the book of Revelation while he was in exile on the Isle of Patmos. This was during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian. From secular historical sources, we are able to date the couple of years that John was in exile. He was banished to Patmos, a tiny, little rocky island off the coast of ancient Asia Minor. John was exiled and banished from the mainland to a tiny island in the Mediterranean off the coast of modern-day Turkey.

We date the book of Revelation about 96 A.D. Conceivably, the date could vary a year, one way or the other. John was on Patmos for about two and one-half years or something like that, so we pick the middle date.

The first question we might look at has to do with the matter of John's authorship. Depending on which commentary you use and which sources you look at, you will find that many of the commentators, particularly the modern commentaries, will question that John wrote the book of Revelation. Let's look and understand why I say that he wrote the book of Revelation. There are several reasons for not questioning John's authorship.

To begin with, the fact that John was the author of the book of Revelation was never called into question until about 200 A.D. There's no record that there was a dispute. The book of Revelation itself clearly states that John wrote it. It starts out clearly stating that John wrote it. No one questioned until 200 A.D. that the John who wrote the book of Revelation was the John who was one of the Twelve. The questioning of John's authorship was never an issue or question in the area of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) at the time of the first century and for quite a number of centuries afterward.

This was primarily an area of Greek settlement. There were other areas, but this was a Greek-

speaking area. There was a very large Greek population that had colonized in that area.

If you remember, the book of Revelation was addressed to the seven Churches in cities in Asia Minor. Churches were located in cities that were on an ancient Roman mail route. The cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea were the ones that were specifically enumerated in Revelation. The Churches in those seven cities were the recipients of this book.

John had lived in Ephesus. It appears from the historical record that the city of Ephesus was where he lived during the latter years of his life.

The Apostle Paul raised up the Church in the area of Ephesus on his first evangelistic journey back in the late 40s A.D. It was the same area to which Timothy was later assigned responsibility. We find Timothy residing in Ephesus in the latter epistles of the Apostle Paul. Ephesus was an area that Paul visited on several occasions and had spent quite a bit of time there. It is the area where we find the Apostle John living in the 80s and 90s A.D. He was exiled from there by the emperor Domitian. About 98 A.D., he was allowed to return from exile on Patmos. He died within a relatively short period of time in or near Ephesus.

There's no record that any of the Churches in ancient Asia Minor or any of the Christian writers in that area ever disputed John's authorship. In those cities, it was taken for granted that John wrote the book of Revelation. The question of John's authorship was primarily raised after 200 A.D.

The original focus of that rejection was in the area of Alexandria, Egypt. The only reason they questioned John's authorship was to undermine the authority of the book or to remove it from the canon of Scripture. Of course, there were those in the area of Alexandria (and in Rome a little later) that certainly had incentive to do this.

There are various reasons why the book of Revelation was viewed as an undesirable book by the professing Christian church. What you find developing and what Revelation and other parts of the New Testament certainly make plain is that there is a clear dichotomy between two churches. One Church really was the Church Jesus Christ built—the Church of which He Himself was the living head, the Church that remained faithful to Jesus Christ and what He taught. A second church was a professing Christian church—a church that professed or acknowledged, on the one hand, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah (they acknowledged

that; they said that), but they didn't teach what He taught.

The professing Christian church substituted a message of their own devising. They substituted various heresies that were rampant in the Jewish world in the early first and second century A.D., along with the ideas of the Samaritans and some of the concepts that were extant in the pagan Greek and Roman world. All these heresies were brought into this other church.

There were two churches: one was a church that was certainly increasingly visible and powerful; the other was God's Church that was increasingly disappearing from public view.

2 Thessalonians 2:7, Paul wrote, "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work;" The mystery religion that deals with lawlessness and is based on lawlessness was already at work.

Jude 3, about 15 years after Paul wrote those words in 2 Thessalonians, Jude wrote and told the Christians, "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

This shows there was an increasing danger of the faith once delivered being lost and obscured because something else was increasingly dominant and visible.

In the last Bible study where we concluded the Old Testament period, we focused on the role of the Samaritans. We went forward to the New Testament and saw that there was a man by the name of Simon the Sorcerer or Simon the Magician. In secular history he is called Simon Magus. "Magus" is simply the Greek word for "magician" or "sorcerer." It's where we get our word "magician."

In Acts 8:9-13, we are simply told that this Simon was the religious leader of the Samaritan community. He was one to whom all of the Samaritans gave heed, from the greatest to the least. He was considered by them to be the great power of God. He was an individual who practiced sorcery and witchcraft and accomplished various false miracles. We are told that he bewitched the people of Samaria with sorceries. He was an individual of great renown. He was an individual who was impressed by the preaching of Philip, and he accepted (at least outwardly or seemingly) the message that Philip preached. When many of the Samaritans were baptized, Simon was baptized.

Verses 18-21, he sought to buy for himself a position of leadership. He sought to buy an

apostleship from the Apostle Peter. Peter told him, 'You have neither part nor lot with us.' "Part nor lot" was a phrase that specifically had reference to an apostleship, a membership in the group of the Twelve. The only other place that phrase is used in the New Testament is in Acts 1:24-26 where it refers to Matthias being chosen by *lot* to fill the *part* of Judas and be part of the Twelve.

Acts 8:21, so when Peter said, "You have neither part nor portion [KJV, "lot"] in this matter," that was the reference.

Verse 23, he told Simon, "For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity [lawlessness]."

We looked at the Samaritans and the Samaritan religion at the last Bible study. This plays an important role because when you go through the book of Acts, you find that the core, the center, of the congregations that were raised up in the New Testament were in the Jewish community in various cities. Whether in Ephesus, Colosse, Rome or wherever—it might be throughout the Gentile world—the starting point still was in the synagogue.

As the Church expanded out of Judea and the immediate areas, still, the starting point was in the synagogue and the core of believers were Jews and Gentiles who attended the synagogue and listened to the law. There were many Gentiles who were sort of "hangers-on." They had not formally converted to Judaism and been circumcised, but they would regularly attend the Sabbath services and hear the law read. The original Christian community in any of these areas centered among the Jews who were converted and Gentiles, conversant with Judaism, who were converted. Then from there, other Gentiles were added in. You had a central core of people that were familiar with the law and the Scriptures.

That was possible because there was a Jewish Diaspora—in other words, a dispersion, a scattering of the Jewish community throughout the known world. It had happened because of the various captivities. God is able to take something that looks like a catastrophe and make something good and positive out of it. The captivities and the scattering of the Jewish community must have looked catastrophic to many and, yet, God took it and made something positive out of it. This scattering of the Jewish community throughout the Roman world meant that there was a nucleus in virtually any city of size. There were people who were conversant with the law and had access to the Scriptures.

You have to realize that access to the Scriptures was a key point. In many of these cities and locales, there was only one copy in the whole community, and that was in the synagogue. A lot of synagogues did not even have a complete copy of all the books of the Scriptures. They may have only had copies of the book of the Law (the five books of Moses) and perhaps portions of some of the others.

You have to realize it was a very expensive proposition. If you had to hire a scholar to sit down and copy out by hand a manuscript of the Bible, how expensive do you think an entire copy would be? How long would it take someone to sit down and copy out the whole thing by hand? You are probably looking at the equivalent of a year's wages. That would be at a professional level because the scribes of the law were some of the most educated people in the community. Otherwise, you would wound up with all sorts of errors creeping in. You are looking at something that was very expensive.

For an individual to have his own copy of the entire Bible would have cost a fortune. As a result, there would have been only a very, very few people who could have ever had such a thing. An individual would have to be very wealthy. In most cases, there were copies in the synagogue and people came in and studied there. They came in and had access to it there, and it was read on the Sabbath. They could come in through the week and have access to portions of it. It was important. That was the nucleus.

The point I am getting to is that while the Jewish community was the core and nucleus for the spreading of the Gospel and for the expansion of the true Church of God, there was another Diaspora that had taken place in the days of Alexander the Great. There was a Samaritan Diaspora, or dispersion; there was a scattering from the Samaritan community. The two centers of the Samaritan community outside of Samaria were in Alexandria, Egypt and Rome.

In Acts 8:10, we read that Simon was the religious leader of the Samaritans. He was the one to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, as being the great power of God. What we have to understand is that here is a man who had influence and was recognized wherever there was a Samaritan community. We went into a little bit of the background of the Samaritans in the last Bible study and in previous Bible studies. We must realize that while they outwardly acknowledged the name of God and identified with many things relating to the God of Israel and to the Scriptures, they, in reality,

practiced the customs and the traditions of the old Babylonian pagan religion. There were various Greek thoughts that had come in and even other ideas and philosophies added in. So, just as there was the true Church, there was also a "mystery of iniquity" that was already at work in the early days that ultimately became the great visible church that was dominant.

In the book of Revelation, the seat of apostasy is clearly identified as being Rome. That's one of the reasons why some of the early church fathers objected to the book of Revelation. They did not like it because the seat of apostasy is clear.

In Revelation 17, it talks about the great whore, a great fallen woman, a great prostitute.

Revelation 17:1, we are told, "...the great harlot who sits on many waters..." What is that?

Verse 15, "...The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues." Here is a great whore that is dominant over many different people, languages and nations.

Verse 3, it is pictured as riding the beast.

Verse 5, this is identified further, "And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

The true Church of God is pictured under the guise of a woman. The true Church is pictured as the virgin bride of Christ awaiting Jesus Christ. Here we have another woman who is pictured, but this time it is someone that would be typical of or a type of Jezebel, as opposed to Sarah.

Why do I say Rome is identified?

Verse 9, as we come down a little further, "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits."

Verse 18, "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Now which great city reigns over the kings of the earth and sits on seven literal mountains? Even in the first century you could figure that out. The great city that was predominant was Rome. Traditionally, Rome was called "the city of seven hills." Rome was built on seven hills. It was the city of seven hills. It was a city that reigned over the kings of the earth. It was the world capital. Really, it was the capital of the known world—of the Roman Empire.

In Revelation 17, we have a woman (a false church) who is identified with Rome. How many great cities reign over the kings of the earth and sit on seven hills? How many of those are you aware of? Certainly, with that description, it fits

into the first and second centuries. The identification of Rome as the seat of apostasy was clear enough that even early church commentators realized where it was, what was being addressed and who was being addressed. Therefore, you might realize that the book of Revelation was not particularly popular in Rome. It was not popular there because it pointed out Rome as the seat of apostasy.

Another factor is that by about 250 A.D., they began to get away from the understanding of the literal thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth. The book of Revelation teaches the literal thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints.

Revelation 5:10, “and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” That’s pretty clear; it’s pretty plain. We will go through that in a couple of Bible studies.

Revelation 20:4, “...And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” It talks about the fact of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6, “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. ..., but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

As the false church (that ultimately developed into the Roman Catholic Church) grew in terms of influence in the Roman world, the teaching of the literal thousand-year rule of Christ and the saints was discarded. Certainly, by the time of the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, the teaching was discarded. It ultimately came to be viewed that the Kingdom of God was already here. The church was viewed as the Kingdom of God on earth.

Augustine, one of the early Catholic Church fathers in the fifth century A.D., wrote the book for which he is perhaps most well known entitled, *The City of God*. He makes the point that the church is the Kingdom of God on earth. Rome becomes the city of God and the Roman Empire is transformed. The book of Revelation clearly teaches the fact that the kingdoms of this world will collapse and be replaced by the government of God.

As the professing Christian church moved further and further in that direction and into political accommodation with the Roman Empire, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth became increasingly an unpopular teaching. The literal proof of the Millennium began to be considered as simply an opinion or as one possible interpretation. Then, within a matter of years, it began to be regarded as sort of a curiosity or something that was a doubtful idea

and opinion. Within a matter of years after that, it was treated as absolute heresy and something that was contrary to teaching.

We have to realize that those who gave heed to Simon Magus and those in the areas of the Samaritan community accepted these fundamental errors. Fundamentally, their problem revolved around the authority of the law of God. The Samaritans had a tendency toward absorbing popular religious teachings and a melding of things together. They picked what was viewed as the best out of all of it and melded it together. That was the Babylonian approach and an approach the Samaritans had evidenced.

The fundamental problem was a problem with the law of God and with the necessity for literal obedience to the law of God. They got off track with that. The fundamental error was a misunderstanding of grace and a false teaching regarding the necessity to keep the commandments. Other heresies and other ideas came in. There were a variety of heresies and some of these various sects persecuted one another. They didn’t agree individually. There was one standard brand that sort of came out and became predominant.

During the time Constantine was emperor, there were various heresies in various parts. Constantine saw the potential of having one religion to unite the empire. The old Roman mythology was pretty well bankrupt. Nobody took it seriously. Many approaches to Christian teaching had spread. He saw there was a need for standardization and picked, as his brand, that which was promulgated by the bishop of Rome. He called the Council of Nicaea and basically presided over it. What came to be considered the Catholic Church derived much of the standardization from there. Various heresies that were extant in the pagan world were increasingly accepted and the heresies grew. They got further and further away from the truth. We, perhaps at some future time, will go through a Bible study on that. It’s very interesting as to how, once they began to get off track, they literally moved further and further away.

Revelation clearly teaches the literal thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. By the second century A.D., that was an unpopular doctrine. The book of Revelation is very Old Testament in flavor. There are at least 285 specific Old Testament references given in the book of Revelation. The Old Testament had fallen out of favor. Revelation certainly teaches obedience to the law of God.

Revelation 12:17, the true people of God are those identified as those, "...who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The true people of God are clearly identified as commandment keepers. That wasn't a very popular teaching at the time the authority of the book of Revelation came to be questioned. There's no reason to question the authorship of the book of Revelation apart from trying to undermine the authority of the book. There was a clear agreement in the areas to which Revelation is addressed. There was never a dispute as to who wrote it. The dispute arose elsewhere at a later point in time.

The book of Revelation plays a very important part in the canon of the Bible. The canon is a set of books that are accepted as authoritative. There have been many books that have been written. There have been many books that have been written by servants of God, but everything that has been written was not chosen as a part of the canon of Scripture.

You can read in 1 Kings 4:32 about how many songs and proverbs Solomon wrote. You can look in the Bible and you don't find all of those. Solomon wrote a portion of the Bible, but everything he wrote isn't in the Bible. You find various prophets mentioned in the Old Testament for whom there's no book in the Old Testament. That's not to say that they didn't write letters or certain things, but God didn't preserve everything that any servant of His ever wrote.

There were specific things that God inspired to be preserved for His people for all times. Some things only had relevance to those people at that time. Elijah was a great prophet of God, but there's no book of Elijah preserved in the Scriptures. Elijah's message was, for the most part, a message that had relevance to his time, his age and his people. The portion of it that has relevance to us is preserved in 1 & 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. We have a little summary of Elijah's ministry and some examples but very little of what he preached. That was not primarily relevant for us, and God didn't see fit to preserve it.

Much of what Isaiah wrote is clearly preserved for us because it has relevance for us today that is far more relevant than the relevance it had at the time it was delivered. Certain books were chosen as a part of the canon of Scripture.

The book of Revelation clearly finishes up the canon of Scripture. Revelation clearly is the logical conclusion of the Bible. Just as Genesis begins the Bible, Revelation ends it. The book of

Revelation perfectly corresponds to the book of Genesis. The Bible starts in a logical place.

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Where would you start with a book like the Bible? Well, you start in the beginning; that's a logical place to start. You could start it in a number of places, but that's where God chose to start and tell the story in a logical way.

We conclude with the book of Revelation. How does the book of Revelation perfectly correspond to the book of Genesis? Here are two books written in two different languages in completed form. Moses wrote the book of Genesis and completed it prior to 1400 B.C. The book of Revelation was completed just prior to 100 A.D. You are looking at 1,500 years. Fifteen hundred years is a long time.

Fifteen hundred years ago was just after the fall of the Roman Empire. I tell you what—there's a lot of "water under the bridge" in 1,500 years. How much do any of us know about what was going on 1,500 years ago? Here was a book that was written 1,500 years later than another book. It was written in a different language, in a different culture and different societal setting. Yet, **they perfectly correspond as the beginning and the end.**

Let's notice **one contrast**. The book of Genesis starts where?

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The book of Genesis starts with the creation of the heavens and the earth. What does the book of Revelation end with?

Revelation 21:1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea." Genesis starts with the fact that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; Revelation ends with the fact that the old heavens and earth pass away and a new heaven and a new earth come to be.

There is a **second contrast**. The book of Genesis, Genesis 2:9, opens with a tree in the midst of the garden, a tree that was called the tree of life. Genesis 3:22-24, we find man excluded from the garden. Why?

Genesis 3:22, "...lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever..." Man is excluded from the Garden of Eden. Man is excluded and cut off from access to the tree of life. Genesis begins with man's exile from access to the presence of the tree of life.

Revelation 22:2, we find, "In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree

of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” We have a description of a time when access is given to the tree of life. The book of Genesis opens with man being excluded from the tree of life; Revelation concludes with man being given access to the tree of life. The tree of life is made available. Again, we have this description.

Verse 14, “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.” We conclude the book of Revelation with access to the tree of life.

There is a **third contrast**. In Genesis, we find death introduced.

Genesis 2:17, “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Death is introduced in the book of Genesis. Death is abolished in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 21:4, “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” We are told there will be no more death. Genesis opens with death being introduced; Revelation ends with death being abolished.

There is a **fourth contrast**. Genesis 3 introduces Satan’s deception of man.

Genesis 3:1-4, “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ And the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’”

We open the book of Genesis with lies and deceptions promulgated by Satan the devil. We end the book of Revelation with the story of what’s going to happen to conclude Satan’s deception.

Revelation 20:1-3, “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.”

As we go through Revelation 20 and 21, we find that the consequences of Satan’s deception are concluded. Satan and his influence on mankind are ultimately and finally removed. Genesis opens with Satan’s deception; Revelation concludes with the final consequence and result of that deception.

Verses 14-15, ultimately, “Then Death and Hades [hell, the grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

There is a **fifth contrast** with Revelation and Genesis. The book of Genesis gives us the story of the removal of God’s government from the earth; Revelation concludes with the restoration of God’s government and the presence of God. Mankind elects to build his own society, his own culture, his own civilization cut off from God and under the sway of Satan’s deception. The book of Revelation concludes with the collapse and destruction of the civilization that man built.

In Genesis, we read of a city that had its beginnings with a tower—the Tower of Babel. If you look at Genesis 11 and 12, you have a story in contrast between two men who each had a vision of a city. In Genesis 11, you read of a man by the name of Nimrod who was looked to by others. We find that the beginning of his kingdom was Babel. He built the beginnings of Babylon. The story of the rest of the Bible—the story of mankind’s civilization, society and culture—is the story of Babylon.

Revelation 18:2, we read, “And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, is fallen, !...’” –The destruction of Babylon.

In Genesis 12, we read of a man who came from the area of Babylon, a man by the name of Abraham or Abram as he was known originally.

Genesis 12:1, “Now the Lord had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.’”

Verse 4, we are told, “So Abraham departed....” He left Babylon. He went to another place where he dwelt as a stranger, a pilgrim and a sojourner.

Hebrews 11:10 tells us, “for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Verse 13, he died in faith, not having received the promises that he believed, and lived his life in anticipation of. The book of Revelation concludes with the destruction of Babylon, that final continuation of what Nimrod had begun.

In Revelation 21, we find New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:2, “Then, I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,” –A city whose maker and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10), a city that has 12 foundations of the wall (Revelation 21:19-20). That is the city Abraham looked for throughout the period of his life and died in faith without ever having seen it.

We have a clear contrast. Genesis shows the beginning of man’s civilization and society cut off from the government of God; Revelation shows the collapse of that system and the restoration of the government of God to this earth. Genesis shows God’s government removed from the earth, and Revelation shows God’s government restored to the earth.

The **sixth contrast** has to do with the final fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham. In Genesis 12, Abraham was told to go out of his country.

Hebrews 11:8, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive for an inheritance.”

Verses 9-10, 13, we are told that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelt as pilgrims and sojourners and they died in faith, not having received the promises. They looked for a city.

Verses 15-16, “And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country.” They sought a city whose maker and builder was God. The book of Revelation shows the final fulfillment and accomplishment of the promises of God. In Revelation, we finally see the fulfillment of the promises God made to Abraham beginning in Genesis 12. Genesis shows the promises made; Revelation shows the promises fulfilled.

The **seventh contrast**, we will note, is that the book of Genesis introduces curses; the book of Revelation abolishes curses. There are several curses that are mentioned in the book of Genesis. We will notice three. In Genesis 3, we have the deception and the sin of Adam and Eve. We have a curse pronounced. The first curse is pronounced.

Genesis 3:17-19, “Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it”: Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the

sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground,”

The ground was cursed because of mankind’s sin.

In Genesis 4, we read of yet another curse. We find Cain murdering Abel.

Genesis 4:11-12, “So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.”

As we come forward, a little bit further in Genesis, we find the story of Noah. The sin of Canaan is described in Genesis 9. We find Canaan cursed.

Genesis 9:25, “Then he said: ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.’”

Genesis starts out with the introduction of curses on the human family. There are various curses. There were curses that were introduced on the very ground and its productivity and curses that were introduced upon branches of the human family because of sin. Curses are ultimately there because of sin.

When the book of Revelation concludes, we find that there will be no more curses. God removed the curses that were there.

Revelation 22:3, “And there shall be no more curse,”

If you go through, there are various curses that you can read. I just mentioned three. It might be interesting to go through the book of Genesis sometimes and look at the curses that were introduced. We are to realize that those curses will not be completely removed until the time of the new heavens and the new earth because curses are ultimately the consequences of sin.

Revelation tells us the end of the matter, just as Genesis tells us the beginning. Genesis tells us the beginning of sin and the curses that originated from sin; Revelation tells us the conclusion of God’s plan and the removal of those curses.

There are **four basic ways of interpreting the book of Revelation**. The **first approach** of those is called a **spiritual interpretation**. That may sound like the best because, after all, we do want to be spiritual, but that is not the case. The spiritual interpretation means spiritual as opposed to literal. It is an interpretation that originated in Alexandria. It is based on the concept of allegory. The Greeks had developed a practice of treating their earlier writings in mythologies as allegories. If you’ve read Greek mythology, you realize it’s the stuff of which

modern soap operas are made. The moral tone and character of it are sort of like “As the Stomach Turns” or whatever it is. “As the World Turns”—that’s what they call it. The point is that most of Greek and Roman mythology is about every sort of thing from rape, incest, murder, intrigue and lying. Just read the stories that Homer wrote, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, that Virgil, the Roman writer, wrote of the story, *The Enid* or when you read what Hesiod, another of the early Greek contemporaries of Homer, wrote of the basic myths of the Greek and Roman world.

In later centuries, they were a little bit embarrassed by this, so they developed a method of interpretation and treated it all as allegory. They said it was not meant to be taken as a literal story about people or about God. They said it was allegory and the names of the individuals were symbolic of various vices and virtues. That was the way they held on to the tradition of their mythology and, yet, got away from the embarrassment that was attached to the fact that such trash would be the best religious literature they could come up with. This was their approach. It became an approach toward interpretation and of treating things as an allegory.

That proved to be a very convenient method for some of the early writers, even in the Jewish and Samaritan communities in the early so-called Christian community because it was a convenient way of getting around the literal statements of the Bible. If you treat the Bible as an allegory, then you don’t have to literally take what it says. If you come across something that’s inconvenient to do or to believe, just treat it as an allegory.

The spiritual interpretation of Revelation originated in Alexandria. Alexandria was a seat of this sort of thing and this approach based on allegory. In other words, this approach overlooked the fact that Revelation claimed to be a prophecy. The primary Catholic approach to the interpretation of Revelation is that it is an allegory of the struggle between good and evil. If you were to consult a Catholic commentary, they would tell you that Revelation should primarily be understood as an allegory of the struggle between good and evil. If you treat it all as an allegory, then when it says there is going to be a thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth, that’s not saying He’s really going to reign a thousand years—that’s just an allegorical way of saying that good will eventually triumph over evil. They treat it as an allegory and get around having to

really examine what the text says. That was the approach that came to be introduced when they couldn’t actually get rid of it. It was too clearly attested to as a part of Scripture, so the approach was to treat it as an allegory. That was one way of interpreting it. You will find that mentioned in some of the commentaries.

There is a **second approach** that is commonly used by a lot of modern commentaries. I will give you the term. It is a technical term, but you may run across it if you read a commentary that deals with Revelation. It’s called “Praetorism”; that means the whole book of Revelation has already been fulfilled, that it was fulfilled at the persecution of Nero. They say, ‘When it talks about these seven heads and all of this, this is just talking about Roman emperors way back in the first century. It is saying that John was simply writing about this time and all the symbolism refers to what was going on in the Roman Empire—the problems the church was having in the first century, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and all this sort of thing. That’s all it is talking about.’

If you throw God out of the picture or if you don’t believe that God was inspiring something, you say, ‘Well, look, these people were simply writing about what was going on around them. They were writing about the events they were living through and John describes with hyperbole and with exaggeration. He describes in symbolic language specific things that were happening in the Roman Empire at the time. It’s not prophetic and there are all sorts of interpretations.’

Revelation 17:10, where it talks about the seven kings, it says, “...Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come.” Certain commentaries will even tell you this is talking about Roman emperors and that Nero is the ‘one that is,’ that there were five before him and then the next one after him. They say, ‘It’s just that things were so bad at the time of Nero that John thought that the world was going to come to an end at the time of Nero.’

Well, that’s silly and there are several reasons. It ignores all of the evidence that the true date of the book is about 30 years after Nero died. It would be sort of stupid for me to sit down and write a book about how World War II was the end of the world. It wouldn’t make a whole lot of sense. It’s a little bit late to come up with something like that now.

There’s plenty of evidence that clearly dates the fact that Revelation was written in the late 90s A.D. It was written at the time that John was in

exile on the isle of Patmos. There are even secular records that attest to the date that John was in exile on Patmos and the specific persecution in the reign of Domitian. There are even secular historical records of the reign of Domitian that specifically date the period of the exile of Christian leadership—the time John was exiled.

The book of Revelation claims a time setting as ‘the day of the Lord’ (Revelation 1:10). They cannot accept the book for what it claims to be. The book of Revelation clearly claims to be something far beyond merely the historical record of what was happening in Rome at the time. The Praetorist approach is primarily used by many of the modern and more secular commentators that really want to distance themselves from God and any specific revelation from God.

There is a **third approach** of interpreting the book of Revelation that is called the continuous historical approach. This claims that the book covers the whole period of church history from John until the present. What they try to do is to correlate the events that are described in Revelation with various historical events. The “abomination of desolation,” for instance, is often connected to the days that the Moslems built the Dome of the Rock on the site of the original temple. That is one point that is often made. It uses the historical approach. There is a tiny historical element in this approach, but there’s far too much emphasis on the historical. It’s the wrong thrust because the book of Revelation clearly says that its primary setting is the Day of the Lord (Revelation 1:10); the prophecies of Revelation center around the Day of the Lord.

A **fourth approach** of interpreting the book of Revelation is what’s called the futurist approach. This claims that the book is future and centered around the time of Christ’s return. This approach is the nearest to being correct. We will see more specifics on this as we go through the next Bible study. It will give you an idea.

Let’s look a little bit at what Revelation is.

Revelation 1:1, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John...”

Here is the “specific purpose statement” of the book. Everybody who’s been in Spokesman’s Club knows the importance of having an SPS (specific purpose statement). Here is John’s SPS. It clearly tells you exactly what Revelation is;

it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. A lot of people say you can’t understand anything about Revelation. The word is “revelation.” It’s not the *concealing* of Jesus Christ; it’s the *revealing* of Jesus Christ. The word in Greek is “apocalypse.” It is where we get our term “apocalyptic.” “Apocalypse” is a Greek word for “revealing.” This is a revealing of information. You remember when Jesus ascended to heaven? The disciples asked Him, “How long?”

Acts 1:6-7, “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.’” There were things that God had simply not revealed before.

Daniel concluded with a desire to know what his prophecies meant.

Daniel 12:8-9, “Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, ‘My lord, what shall be the end of these things?’ And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.’”

Revelation provides the information that is necessary. It is the revelation. It is the revelation by the living resurrected Jesus Christ of information that God gave Him.

Revelation 1:1, God the Father allowed this to be revealed by Jesus Christ for the purpose of “...[showing] His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John...”

The book of Revelation records three things. That’s mentioned in verse 2. What did John bear witness (KJV, “record”) of?

Verse 2, “who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to all things that he saw.”

Three things: 1) “the word of God,” which is direct statements of God, the law of God which is the revelation of God, 2) “the testimony of Jesus Christ,” which is the things of which Jesus Christ bore witness to John, and 3) “to things that John saw,” which is John’s dream or vision.

In much of the book of Revelation, John wrote a description of what he saw. He had to describe it in a language of his day. If you or I were to see a movie and in that movie there were all sorts of things that we had never seen before, if we were describing it to somebody else, we would have to use terminology that had significance to us. We would say we saw something. ‘It was like this, yet, it was a little bit like that. It was sort of similar to something else and I saw it.’ We would have to use the vocabulary we have.

As new inventions have come along, of course, new words have had to be created for the language. If you were to go back 150 years and mention the word “automobile,” nobody would know what you meant. Certain words in the English language had origins in Latin. The term “auto” and “mobile” had their origin in the Latin language. “Auto” meant “self” and “mobile” had to do with “something that moved.” So, a new word was created out of words that already existed. Here was something that moved by itself, as opposed to being pulled by an animal. But if you were to use that word at an earlier time, they wouldn’t have known what you meant. That’s why when the automobile was first invented, many people referred to it as a horseless carriage.

Mr. Armstrong used to tell the story of when he was a little boy about six years old. One day his father said, ‘Quick, quick, come here and look. There’s a horseless carriage.’ That was something they had heard of but had never seen. He came running to the window to look out and here was a carriage that was hitched up to mules instead of horses. His father had a big laugh, ‘See, it’s a horseless carriage.’

The point is that John, with his vocabulary, had trouble describing what he saw. He had to describe what you read in Revelation in the vocabulary that he had, just as you and I would have to describe something we saw in the vocabulary we have. Many of the things he saw in vision were things that, at the time he lived, didn’t yet exist. He was transported in vision about 2,000 years into the future.

Revelation includes “the word of God,” what God said. It includes “the testimony that Jesus Christ bore,” the statements that He made to John. And it includes “the things that John saw.”

Revelation 1:10, the theme of the book of Revelation is given, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet...”

This expression “in the Spirit” has to do with receiving a vision or a revelation of God. The word that is translated “on” in verse 10 is from a Greek word that would be spelled “en.” Most times when that word is used in Greek, it is rendered by the English word “in.” This little word in Greek is pronounced “in,” only it is spelled “e-n.” Our word “in” is spelled “i-n.” The Greek word “en” is most commonly rendered by the English word “in” and it means “in” in the sense of “during the time of”—“in” in the sense of time, as opposed to “in” as inside

something. Our word “in” can have a variety of meanings. John says, ‘I was in the Spirit in (or during) the time of the Lord’s Day.’

Now, what is the Lord’s Day? Many of the Protestants like to quote Revelation 1:10 and say they don’t keep the Sabbath; they keep the Lord’s Day just like God does. Show me here anything that gives any indication whatsoever that it is talking about Sunday. There’s no place in the Bible that says Sunday or the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day. The point is that he is not talking about Sunday or Saturday. He’s not talking about either one. If you want to know what he is talking about, just turn back to the book of Joel.

Joel 1:15, “Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; ...” Joel talks about the “day of the Lord.” Revelation talks about the “Lord’s Day.”

That is a distinction we make in English; it wouldn’t be an issue in French. If you were saying “the Lord’s Day” in French, it would literally translate as “the Day of the Lord.” We use the “’s” for possessive in English. We use two different possessives in English. You can say either “Day of the Lord” or “Lord’s Day.” We have two ways of making the possession. You can say “John’s house” or “the house of John.” In the French language, as in many other languages, you don’t have that double type of possessive. A number of you speak French. The only way you translate it would be “Day of the Lord.”

Revelation 1:10, by the way, that’s the way a French Bible translates, “I was in the Spirit in the Day of the Lord,” which is exactly the way the Greek is, too. The Greek does not have “’s.” The problem with Revelation 1:10 is a problem that only exists in English translations. If you were reading it in a French translation or in original Greek, it wouldn’t create the same problem.

It only creates a problem in English because some have tried to say that “Lord’s Day” means something totally different from “Day of the Lord.” They say it’s talking about Sunday. Where does it say anything about Sunday? It doesn’t mention first day, seventh day or any other day. John was in the Spirit; he was transported in the Spirit (in vision) forward to the time of the Day of the Lord. That’s the point of the book of Revelation. The theme of the book of Revelation is centering around the Day of the Lord. The book of Revelation isn’t centering around the Sabbath; it’s not centering around Sunday. It’s centering around that period in time of God’s intervention, the period when God steps

into history and intervenes in the affairs of man. It's called in Scripture by the general broad term "the Day of the Lord."

This is man's day—a time when God is pretty well keeping hands off except in specific cases where He might choose to intervene because He is working out a plan and a purpose. But, basically, this is the day of man. This is the time when man is pursuing his own way. The time is going to come when God will step into history.

Revelation centers on that Day of the Lord. Revelation 1:10 makes it very clear that the primary setting of the book of Revelation is prophetic. It is for a time in the future, centering around the time of Christ's intervention and return to the earth.

Revelation 1:1 shows that some of what is revealed consisted of things that were going to shortly take place. We are going to get into some of that next time. We are going to go into Revelation 2 and 3 that deal with the specific messages to the seven Churches. You will find there are story-flow chapters and inset chapters.

The first five chapters are sort of inset chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with a summary of the history of the Church from the time of the New Testament period all the way down to ahead of us.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with a vision of heaven.

Chapter 6, we get into the story flow. Chapter 6 deals with the opening of the first six of the seven seals.

Chapter 7 is another inset which gives the story of the sealing of the 144,000.

Chapters 8, 9 and 10 continue the story flow down through the events connected with the seventh seal.

Chapters 11, 12, 13 and 14 again are inset information.

Chapter 11 deals with the two witnesses.

Chapter 12, the true Church is protected in the wilderness.

Chapter 13 gives a description of the Beast.

Chapter 14 focuses on the 144,000 again.

Chapters 15 and 16 continue the story flow of the seven last plagues.

Chapters 17 and 18 again are insets.

Chapter 17 is about the Beast and the great whore.

Chapter 18 is the fall of Babylon the Great (or Rome).

Then the story flow is continued in chapters 19, 20 and 21.

Chapter 19 gives the marriage supper. It tells us about the marriage supper of the lamb.

Chapter 20 is about the Millennium and the Great White Throne.

Chapter 21 describes the new heavens and the new earth.

Chapter 22 is another inset with sort of concluding remarks.

If you follow the story down through, chapter 6 has the first six seals. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 have the description of the seventh seal (the seven trumpets). Chapters 15 and 16 have more description of the seven last plagues, which are a part of the seventh seal or the seventh trumpet of the seventh seal. Then chapter 19 tells what happens after that—the marriage supper. Chapter 20 is about the Millennium and the Great White Throne. Chapter 21 is about the new heavens and the new earth.

It just runs down in story flow with continual insets that sort of break into the story flow to give you information and details about something. We will go through that in detail in the following Bible studies.

The next Bible study we will cover the first three chapters of Revelation, primarily focusing on the message to each of the seven Churches.

Bible Study # 94
August 11, 1992
Mr. John Ogwyn

Book of Revelation Series—Revelation 1—3

I want to get right into the book of Revelation this evening. We had an introduction to the book last time. Primarily, we **are focusing on Revelation 2 and 3 this evening that deal with the seven Churches of the book of Revelation.**

Much of the material we looked at last time focused on the setting of the book and the fact that this is written as a revelation—a revealing—from God Himself. It was given to Jesus Christ 'to show His servants the things that must shortly come to pass. It was sent and signified by His angel to His servant John' (Revelation 1:1). This is the message that God gave.

We saw in Revelation 1:10 that John addressed the fact that he was in the Spirit. He was transported into the Day of the Lord in Spirit. This is a time setting. This is a point of time that focuses in on the end time, the time of the return of Jesus Christ, the period of the Day of the Lord, as it's termed in the book of Joel and other places.

Revelation 1:10-11, "...and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,' and, 'What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.'" So, in vision, John is transported.

All of a sudden, he hears this great voice behind him.

Verses 12-19, "Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands [KJV, "candlesticks"], and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of

Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.'"

Then He begins to interpret some of the symbolism that John saw.

Verse 20, "'The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.'"

There were seven Churches picked out in Asia Minor. If you have a map of Asia Minor in your Bible, I would suggest you turn to it. Asia Minor is now modern-day Turkey. These seven Churches were there. If you look closely, you will find there were other Churches that were also nearby. For instance, very near Laodicea was the Church of Colosse, to which the book of Colossians was written. There are several other cities that are mentioned. These seven are picked out.

Understand that God uses numbers in a symbolic fashion. Seven is used over and over in the book of Revelation because seven is symbolic of completion and perfection. Go back to the seven days of creation; seven stands out as God's number of completion and perfection. All through the book of Revelation you find seven stars, seven lampstands, seven Churches, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven last plagues, seven heads of the beast. You have the number seven over and over. You have seven here, there and yonder that is used in a symbolic way all through Revelation.

These Churches were picked out. These were Churches on a Roman mail route. They are addressed in a particular order.

The seven lampstands—where does that symbolism come from? Does it remind you of something? If you think about it, it will remind you of the tabernacle back in the book of Exodus. Let's go back and notice, very briefly, Exodus 25 and Exodus 37.

Exodus 25:1-2, "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering.'"

Verses 8-9, "'And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.'" God revealed the way it was to be.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Hebrews 8:5 that it was the pattern of heavenly things. The things in the tabernacle had symbolic value. They were built in a particular way.

Hold your place in Exodus 25. I want to read what Paul says in Hebrews 8.

Hebrews 8:1-2, “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.” You see, the tabernacle had reference to the tabernacle that Moses pitched, and he said that Jesus Christ is the Minister of the true sanctuary, the true tabernacle. Go down to verse 5.

Verse 5, “who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, ‘See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’” Why was it so important that Moses make it according to the pattern? –Because it had symbolic value. Everything in the tabernacle symbolized something either in heaven or in God’s great heavenly plan.

In Exodus 25, we go through what was to be built.

Exodus 25:31-32, we find, “‘You shall also make a lampstand [KJV, “candlestick”] of pure gold; And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lamp stand out of the other side.” There were six branches that came out of the lampstand. There was one central branch that came up, and then three on one side and three on the other, which made, of course, seven altogether.

Verse 37, “‘You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it.’”

In Exodus 37, it further describes the making of this and how they were to do it.

Exodus 37:17, “He also made the lampstand of pure gold;”

Verse 23, “And he made its seven lamps, its wick-trimmers [KJV, “snuffers], and its trays of pure gold.” It talks about the seven lamps and the wick-trimmers of it.

Here’s the point: in the tabernacle itself, when you went into the Holy Place, there was a rectangular room that the priest walked into and there were three articles of furniture. On one side, there was a table that contained the 12 loaves of showbread or the bread of presence. This was brought in fresh every week. It was symbolic of the 12 tribes. It was there as an offering to God. These 12 unleavened loaves were on this table, the table of showbread. On the other side was this big seven-branched

candelabrum. Really, it was not a candelabrum in the sense that it held candles. It held a little bowl of olive oil because that was what they burned rather than a waxed candle. This was perpetually kept burning. This was the only light in there. Then at the back, right before the curtain that separated off the Holy of Holies, was the altar of incense.

Revelation 1:20 tells us that the seven lampstands are the seven Churches. In the tabernacle we had this seven-branch lampstand. In Revelation, we have seven lampstands. The people of God were symbolized by what was described there in the tabernacle. The 12 loaves were symbolic of each of the 12 tribes. They symbolized the people of God and were presented before God. These unleavened loaves represented the people of God.

Then we had the light that was provided by this candelabrum. What did Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount? Didn’t He say that we are to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14)? God’s people through the centuries are symbolized as the light of the world. The lamp burned olive oil. Olive oil is used in the Bible as a type of God’s Spirit.

How do we give off light to the world? For light to be given off, there has to be a fuel supply. Our lights in here are electric. If the electricity went out, we would have no lights. If you have candles and all the wax burns away, you have no more light. If you have a kerosene lantern, when the kerosene burns up, you have no more light. There has to be a supply of fuel. Olive oil was the fuel. Just as in our lives, the only way we are going to be a light to the world is God’s Spirit in us. This was symbolic of the people of God.

I don’t have time to go into the parallels of the Old Testament, but if you go through the history of the people of God **in the Old Testament period, there were seven successive stages in the history of the people of God:** 1) the period of Moses and Joshua, 2) the period of the Judges, 3) the period of the united monarch of Saul, David and Solomon that ruled over the entire nation, 4) the period of the divided monarchy that continued on down to the captivity, 5) the period of restoration at the time of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah and, after, the restoration period that continued all the way down through the Hellenistic time, 6) the revival that took place at the time of the Macabbees, about 160 years prior to Christ and the brief work that they did in the physical sense and then, finally, 7) the final stage of the history of the Old Testament Church was what we found when we came on the scene

in the New Testament when Christ said the Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat (Matthew 23:2). That was the final stage of the history of the Old Testament Church.

The New Testament Church also has its history symbolized in seven stages, symbolized by these seven Churches that were picked out.

These Churches were picked out to illustrate something; there were other Churches in the area. This was not a letter to every Church that was in Asia Minor. There were many more than seven Churches. Colosse was right there where the rest of them were but wasn't in this group to receive the letters.

There were seven that were specifically picked out. They were on a Roman mail route, but the mail didn't run in only one direction. We have one-way streets. They didn't have one-way roads that they could go from "here to there," but then couldn't turn around and go back the other way. They didn't build roads that way in the Roman Empire. Roads ran both ways.

If you look at the seven Churches, they sort of go around in a circle. You could have started one way or started the other way. He started where he started because there was a particular symbolism involved. God inspired that John would pick out and focus in with a message to each one of these seven congregations, focusing on certain characteristics of each congregation that would be used to typify the people of God down through the centuries.

The history of God's people can be summarized in seven successive stages, symbolized by the seven lampstands. In the Old Testament, it was one lampstand with seven branches because it was in one place, one location and everything came out of the one place. The New Testament Church was different. You are looking at different groups, different places stretched across half of the globe, as we will see as we progress through the history of the New Testament Church.

It's important to understand that Jesus Christ pictures Himself standing in the midst of these lampstands (Revelation 1:13). The lampstands represent the Church, the light of the world. The seven lampstands were literally oil lamps, if you want to be technical about it because what's addressed here burned oil. Christ is pictured as standing in the midst. He wasn't just in the midst of those seven congregations in ancient Asia Minor. He is symbolized as standing in the midst because the seven Churches symbolized God's Church throughout the centuries. Jesus Christ is pictured as standing in the midst. We see Him

addressing it this way, and He addresses a message to each of the seven Churches.

Let's briefly look and summarize the history of the seven stages of God's Church. Then we will go through some of this material verse by verse.

The Church at **Ephesus** is the starting point, so that would obviously be the Church in the apostolic time. The Church of God, of course, had its beginnings Pentecost 31 A.D. It was originally centered in the area of Judea. John died in Ephesus. This was the headquarters of the Apostle John. Remember, John outlived all the other apostles by about 30 years. For about the last 30 to 35 years of his life, he was the last living of the Twelve. The Church was originally centered in Jerusalem and in Judea; Jerusalem was the headquarters. The Church spread out through the ministry of Paul and the other apostles. There were a number of things that happened.

I've brought these books along for a purpose. I want to show you something in just a few moments that is very instructive for us.

By 70 A.D., the true Christians had left Jerusalem. Remember, the Romans came in and destroyed Jerusalem. The Church had fled Jerusalem in 69 A.D. They went to a little place called Pella and were there for a period of about 65 years. In the meantime, of course, various problems and difficulties had come in. There were heresies that came in. The Apostle John lived until the 90s A.D. and he died in Ephesus. The Jerusalem Church, as I mentioned, fled Jerusalem in 69 A.D. They fled to Pella. By 135 A.D., the remnant of the Jerusalem church—most of the Jerusalem church—apostatized. That is the year the Jerusalem church ceased to keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days and began to observe Sunday. I'll read the documentation on that in a moment.

Sunday observance began to be openly promulgated in Rome and I have, interestingly enough, a book here entitled *From Sabbath to Sunday—A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity*, published by the Pontifical Gregorian University Press in Rome. So, this is not just what I might say or what somebody else might say. It has the imprimatur of the Vatican right here. You can read it. You can even translate the Latin inscription: "With the approval of the Vicar in Rome." And it's dated. This represents a statement of history that is in accordance with what Catholic scholars would not take exception to at all, in terms of the statement that Sunday observance did not begin in Jerusalem.

Sunday observance began in Rome and they date it. There's no proof of it earlier than 115 A.D. In fact, the date for the first Easter Sunday service that was held in Rome, as opposed to a Passover observance, dates to 115 A.D. About 15 or 16 years after the death of the Apostle John, it was openly being taught that Sunday was the day of worship and not the Sabbath. I want to go into this because I think we should understand.

How can people get so far off in such a short period of time? There were people who had heard John preach. You're only one man removed from Jesus Christ Himself. John was the disciple whom He loved. He was the one who took care of Mary during the latter years of her life. He was the one who was there as a part of the Twelve. If somebody knew what Jesus taught, it should have been John. He certainly should have known. He was with Him as a disciple three and one-half years. He was the one that Christ trusted to take care of His mother. John certainly should have known and understood.

Interestingly, we are going to see some things, but I don't want to get ahead of myself. I want to give you an outline, and then I want to come back and fill in some details. I want to fill in more of the details on Ephesus because that's an important area.

It's interesting that the literal city of Ephesus came to an end shortly after 135-140 A.D. The population moved a short distance to higher ground. Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia.

I will read a brief quote from this book. This is a Protestant book. I have Catholic books and Protestant books here, as well as a couple of these early church fathers; for example: *The Apostolic Fathers*, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, and Gibbon's *Triumph of Christendom in the Roman Empire*. These are not just something that represents what Mr. Herbert Armstrong said or what the Church says in terms of our "ax to grind."

It's interesting. This book that I say is a Protestant book, a book by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *The Story of the Christian Church*, makes an interesting comment.

He says on page 41, "We name the last generation of the first century, from 68 to 100 A.D., 'The Age of Shadows,' partly because the gloom of persecution was over the church; but more especially because of all periods in the history, it is the one about which we know the least. We have no longer the clear light of the

book of Acts to guide us; and no author of that age has filled the blank in the history. We would like to read of the later work by such helpers of St. Paul as Timothy, Apollos and Titus, but all these and St. Paul's other friends drop out of the record at his death. For fifty years after St. Paul's life a curtain hangs over the church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul."

Amazing! Very different because you see one Church was on the horizon when the mist settled, and another church was on the horizon when the mist departed. How did the change take place? What happened?

Revelation 2 and 3 gives the history of the true Church. The Church at Ephesus was symbolic of the first stage of Church history, which is basically the history of the Church from about 31 A.D. down to about 135 A.D.

The Church at **Smyrna** pictures the second stage in the history of the Church. We pick up the story in the period after the death of the Apostle John and trace it down to about the mid-seventh century. We will use 650 A.D. as an approximate date.

The first leader, on whom we will focus, was Polycarp. Polycarp was the bishop or leader of the Church in the literal city of Smyrna, which was a neighboring city to Ephesus. Polycarp had been a disciple of the Apostle John. In fact, we have two or three of the letters of Polycarp that actually remain. They have been preserved. Polycarp died about 160 A.D. He had been a disciple and personal acquaintance of the Apostle John. He was a very elderly man when he died. He was probably in his late 20s when the Apostle John died, and he was well into his 90s at the time of his own death.

We come down. We'll read a little bit about the Church during this time. Various names are applied to the Church. The history of the true Church was primarily written by its enemies. The true Church was being persecuted. It was on the fringes of the Roman Empire during much of this time.

This period, which is symbolized by the Church at Smyrna, was a time of intense persecution and martyrdom. One of the names attached to the people of God was the term "Ebionites." There were others who were called Ebionites, too. It was a term that meant "poor people." We will see some things about that.

The Catholic Church, as we know it, emerged during this period. It arose from the confusion and multiple heresies that existed in the first century. It wasn't just one heresy in a straight-line shot; there were multiple heresies. There were certain things that became predominant. There was the emergence of a predominant leadership in Rome. It was the alliance of church and state made at the time of the emperor Constantine that ensured the supremacy of the bishop at Rome and the particular brand of "Christianity" that he happened to champion. The Council of Nicaea, which was called to standardize "Christian" practice, was called by the authority of the emperor Constantine. The Council of Nicaea was presided over by the emperor Constantine. He was the one who actually sat in the chair and presided over the meeting. The empire had become split and splintered, so it was his intent to use religion to reunify the empire. The old Roman state religion no longer had much influence.

I will give you a quote about Polycarp and later Polycrates. Polycrates was a later disciple of Polycarp. A dispute that was called the Quartodeciman Controversy came to a head around 200 A.D. "Quartodeciman" is just a Latin word that means "the fourteenth." The controversy about "the fourteenth" is what it means. We celebrate the Passover on the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar. The controversy was: when should the Passover be celebrated? You know, of course, that the term that is used in the Latin to refer to Easter, which is celebrated in the Catholic world, is the Latin word for Passover. It's called the "Paschal" season. A similar term is used in French to refer to it. French, Spanish and Italian all use terms that are derived from Passover. What it amounted to was the old Samaritan trick of calling the wrong thing by the right name. They appropriated names from the Bible and applied them to pagan things. The controversy over celebrating Passover was: should you celebrate the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar as Passover or should you celebrate it on a Sunday morning as the Paschal service?

Eusebius was a Catholic historian and bishop who attended the Nicene Council. He lived in the fourth century A.D. He was there with the emperor Constantine and the others at the Council of Nicaea. He wrote a history of the church up until the time of the emperor Constantine.

Quoting here from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, he said, "The bishops, however, of Asia

[referring to Asia Minor], persevering in observing the custom handed down to them from their fathers, were headed by Polycrates [Polycrates was the disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp had been the disciple of John.]. He, indeed, had also set forth the tradition handed down in them, in a letter which he addressed to Victor and the church of Rome. 'We,' said he, 'therefore, observe the genuine day; neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom. For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep [His use of terms is interesting.], which shall rise again in the day of the Lord's appearing, in which He will come with glory from heaven, and will raise up all the saints;'"

Now, Polycrates didn't believe that they had all gone off to heaven. He didn't say, 'They are up in heaven watching us.' He said, 'They've fallen asleep and they are going to wake up when Christ comes back in power and in glory.' He names all various ones. He mentions Philip, one of the 12 apostles who sleeps in Hieropolis. He mentions John who rested on the bosom of our Lord, who's buried in Ephesus. He mentions Polycarp of Smyrna. He goes through and mentions various others.

Continuing, he said, "...[All these who are now] awaiting the episcopate from heaven [the visitation from heaven; the return of Christ], when he shall rise from the dead. All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. Moreover, I, Polycrates, who am the least of all of you, according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have followed. For there were seven, my relatives bishops, and I am the eight; and my relatives always observed the day when the people (*i.e.* the Jews) threw away the leaven."'"

Oh, they observed the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread! He said "my relatives always observed the day when the people threw away the leaven."

Continuing, "'I, therefore, brethren, am now sixty-five years in the Lord [He had been in the Church for 65 years, so he was a very elderly man by this time—certainly well into his 80s.], who having conferred with the brethren throughout the world, and having studied the whole of the sacred Scriptures, am not at all alarmed at those things with which I am threatened, to intimidate me. For they who are greater than I, have said, 'we ought to obey God rather than men.'" ...Upon this, Victor, the bishop of the church of Rome, forthwith endeavored to cut off the churches of all Asia,

together with the neighbouring churches, as heterodox, from the common unity. And he publishes abroad by letters, and proclaims, that all the brethren there are wholly excommunicated.”

It goes on. A little later he talked about Polycarp, who had actually made a trip to Rome many years earlier, trying to explain to the church at Rome that the Passover should be kept on the 14th day of the first month.

Continuing, it says, “And when the blessed Polycarp went to Rome, in the time of Anicetus [bishop of Rome], and they had a little difference among themselves.... For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it, because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe, who said that he was bound to maintain the practice of the presbyters [elders] before him.”

So, Anicetus followed the tradition in Rome which dates back to 115 A.D. Anicetus’s predecessors were Pius, Hyginus, Telephorus and Sixtus. Sixtus is the first of the bishops who is mentioned by Eusebius as having observed Easter Sunday. Sixtus, according to the dates given, came to his position in 115 A.D. That is why I gave the date 115 A.D. The idea certainly was around before then, but it was in 115 A.D. that Sixtus took over control as the presiding bishop in Rome and accepted Easter Sunday. We are going to see a little later how he made and introduced something like that.

Notice Polycarp and Polycrates. Here were people who were the true Church, who had a connection to the original apostles and—even as a matter as preserved by Catholic historians recognized—were observing the days we observe. This would be the time of Smyrna.

Pergamos was the third Church and the third phase mentioned. There was a time when the Church was in hiding. The very word “Pergamos” means “fortified.” They were known in history as Paulicians and Bogomils. These were terms that were applied to them. Some of the leaders, of whom we have record, are men such as Constantine of Mananali, Simeon who flourished about 690 A.D. and Sergius who flourished about 830 A.D. Pergamum was originally the seat of the Pontifex Maximus. It was also the city of Aesculapius the serpent, the original city.

Thyatira was the fourth Church, the fourth stage. It symbolized the Church in the Middle Ages. It was a period during which one of the

primary terms that was applied was the Waldenses. Peter DeBruys and Peter Waldo were some of the best-known leaders. Peter Waldo flourished between about 1150 and 1200 A.D. These were people who, in the latter part of their history, were scattered in areas of Southern Europe and Eastern Europe, down in the Alpine areas stretching across through portions of France and Italy. Originally, they had moved into that area from Bohemia. By about 1500 A.D., they were pretty well extinct.

However, the fifth stage, the Church at **Sardis**, known as the Lollards in English History, came to England in the late 1300s and 1400s. They spread in from some of the German and Bohemian-speaking realm. There are records of Sabbath-keeping Churches in England during the 1500s, 1600s and 1700s. We have a record of Stephen Mumford who came from England to Newport, Rhode Island in 1668 A.D. and established the first Church of God in the new world. It started in Rhode Island in 1668 A.D. In the early 1800s, a group called Seventh Day Baptists split off from the Church of God. About 1860 A.D., the largest portion of the Church followed the wife of an elder in the Church. This woman claimed to be a prophetess and to have visions. Her name was Ellen G. White. Those who followed her took the name Seventh Day Adventists. It was the remnants of these people that Mr. Herbert Armstrong came among in the 1920s and gave rise to what we term the sixth stage of the history of the church, typified by the Church at **Philadelphia**.

It’s interesting. The original city of Philadelphia was in a very earthquake-prone area of Asia Minor, and it was the site of frequent earthquakes. The name “Philadelphia” means “brotherly love.” We find that the Church in Philadelphia is pictured as going through open doors to do a work. We find that it is promised protection from the tribulation. This represents the work that God raised up through Mr. Herbert Armstrong, of which we are a continuation.

The Church at **Laodicea** pictures the final stage. Laodicea, in Asia Minor, was originally a very wealthy city. It was known for its soft wool and for its very soft life. It was a very prosperous area. There was a great pagan temple in Laodicea, which served as sort of the medical center of Asia Minor. It was an area to which pilgrimages were made from all over the area. It was also prominent in the manufacture of eye salve. We will notice a play on that a little later in the message to the Laodicean Church. The name “Laodicea” means “the people judge.”

“*Lao*” means “people” in the Greek language; “*dicea*” is the word for “judge.” It clearly is the era that is the final stage of the Church. The description given is very much in tune with the permissive, do-your-own-thing, materialistic, complacent attitude that is so pervasive in our society. Certainly, the people of God are not immune from the attitude and the spirit of the time.

I want to go back and comment a little bit on the situation at Ephesus—the Ephesians Church and the message to the Church at Ephesus.

Revelation 2:1, “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write...” This is addressed to the angel of the Church of Ephesus.

Verses 2-7, “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

What is He talking about? The test of the Ephesians era was they had to weigh the claims of those who claimed to be apostles and were not.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul addressed that, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, ...”

This is going back to Simon the sorcerer. We studied about him in Acts 8. We went into a little bit about him last Bible study. According to history, Simon the sorcerer (from Samaria) left Samaria and went to Rome by 42 A.D. I should have brought the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the old 11th edition, to read the article. They have about a three-page spread on Simon Magus. If you look him up in a modern encyclopedia you won’t find much, but the old encyclopedia had quite a spread on him. According to historical sources, he went to Rome about 42 A.D. and

remained there on up until his death in the late 60s. He was very much responsible for the heresies that eventually coalesced into the Catholic Church.

The Church in Ephesus (the Ephesians era) was tested in having to weigh the competing claims of those who claimed to be apostles—whether or not they were. They hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. “Nicolaitans,” if you translate it, “Nicolas” is the Greek translation of “Baal.” “Nicolas” (“*niko*” in the Greek) means “conqueror” or “ruler”; “*lao*” means “people”—ruler of the people. “Balaam,” “*Baal*” means “lord” or “ruler”; “*am*” means “people.”

Jude 3-4, Jude told them, “...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Verse 11, “Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit [KJV, “reward”], and perished in the rebellion of Korah.” This is the mystery of lawlessness that Paul said was already at work when he wrote to the Thessalonians in the 50s (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

Here is the way things got off the track. I am reading from a book, *The Collier Catholic Reader’s Series* entitled “Heresy and Orthodoxy.” In the book, he is quoting from the writings of Marcion. Marcion was a teacher. This is written about 144 A.D.

Here is the statement: “Paul alone preached the gospel, the essence of which is salvation by faith. For it’s enough to believe and to love.”

This is the statement that was made and began to be preached; you see how he got off the track. We are warned about those who would turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, into lawlessness (Jude 4). They confused God’s grace with a license to sin. They say the law is done away and that grace replaces the law.

2 Peter 3:15-16, notice Peter’s warning, “and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

Peter said there are people who are taking what Paul said out of context. They are twisting the

Scriptures. What were they teaching? They were teaching that all you had to do was to believe and to love. If you really understand what it means to believe, and if you really understand what it means to love, yeah, that's fine, but they didn't understand it that way.

1 John 5:3, John said, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments."

But their teaching was, 'Look, all you have to do is believe on the person of Jesus Christ.' Their gospel is a message that exalts the person of Jesus Christ and leaves aside the message Jesus Christ brought. It substitutes a gospel *about* Jesus for the gospel *of* Jesus Christ, the gospel He, Himself, brought. It was an "all you have to do is to believe and to love" gospel. That sounds good. That's pretty and that's flowery. That sounds beautiful. But if all you have to do is to believe and to love, it sets the stage for the next thing. This was the foundation of the heresy that was undermining the necessity of observing the law.

When you look at the earliest church fathers, they didn't say it was wrong to keep the Sabbath. They simply said, 'It's fine to do it as a custom, but it's not necessary for salvation.' They originally didn't try to stop people from doing it. They just said, 'Now, it's fine to observe these things. It's fine to do it and follow the example of the apostles and the ones that have gone before, but it's not necessary for salvation because for salvation, all you have to do is to believe and to love. All you have to do is believe in Jesus and love one another. That's all you have to do to be saved.'

But by about the time of John's death, intense anti-Jewish persecution began to break out in Rome. There had been several previous expulsions of the Jews from Rome. At that time, a very virulent wave of anti-Semitism swept Rome, in particular, and other parts of the empire. So, at that point, the bishop of Rome said, 'Sabbath observance is fine, but it's not necessary for salvation. All it does is get us unnecessary persecution because we are confused with the Jews. What we need to do is to make a clear distinction in our identity from the Jews, so let's not follow their custom anymore. It's not necessary for salvation. All we have to do is to believe and to love. We just have to believe in Jesus and love one another. Why should we get persecuted because everybody's mad at the Jews? Let's substitute; let's just have our services the next day.' That sounds reasonable, right?

It's interesting. Let me find my quote here in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, Chapter 7: "Anti-Judaism in the Fathers and the Origin of Sunday." This quotes Ignatius who was bishop of Antioch right after the Apostle John's death. You have to realize there was a mixture; there were people who were lurking around the fringes. There were various ones who had various positions, and once John died, it all came out of the woodwork.

3 John 9-10, even when John was alive—read 1, 2 and 3 John—you remember, John even wrote, "I wrote to the church, but Diotrophes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church."

John said, 'If I come down there, I'm going to deal with that fellow.' But you see, John was on up into his late 90s and he died. When John was dead and no longer on the scene, then you had all this stuff that began to erupt.

Ignatius writes and I'll just read the quote from his writings, "For if we are still practicing Judaism, we admit that we have not received God's favor."

"The frequent recommendations to abandon the practice of Judaism imply a strong leaning toward Jewish practices within the Christian community of Asia Minor." You don't have to keep telling people not to do something if they are not doing it already. The fact that you had letters written to Christian churches in the second century condemning the practice of Judaism means that these people were doing these things.

Continuing, "...the condemnation of Jewish practices such as 'sabbatizing' which is the observance of the Sabbath according to Jewish manner, and the exhortation 'to live according to the life of the Lord....'" The beginning of the use of the term "Lord's Day" had to do with this.

Ignatius urges Christians to stop practicing Judaism and to stop living like the Jews. He's writing within five or ten years of John's death.

Ignatius says, "[If then those] 'who lived in ancient ways' and who 'attained a new hope', no longer sabbatizing but living according to the Lord's life (or, Lord's Day)... it is wrong to talk about Jesus Christ and live like Jews." 'It is monstrous to talk of Jesus Christ and to practice Judaism.' He is writing this sort of thing.

I want to read a little bit here from the *Epistle of Barnabas*. He's writing about 120 A.D. He tried to spiritualize away the law. He said, "Further, then, it is written about the Sabbath, also in the Ten Words which He spoke to Moses face to face on Mount Sinai, 'And treat the Sabbath of the Lord as holy with clean hands and a pure heart.' And in another place he says, 'If my sons keep the Sabbath, I will let mercy upon them.' He mentions the Sabbath at the beginning of the creation: 'And in six days God made the works of His hand, and ended on the seventh day, and he rested on it and made it holy.' Observe, children, what 'he ended in six days' mean. This is what it means, that in six thousand years the Lord will bring all things to an end, for a day with him means a thousand years. He himself bears me witness, for he says, 'Behold, a day of the Lord will be like a thousand years.' Therefore, children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be brought to an end. 'And he rested the seventh day' means this: When his Son comes and destroys the time of the lawless one, and judges the ungodly and changes the sun and moon and stars, then he will rest well on the seventh day."

He goes on to say that, "If, then anyone can now, by being pure in heart, treat as holy the day God declared holy, we are entirely deceived. Observe that we will find true rest and treat it as holy only when we shall be able to do so having ourselves been made upright and had the promise fulfilled..."

His contention was, 'We can't really keep the Sabbath until after Christ gets back. We don't need to do away with it.'

There's an interesting statement that he made. Barnabas took a very allegorical approach to the Scripture. He said, "Now for as much as Moses said you shall not eat swine or eagle or falcon or crow or any fish that has no scale upon it, he received in his understanding three ordinances. So then it's not a commandment of God that they shouldn't bite with their teeth, but Moses was speaking it in spirit. Accordingly, he mentioned the swine with this intent. You shall not cleave, says he, to such men that are like swine; that is when they in their luxury forget the Lord."

What he did was quote Scripture and say, 'He didn't really mean that. He didn't really mean you shouldn't eat swine in the sense of eating it with your teeth. He's just saying you shouldn't associate with people who act like pigs.' They gave an interesting line of reasoning.

I am going to paraphrase a little of this for the sake of time. They said, 'Now, look, on the first

day of creation God said, "Let there be light." He did that on the first day. We call the first day of the week "Sunday." Who is the light of the world? —Jesus Christ. He's called, in Malachi 4:2, the "Sun of Righteousness." So, really, the first day is the day that should be symbolic of Jesus Christ.' This was the sort of reasoning that they used, 'See, no commandments and no particular point.'

Justin Martyr, who was writing about 150 A.D., used various things to justify Sunday worship—the creation of light on the first day, the resurrection of Christ. They quite often used the term "the eighth day." What is the eighth day? Well, it's the day after the Sabbath. The eighth day would be the first day. Justin Martyr went into all sorts of things—the fact that circumcision was on the eighth day (well, circumcision of the heart), there were eight souls in the ark, the flood covered the mountains 15 cubits, which means seven plus eight. Now what does that have to do with it? It was only at a later time that the emphasis on a Sunday resurrection began to be the primary reason. That couldn't be used at first because you had to get further and further away from the time of the original apostles. Since John was there as a witness to the resurrection, you couldn't very well preach about Easter Sunday when he was around. He was there. He saw Jesus Christ in His resurrected state. But once John was dead, the "floodgates" were open. All kind of things could come out. John wasn't around to say, 'No, it wasn't that way.' Paul's writings were the ones that were primarily twisted and misapplied.

Let me read just one other brief thing. This was from Edward Gibbon's (who was a famous British historian) *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. To show you a little bit of the way things changed that way, he says, "The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition that was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years. By the same analogy, it was inferred that this long period of labour and contention, which was now almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumph band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon the earth until the time appointed for the last and general resurrection." He explains what the church taught.

Continuing further down, “The doctrine of Christ’s reign upon the earth was at first treated as a profound allegory.” By the time of the second and third century, it was profound allegory. Irenaeus, Ignatius and some of these others said it was a profound allegory.

“[It] was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion,... He said, ‘That’s just a matter of speculation. We don’t really know about that. He may not really reign for a thousand years. We can’t really prove that He’s going to literally come back and rule for a thousand years. That’s just speculation, and, you know, it gets our minds off on speculating about Christ coming back and everything. That’s doubtful and useless opinion.’

Continuing, “...and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism.” It started out being accepted and taught as the truth. Then it was a profound allegory. Then it was just sort of a useless opinion and didn’t really matter one way or the other. Then it progressed to being heresy and fanaticism, and they were ready to persecute you if you believed that. It was a step-by-step progression. This sort of approach was the way so much of the rest of this went. The first approach was to continue to do the law. They continued to follow many of these customs, but what they undercut was whether or not it was necessary.

It’s sort of like boiling a frog in water. You turn up the heat and the water comes to a boil. If you threw the frog in the boiling water it would hop out, but if you put it in cold water and turn up the heat, it gets warm gradually and the old frog doesn’t notice until it’s too late.

If they had come along and just immediately said the Sabbath and the Holy Days were done away and they were going to keep Sunday, Easter and Christmas, boy, that’s quite a contrast. They couldn’t do that while John was alive. They couldn’t just instantly come up with that as the “first dash out of the box.” What they came up with is, ‘Look, the only thing you have to do is to believe.’

As Marcion wrote, ‘It’s just to believe and to love. That’s all that’s necessary, to believe and to love—believe in Jesus and love one another. All of these other things really aren’t necessary. It’s fine, but it’s not necessary. Well, if it’s not necessary, why should you be persecuted for it? Maybe we should just do something else.’ And so they did. They said it would make a clear demarcation of their history from that of the Jews.

I will read a little bit of what Gibbon says, “The history of the church in Jerusalem affords a lively proof of the necessity of those precautions, and of the deep impression which the Jewish religion had made on the minds of its sectaries. The first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem [all circumcised Jews and the congregation over which] they presided united the law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ [In other words, it was the true Church.]... The Jewish converts, or, as they were afterwards called, the Nazarenes [We find that term is actually used in the Bible; that was a term that was applied to them.]... The Nazarenes retired from the ruins of Jerusalem to the little town of Pella beyond the Jordan, where that ancient church languished about sixty years [and after the second Jewish revolt in 135 A.D.]... But at length, under the reign of Hadrian, the desperate fanaticism of the Jews filled up the measure of their calamities; and the Romans, exasperated by their repeated rebellions, exercised the right of victory with unusual rigour [They completely destroyed Jerusalem.]. The emperor founded, under the name of Aelia Capitolina, a new city on Mount Sion, to which he gave the privileges of a colony; and denouncing the severest penalties against any of the Jewish people who should dare to approach its precinct. He fixed a vigilant garrison of a Roman cohort to enforce the execution of his orders. The Nazarenes had only one way left to escape the common prescription.... They elected Marcus for their bishop, a prelate of the race of the Gentiles [He was a native of Italy.]... At his persuasion the most considerable part of the congregation [most of them] renounced the Mosaic Law [which would be the Sabbath],... By this sacrifice of their habits and prejudices, they purchased a free admission into the colony of Hadrian,....”

Then he goes on to describe, “...the obscure remnant of the Nazarenes which refused to accompany their Latin bishop...spread themselves into the villages adjacent to Damascus,... [and are known by] the contemptuous epithet of Ebionites.” He went on to describe how traces of the Ebionites can be discovered as late as the fourth century.

When Christ talked to the Church in **Ephesus**, He addressed those who had to make a distinction. The test of the true Church at that point was ‘to test [KJV, “try”] those that said they are apostles’ (Revelation 2:2). –Whether or not they were. How do you test them? You put it to the test.

Isaiah 8:20, “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” There’s no truth in them. The test as to whether someone was what he said he was, was whether or not he taught God’s truth. It was a time of demarcation between many who called themselves “Christian.” We find that very few really preserved and held on to the truth. They took the path of least resistance, undermined by things that took place over a period of years.

During much of the Ephesian era, there wasn’t a clear distinction between the true Church and the false church. In many cases, brethren were meeting in congregations that consisted of various ones because everybody called themselves Christians and congregated together. Communication, transportation and many things played into this. The clear cleavage between what became the Catholic Church and what remained as the true Church of God was accomplished during the time of the Smyrna Church.

Revelation 2:8-9, He says, “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, :... ‘I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich) [Spiritually, they were rich; physically and materially they were in poverty and under great persecution.]; and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.’”

The Samaritans anciently claimed to be Jews, but they weren’t. You can read of that back in the period of the Old Testament. We read of it when we went through Ezra and Nehemiah. Here were their modern-day New Testament descendants. The followers of Simon Magus claimed to be spiritual Jews and they weren’t that either. The message to Smyrna is, ‘I know those that claim to be My true people and really aren’t. For them to attach My name to them is blasphemy. I know that these false heretical groups are not the Church of God. It’s the synagogue of Satan.’

Verse 10, “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days [There was a ten-year persecution from 303 to 313 A.D. by the emperor Domitian that seems to be addressed here.]. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

This Church was perhaps the most persecuted period. It was a time of intense persecution. It was during the next stage that God removed His people from the bounds of the Roman Empire.

For about 1,260 years, the Church remained primarily outside the pale of the Roman Empire and the populated urban areas.

It was basically during this Smyrna period that the emperor, Constantine, came on the scene. There are historical records in the church fathers concerning controversies involving the true Church and the heretics, all the way up to the time of Constantine.

The Council at Nicaea was called to settle the issue of when to observe Passover. The Roman practice of Easter Sunday was the decree. Then just five or six years later, the Council of Laodicea set enforcement on the issue of Sunday observance in place of the Sabbath. You don’t have to make an issue of those things if they are universal. If Christ is the One who changed it, why do you find disciples 300 years later still doing something else? The only reason that Constantine and the Roman government had to get in on the act was because they were trying to make something that had crept in and had become predominant, universal. But it wasn’t, by any means, universal. The true Church visibly disappeared from the scene during this period.

Smyrna comes from the word “*mer*.” It means “perfume.” That was what was offered on the altar of incense. They were, in that sense, a living sacrifice to God.

“Pergamos” means “fortified.” The Church at this point, the seventh century A.D., migrated out of Asia Minor up into the very mountainous regions of Armenia and remote mountain valleys. They were pretty well isolated from the general population.

Revelation 2:13, Pergamos was told, “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”

Pergamos was the ancient seat of the Pontifex Maximus of the Babylonian Mystery religion. It was in 133 B.C. that Attalus III, god-king of Pergamum, died. In his will, he left his kingdom and his title “Pontifex Maximus” to the Romans. He literally bequeathed his kingdom to the Roman rulers in his will in 133 B.C. The title “Pontifex Maximus” was used by the Roman rulers. It became a title of Julius Caesar; he became Pontifex Maximus. It continued on down and all the emperors of the Roman Empire used that title up until Emperor Gratian in 378 A.D. He resigned the title “Pontifex Maximus” and bestowed it upon Pope Damascus in 378 A.D. That title has since been used by Rome. That’s

why the term “Roman Pontiff” is used referring to the pope. It goes back to that title. That’s the trace of it.

It refers to Pergamos as being “the place where Satan’s seat dwells” because that ancient city was the location of that. “Antipas” in Greek could be translated “Antipater” or you could translate it literally as “antipope” or “one who was against or opposed the pope” in that way. It’s very likely a reference to Constantine of Mananali who was martyred in 684 A.D. for preaching against the pope. They labeled him as the antichrist of the gospels. It describes this.

The Church at Pergamos began to remove itself from the confines of the empire up into that area of Armenia.

Verse 14, He said, ““But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam,”

Verse 15, ““Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.”

There was a certain involvement of spiritual fornication. It was a time of persecution. There were various attempts of those who would try to make political arrangements and alliances with the world trying to protect themselves.

Verse 16, they were told, ““Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”” They were warned that the way to resolve their problem was not to enter into political alliances.

The term “Bogomils” came to be applied to this group of people. They moved up into the areas of Armenia and on into sections of what’s now portions of Bulgaria and portions of Eastern Europe. They moved in that very mountainous Transcarpathian mountainous area. Many of them got tired of running, entered into alliances with some of the people around and tried to protect themselves. This is what they are being indicted for here. There were others who trusted God and they moved on a little further.

We pick up the remnants of them in the next Church, the Church at **Thyatira**. Cloth merchants coming from that area of Bulgaria came into the Alpine areas of Europe and brought the truth that emerged there in the Middle Ages. It was the brightest flame in the Middle Ages. Particularly, the preaching of Peter Waldo had significant effect and influence through that remote Alpine area in southern France and northern Italy.

Verses 19-20, He says to the Church at Thyatira, ““I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are

more than the first. Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.”

There were those among the Waldenses who counseled people, ‘Go ahead and attend mass (which was enforced by civil decree) to avoid persecution. Go ahead and attend mass. You know it doesn’t really mean what it says. You go ahead and partake of the symbols there at the mass.’ In reality, you are eating something sacrificed to an idol because that’s what’s there. Idols are all over the place.

“To teach and beguile [KJV, “seduce”] My servants to commit sexual immorality [KJV, “fornication”].” –To enter into illicit relationships with the world and the society around. “You allow that woman Jezebel”; Jezebel was a type of the great whore of Revelation 17. The Catholic Church was personified in Jezebel. If you really want to know what God doesn’t like in a woman, go back and study about Jezebel; she sort of sums it up. When God gets ready to mention a bad example, she’s the one He uses. He uses her here symbolic of the false church because she literally committed fornication (immorality) with various surrounding kings trying to build alliances. The church, as a symbolic woman, symbolically entered into illicit relationships and various alliances. Thyatira was indicted on this. They had allowed some of these things, and He said, ‘I am going to allow persecution.’

Verses 22-23, ““Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death. And all the churches shall know....”” We have the emergence of the beginning of some of the reform movements. Even the problems and persecutions that came are made reference to here.

Revelation 3:1, the Church at **Sardis** was told, ““...you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”” They were spiritually dead. This is certainly the description of the Church when Mr. Herbert Armstrong came among them. They had a name, but for all intents and purposes, they were spiritually dead.

Verse 2, they were told, ““Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.””

Verses 3-4, "...hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." But, of course, many had defiled their garments. "Sardis" means "remnant."

Verse 7, **Philadelphia** was told, "...These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens...'"" "Philadelphia" means "brotherly love."

The "key of David" was the symbol of opening and closing, the power to open and close. This was coming forth from the throne of David. It's interesting that the key that unlocks and opens up prophecy to our understanding is the knowledge of where the throne of David is, the throne that God established, the throne to which Christ will return. Christ pictures Himself to Philadelphia as opening doors for a work to be done and, in some cases, shutting doors.

Verses 8-9, He says to Philadelphia, "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet," That means in the resurrection. We will have to be born into the Family. We will have to be God, as a part of God's Family, for anybody to be able to worship us because it's a sin to worship even an angel.

Revelation 19:10, when John bowed down before an angel, the angel said, "...See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant," He said, 'Stand up. I'm a servant of God just like you are (cf. Daniel 8:16-18).' So, if Christ is going to make somebody come worship at our feet, that will only be after we have entered into the Family of God and have, in that sense, been literally born as sons of God. We are sons of God right now but not in glory as at the resurrection. We are not sons in the full sense that we shall be.

Revelation 3:10, KJV, "Because you have kept the word of My patience," That's the test of this era—to patiently wait for God to do what He says He will do. If you get ahead of God, you get in trouble. That's one thing that is very important for us to understand and to remember.

It was God's purpose to bring Israel, under Joshua, across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land, wasn't it (Joshua 1—4)? God

intended to do that. Because the Jordan was at flood stage, you couldn't cross it. God worked a miracle. He opened the Jordan River and let them come across on dry ground. Do you know how He did it? He had the priests bring the ark. They carried it on their shoulders and came down. When the first priest stuck his first foot into the water, the waters stopped and the waters parted. The priests walked out and stood in the middle. They held the ark in the middle and people walked across.

What do you think would have happened if somebody had gotten ahead of the ark? If they had said, 'Well, God wants us on the other side so why wait?', you know what would have happened? They would have drowned in the river. You don't get ahead of the ark.

Verse 10, the Philadelphia Church is told, "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth." This is a reference to the Great Tribulation.

Verses 11-12, "Behold, I come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God,"

The pillars of Solomon's temple had names. You can go back and read it in 1 Kings 7:15, 21 and 2 Chronicles 3:15, 17. The pillars of Solomon's temple were named Boaz and Jachin. It literally meant "strength" and "stability." That's what's involved here. The pillars were supports—strength and stability. That's part of what God's trying to build in. He says the reward is being with Christ at headquarters in the New Jerusalem.

The Church of the **Laodiceans** is the final stage of the Church.

Verses 15-18, He says, "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."

The problem is that they don't see themselves. Their own evaluation is that they think they are in great shape. This is descriptive of a complacent, materialistic, permissive sort of

watered-down, tepid approach, very much in harmony with the state of our society and our world. The world we live in is a lot more conducive to producing Laodiceans than it is Philadelphians. Christ indicts this final stage of the Church because they reflect too much of the spirit of society, as opposed to the Spirit of God. They don't really see themselves for what they are. They want to basically do what they want to do. They are not all stirred up and all excited about God and about God's way. They are preoccupied with other things.

Verses 19-21, He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him that overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." We see this involvement here.

We see these statements to the seven Churches. One refrain that runs through after the message to each one of the seven Churches is, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

There are three aspects of the messages to the Churches. The first aspect is that it was a literal message to seven literal congregations in Asia Minor 1,900 years ago. Second, it certainly is descriptive of attitudes that have been extant in and among God's people all the way down through the centuries. At any given time, you would find people who reflected a variety of these attitudes and states of mind, but that's not all it's about because we have seven distinct congregations that are successive stops on a mail route. It's not simply of historical significance to what was going on in congregations 1,900 years ago. It's not simply attitudes that are prevalent. Surely, there are those who have lost their first love and there are those who are Laodicean. There are those who are this or that in terms of attitudes. Third, there are also seven distinct successive stages typified by seven distinct successive stops on a Roman mail route that symbolized the seven stages through which the history of the Church of God will pass. We should be aware of that and aware of these things because they are messages for us.

Revelation 3:22, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.""

You, perhaps, thought that by taking seven Bible studies on the book of Revelation, we could go into every detail and cover in depth every word

of the book of Revelation. I have skimmed the high points of the first three chapters and haven't covered a third of what I wished I had covered. But we're not going to spend 21 Bible studies on Revelation. We are just going to keep it to seven. We will come back and pick up some of this stuff in later Bible studies and sermons on other subjects. This is to give you an overview.

You have study questions for next time. We are going to cover chapters 4, 5 and 6. By the way, if you have copies of *Revelation: The Mystery Unveiled* and *The Beast of Revelation, Myth, Metaphor or Soon-Coming Reality*, it would be good to study them.

Bible Study # 95
September 8, 1992
Mr. John Ogwyn

Book of Revelation Series—Revelation 4—6
(Chart at end)

We are getting on a little further into the book of Revelation this evening. We **are going into chapters 4, 5 and 6.**

One thing I might mention at the beginning. You know there are various groups, particularly a number of the Protestants, who teach the doctrine of the rapture, which is the idea that the second coming really isn't the second coming. It is sort of the second "almost" coming, sort of a near miss. The doctrine of the rapture, of course, is not found in the Bible.

It's amazing how certain terms find their way into the religious vocabulary and you don't find them in the Bible. The Protestant doctrine of the rapture, you won't find in the Bible. The doctrine of the trinity, you won't find in the Bible. It was not used until a couple of hundred years after the Bible was completed and a Catholic writer used it.

The doctrine of the rapture is the idea that Christ doesn't really come all the way back. He only comes as far as the clouds and He catches up the church. He takes them all up to heaven; we sit up there and watch while the Tribulation is going on. Perhaps you've seen a car with a bumper sticker that says, "In case of the rapture this car will be driverless" or whatever. "This car will be without a driver in the case of the rapture." One of the scriptures they quote to prove their doctrine is Revelation 4.

Revelation 4:1, John says, "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, ...'" They stop at that point and say, 'This is the point at which the rapture occurs and throughout the rest of the book of Revelation, the church is no longer on the earth. The church is no longer pictured as on the earth throughout the rest of the book of Revelation, so this proves the rapture.'

Well, it doesn't prove the rapture. It's not talking about that at all. This is a vision that John saw. Let's go on and read the rest of the verse.

Verses 1-2, "... And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.' Immediately I was in

the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne."

John saw a vision and his vision transported him into the presence of God. It's a remarkable thing when we read some of this. John was describing what he saw in the vocabulary that he had. Sometimes you read a description and you have trouble picturing it in your mind. What you have to consider is that if you were shown things you had never seen before, how would you describe it? You would have to use words and terms that you were familiar with and say, 'It was like this' and 'It was like that.' You wouldn't know what it was. You wouldn't know the name of it unless someone told you, and if you put down the proper name, no one else would know what you were talking about.

What if someone of 100 years ago were transported forward into the future and saw a television and a VCR and then they went back to their point in time and were trying to describe to someone what they saw. If they used the word "television" and "VCR" that would be meaningless because nobody in the 1890s would have any idea of what that was. You might as well have called it a "whatyoumacallit" because it would be just about as meaningless to them.

It reminds me of an old man that I knew in the Church in Texas. He told me about when he was a boy, which was in the 1890s. One day they went to town in a wagon, and while his father was shopping, he was wandering around as kids would. There was what was called a "magic lantern show" that was being held in the back part of somebody's barn there in town. There were barns in town back at that time. The magic lantern show was sort of the ancestor of the moving picture. It was a very primitive sort of thing. It was literally a magic lantern show because the lantern was the means of light, and there was a sort of flipping through these cards. Some of you may be familiar with that. Anyway, it was a very crude and primitive thing, but it did project the picture onto a sheet that was hung there in the dark barn. The lantern was what gave the light, and somebody had to manually put through the sequence. It looked like it was moving. It gave the illusion of moving—jerking, yes, but moving nevertheless. When he got back home, he was telling his dad about seeing moving pictures, and his dad whipped him for lying. He said, 'Pictures don't move. Don't be coming back telling me tall tales.' It seemed a very farfetched thing.

The point that I am making is what is unfamiliar is very difficult to describe. You describe it in

terms that are familiar to you. Back then, they called it a magic lantern show because they literally used the lantern and it seemed like magic. Instead of still shots, you saw things projected on the screen that seem to be moving. It was very primitively done.

John described things that he had never seen before. He described things that there were not appropriate words for in his vocabulary to describe. He described things and if he had put down the real name of it, nobody he was writing to would have known what it was. They would be looking at it and wouldn't be able to figure it out either. John described, in the vocabulary of his day, the things that he saw.

As we go through the book of Revelation, some of these things may very well have to do with futuristic battle scenes, weapons and things of this sort that there simply were no words for. When he describes battles and weapons, he talks about chariots. He talks about something that looked like a swarm of locusts flying through the air. If he had seen a squadron of attack helicopters moving through, what would it have looked like? It would have looked like a swarm of locusts coming through. He would have looked up and would have seen—transported in vision—things that were simply beyond the scope of his imagination. So, he would have used terminology familiar to him.

Just like when the first cars came along, they were called horseless carriages. That was the way people described them. It was like a carriage but didn't have a horse in front of it. In describing some of these things, the problem is a matter of vocabulary.

If somebody wants to make the point that God's Church isn't found on the earth again after Revelation 4:1, all they have to do is go to Revelation 5:10 and find that we are kings and priests on the earth. There are plenty of other places. Revelation 12:14 talks about God's Church literally being taken to her place in the wilderness, to a place of protection or a place of safety to be protected from the Great Tribulation. There are some that object to the use of the term "place of safety" because they say that exact term is not in the Bible. No, it's not exactly what it says.

Revelation 12:14, "But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent."

We could call it "the place in the wilderness where the Church is nourished for a time, times

and half a time" every time we discuss it, but it's simpler to refer to it as "a place of protection" or "a place of safety"—a place for God's Church to be protected and nourished. What is a place of safety? It's not a matter of quibbling about terms. We find that the place where the woman, or the Church, is to be nourished is a place in the wilderness. It's a place on the earth, not off up in heaven somewhere; it's not in some situation like that.

In Revelation 4:1, John sees a vision. John had seen another vision about 65 years or more before he saw what he saw in Revelation 4. John had seen another vision. That vision is recorded back in Matthew 17.

Matthew 16:28, remember at the very end of the chapter Jesus said to the disciples, "...there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Then the very next verses, Matthew 17:1-2 say that a week later, He took James, Peter and John and went up into a mountain apart from the rest of them and was transfigured before them. They saw Him in His glorified state.

Verse 3, they saw Moses and Elijah in glorified form conversing with Him.

Matthew 17:9, at the end of that experience He told them, "...Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." They saw a vision. That was the fulfillment of the promise that some of them would not taste death until they saw Him coming in the Kingdom. They saw it in vision. They saw Him in the glorified state that is representative of the Kingdom of God. They saw Him with individuals who will be in top positions in the Kingdom of God. They saw a vision of the resurrection. They were transported in vision into the Kingdom.

Now, over 65 years later, John is an elderly man in his 90s in exile on the island of Patmos and is given a vision. He had previously been given information. Now, in vision, he is transported into the very presence of the throne of God.

There are those who say, 'We don't know anything about what God is like or what heaven is like.' Oh, yes, we do! We wouldn't know it if God didn't tell us, but we can know. It's not the idea, 'well, whatever you try to imagine and visualize—God and whatever you are imagining—it won't be that way.'—Perhaps, if all you had was imagination; however, there are various things that you can certainly know. We know that there is a brilliance, a glory like the sun. In fact, we even know what color His hair is.

Revelation 1:14, “His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow, ...”

Verse 13 describes the garment that He has on. It describes various things. Those things that God reveals can certainly be known. Now, if God doesn't reveal it, we can't know it, but God does reveal certain things. He wants us to have a grasp of what He is like. He reveals information about Himself and about His throne.

In Revelation 4:1, God gave John the vision. John was to write these things down to show these things to the servants of God (Revelation 1:1). When John was transported in his vision, he saw a throne in heaven and an Individual sitting on that throne.

Revelation 4:2, “Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.” There are several places in Scripture where we find references to that. You can go back to Ezekiel 1; you can go to the book of Daniel (Daniel 7:9), where it talks about the Ancient of Days sitting on a throne. There are places in Daniel 7 and Ezekiel 1. There are places that are references to God and to a vision of heaven and God's throne. This is what John sees.

Verse 3, “And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.” What he saw was a reflection of light. It was brilliant. There was a splendor and a brilliance of color and light that was just overpowering to him. He saw it like a rainbow.

We've probably all seen prisms. My wife has a little one that hangs on a shade. Certain times of the year, at the right angle of the sun, the sun will hit it and will make little rainbow colors that come through the kitchen and shine on a kitchen cabinet. Many of us have seen that sort of thing. It's just a tiny bit, but it's pretty. We see here where God is surrounded by things like that.

Verse 6, “Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, ...” The light that is emanated and the refraction of that light, the brilliance of color and beauty were just overwhelming. He describes it like a rainbow around the throne. There was all this brilliance and this beautiful light.

Who is it that designed color to be a part of life? That's an incredible thing. Here you have sunlight. There's no color in sunlight, but when it shines through a glass prism, all of a sudden, you have red, yellow, blue—you have color. Where did that come from? Well, it came from the light. How did it get there? God put it there.

He designed light in a way like that. He designed all sorts of things, and we see just a tiny glimmer of it. Here, on this earth, we get to enjoy some of the beauty that God has designed. But do you think God has given us something that is beyond what He has? Do you think God looks down and is sort of envious and thinks, ‘People get to have all the fun; they get all these nice things.’

Sometimes people, particularly young people, are concerned. They want Christ to come back, but they don't want Him to come back too soon because they want to be able to have some fun in life. If you stop and think about it, do you think God looks down and is envious of what people are doing? Do you think God says, ‘Those people get to have all this fun. They have such exciting lives and get to do these thrilling, fun things—all I get to do is just sort of sit here.’

Psalms 16:11, “...in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Believe me, there's nothing we can enjoy on the human level that even holds the flicker of a candle to the kind of enjoyment we can have on the God level. There just isn't!

It's hard for us to fathom—just like it would be hard for your two or three year old to fathom the things that you enjoy as an adult—why would that be so thrilling? A little child can sit there and make all these noises with his mouth and run his little truck across the floor. He's having a “ball.” Do you look down there and say, ‘I wish I could do that again. That's just so much fun.’ Would you just want to spend your day making all those noises with your mouth. No, there are a lot of other exciting things—things that never even entered into the child's mind. He can't comprehend what it's like to live on an adult level. In the same way, we can't comprehend what it's like to live on the God level. God gives us a little bit of insight.

John sees this and he's overwhelmed by it.

Revelation 4:4-5, then he notices, “Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

I am going to show you a little bit about who these seven Spirits are. We are going to see that this is identified in the Scriptures. Who are the 24 elders? What are they? The term for “elder” in the Greek language is the word “*presbyteros*.” The Presbyterian Church takes its name from that term. That's the style of government they

have—government by the elders or the presbyters, as it is in the Greek. Basically, that word means what our word “elder” means in English. The primary meaning of “elder” is “one who is older” and by implication, therefore, “one who has great experience and wisdom.” The elders of ancient Israel were the ones that people went to for counsel and advice. They were the ones who made judgmental decisions in a community. The elders were the ones who gave guidance. They were older men who had experience and were looked to by others as a source of wisdom. They occupied governmental function, in the sense that they often sat as a council to make decisions and give advice. The Jews applied that term to the members of the Sanhedrin.

Here we find created beings at the throne of God who occupy very high-level positions in God’s government. Who are they counseling and advising and making judgmental decisions pertaining to? –Undoubtedly, the various angelic creatures and creation. We are not told how many angels there are. Perhaps there are billions of them. In Revelation 5:11, it talks about 10,000 x 10,000. Well, that is 100,000,000 (100 million), so you know that there are many. It talks about many others, so there are perhaps even billions of angels. We are not told exactly how many, but God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). There is order and organization in everything that God does.

Twelve is God’s number for organization, for government structure or for organized beginnings. When God began the nation of Israel, He did so with 12 tribes. When you go back to the book of Exodus and Numbers, you find there were 12 princes, a prince for each tribe. When you go into the New Testament, Christ chose 12 apostles as a foundation of the New Testament Church. So, 12 is a number of organizational beginnings. It denotes governmental structure.

Here in Revelation 4:4, we have twice 12; 2 x 12 is 24. Here is the governmental structure that the angelic realm is predicated upon. God doesn’t have angels out there just sort of swarming all over the place. There’s organization and structure. There is structure and a hierarchy. God doesn’t reveal all of it to us. We don’t need to know it all, but He gives us little bits of insight.

These 24 great angelic creatures sit like a council and occupy a position of administering the angelic realm right there at the throne of God. They are a source of advice, counsel, instruction

to the angels and deal with matters that come up. They are seen there.

It mentions these seven lamps burning before the throne.

“And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

Verse 6, “Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.” Here we find this great expanse. John describes it. It’s like crystal; it was reflective. Evidently, it was sort of like a mirror finish. Perhaps parts of it may have even been some sort of crystalline design that refracted light. There was brilliance and shine to it. John had never seen anything like it. Of course, the reason is because there is nothing like it. It is something that exists at the throne of God.

Verse 6, continuing, it then describes these four creatures that were full of eyes, “...And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.”

Verses 7-8, it describes them as having characteristics like a lion, a calf, a man and an eagle and they had six wings. We think that sounds like an awfully unusual creature. It seems unusual to us because you and I have never seen anything like that.

They are mentioned back in Ezekiel 1. Ezekiel 1:5-10 describe four creatures. Ezekiel tells us they have four faces: one face was like a man, one was like a lion, one was like an eagle and one was like an ox; it describes that they had wings. They were unusual-looking creatures. The reason they strike us as unusual is because we have never seen anything like that and have trouble imagining anything like it.

Let me ask you a question. What did God model the animals here on earth after? Ever thought about that? You know, God modeled man after Himself. He made man in His image (Genesis 1:26; Genesis 5:1, 3). God made man a clay model that had the shape, outline and imprint of His characteristics. God modeled man after Himself. There are creatures in the spirit realm. Many of the angels also have the look of what we would term a human being. They carry that outward form and shape, but there are others that don’t.

The proof of that—remember, 2 Kings 2:11, when Elijah was taken up into heaven in a chariot. He was taken up into the sky (the atmosphere). What was he taken up in? He was taken up in horses and chariots of fire. Where do you think they got the horses of fire? Do you think they went down to the auction and bought

the first horses that came through the ring? They wouldn't have gotten very high off the ground, and you wouldn't have gotten them close to a chariot of fire, that's for sure. These were angelic horses. They were horses that existed in the angelic realm. We know that there are creatures that have the appearance of a horse because even Jesus Christ is pictured as sitting on a horse.

Revelation 19:11, "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war."

Verse 14, "And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses."

We find a description that there are angelic creatures. Since they are made of spirit, they are angelic creatures, creatures in the angelic realm. Certainly, some beings in the angelic realm have the appearance of what we would term animals. Just as God modeled man after Himself, certain animals that He made were modeled after counterparts or certain characteristics of angelic beings. Now, I am not saying that every animal you come across has some sort of a heavenly counterpart. I don't think that's necessarily the case at all. There's no indication of opossums and armadillos and all the rest of it. I am not indicating that at all, but there are some. How many are there? I don't know. We are not told. We have certain ones.

"And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

Revelation 1:4-5, if we go back, "John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead," We again read of the seven Spirits before the throne of God.

Revelation 3:1, "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, "These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your works,'" There's a reference to these Spirits. What are they? Let's turn back to the book of Zechariah and we will notice in Zechariah 3 and 4.

Zechariah 3:8-9, ".... for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH [This is a reference to Jesus Christ; in most of your Bibles, the term "BRANCH" is probably in all capital letters.]. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription," says the

Lord of hosts, "and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.""

Zechariah 4:10, "For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."

Revelation 5:6, "And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth."

"Seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." We find that reference in Zechariah 4:10. We find these seven Spirits referenced in other places in the book of Revelation. This is not the Holy Spirit. These are spirit beings.

Just hold your place here and let's notice one other place.

Hebrews 1:7, "And of the angels He says: 'Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.'" His ministers are His servants. His angels are spirits. Some servants are likened to flames of fire. Here this describes created angelic spirit beings that evidently serve as an information-gathering source to God. They are the means by which God keeps up with every single thing that's going on all over the earth.

Our technology is very primitive, but there are certain things that we are aware of that can give us some insight. Our technology is perhaps more than generations past, though I don't think we should think that what we have is comparable to what God has. To compare what we have to what God has is like comparing a little flickering candle with the sun in full glory. There's not a whole lot of comparison. A little flickering candle and the sun both provide light and heat, but the distinction between them is awfully significant.

We can put satellites in the sky, and we can have various ones located in orbit in various places around the earth. We call them "spy satellites." They can send back pictures. Somebody can be sitting in a room watching on a television set something that is going on a world away. We have telephoto. We can take photographs and watch things that are going on a long ways away. We have sent probes into outer space. We can sit and watch film footage coming from the moons of Jupiter—just incredible things. Somebody can sit and watch something projected onto a television screen.

Here it's being projected back. These seven Spirits that John described serve, in that sense, as the eyes of God. They are the means by which God watches what is going on. They are described here.

John sees a great celebration of praise for God going on in heaven.

Revelation 4:11, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”

For all of this brilliance, magnificence, power and grandeur that are described in the spirit realm, none of them are created to be part of God's Family. Just hold your place here and let's go back to Hebrews. God is speaking of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:4-5, “having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten you’? And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’?”

For all the grandeur, power and greatness that these angels were created with, none of them are part of God's Family. They are created as servant beings to serve and carry out God's government, but we have the opportunity to actually be a part of His Family, to actually be a part of the very Family of God.

Revelation 21:7, God says to us, “...I will be his God and he shall be My son.” ‘You are My sons!’ Now, if we are sons and He's the Father, that's a Family, isn't it? It's a relationship the angels can't have. We don't just become angels. We won't sprout wings, grow a halo and become an angel. Our destiny is far, far greater than any of the angels.

Let's compare it. In a monarchy, the only way you can be a part of the royal family is to be born into the royal family. If you're a commoner, the highest thing that you could aspire to is to be the Prime Minister. If you actually look at the meaning of the words “Prime Minister,” it simply means “the first servant” or “the chief servant.” But you can never be higher than that because the only way you can be a prince or a king is to be born into the royal family.

The angelic beings have great power, authority, grandeur and greatness—far greater than what we have as human beings right now. Our destiny is not just simply to be a super angel. It is far, far above the angelic realm. It's incredible.

John sees a little bit of this. He sees heaven. He sees the very throne of God.

Revelation 5:1, “And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll [KJV, “book”] written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.”

Verse 3, “And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.” None of the created angelic beings that were in heaven—not the 24 elders, not the four living creatures, not Michael or Gabriel or any of the angelic beings that were in heaven—were worthy to open that book. There was no human being alive on the earth that was worthy to open that book. There was nobody dead and buried under the earth that was worthy to open that book.

Verse 4, John was just overwhelmed that there was no one that could open the book.

Verses 5-6, “But one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.’ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain,”

John uses the metaphor “Lamb of God.” He uses it in his gospel and in the book of Revelation. It is referring to Jesus Christ.

Verse 7, he describes, “Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.” He took it out of the hand of God the Father.

Verse 8, “Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”

“Golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.” Do you ever think of God having a means of storing up prayers? It describes here golden bowls full of incense. Incense was offered in the Holy Place and was symbolic of the prayers of God's people—it's sweet savor coming up to God. God evidently has a means by which He preserves the prayers of His saints. They are really precious to Him. If we consider and think about that, we might be more careful in our prayer life. Think about that.

I don't know about you, but I have a box at home. In that box, I have an accumulation of cards. I have things my children made for me years ago when they were really small. I have cards that they would make or a letter that they would write to me. I have cards that various people have sent over the years. From time to

time I like to go back through, look and think back about some of that and to sort of take encouragement from some of that. We often save things that our children do when they are young because it means a lot to us. It's very precious to us. As they get older, you look back and see some of these things. It's something you enjoy reminiscing about. God appreciates and values the prayers of His children.

I want to call your attention to a technical point in verses 9 and 10 so we can understand it.

Verse 9-10, "And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.'" The King James Version translates it with the first-person pronouns "us" and "we." Many other translations will render the third-person pronoun "them" or "they" and that is correct.

The Greek text that the King James was translated from is called the "Textus Receptus." Overall it is a very accurate text. It is not identical to what is called the "Majority Text" or "Byzantine Text," which comprises about 90 percent of the Greek manuscripts. It is a text that was available there in Europe and was primarily compiled from those. Overall it was a very excellent text, but when you check the Majority or Byzantine Text, which is really the authoritative New Testament manuscript, it uses the third-person pronoun "them" or "they." That is correct because if you look at the context, angelic beings are the ones that are singing. Well, they haven't been redeemed out of tribe and tongues and peoples and nations. The correct translation would be using the third-person pronoun "them" or "they." Most modern translations render it that way. The New King James renders it the way the Old King James does, but they have a footnote in the margin where they tell you that the text is really a deviation of the King James text from the originals, one of the few, one of a handful.

The angelic creatures are singing a new song to Christ.

"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us [them] to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation..." It's talking about human beings from every ethnic background who have been redeemed to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. Angelic beings

are singing this. Naturally they would use a third-person pronoun.

"And have made us [them] kings and priests to our God; and we [they] shall reign on the earth." Verse 11, "Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands..." He saw 100 million and then thousands of thousands. That's millions! John saw millions of angels. One choir was 100 million angels. Can you imagine what sort of a volume of song that ten million angels could make?

We hear our choir sing and that's inspiring. When you go to the Feast, there may be a large choir that consists of 100 or 200 at a big Feast site, and that's really impressive. Can you imagine the choir that God has in heaven? —A hundred million angels! That must be quite a thing.

They were singing and glorifying God and Jesus Christ. They were worshiping Him because now the Lamb opens the seals. The Lamb is Jesus Christ. He opens the seals. He is the Revelator. Jesus Christ is the One who reveals what the seals meant.

A document was written and sealed. The King James Bible says it was a book, but what we are seeing is actually a scroll. Books that are bound, as we think of them, didn't come into use until at least a couple of hundred years after the time John had written Revelation. Up to that time, a scroll, which is unrolled, is what was utilized. Here we find something that was sealed. It was sealed and a seal was broken. You unrolled it and then you got to another seal. You broke that seal and unrolled it further.

Seals were put on letters. It was a way of making something tamper proof, of ensuring that only the authorized individual used it. In ancient times and coming on up into fairly modern times, sealing was generally done on legal documents. Sealing wax was put on them and then a signet ring was pressed into the warm wax. Something that identified or authenticated the genuineness was pressed into it. Pages of a will or something similar were folded. Then they would heat wax, let that blob of wax fall on the fold and then put a seal in it. If anybody broke it, it was obvious. You couldn't repair it. It would be apparent whether or not it had been tampered with. It was a means of protecting a legal document and guaranteeing that no unauthorized entry was made. Nobody had access to it. If they did, it was readily discovered that they had done so. No one

was authorized to open it except the individual who was authorized to break that seal.

No one was allowed to break that seal. God had written it. He had sealed it and no one was authorized to break the seal. No one was worthy to break the seal except Jesus Christ. He broke the seal. As Jesus Christ would break the seal, John described it. It's like John is in heaven. He's transported to heaven and he's before the throne. The seals are broken and it's like he's watching on a big television. Now, that's a poor analogy, but it sort of gives you the picture. It's almost as though he's there. All of a sudden, he sees all of these events going on. Then another seal is broken and he sees all these other events going on. This is a remarkable thing. You can sort of picture it. It's something like a giant movie screen, though perhaps a 3-D movie screen or something far more impressive than anything we have.

All of a sudden, John actually sees these events taking place. What he sees is symbolic and these symbols are interpreted. Where would we look to find the interpretation? We have to go to the interpretation given by Jesus Christ because He's the Revelator. He's the only one worthy to open the seals.

Revelation 6:1-2, the **first seal** is a **white horse**, "Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; And I looked, and behold, a white horse. And he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer."

Verses 3-4, the **second seal** is a **fiery red horse**, "When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, 'Come and see.' And another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword."

Verses 5-6, the **third seal** is a **black horse**, "When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, 'Come and see.' And I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, 'A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius;'"

Here was food rationing—famine. Food was being rationed out. A denarius was the daily wage of a laboring man at that point in time. We are looking at a small ration of food for a day's wages—at least a day's wages, what we would term "minimum wages." We are looking at food

being scarce, being rationed and being very expensive.

Verses 7-8, the **fourth seal** is a **pale horse**, "When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come and see.' And I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades [grave; the grave follows after death] followed with him. And power was given to them [the previous horsemen, particularly the red horseman of war and the black horseman of famine, together with the pale horse of death] over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death,"

Among those three—warfare, famine and disease—one-fourth of the earth's population dies, along with many animals. It's a horrendous event.

Verses 9-11, the **fifth seal** is **slain souls**, "When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' And a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed."

Let's talk about this fifth seal a little bit. There's some who point to Revelation 6:9 and say, 'This proves there's people in heaven. People go to heaven when they die because it talks about them right here.' Well, if Revelation 6:9 proves that people go to heaven when they die, it also proves that they all go under the altar, which must be a rather crowded place by now. They want to take that literally and say that proves they are going to heaven. If you are going to take it literally rather than symbolically, then it proves they went down under the altar and they are stuffing another one down under there. Those who believe in going to heaven don't think they are going to lie under the altar stacked up like cordwood for centuries and millennia. They think they are rolling around the streets of gold.

What is it talking about? What was under the altar? The altar in the tabernacle and temple was where the sacrifices were slaughtered. What was under the altar? There was a basin that collected the blood of the sacrifices. There was a basin at the foot of the altar and the blood ran down. The blood was collected in the basin and was utilized. The blood was symbolic of the life of

the creature. In Leviticus 17:11, we are told that the life is in the blood.

Let's go back to the book of Genesis. In Genesis 4, we read the story of Cain and Abel.

Genesis 4:8-10, "Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose against Abel his brother and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' And He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.'"

Did he mean that Abel's blood literally had a voice? Well, no, he's using what is termed "metaphorical language." The very presence of the blood of a righteous man demands retribution from a just and holy God. He told Cain, "Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground." In other words, the very presence and existence of the blood of Abel demanded retribution from a God who is holy and just—not simply One who stands by and ignores it—when one of His servants is slaughtered.

Now, the blood of righteous Abel cried out. If the blood of one righteous man—one martyr—cried out for vengeance, how much more loudly is the collective cry from the blood of all of the servants of God who have been slain down through the centuries—from righteous Abel on down? How much more loudly does the blood of all righteous men cry out collectively? The martyrdom of men and women of God demands that a God who is just and holy has to intervene for there to be justice. If God is a God of justice, then somewhere along the line there has to be some retribution. In this life, many times the righteous perish and the wicked prosper (Psalm 73). Unless there is a final evening of the score, then how do you come out ahead by obeying God?

What he sees is the collective martyrdom of the people of God down through the centuries who were figuratively crying out, just as Abel's blood had cried out.

Revelation 6:10, "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'"

Verse 11, "And a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer [KJV, "a little season"], until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed."

They would rest a little while longer; they would remain in the grave yet a little season until the resurrection. There is a final end-time martyrdom yet to come.

Revelation 12:13-14, "Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time [three and one-half years], from the presence of the serpent." He's not allowed to get to her. He tries, but he can't. So, he's angry.

Verse 17, "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." He goes to make war with those who weren't taken to a place of protection. He goes to make war with the only portion of God's Church that he is allowed to get at—the portion that is not in the place of safety.

When you go through Revelation 3, it is apparent that the Philadelphia Church is taken to a place of protection and the Laodiceans are not. I covered some of that in a sermon. The Tribulation is Satan's wrath. It is Satan's wrath against the people of God—against God's people nationally and against God's people spiritually. God's people nationally are the nations of modern-day Israel—the United States and British Commonwealth nations, the people who were the descendants of Abraham and with whom God made His covenant.

Jeremiah 30:7, "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." It is the time of Jacob's trouble. It's a time that is terrible; there is none like it. Here is an unsurpassed time of calamity called "the time of Jacob's trouble."

Let's go to Matthew 24. Here we find Christ the Revelator. Hold your place in Revelation 6 and Matthew 24 because we are going to go back and forth a little bit.

Matthew 24 is the focal point of Bible prophecy. This is where Jesus Christ unveils and gives the key to understanding what we read in Revelation 6.

Matthew 24:21, He talks about a time of "...great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be." You can't have two times that are worse than any other time. If the time of Jacob's trouble is a time such as there has never been,

and if the time Christ speaks of right here in Matthew 24:21 is the time worse than any other time, then obviously it's the same time.

It is Satan's wrath. It is Satan's wrath against physical Israel. It is the time of Jacob's trouble. It is also Satan's wrath against God's Church. God protects the Philadelphians era of His Church. Satan can't get to them. He wants to, but he can't because God won't let him. He then goes after the only part that is there, which is the remnant—those that have been left behind, the Laodiceans. He goes after them with full force and fury. Many of them are martyred. That is the final time of the martyrdom of the people of God. The Great Tribulation is Satan's wrath.

Revelation 6:12-13, the **sixth seal** is **heavenly signs**. "I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind." This is speaking of giant meteor showers—heavenly signs. It is just an incredible thing.

Now, let's go to Matthew 24.

Matthew 24:3, "Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" How are we going to know?

Verse 4, "And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you.'" The first thing we have is deception. We have false messiahs, false Christs.

What is the first seal? It's someone coming on a white horse (Revelation 6:1-2). Some commentators will tell you this is talking about Christ. No, it's not talking about Christ. Christ doesn't come back until Revelation 19. He's pictured as coming on a white horse all right. What we find in Revelation 6 is somebody masquerading as Christ, somebody who tries to give the outward appearance.

But notice there is a significant difference. The rider in Revelation 6:2 has a bow. Christ is never pictured as having a bow. He's pictured as having a sword (Revelation 19:11, 15). The sword represents the word of God (Hebrew 4:12). The bow was the symbol of Nimrod the mighty hunter. Back in Genesis 10 and 11, we have the story of Nimrod and the tower of Babel.

Genesis 10:8-10, "...Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord.' And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel,"

Here was the beginning of Babylon. He was the great conqueror, the mighty hunter and the founder of the Babylonian Mystery religion. Here we find the final end-time successor. We find those who were a perpetuation of the Babylonian Mystery religion coming with the sign and symbol—in reality, the successor of Nimrod—coming and purporting to be Christ.

What did Jesus say?

Matthew 24:5, "'For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.'" They are going to come giving this impression. There's going to be deception. There are going to be false messiahs, false Christs.

I may go into some of these seals a little more on the Feast of Trumpets. The **first seal is the white horse of deception**—"those coming in My name."

Matthew 24:6-7, notice the second thing, "'And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.'" The **second seal is the fiery red horse of wars**. There's going to be wars on the international scale; that's kingdom against kingdom. There's also going to be wars in terms of ethnic strife and violence, which is nation against nation or "ethnos against ethnos."

We use the word "nation" in modern English to refer to various countries like Canada, the United States, Mexico, Britain, France or whomever. But the word "nation" derived from a Latin word that we get our word "nativity" (like in nativity scene). Hospitals have a prenatal unit. The word comes from the Latin word for birth. When you talk about "neonatal" or "prenatal" you are talking about the care prior to the birth of a child, as in prenatal care. When you talk about a nativity scene, you are talking about the traditional Christmas scene centering on what is purported to be the birth of Christ. Our English word "nation" is derived from the same Latin root. It means those who are bound together by birth, those who share a common ancestry. It's translated from the Greek word "ethnos" from which we get our word "ethnic."

You can see the ethnic violence and that's happening all over the world. It's happening in Africa, Asia, Europe and all over the world. It's happening in this country. It is violence of one group against another, who may be within the same country, but they are of different "ethnos," different ethnic groups. In some cases, there are different political entities such as countries or nation states—"kingdom against kingdom." It is

warfare and violence internally among various ethnic groups and on the international scene.

What was the second seal? Wasn't it the red horse? The red horseman had the power to take peace from the earth; that's war (Revelation 6:3-4). That's the second seal. Christ interpreted it right here in Matthew 24.

What did He say the third seal was? Famine!

Matthew 24:7, "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines," What was the **third seal**? It was **the black horse, rationing food, famine** (Revelation 6:5-6).

What was the **fourth seal** that Jesus revealed? — **Pestilences**.

Matthew 24:7, "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences,"

Revelation 6:8, "...And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword [warfare], with hunger [famine], [and then] with death," The **fourth seal is the pale horse which is death**. There will be disease epidemics. There will be things like the black plague that devastated Europe during the early Middle Ages. We are finding that there are things and will be things we have only seen the very beginning of. I tell you what—AIDS and some of these other things that are coming along—they haven't seen anything yet, in terms of what is going to transpire.

It talks about **earthquakes** right along with this (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:12), an upsurge in earthquake activity. There will be earthquakes and natural disasters in various places. We are certainly experiencing that.

Matthew 24:8, he says, "All these are the beginning of sorrows." The first four horsemen are the beginning of sorrows.

What's next?

Matthew 24:9, "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake." Oh, that's martyrdom! What was the **fifth seal**? —A **future martyrdom of the saints** (Revelation 6:9-11).

Matthew 24:29, he comes down, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." That's the **sixth seal**; that's the **heavenly signs** (Revelation 6:12-17).

Jesus Christ opened up the seals of Revelation. Matthew 24 is where we look to find the interpretation that Jesus Christ gave of these symbols. The **sixth seal is God stepping into**

history. That is the **beginning of the Day of the Lord**.

Verse 17 is the last verse of Revelation 6.

Revelation 6:17 says, "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

The Great Tribulation is Satan's wrath. Satan's wrath is directed primarily at the people of God, physically and nationally, as well as spiritually. It is aimed at the modern-day descendants of Israel (the United States and British Commonwealth nations) and at God's Church, God's people, spiritually. It's the time of Jacob's trouble, and it's the time when Satan goes to make war with the remnant that is left behind. That's the **Great Tribulation of Satan's wrath**; that's the **fifth seal**.

The other seals are already opened prior to the beginning of the Tribulation. They are opened one at a time. They follow one another sequentially, but the first seal is not closed back up when the second one is opened. The first is opened first and it begins. It's followed by the second. Now, you have the first and the second both going on. Then the third one is opened up and the first and the second are still going on. Then the fourth one is opened up and all are going on. The first four horsemen are already riding when the Tribulation starts. They haven't done everything they are going to do because each of these seals, as it's ongoing, is continuing to build in its intensity.

When the Tribulation starts and it proceeds along, we come to a point where God steps in and the Day of the Lord begins. The final one year of that three-and-one-half-year period represents God stepping in and beginning to deal with the beast power.

The sixth seal is simply God saying, 'Let Me have your attention, please!' Only He says it very dramatically. He is going to get the world's attention. I want to tell you what—an earthquake has a way of getting people's attention. A hurricane can get your attention. I've been in hurricanes and I've been in earthquakes. The advantage of a hurricane is that at least you know it's coming. If you want, you can try to do something, either by taking refuge or leaving and getting away. An earthquake just comes. You don't know it's coming until it's here, and there's no place you can go because the most solid, permanent thing you know of is shaking and quivering like a bowl of Jell-O right under your feet.

If you go up in an airplane and there's a lot of turbulence, you say, 'If I ever get my feet on solid ground again, you're not going to get me

back up here.’ I’ve known of people who have been talked into going on a deep-sea fishing trip. They got out there and, boy, it (rough sea) was going. They were saying, ‘If I ever get off this boat and get my feet on solid ground again, you’re not going to get me back out here.’ We think if we are in the air and it’s turbulent or if we’re on the water and it’s turbulent, well, if we can just get onto solid ground, we’re okay. But when you are on solid ground and it’s not solid—it begins to quiver and shake like a bowl of Jell-O—where are you going to go and what are you going to do? The only things you can do is stand there and pray that it doesn’t get bad enough to bring down whatever you’re in on top of you. It’s just a matter of intensity.

Science can’t tell you how intense it’s going to get. They can’t tell you when it’s going to come. Interestingly enough, certain animals are the best predictors—horses in particular. They can sense it a day or so before. We think we are so smart. Our instruments can’t pick up what animals sometimes can pick up. God designed a few things in, and we still haven’t figured out all of it.

The point is that God is getting ready to step into history and He does so in a dramatic way. Earthquakes begin to shake; there are tremendous meteor showers and inexplicable signs in the heavens like a total eclipse. Incredible things are occurring and it’s frightening. God is getting ready to intervene. That is the sixth seal. It sets the stage for the seventh seal.

I will call to your attention that you may want to go back and read Ezekiel 1 (the vision that Ezekiel saw) and compare it with Revelation 4. Ezekiel saw a miraculous appearance. God appeared in a certain conveyance—a way that He at times chose to transport Himself through the universe. It describes this. Some will say Ezekiel saw the first UFO. It’s not a UFO; “UFO” means “unidentified flying object.” What Ezekiel saw is clearly identified. It’s the throne of God. It was an IFO, an identified flying object. There’s no question as to what Ezekiel saw because he explains and interprets it.

There’s an awful lot packed into the book of Revelation. We’ve only just sort of skimmed the surface of it.

Next Bible study we will have a chance to go through chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 as we progress a little further.

The Seven Seals of Revelation

First Seal	Second Seal	Third Seal	Fourth Seal	Fifth Seal	Sixth Seal	Seventh Seal
White Horse: Deception	Red Horse: War	Black Horse: Famine	Pale Horse: Pestilence	Martyrdom and Great Tribulation	Heavenly Signs	Seven Trumpet Plagues
Revelation 6:1-2	Revelation 6:3-4	Revelation 6:5-6	Revelation 6:7-8	Revelation 6:9-11	Revelation 6:12-17	Revelation 8:2

Silence in Heaven
Rev. 8:1-6

Seven Trumpets: The Day of the Lord

First Trumpet	Second Trumpet	Third Trumpet	Fourth Trumpet	Fifth Trumpet	Sixth Trumpet	Seventh Trumpet
Green grass and one-third of the trees are burned up.	One-third of sea becomes blood; one-third of ships and sea life are destroyed by fire.	One-third of waters turn bitter.	One-third of sun, moon and stars do not shine.	"Locusts" wield the Beast's military power.	200 million-man army gathers.	The Kingdom is proclaimed. Second Coming
Revelation 8:7	Revelation 8:8-9	Revelation 8:10-11	Revelation 8:12	Revelation 9:1-12	Revelation 9:13-21	Revelation 11:15-19

Seven Last Plagues

First Plague	Second Plague	Third Plague	Fourth Plague	Fifth Plague	Sixth Plague	Seventh Plague
Sores afflict those who accepted the mark of the Beast.	Sea turns to blood; all sea creatures die.	Rivers turn to blood.	Mankind, scorched by the sun, blasphemes God.	The Beast's seat of government is afflicted.	The Euphrates is dried up; world armies gather to Armageddon.	The earth is utterly shaken.
Revelation 16:2	Revelation 16:3	Revelation 16:4-7	Revelation 16:8-9	Revelation 16:10-11	Revelation 16:12-16	Revelation 16:17-21

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Mr. John Ogwyn

Book of Revelation Series—Revelation 7—10

As we continue along, we will go right into the book of Revelation this evening. We **are getting into Revelation 7, 8, 9 and 10 this evening.**

There are several things to understand in terms of a basic outline of the book of Revelation and what is involved. Chapter 6 gives us an outline of the first six seals of the book of Revelation. Then in chapter 8 we get into the seventh seal. There are seven seals to the book of Revelation that seal the whole book. Coming down, you have seven seals and then the seventh seal is comprised of seven trumpets. When the seventh seal is opened, seven trumpets begin to blow successively through that period of time; then the seventh trumpet consists of seven last plagues. **We have that outline as we go through. You have the seven seals; the seventh seal is seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet is seven last plagues.** I am going to touch on some of these things in more depth on the Feast of Trumpets. I will comment more on other things here this evening.

I want to give you a little bit of a background. There are a couple of things to understand in regard to this. The first six seals are all listed in Revelation 6. That's a good way to remember them, by the way. Where are the first six seals? Well, Revelation 6. *The six seals go through: 1) the false prophets, 2) wars and rumors of war, 3) famines, 4) disease epidemics, 5) the Great Tribulation, and 6) a great earthquake and heavenly signs.*

The heavenly signs set the stage for the Day of the Lord; **the seventh seal is the Day of the Lord.** The Day of the Lord is comprised of the seven trumpets. The trumpet plagues that are dispersed from them begin in Revelation 8.

The Great Tribulation is the fifth seal. From that we understand that the first four seals are all opened prior to the beginning of the Tribulation. *The Great Tribulation, we are told, consists of the last three and one-half years prior to the return of Christ.* It's defined in Scripture as time, times and a half time or 1,260 days or three and one-half years. It's the time that God's Church is to be protected in a place of safety. That's in Revelation 12, which we will get into next Bible study. This is our last Bible study until after the Feast.

There is a distinction that needs to be understood between the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. **The Great Tribulation, the fifth seal, is Satan's wrath.** Satan's wrath is poured out in two directions: it's poured out against God's people nationally and against God's people spiritually (God's true Church). God's people nationally are, of course, not only the Jews, but also the modern descendants of the so-called "lost ten tribes."

Approximately one-third of the Bible consists of prophecy. The most important key to unlocking and understanding Bible prophecy is the identity of Israel because if you don't know who and where Israel is, then you are in a fog. When you read prophecy in the Old Testament, you don't know who it's talking about. That is an important key. It is a doubly important key when you understand the responsibility of warning Israel that is outlined in the book of Ezekiel—the message of the watchman and all these things. It represents an important key to understanding Bible prophecy.

Jeremiah 30:7, we are told of the Tribulation, "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's [Israel's] trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." That's why I say that the Tribulation is the wrath against physical Israel—the United States and British Commonwealth nations, in particular. It's the time of Jacob's trouble. We are told in Jeremiah, "That day is great, so that none is like it." Now, you can't have two times that are "great, so that nothing is like it." If something else is like it, then it doesn't stand out as unique. This is a unique period. It is a time of great trial and great tribulation. No time is comparable to it. When you go to the book of Matthew 24, it talks about the time of the Great Tribulation.

Matthew 24:21, "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be." Here's a unique period of time called the Great Tribulation. It surpasses every other time of adversity that has ever been known up until that time.

"For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble." No day is like it. We are talking about the same thing—the Great Tribulation.

In Revelation 12:14, we find that the Church is taken to a place of protection, a place of safety. Verse 17, Satan goes to make war with that portion of the Church left behind—the Laodicean era. It is wrath directed at physical Israel and at spiritual Israel. The prophecies of

the Old Testament particularly relate to the national aspect of it.

This period of Tribulation—this time of intense pressure, adversity and all of the calamities that are associated with it—includes invasions, captivity and all the things that are prophesied in the books of Ezekiel, Isaiah and Jeremiah, as well as in the Minor Prophets. It includes all of these things. This is Satan's wrath.

What it amounts to is that God removes His protection. It's not God's wrath, but God removes His protection. You know, if we don't value what God gives us, God may say, 'You want to do it your way; go ahead and see how well you handle it.' Nationally, we have not really appreciated and valued God's blessing and God's protection.

The Laodiceans are not really stirred up and excited about the work of God. They don't have the burning zeal to really do the work that the Philadelphians are pictured as having. Rather, they are described in Revelation 3 as having sort of a compromising, lukewarm, little bit of a watered-down attitude. They don't have that zeal. That's what they are told they are lacking.

In Ezekiel 3 and 33, it talks about the watchman. The watchman is to go and deliver the message and be a watchman for the house of Israel. The watchman has the zeal to do the work to proclaim the message of God, to give the warning and the witness message that God has given. Philadelphians have the real zeal to go forth and to do that. In the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 9:4), it talks about those who sigh and cry for the abominations of Israel, those who are really bothered by what's going on. That zeal is there. That's one of the great contrasts.

We come down. The fifth seal is opened in Revelation 6. Then there comes a point where God steps in. **The sixth seal—the heavenly signs and earthquake—is the beginning of God's intervention.** These other events have been going on now for a period of time. The sixth seal sets the stage.

Revelation 6:17, "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" **The seventh seal is the Day of the Lord; the Day of the Lord is the day of God's wrath.** God gets ready to pour out His wrath, especially directed at the world that is under the full sway of Satan.

We note that Revelation 7 is an inset. If you are following the story flow, you come down through the sixth seal in Revelation 6. Then in Revelation 8:1 the seventh seal is opened. That is the sequence. Chapter 7 is a break into the sequence.

It seems very likely that what is termed "*Day of the Lord*" probably refers to the last year prior to Christ's return. We know that many times a day is used for a year in Bible prophecy. I am going to prove to you in a few moments that there are a number of months that are involved in this. There's a specific period of five months that's mentioned in the context of one of the trumpet plagues. When you look at the severity of them, it's unlikely that we could be looking at any sort of an extended period of time.

The Tribulation begins with the cessation of the sacrifices in Jerusalem. Of course, they haven't started yet. They will start and they will be stopped. It doesn't say how long they will continue between the time they are initiated and the time they are stopped. But when they are stopped, we are told in the book of Daniel and other places that it will be the beginning of a period of 1,290 days. That is one month more than the 1,260 days that the Church is to be protected in a place of safety. We are looking at the onset of these things about three and one-half years before Christ returns. They continue on along for a two-and-one-half year period and the beast power is doing these things. But part way through the Tribulation (about two-thirds of the way through), God begins to step in. God begins to intervene. The heavenly signs are when He gets people's attention.

Then, in chapter 7, He does something. Let's notice.

Revelation 7:1-3, "After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth... Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.'" *The events of the Day of the Lord are held up for the completion of the sealing of the servants of God.*

Now, how are they sealed? What does that mean? With what are they sealed? If you get a legal document, what does a seal do? A seal authenticates genuineness. Sometimes you have to get a legal document notarized. The notary affixes his seal. The seal authenticates genuineness. That's the purpose of a seal. The seal that God places on His servants authenticates that they are the genuine thing.

Ephesians 1:13-14, "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed,

you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who [which] is the guarantee [KJV, “earnest”] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. God’s Spirit seals us. It authenticates us as the genuine article. It’s the earnest of our inheritance. You know what “earnest” is? If you have ever purchased a house, you frequently put down what’s called “earnest money.” That is a proof that you are going to come back. They, at that point, take the house off the market. You give them a certain portion; that’s earnest money. That means you are going to be back and fulfill the terms of the contract. You are going to come back at a designated time and complete the verbal agreement made with them. You are going to pay in full. You are going to finish what you have promised. This is the proof that you are going to come back and follow through with that promise.

When God gives us His Spirit at baptism, it is the earnest of our inheritance. You haven’t received the inheritance yet. When we’re baptized, we don’t suddenly become immortal to where we never die. You have the Spirit of God residing in you. In that sense, you have eternal life in you, but you have to endure to the end in order to be saved. That Spirit is the authentication of our genuineness. It is the earnest of our inheritance. We are told that we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. God’s Spirit seals us as the real thing. It is the evidence that God is going to ultimately finish what He has started in us. When God gives you His Spirit, He starts a process.

Job 14:15, Job tells us, “...you shall desire the work of Your hands.” Job understood that God was going to desire to finish what He had started in you. There are other scriptures in the New Testament that talk about God bringing to completion the work that He has started in our lives (Philippians 1:6).

Revelation 7:4, “And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed...”

This sealing of the 144,000—the Holy Spirit is what seals God’s people.

We read an analogy that is given in Ezekiel 9 of the writer’s inkhorn.

Ezekiel 9:4-5, “and the Lord said to him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.’ To the

others He said in my hearing, ‘Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity.’” Everyone is going to be subject to this.

Verse 6, “...but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” They begin right there. It talks about being set aside. It talks about God’s people being sealed in that way.

One thing to understand is the fact that the greatest harvest of our work is yet in the future. There are people who have listened to the broadcast and read the magazines or booklets for years. They have heard all these things and somehow it doesn’t seem that important. They have either filed it away or said, ‘that may happen some day; it doesn’t really pertain to me’ or whatever they have done. But I am going to tell you what—when these events begin to happen (some of them have begun to happen) and when the reality of the Tribulation is here, it’s going to be a little late to be arguing about some of these things that maybe some have argued about.

When the events that are prophesied really begin to fully come about, you’re going to have people who are going to come to repentance during that period of Tribulation. Some of them are going to be martyred and others are going to survive through it, but there are going to be individuals who really begin to repent and their whole attitude changes. Instead of wanting to strive, argue about “the way I see it” and all this sort of thing, that is not going to be their attitude. When the troops are marching down the streets, it’s going to be a little late to argue about the Greek and the Hebrew. The Tribulation is going to be here. Individuals who have sort of played around with the truth, in many cases, are going to wake up at that point because the reality is going to be there.

Revelation 7:3, we find that they are told to wait, hold up, ‘until we seal the servants of our God.’ There is a sealing that is completed. If you check this, it doesn’t necessarily have to mean that none of the 144,000 have been sealed prior to this time. There are two different ways of reading the term for “seal.” Either the whole 144,000 are sealed at this point or the final group that comprise the 144,000 (those that bring it up to the full contingent) are sealed at that time. In other words, this sealing marks the completion of sealing those who will comprise the 144,000. I think the clearest understanding of it is that the last of those who will be a part of that group will be sealed at this time.

God has selected this number for certain reasons. There are 12,000 who are assigned for each one of the tribes of Israel. You have this assignment that goes on down (Revelation 7:5-8). Twelve is the number of organized beginnings. Twelve is an organizational number that is used throughout Scripture, so here is something that is going to play an important part in God's government.

Revelation 7:9, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, ..." When you say, 'no man could number,' what does that mean? Does that mean nobody can count that high? Well, no. You can count up into the millions and billions. We've been able to number the people of the United States in terms of population. When it says, "a great multitude which no one can number," it is simply talking about a large crowd of undetermined or undefined number that no man could number, in the sense that no man was permitted to number. No man was allowed to number it. It was a large crowd. God has a specific designation, this 144,000. But, in addition, there is a multitude (a large crowd or group) that comes out.

Verse 9, continuing, "...of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, ..." We see them here as well.

Verse 11, we see the angels here, "And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God..."

Verse 13, "Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?'"

Verse 14, "And I said to him, 'Sir, you know' [John says, 'Well, I'm not sure; I'm sure you know.']. So he said to me, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"

We find a number of people who are defined as having repented during the Tribulation—in many cases, having been martyred. The great harvest of this work is yet future. The time setting on this is important.

Many years ago in the early part of this century, the Jehovah's Witnesses locked in on the 144,000 in this verse and decided they were the 144,000, which presented a problem to them when their membership got larger than 144,000. I think there are over a million of them now. They obviously can't all be the 144,000. The sealing did not take place in 1914 or 1918. The sealing that is described here is to take place in

the future. The heavenly signs have not yet occurred; the Tribulation has not yet occurred. We are looking at an event that is yet future, an event that will occur.

The reason this is set apart is that God, at this point, is getting ready to pour out His wrath on unrepentant mankind. God will protect those who have really learned their lesson and come to repentance through the Tribulation. God will protect them from His wrath that is poured out. The Philadelphian Church is in a place of protection, geographically, where they have been protected through the Tribulation, which is continuing. Now, God is getting ready to step in and pour out His wrath. God is going to protect those who have really learned their lesson and come to deep repentance from the consequences of what He is going to pour out.

Revelation 8:1-4, the **seventh seal**, "When He opened the seventh seal, and there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And he was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand." —God's people praying to Him.

Incense was used in the tabernacle. The smoke of the incense is symbolic of the ascending prayers of the saints. We symbolically have pictured the prayers of God's people for God's intervention, deliverance and judgment all the way down through the centuries. Up until this point, God has not stepped in and answered those prayers. Collectively, those prayers are preserved. Now they are offered up. It's now time. It's time for those prayers to be answered.

Verse 5, "Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake." Pretty impressive!

Verses 6-7, the **seven trumpets** begin when the **first angel sounded**, "So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood and they were thrown to the earth; ..." Here is a lightning storm. You talk about a thunderstorm!

I suspect all of us have been in thunderstorms and perhaps had some hail. It can be pretty intimidating. Lightning flashing and hail falling can be pretty frightening. There's never been a

storm like this. When God gets ready to unleash the weather, you talk about showing man how puny he is. Oh, we can do so much. Look how great we are. Yeah, just one little “blow” (hurricane) came through here. It just rattled, shook and shivered things every which way and that was nothing by comparison.

Verse 7 continuing, “...a third part of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.” Lightening triggers forest fires. Can you imagine this kind of storm that is occurring worldwide and fires breaking out everywhere? You wind up with a third of the vegetation destroyed. There is tremendous hail coming down; there is lightning and thunder. That would be just about the most frightening thing people would have been able to imagine up until then. But they haven’t seen anything yet. That’s only the first trumpet.

One of the things that has to happen is (go back to the plagues of Egypt) God has to humble haughty man.

Isaiah 66:2, God says, “...‘But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.’” –Someone who has that spirit of humility and walking with God, rather than filled up with pride and thinking how great he is and what he can do.

Revelation 8:8, the **second angel sounded**, “Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood...” This could refer to a giant meteor or asteroid that hits the earth. Where it describes a mountain burning with fire, that is perhaps some sort of gigantic volcanic activity.

Verse 9, the result is, “and a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.” Here is something horribly disruptive to the oceans. Can you imagine the horrible stinking mess you wind up with when a third of the sea life is destroyed?

Anybody who lived on the Atchafalaya River in Louisiana got a little bit of a taste of that with all the destruction of fish following the hurricane and the stench and smell out there. All these fish stinking will almost be enough to be a plague in itself. One dead fish can smell pretty bad; here’s a whole bunch of them.

Verses 10-11, the **third angel sounded**, “Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water; and the name of the star is Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from the water, because it was

made bitter.” We are looking at a poisoning effect that this has on the ground water and on the fresh water. A large part of this becomes undrinkable. Many people die.

Verse 12, the **fourth angel sounded**, “Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened; and a third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.” This is some sort of disruption in the earth’s orbit—a tilt on the axis to where there is a disruption of the cycle. Everything that gives any sort of normalcy and stability is disrupted.

Verse 13, “And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!’” **The next three trumpets are called the three woes**. The first four are the easy ones. We hadn’t even gotten to the three woes yet. I’ll tell you what, if what has already happened isn’t bad enough to be called a woe, you certainly don’t want to be around for these.

Revelation 9:1, the **fifth angel sounded with the first woe**, “Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. And to him was given the key to the bottomless pit [margin, “shaft of the abyss”].” “Star” is often used as symbolic of an angel. When “star” is mentioned in the earlier chapters, it could very well be referring to an angel or perhaps also a meteor or an asteroid.

Verses 2-3, “And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.” Here it refers to power being given to unleash something.

John describes what he sees. This is one of the keys to understanding some of the symbolism. John is describing what he sees in the language of his day. When he describes this war-making power, he describes it as looking like a horde of locusts, yet not really locusts but sort of like that. He could be describing big attack helicopters. Can you imagine? What would that look like to John. The sky becoming dark with these big military attack helicopters. What would that look like to him? It would sort of look like a swarm of locusts or some sort of thing that comes through. Exactly what it was is not entirely possible to know. You find it described here as something rising up out of this great abyss. Later on we find

the beast is pictured as ascending out of this great abyss, this bottomless pit (Revelation 17:8). We are looking at something that is pertaining to the beast power that is swallowed up. We are looking at something that comes up out of this great abyss, a great war-making power that comes upon the earth.

Verse 4 describes some sort of futuristic weapon, “They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God in their foreheads.”

Verse 5, “And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. And their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.”

Here is some sort of a bomb. There was a lot of work that was done on what is called the neutron bomb, which was supposed to kill people and not destroy buildings. This has always been one of the things that people like to come up with—how to wipe out the enemy without wiping out everything the enemy has. This is some sort of a weapon that they come up with.

In this case, it’s not exactly a neutron bomb. It doesn’t kill people. Perhaps it has something in it that affects the central nervous system or some sort of thing that creates some sort of pain and torment, yet, doesn’t necessarily result in death. It’s not destructive to plants, buildings and things of that sort. It only affects human life. God is going to protect those whom He has set apart.

It describes this torment. It describes it like the torment of a scorpion. If you have ever been stung by something like that, you realize how painful something of that sort can be. This is something that causes some sort of an allergic reaction that hangs on and on but does not necessarily end in death.

Verse 6, in fact, people are going to be so miserable they are going to seek death and not find it. Things they thought were going to deliver them are not going to deliver them. They are not going to come up with a vaccine that’s going to solve this problem. They are not going to run down and get something prescribed that is going to solve this.

Just like in Egypt. What in effect has to happen—just like the plagues of Egypt—people have to recognize that everything in which they have placed their trust and confidence to deliver them, can’t. The gods of Egypt are not gods. God executed vengeance against all the gods of Egypt. The ten plagues that came on Egypt executed judgment against the gods of Egypt. It showed that the gods of Egypt were not gods.

They could not deliver the people who placed their trust and confidence in them.

John describes what these weapons look like. He talks about them looking like locusts.

Verse 10, “They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails.” This would indicate weapons that are fired out from the rear or from the bottom. What would it look like to John to see some sort of wave after wave of attack jets, attack helicopters or something like that coming over?

Verse 11, the real instigator is, “And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.” –Which means “destroyer.”

Verses 12-16, **the sixth angel sounded with the second woe**, “One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things. Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great River Euphrates.’ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million, and I heard the number of them.”

Here was a great army that consisted of 200 million.

Verses 18-19, “By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.”

This is a pretty good description of a nuclear attack—fire, smoke and brimstone that issued out. It describes that their power is in their mouths and in their tails. It comes out both the front and the back. What you have described here is something that’s not quite as high tech—not quite the high technology of the fifth trumpet—but it’s pretty efficient. What you have described here is an insanity that breaks loose that would result in total destruction and annihilation of the human race if God did not step in to stop it. Really, a loss of sanity because the fifth trumpet (vv. 1-12), this great military machine that arises up out of the beast power, is described as something coming up out of this great industrial complex. This is the military power of the beast. Against whom is it directed? Well, it is directed at those who counter-attack

them in the last part of the chapter (vv. 13-21)—the sixth trumpet.

Let's notice. Just hold your place and go back to Daniel 11.

Daniel 11:40, ““At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him....”” The king of the South is referring to the area south of Jerusalem, the Arab-Islamic combine centered there. The king of the North is the area north of Jerusalem, referring specifically to the beast power. Europe is going to come in with an invasion. They are going to invade the Middle East and take possession of this whole vital area (vv. 40-41). *This marks the onset of the Tribulation—this period of Tribulation against the people of God spiritually (the Church) and God's people nationally (physical Israel)*. This is going to go on. The whole world is going to be tied up, dominated and acquiescing to this.

But there's going to be trouble and rumblings.

Verse 44, we are told, ““But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.””

As time continues into the Tribulation, the beast power is going to be more and more convinced that there is trouble and resistance in the East—problems and rumblings in nations like China, India and what used to be Soviet Central Asia. They are not satisfied with the status quo and with the place they have in the new world order that is going to come about. There is a lack of trust.

The beast power comes up with this technology and they think launching this pre-emptive blitzkrieg-type of an attack will resolve their problems. They launch it, all right, and it is tremendously devastating and destructive, but there is a counter-attack. The only place you can put together an army of 200 million is from places like China, India and that area. This vast invasion army has prepared a nuclear attack and an all-out nuclear attack is launched against Europe.

Very likely this is the timing of the destruction of Rome that you read of in Revelation 18. This takes place perhaps just days or a week or two prior to the very end—just right down to the wire—as the sixth angel sounds (Revelation 9:13) and this nuclear attack is launched that is destructive to the beast power. When this is launched, a third of the people die as a consequence of this attack (Revelation 9:18). They don't have quite the sophisticated technology.

Revelation 9:19-21, “For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

What is the idolatry God is talking about? – Materialism, violence and sorceries. Interestingly enough, the word “sorcery” in the Greek language is “pharmakon” or “pharmakeia.” It could very easily refer to drugs and the drug problems that are so prevalent—the drug pushers and all of the things connected with that. That's the sense. We even get our modern word “pharmacy” from “pharmakeia.” The term referred to various potions, poisons and things that were mixed up, various concoctions that certainly included many of the things that are commonly abused drugs of today. That may very well be a reference to that sort of thing. Certainly, it is one of our major social problems. Violence, drug dealings, immorality, theft—a pretty good rundown of major social problems we encounter.

We see these trumpets blown and God's hand removed.

“Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great River Euphrates.’”

Euphrates is evidently going to be sort of a dividing line in terms of a sphere of influence with what are called the kings of the East and the beast power. This is going to result in an armed invasion of the Middle East. The beast and the false prophet have their headquarters in Jerusalem. For this period of time, they have made Jerusalem the place from which they are seeking to direct the new world order they are establishing. We will get to that in a moment.

But this matter of the Euphrates—the Euphrates River right now is in the nation of Iraq, close to the border with Iran. It is close to the Iran-Iraq border. Based on this prophecy, we have speculated as to whether or not there may literally be a dismemberment of Iraq. It's sort of interesting. The area where the Shites are, in southern Iraq, is the area to the east of the Euphrates River, and they, of course, are tied in with the Iranians, in the sense that they are sort

of allied with them. It's very possible that Iraq may become dismembered at this point in time or a little later on when the beast power invades the Middle East, and they simply choose not to go beyond the river Euphrates.

Anciently, the Euphrates River was the line of demarcation between the Roman Empire and the Partheon Empire. The Partheon Empire stretched through Iran and into India, and then the Roman Empire stretched from the Euphrates to the west on through Western Europe. That was sort of the line of demarcation between East and West and in many ways still serves that point.

What we are looking at—there have been demon spirits that have been restrained and have not been allowed to progress beyond that point. Satan and his demons can go no further than what God allows. One of the reasons they don't do worse than what they have done is because of restraints that God places. In the book of Job, you find that Satan can't go beyond what God permits him to do. When God removes restraints, there are things that happen. At the appropriate time, God removes certain restraints. He simply takes hands off and allows these things.

Now we have an inset. **Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 all provide an inset into the story flow.**

We don't come to the seven last plagues until we get to chapters 15 and 16. *The purpose of an inset is to go back and pick up some threads of the story and bring them down to this point.* Here we are down to the point just before Christ returns because, after all, the seventh trump is the last trump, isn't it? When are we going to be changed from mortal to immortal?

1 Corinthians 15:52, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

We are not at the last trump yet; we are just prior to it. Now, we are going to go back and pick up details of the earlier story and bring them down.

Revelation 10:1-4, "And I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. And he had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. And when he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.'" That was not something that needed to be written.

Verses 5-6, "And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer..." –Or as one translation renders it, "no further delay." There would no longer be a lengthening of time.

Verse 7, but rather, "but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets." We are coming down to a point where there should be no further delay.

As we come down, chapter 11 follows right on the heels of chapter 10. When the seven thunders had finished, it is at this point that John is told that the time is now come for God to begin to step in. Here we are picking up an earlier sequence. We are picking up the seven thunders uttered earlier.

What do the seven thunders have reference to?

The most likely explanation that I have ever heard of this is one that I discussed with an evangelist in the Church a number of years ago. Down through the centuries, the Church of God has thundered God's message. The message that God delivered through them has been thundered to the world. You know, some thunder is near, close, loud and overwhelming. Other thunder has a faint distant roll. It's thunder, but it is a roll of thunder that is faint in the distance. Some is closer and has great power. *The point is that down through the centuries, each of the seven Churches has thundered God's message.* Some have been a faint distant echo; others have been a powerful blast. At the time when the messages of all the seven Churches have been delivered, it is at that point that there's no longer a reason to wait any longer. Rather, it is time for God to step in. It is the culmination when the seventh angel sounds. Everything will come to a climax.

Verse 11, John is told, "And he said to me, 'You must prophecy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.'"

It continues on. There's not really a break in the sequence.

Revelation 11:1, "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.'"

Verses 3-4, "And I will give power to my two witnesses, These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of

the earth.” *The two olive trees are symbolic of the two witnesses.*

Verses 14-15, as we come on down, we pick up the story flow again, “The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly. Then the seventh angel sounded: !...”

Chapters 10 and 11 provide an inset. They go back and pick up the story, bringing us down through the role of the Church in the end time. We are not going into chapter 11 very much this evening. That deals with the work of the two witnesses.

Each of the seven Churches has its job to do. Some do their job powerfully; others do their job faintly. Christ is going to be more pleased with the job some have done than others. There is a job that each of the seven Churches has to do, based on the circumstances of their time and age, the opportunity set before them and the zeal they have to pursue those opportunities. The time is going to come when the thunderings will cease and God begins to fulfill these things that will take place.

One interesting thing—John is told in Revelation 10:8-9 that he is given a book and told to take it and eat it.

Revelation 10:10, “And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.” It was sweet and it was tasty, but when he had eaten and digested it, it became bitter.

In many ways that’s the way prophecy is. It can be tasty. It can be interesting. It can be sort of like eating desert. It can be sort of the desert at Bible study when you get interested in these things—and that’s fine. A third of the Bible is prophecy, so prophecy is important. But two-thirds of the Bible isn’t prophecy. Those two-thirds are pretty important, too.

All the prophecy in the world won’t do you any good if you are not living a Christian life and doing what you should do—keeping the commandments, seeking to serve God and really walking with Him. Prophecy is given to encourage the people of God. It is given to warn specific nations and specific groups of what God’s judgment will be if they don’t repent. It is given as a proof of God. God is the One who can declare the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Prophecy is given to stir up and motivate the people of God. It helps us to perceive where we stand in the overall scheme of things of the plan of God. It is able to stir up and inspire us to do the things we need to do and give us hope and encouragement with respect to the future.

It can be tasty when you eat it, but when you really digest it, when you really grasp what it is talking about, some of these things are horrible. They really, really are. That’s the way it was with John. It was tasty to eat, but then as he digested it, it was bitter. Many things are going to happen and it will get so bad before it gets better. It’s like the world has to hit bottom before it can begin to surrender and recover. Until people are brought to the point that they’re prepared to really surrender unconditionally and turn their life and their will over to the care of God, there’s not going to be a whole lot that can be done. There has to be a consequence, so there are things that are going to take place.

We see these things are outlined. As we come down, we have the **seventh seal**: the **trumpet plagues**. The trumpets begin to sound. Evidently, **this final year—this Day of the Lord—signals God’s intervention**. The first trumpet starts out with tremendous cataclysmic storms—thunderstorms, hail storms, fires break out worldwide—terrific devastation of the environment, of grasslands and trees and tremendous fires. It’s followed by the second trumpet and destructiveness that occurs to the oceans and seas. Sea traffic is disrupted, sea life is destroyed and a third of the ocean waters become like blood. Very swiftly on the heels of that, the third trumpet, a third of the freshwater becomes poisonous and there are tremendous problems in that regard. There is tremendous death that takes place as a result. This is followed by the fourth trumpet blast which sees these great upset astronomical conditions that are just totally disruptive. It is followed by **trumpets five, six and seven**—what are called the **three woes**.

The **first woe, trumpet 5**, results in the military machine that ascended up out of the abyss—the beast system—launching an all-out attack on Asia with high-tech sophisticated weapons, attempting to quell it before anything gets out of hand. You see, the point is that they never really trust one another.

The **second woe, trumpet 6**, results in a great counter attack; a gigantic army is mobilized and counters an attack. A nuclear attack devastates Europe and sets the stage for the final gathering of armies.

When the **seventh trumpet** blows, the **third woe**, the armies that are converged in the area of Armageddon advance toward Jerusalem to be destroyed because as those armies come in, Christ returns and the seven last plagues are poured out in that final day—the day that Christ

returns. These armies temporarily throw aside their disagreement with one another to seek to repel what, for them, is going to look like an invasion from outer space. That's going to be stopped in a moment.

We come down through these trumpets. We see this inset that shows the work of God down through time. There are events that are going to occur in the end time.

In Revelation 11:1, there is a measuring of the temple or the Church. Mr. Herbert Armstrong felt that chapter 11:1, at least partially, had analogy to God's Church, in effect, to measuring up. It talks about measuring those who worship there.

The temple can be used to refer to a literal temple (to a building); it can be used metaphorically to refer to the Church collectively. Even our bodies are called the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Many times, several examples or analogies are used to refer to the same thing. In some cases, the same analogy or example is used to refer to two or three different things. The point of an example, analogy or figure of speech is to help illustrate a spiritual truth. It is to help physical people grasp something that is on the spiritual level by comparing it to something that is on the physical level.

That is why God's Church can be collectively compared to a temple. The temple was built as the dwelling place of God. The Church is pictured as collectively being a holy temple of the Lord—the spiritual temple.

In 1 Peter 2:5-6, Christians are compared to being living stones—like component parts. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. This is one example, one analogy. The term “temple” is also used to refer to individual Christians.

1 Corinthians 6:19, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?...”

The same analogies apply to something a little differently. The Church is compared to the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7; 21:9). We will marry Christ. Paul uses that analogy in Ephesians 5.

The whole point is that he's not saying the Church has changed into a literal building or the Church has changed into a woman. It's to illustrate an aspect of spiritual truth. It's to give us something physical that we can relate to, so that we have a concept of what it is God is describing that illustrates at least one aspect of what God is doing.

Mr. Herbert Armstrong felt that Revelation 11 was generally a reference to the Church at the end time—let's say a measuring that was going

to be applied. I'm sure we may not understand every detail of certain prophecies until we have arrived at the juncture in history where it's necessary for us to understand. It isn't necessary for us to understand everything in total detail right now. We have sort of a broad outline of understanding, and the closer we get to that juncture of history, the clearer some of the things will be.

We have a little bit of an overview, coming down through chapter 10.

Chapter 11, as I mentioned, gets to the two witnesses, which we will comment on briefly next time. We will comment on their work. They will be the ones primarily doing the work of God during the Tribulation when the Philadelphian Church is in a place of protection. The Laodiceans certainly have to witness in a personal way with their lives, as they have to come to grips with their lack of taking God's way seriously and their attempt to sort of have a foot in the world and a foot in the Church. They are going to have to get both feet in the same place.

Those events are yet to come. God will use these two individuals, these two witnesses. They are described as His representatives, in the way that He used Moses and Aaron in the court of Pharaoh, to serve as a witness and a testimony during this period of beast-power domination and control.

I think this pretty well brings us to the conclusion of our Bible study period this evening. We are already four Bible studies into Revelation. We have three more Bible studies in Revelation to wrap up things.

Bible Study # 97
October 27, 1992
Mr. John Ogwyn

Book of Revelation Series—Revelation 11—13
(Chart at end)

We are getting into chapters 11, 12 and 13 of the book of Revelation tonight. We have a chart that I think will be helpful as we go through some of the material this evening. It is a chart that lays out in chart form the material that we are going to go through in Revelation 13 on who is the Beast and the succession of the beast powers. Some of you may have this chart in the booklet, *The Beast of Revelation—Myth, Metaphor or Reality?*

Mr. Herbert Armstrong had a similar chart. In fact, before we get started, I might tell you something. When I was a student at Ambassador College, I had a chance to see the original version of this in a mimeographed copy of the magazine at that time. I think it was the 1937 or 1938 copy of the magazine. The chart looked just like it is now except it was drawn out by hand and mimeographed. This had been set to type and hand lettered. I actually went through and compared to see if there was any difference.

There was one difference, and I will show you exactly what it was. If you go to the far right-hand column and go all the way to the second one from the bottom on the far right hand side, it says, "Italy and Germany ending in the Hitler-Mussolini Axis 1870-1945." See that? The only difference in the original chart was the fact that it said, "Italy, united by Garibaldi, 1870-[blank]" because it was 1937 or 1938 and 1945 hadn't gotten here yet. Mr. Armstrong didn't know the date would be 1945. He didn't know what date to fill in there, but that was the only difference.

As a young college student I was sort of intrigued by that—of being able to go back through that at that time. They had available, there in the college library in bound form, all of the magazines and all the literature going back to the first material that had ever been printed. They had a bound copy available in the reference section there in the library. It was very interesting to me as a young college student to go back and go through that to see what had been said and what the earliest literature and things like that had looked like.

This chart will make it easier for you to follow the Bible study this evening. This will be sort of a handy detachable copy you can have and keep. This is the fifth of our seven-part series on the book of Revelation. We are going to be covering

chapters 11, 12 and 13 of the book of Revelation. **We will spend a great deal of this time in chapter 13.** That is one of the reasons that I passed out this material. The chart will give it to you in written form and make it much easier to follow.

Chapters 10 and 11 sort of go together. Last time we commented a little bit on the tie-in from chapter 10 into chapter 11. Chapter 11 is an inset to be taken in connection with chapter 10.

Chapter 11 focuses in on the activities of the two witnesses. In many ways, the actions of the two witnesses were typified by Moses and Aaron. You could say that what Moses and Aaron did in the court of Pharaoh was sort of an analogy to the way that God is going to use the two witnesses at the end time. Here were two of God's servants that came before the leader of the world power at the time. They came in as representative of God, stating God's announcements and proclamations and, in case after case, announcing plagues that were going to come.

Many of the plagues of the book of Revelation were foreshadowed by many of the plagues that God sent on Egypt. Part of the reasons for the plagues is much the same as why God sent the plagues He did on Egypt. If you go back and read the account in Exodus, one of the things stated about the plagues God sent on Egypt was that they were sent against all the gods of Egypt. In effect, God was showing that the gods the Egyptians worshiped were not gods.

Their gods were not able to deliver them. They worshiped the Nile. The Nile couldn't deliver them. It was turned to blood. They worshiped the sun god. The Creator God who made the sun blotted it out and it became so dark that you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. The gods the Egyptians worshiped failed to deliver them.

We see the same thing today. We find, in our time, that we have our modern gods. We have our gods of technology and progress that we worship as a nation and as a world. We think we can deliver ourselves from so many of the problems of the past.

We are going to find that all of our great technology and all of our great skills can't deliver us. Our great medical skills are not going to keep the plagues from wiping out a large part of humanity. Our great technology—all of our computer resources, our transportation and all of these things—are not going to keep the famine from coming. It's not going to keep many of these catastrophes from occurring.

The two witnesses are going to announce these plagues. We will notice some things about them. Chapter 12 is another inset. It focuses on God's Church. Where is the Church going to be during the time that all of the catastrophic events are going on?

Chapters 8 and 9 bring us through the events of the Day of the Lord.

With Chapter 10, we begin to get into an inset. It goes back and shows sort of an overview of the work of the Church coming down into chapter 11 that leads up to the events of the two witnesses.

Then chapter 12 goes back and picks up the story of the Church in terms of how God protects it.

Chapters 10 and 11 focus on the Church in terms of how God worked through His Church and how He will work through His Church in the context of all of these plagues.

Chapter 13 focuses in on the beast. It describes the succession of world-ruling empires by using the descriptions of Daniel 7 and sort of bringing them up to date. It continues on details that Daniel did not primarily give. God inspired Daniel to give the overview. John picked that up and focuses in greater detail. Other identifying signs are pointed out: the number of the beast's name, the image of the beast, the mark of the beast and the second beast that looked like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. There is a tremendous amount in this material.

Revelation 10:11, "And he said to me, 'You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.'" If you notice, it just continues right on.

Revelation 11:1-2, "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.'"

Most likely, as is so often the case in Scripture, this is something that is a type and an antitype. There is going to be an altar that is rededicated. There is going to be a restoration of physical sacrifice because the Bible very clearly prophesies that they are going to be cut off; they are going to be stopped (Daniel 11:31). You can't stop it unless you start it, so there is that physical aspect. There are references to the Gentile nations coming in and the beast power taking over Jerusalem.

However, there can also be allusions here to the Church itself, which in the Bible is likened to a spiritual temple. Mr. Herbert Armstrong applied these verses, in type, to what he was doing back

in 1978-1979. Some of you remember that. At that particular time, he drew the analogy of what he was doing to measuring the temple (the Church) in terms of what he viewed as the responsibility that God had given him to put the Church back on track after the events of much of the 70s.

There is reference to the 42 months. Three periods are used synonymously in the Scriptures: 42 months, 1,260 days and time, times and half a time. Forty-two months is three and one-half years. Thirty-six months is three years; six more months makes 42. Twelve hundred and sixty days—if you divide 1,260 by 30 (just strike off the zero and divide three into 126), you get 42. So, 1,260 days is 42 30-day months. These terms are used interchangeably. There is a reference to this period of three and one-half years—the time of the Tribulation. It is a time when the beast power will be in occupied possession of Jerusalem.

Certainly, there are allusions to the events of, let's say, measuring or preparing the Church and the fact of a distinction that is given. There are various analogies that are drawn. We have the analogy of the temple itself. There was a temple compound, a courtyard. There was an outer courtyard called the court of the Gentiles. People who were interested in being able to hear the message could come in. There was a gate that went into an inner courtyard, the court of the Israelites; it was forbidden to enter the inner courtyard unless you were circumcised. Circumcision was the sign of the full acceptance of the covenant.

Inside that inner courtyard (the courtyard of the Israelites) was the altar of burnt sacrifice where the sacrifices were made. Then a little closer to the temple proper was the brazen laver, which was a big brass pot that contained water out of which anyone who was going to enter the sanctuary had to wash. Then there was the temple itself into which only the priesthood could enter. There was the Holy Place and then the Most Holy Place—the Holy of Holies—into which only the high priest could enter. That symbolized the very presence of God. The closer you got in, the greater level of sanctity was required. The whole issue was descriptive of access to God—how close were you to God or how far were you from God. That's sort of descriptive. If this is an analogy drawn to the Church then, clearly, we have those who are described in the courtyard as sort of the "hangers-on" and those who are really going all the way with it. That's the measuring rod that is described here in verse 1.

Verse 3, we are told, ““And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days,”” Who are the two witnesses? You want to know?

Well, it tells you right here.

Verses 4-6, “These are the two olive trees and the two lamp stands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.”

The two witnesses are actually the ones who will announce and call down the succession of the plagues that we have been going through a little earlier. God allowed Moses and Aaron to do that. God used Elijah to do that sort of thing. Elijah prayed and God shut the heavens (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17). In fact, there is an account in the case of Elijah where fire was called down (1 Kings 18:38). Elijah called down fire from heaven. The work of the two witnesses has been prefigured by individuals who have gone before.

Now, let’s notice a little bit of the symbolism. In verse 4, they are compared to two olive trees and two lampstands (KJV, “candlesticks”). There are some things that perhaps could be speculated about. I will just call your attention to some of the things that you might want to cross reference here. Hold your place and turn back to Zechariah.

Zechariah 4:1-7, “Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, ‘What do you see?’ So I said, ‘I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left.’ So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, ‘What are these, my lord?’ Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, ‘Do you not know what these are?’ And I said, ‘No, my lord.’ So he answered and said to me: ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of hosts. “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”””

Verses 9-14, ““The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands shall

also finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.’ Then I answered and said to him, ‘What are these two olive trees, one at the right of the lamp stand and the other at its left?’ And I further answered and said to him, ‘What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?’ Then he answered me and said, ‘Do you not know what these are?’ And I said, ‘No, my lord.’ So he said, ‘These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.’”

You sort of come back full circle to Revelation 11. The two anointed ones are the two witnesses who are symbolized by these two olive trees. If you go through the context of Zechariah 3 and 4, it focuses on two individuals. Zechariah was writing at the time when the temple was being restored and the Jews were being brought back out of Babylon. Zerubbabel was the leader bringing them out of Babylon. He was the one who brought them back. That’s what the name “Zerubbabel” means; it means “out of Babylon.” He led the Jews out of Babylon. He came back and was ruler over them. Joshua the high priest who is mentioned in Zechariah 3:1 accompanied him.

In Zechariah 3, Joshua the high priest is pictured as being clothed in filthy raiment and needing to be cleaned up by God. In that sense, Zerubbabel and Joshua served as a model for the description that is given. The prophecies that are made in Zechariah 3 and 4 stretch far beyond the literal Zerubbabel and Joshua of 2,500 years ago. It comes down to individuals who, let’s say, have roles that would be played in the end time. If you look in the context of Zechariah 3 and 4, we could say that the two olive trees, in that sense, would be analogous to the role of Joshua and Zerubbabel.

The other comparison in Revelation 11 is the two lampstands. The two witnesses are compared to the two olive trees, and they are compared to the two lampstands. The lampstands are alluded to back in Zechariah 4. There are seven lamps with seven pipes that are described in Zechariah 4, and if you look in Revelation 11:4, there are also two lampstands.

Revelation 1:20, we are told (last part of the verse), “...and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.”” This has led some to speculate that the two witnesses, who are

compared to being two lampstands and two olive trees, may be the individuals who would be the physical leaders of the last two stages or eras of God's Church, pictured in Revelation 3 as the Church at Philadelphia and the Church at Laodicea. There are seven lampstands that symbolize the seven Churches or the seven stages of the one Church.

Actually, the original symbolism of these seven lampstands goes back to the temple. The seven lampstands provided light in the temple. They really weren't candlesticks as we think of them burning wax candles. They were shaped like that but had a golden bowl that was filled with olive oil. Olive oil was the fuel that was actually burned and gave off light. It was like an oil lamp. The oil was olive oil and that was the light.

Now, in this sense, who is it that is going to be the light to the world from God? Well, these two individuals are going to represent God. The olive oil is used as a type of the Holy Spirit, so the analogy of a lampstand is certainly appropriate. The two olive trees symbolize the Holy Spirit of God. We have speculated on this. We have, of course, wondered who the two witnesses are. Various ones have speculated various things at various times. I don't have any names to fill in the blanks here, but God certainly does. At the appropriate time, it will be evident and it will be evident by the way God is using them at the time.

The time setting of the work of the two witnesses is the time of the Great Tribulation. They will have great miraculous power. But, of course, realize that the false prophet is working false and lying wonders for the beast during this time, countermanding that God is working true miracles through His servants. They will accomplish this during this period of 1,260 days.

Revelation 11:7-8, "Now when they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." Jerusalem is where they are going to be prophesying. It's where the beast and the false prophet will have set up their headquarters.

Verse 9, it says, "Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three and a half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves." How are they going to do that? It will probably be on television and satellite hookup. This is a verse that you could never have literally understood in

times past. Now, we can watch what is going on half a world away. When they are rioting in Tennenman Square in China, people in Europe and America are watching it. Here we are going to find people and kindred and tongues and nations that are going to see their dead bodies. This is going to be the focus of things. They are not buried. They are just allowed to lie out there.

Verse 10, "And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, ..." You see, when the plagues come, they will blame their problems on the two witnesses. Instead of repenting at the message of the two witnesses, they are going to be like Pharaoh; Pharaoh thought his problem was Moses. In Pharaoh's mind, the problem was Moses. Pharaoh thought that if Moses would quit calling down all these plagues, he wouldn't have any problems. The problem wasn't Moses; the problem was Pharaoh. He wouldn't repent. He wouldn't do what God said, which was, "Let My people go."

The people of the world who are caught up in this beast system, as far as they are concerned, the problem is these two witnesses. Nothing is allowed to get to them. Three and one-half years go by and nobody can harm them. If somebody tries to harm them, fire comes down (v. 5). I tell you what—it wouldn't be long before you would run out of assassins who are wanting to line up for that job. You talk about a suicide mission! This would be a real suicide mission.

Things go along. They come in and announce what God is going to do next. Instead of people repenting, realizing that they and their sins are to blame for what's happening, they are going to view these two fellows as the problem. If they could be rid of them, everything would be okay. When they are finally allowed to be killed, everybody is rejoicing. They think the problems are over.

Verse 11, "Now after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them." I think that's probably an understatement. All these people have been dancing and having a party. Here are the two corpses lying out there for three and a half days. All of a sudden, they stand up and sort of dust themselves off. You can just imagine the pandemonium that breaks out.

Verse 12, "And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.' And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them."

Now, we realize that there are three heavens spoken of in the Bible, and you have to determine it by context. The Bible speaks of the clouds of heaven and the birds flying in the midst of heaven. It uses the word “heaven” to describe the earth’s atmosphere—where the clouds are, where the birds fly or the rain of heaven is. There is another heaven that’s spoken of. It talks about the stars of heaven, outer space. You have the heaven of the earth’s atmosphere and the heaven of outer space. Then there is the heaven of God’s abode, which Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 12:2 as the third heaven.

The Bible doesn’t use the phrase “first and second heaven.” That exact phrase isn’t found in the Bible, but it does use the term “third heaven.” If you have a third heaven, you have to have a first and a second. The Bible does use the term “heaven” referring to the rain of heaven, the clouds of heaven or the birds of heaven. That’s clearly the first heaven. That’s the one closest to the earth. Then the stars of heaven obviously have to be the second one—that’s outer space. Then the third heaven is the heaven of God’s abode.

When it talks about “ascending to heaven in a cloud,” the context has to describe which heaven. Christ is going to come. When He returns to the earth, He’s going to return in the clouds of heaven. The saints are going to be caught up to meet Him in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). They ascend up to heaven in a cloud. How high do you ascend in a cloud? You ascend up into the earth’s atmosphere. Once you are above the earth’s atmosphere, there are no more clouds. You won’t ascend to the moon in a cloud. You don’t go into outer space in a cloud.

Revelation 11:12, “...And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.” They see that they are rising up.

Verses 13-14, “In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand men were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.”

Verse 15, the **seventh angel sounded** with the **third woe**, “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’”

In terms of the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses, we could compare that to Elijah ascending up and being caught up into the heavens in the fiery chariot (2 Kings 2:11). At

first glance, it would seem that when the two witnesses are raised up, this is the first resurrection and the return of Christ. But if you continue down in context, you get the idea that this may actually be a few days before the end because the seventh angel doesn’t sound until verse 15. It’s very possible that the two witnesses are actually raised up in the same way that Lazarus was raised up (John 11:43-44), or they are caught up into heaven in the same way Elijah was caught up into heaven and removed from where he was. If it is before the coming of Christ, it is likely a matter of a day or two or three—just immediately before.

That is sort of the context because the earthquake that’s described in verse 13 is not the great earthquake that is described a little bit later. In the earthquake of verse 13, only a tenth part of the city falls. The great earthquake described in Revelation 16:18 is the greatest earthquake the world has ever seen. In Revelation 16:19, we find that the city was divided into three parts. The earthquake mentioned in Revelation 11:13, at the time the two witnesses are resurrected, is simply a prelude. I guess you could say that the earthquake of Revelation 16:18-19 is the aftershock. Those who come from California are familiar with aftershocks of an earthquake. In this case, the aftershock is going to be a lot more than the original shock.

If you put it together and really examine it closely, I think the indication is clear that the three and one-half years the two witnesses will prophesy in Jerusalem will almost be an exact overlap of the Tribulation but not exactly. It may actually have its beginning a few days or a week or so earlier because they are going to prophesy 1,260 days and then they are going to be killed. They are going to be dead three and one-half days; then they are going to be raised up, caught up into the clouds and disappear from everyone’s view. An earthquake is going to occur. It will be a great earthquake; it will destroy ten percent of the city. Now, that sounds bad until you read on in Revelation 16 where you have an earthquake that causes everything to fall apart. We are looking at an event that is just setting the stage. When that is finished, the second woe is passed and the third woe comes quickly (v. 14). The **third woe is the seventh trumpet**, which is described in verse 15. We sort of get the view of what’s going on.

Revelation 12 is another inset.

Revelation 12:1-5, “Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child,

she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. And she bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne.”

Who is the male Child? The male Child is Christ. Who is the woman? The woman is used symbolic of the Church. The Church is a continuum that had its beginnings in the wilderness—the Old Testament Church in the wilderness, the congregation of Israel.

The symbolism of the sun, the moon and the stars is associated with Israel. Hold your place and let's go back to Genesis. Notice this symbolism that is associated with Israel.

Joseph had a dream.

Genesis 37:9, “Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, ‘Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.’” That was symbolic of what was going to happen later on when Pharaoh made him ruler over all the land in Egypt. The sun, moon and stars were used symbolic of the family of Israel—in other words, Jacob and Rachel and the 12 sons who became the 12 tribes. The sun, moon and 12 stars were used symbolically of the family of Israel.

Here we have a woman—the Church, the congregation of Israel as she was—who is described with the symbolism that denoted Israel who brought forth the Messiah. Israel, in that sense, brought forth the Messiah who was ultimately caught up to God. In the Old Testament period, it was the congregation (KJV, “church”) in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). It was the congregation of Israel. In the New Testament period, it is the Church of God. It is still symbolically the woman or the Church (God's people).

Revelation 12:6, after the Messiah is caught up to God, we find, “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.” We are going to come back to that and make comment on it in a moment.

In verse 3, we saw the great red dragon. Verse 9 defines the great dragon as the devil and Satan. We find him described as a dragon with seven

heads and ten horns, which is symbolic of the beast system and symbolizes his kingdom.

In verses 4 and 9, the reference of his being cast to earth and his angels with him pulling a third part of the stars (stars were used to symbolize angels) has led us to understand that very likely Satan pulled one-third of the angels when he rebelled and was cast down.

Verses 7-9 gives us a glimpse of that, “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Verse 10, “Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’”

Verses 12-14, “‘Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.” Here we find something different.

Coming back to verses 5-6, we find the woman fleeing after the Messiah is caught up to heaven. That was a type of what will occur at the end (vv. 12-14). In the description that we have in verse 6, the woman, or the Church, is taking the initiative and fleeing into a wilderness area, which is basically an area that is sparsely inhabited, and remains there for this period of 1,260 days, as it is described.

“Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth.” There was war in heaven a long time ago and Satan was cast out (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28). But here in Revelation 12, we are reading of another war when Satan is cast down. This time he has great wrath because he knows that he has but a short time. The Tribulation is Satan's wrath. It is prompted by his being cast back down. He comes down and he has great wrath because he knows that it's almost over. In rage and frustration, he lashes out at the people of God.

The difference is: in verse 6 the Church *flees* and in verse 14 the Church is *taken*.

What the Church went through in the Middle Ages was a type of what it will be going through at the time of the Great Tribulation in the end time.

In 325 A.D. at the Council of Nicaea, it was established that from that time on, those who continued to keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days, contrary to the customs and practices by those who called themselves Christians in Rome, were now to be persecuted by the power of the government. The Roman emperor Constantine devised, in collaboration with the bishop of Rome, a standard brand of Christianity among all of the groups that called themselves Christian and enforced a uniformity and unity.

Unity is a wonderful thing, but first and foremost, unity has to be with God and has to be centered around God. Unity for unity's sake—if you're unified with the devil, you're not in good shape. That's not the kind of unity that God wants. *We are going to find that the world is going to enforce unity; it's going to be called "the mark of the beast."* Unity, as God looks on it, is unity that originates with God and with the Spirit of God. There's a unity of the Spirit of God.

The unity that Constantine enforced was a unity that was imposed by the iron power of the state. In 325 A.D., pressure on the Church was brought to bear from the government—primarily to those existing in the areas of Asia Minor. It forced the people who refused to compromise with the law of God to liquidate what they could liquidate and, in some cases, just walk off and leave it and get out of there. They went to the area of the mountains of Armenia. Portions of them went up into some of the Balkan mountain area; some branched out into the Alpine Mountain region. Some went up into the Transcarpathian Mountain areas of Central Europe.

In recent months, we have come in contact with remnants of Sabbath keepers who are there. These were areas that God's people fled to—areas that were sort of on the edge of civilization—mountainous, wilderness regions.

In ancient times when transportation and communication was pretty skimpy, if you were in a remote area, the power of the state didn't really come in where you were. It's sort of like some of the old hillbillies back during the last century and certainly the early part of this century. The revenue men simply didn't get that far back into the hills because it was remote and transportation was difficult. There are areas of this state that it has not been that many years ago

that outsiders just didn't venture in. They didn't have much way to get in and couldn't find their way around. It was sort of remote and cut off.

That's the way these areas were. God's people simply disappeared into some of those remote areas that were so far off the beaten path that it wasn't worth the trouble and effort of the civil government to try to penetrate that far back. Now with modern communication and transportation, it's sort of hard to lose yourself.

That was not the case at this time. God's people simply fled and moved into those areas. We pick up bits and pieces of them through the medieval period. They remained in those areas that were the border areas of the Holy Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire and the other empires. This was sort of the border area. What it amounted to was that they were left alone for the most part.

If you want to run an exact 1,260-year period (v. 6), using a day for a year, you could run it from 325 A.D., when the Council of Nicaea and the Roman emperor Constantine imposed a death penalty for any Christian who continued to Judaize, as the decree stated it. By "Judaize," he meant keeping and observing the days the Jews kept—the Festivals, the Sabbath.

If you come down 1,260 years, it brings you to 1585 A.D. That was the year in which England gave religious liberty. Full religious liberty and toleration was not given, but that was the last recorded imprisonment for Sabbath keepers. There was no more imprisonment. Sabbath keeping and observance was not reckoned as a criminal offense. It was decriminalized in England in 1585 A.D., and it was in that year that the first congregation began to emerge in the "light of day" there in England.

There are records of early Sabbath-keeping congregations that date back at that point—the Millyard Church in England, a Sabbatarian Church from whence later Stephen Mumford (less than 100 years later), in the 1660s, came from England to Rhode Island and founded the first Sabbath Church in the new world, from whence the Church has spread through Rhode Island, into New Jersey, down into the area of West Virginia and from there, in the middle 1800s, on into the Northwest. It is this group with which Mr. Herbert Armstrong came into contact.

It was at that point, 1,260 years later (1585), that God's Church finally was able to emerge from hiding. For the first time in 1,260 years, God's people were able to emerge and at least be able to function openly in society.

That period of persecution, martyrdom, all the atrocities of the medieval period, the Inquisitions

and the attempts to destroy any deviation was merely a type. What the Holy Roman Empire did during that time was a type of what the final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire will do in the end.

Verse 14, we are told the Church is taken into her place to be protected and to be nourished.

Verse 17, “And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

When you compare it, we have a distinction. Revelation 3, the Church in Philadelphia, that sixth era or sixth stage in the history of the Church has the promise given to it.

Revelation 3:10, “Because you have kept My command to persevere [because they faithfully held on to and kept the command to persevere], I also will keep you from the hour of trial [or the hour of tribulation] which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

Verse 16, the Laodiceans are told, “...because you are lukewarm [complacent], and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.”

Verse 19, because Christ loves them, He is going to allow them to be chastened so they can be awakened.

Revelation 12:17, you find that Satan is going to make war with the remnant—those who are left behind. We find that distinction.

We see the reference to a place of protection or a place of safety, as we have termed it. The specific words “place of safety” are not used here, but the word “place” is used. What is the purpose of the “place”? It’s a place to be safe from the dragon, so we call it “the place of safety.” I don’t see where that represents a problem. It simply is descriptive of a place where God will protect His people from the atrocities of the Tribulation.

Revelation 13:1-3, “Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.”

Ultimately, they were worshiping the dragon, which was the source of power. They worshiped the beast by admiring the beast.

Verse 4, “So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’” They adored and worshiped the beast. The beast had this veneration. They stood in awe of the beast. They were deeply impressed with its system.

Verse 5, “And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.”

Verses 7-8, “And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and nation. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him,” Everybody will be directed toward worshiping it.

At this point, let’s stop and I will direct your attention to the chart that you have.

If you look at the top, you will notice that we have several things lined up. We have Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Daniel 8, Revelation 13, Revelation 17, with an explanation of the symbols and events fulfilled in history.

Look at the chart. Remember, Daniel 2 uses the analogy of the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw. He saw the head of gold, the shoulders of silver, the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, the feet of iron and potter’s clay with the ten toes that are smashed by Christ at His return (vv. 32-35).

Daniel 2:44, when you go down through the progression, we are told, “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;” That is defined.

Verses 37-38, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, “You, O king, are a king of king.... –you are this head of gold.”

Verses 39-40, “But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours [which was the Medes and the Persians]; then another, a third kingdom of bronze [which was Alexander the Great, which swallowed up the Persian Empire], And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron [that was the Roman Empire that swallowed up Alexander’s empire],”

Verses 41-43, it continued all the way down. The final end-time culmination of the Roman Empire is in the final ten toes, which are described as iron and potter’s clay.

Daniel 7:3-7, Daniel sees four creatures that are compared to a lion, a bear, a leopard and a great fourth beast that has ten horns. When we go through the sequence that’s given in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, we find by comparing the two visions that Daniel defines the head of gold (the Babylonian Empire) in Daniel 2 equated with the

lion in Daniel 7. The second kingdom, the kingdom of silver in chapter 2, is the bear of chapter 7, which symbolized the Medes and the Persians. The third kingdom of bronze in chapter 2 corresponds to the four-headed leopard, which symbolized the empire of Alexander the Great because after his death, it split into four sections. Then, finally, the fourth beast in chapter 2:33 is represented as two legs of iron and, in chapter 7, as a creature possessing great iron teeth. This fourth creature that had the ten horns was the Roman Empire. This chart lines it up. You can see how it lines it up coming down.

Revelation 13 and Daniel 7 correlate very much. They looked at it from different perspectives. Daniel looked at it at the time when only one creature had emerged. The Babylonian Empire was on the scene, to be followed in Daniel's lifetime by the Persians.

Daniel saw four creatures: the lion, the bear, the four-headed leopard and the fourth great creature. John, in Revelation 13:1, saw it as one creature that had characteristics of a lion, a bear, a leopard and had seven heads. Well, how many heads were in Daniel's vision? The lion had a head, the bear had a head, the leopard had four and then the fourth creature had one—that makes seven heads. The fourth creature of Daniel's vision had the ten horns.

You find that Daniel looked at it as four different, distinct creatures that were emerging. John saw one big system that had the characteristics of these four that Daniel had seen. It was simply the same thing viewed in a little different way. You still had the same creatures described. You had the same number of heads and the same number of horns. The seventh head (the fourth creature) had ten horns. The ten horns were the ten successive stages of the old Roman Empire that continued down through history.

I am not going to totally cover the chart this evening because we are going to cover some more when we get to Revelation 17. We are going to realize that when John describes it in Revelation 13, he is describing the beast as he viewed it in his day and continuing to the future.

Verse 3, the Babylonian-Roman system had not yet received its deadly wound. The beast received a deadly wound in 476 A.D. The Roman Empire fell. The last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, was forced to abdicate and the Roman Empire fell. The date that is often used as the closing date of ancient history is 476 A.D. The fall of Rome was the end of ancient history and the beginning of the Medieval World. Just like 1492 A.D. is considered the end

of the medieval period and the beginning of the modern world.

We are told that the beast received a deadly wound.

Verse 5, then the deadly wound was healed and it was given power to continue 42 months. The deadly wound was healed in 554 A.D. There occurred what was called the Imperial Restoration. You can see it on the chart. The Imperial Restoration occurred in 554 A.D. Justinian, the ruler from Byzantine (the Eastern Empire), at the behest of the pope, came in and cleared out the other occupying groups. The Roman Empire was restored in the West. The restoration of the Roman Empire was called in history "The Imperial Restoration."

There were successive periods down through history. There were successive crownings. You had the Imperial Restoration by Justinian, beginning in 554 A.D. The Roman Empire continued down. The pope crowned Charlemagne on Christmas day in 800 A.D. as the restored Roman emperor. There was the crowning of Otto, the German king, in 962 A.D. Continuing down, there was the Habsburg ("Hapsburg" in English) Dynasty and then the crowning of Napoleon in 1804. When Napoleon was defeated in 1814, that ended the 42 months or 1,260 years of unbroken continuation of the Roman imperium—the Roman Empire.

When Napoleon was defeated in 1814, that succession had a stop. The deadly wound was healed and power was given to continue 42 months. This is described right here on the chart. If you look toward the bottom, the line that goes across, you can see the deadly wound and the quotation that is given. We will compare some of that with Revelation 17 at the next Bible study.

Let's notice some other things. We find that this blasphemous system had the name of blasphemy stamped on it. Throughout its history from the time that it was restored under Justinian (The Imperial Restoration), it was known as the Holy Roman Empire, as opposed to simply the Roman Empire. It was the Holy Roman Empire, or as it was called later in the Medieval period, the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation. That was, in effect, a blasphemous title because "holy and reverend" is the name of God (KJV, Psalm 111:9); to attach God's name to that Babylonish system is blasphemous. There is nothing holy about it.

Revelation 13:11, we find another beast described, "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon." It outwardly looked like a lamb. It had two horns. A horn is

symbolic of governmental authority. It was like a lamb, yet, it spoke as a dragon.

Verse 12, “And he exercises all the authority of the first beast [the old Roman Empire] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship [To worship is to give loyalty, allegiance and devotion.] the first beast [the Roman system], whose deadly wound was healed.”

The second beast is the papacy. The Catholic Church is described here. “The two horns”—it had civil power and ecclesiastical power; the Catholic Church is both church and state. Vatican City is a state. It has diplomatic relations with many nations. They are on the verge of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel right now. They have established diplomatic relations with Russia. They exchange ambassadors. It is the only church that is a state. The pope has the position of head of state and Vatican City is sovereign territory.

Technically, Vatican City is not a part of Italy. It is located in Italy, but the Italian law doesn't have predominance there. It is a sovereign territory, a sovereign state. At one time during the Middle Ages, they ruled as a temporal power. They ruled a larger section. The papal state was the whole middle section of Italy. Now, all that's left is Vatican City. It has both temporal power and ecclesiastical power, so it is symbolized by two horns. It outwardly resembles a lamb—like Jesus Christ. It has the outward guise of that. Yet, in reality, it is not Christ's system but Satan's system. It exercised the power of the old Roman Empire.

“And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.” Once the deadly wound was healed, the Roman Empire came back as the Holy Roman Empire. The Catholic Church insisted that everybody give loyalty, devotion and allegiance to the Holy Roman Empire.

Next Bible study I am going to bring some history books—secular history books that came out of the college—outlined series on medieval and ancient history. I want to read some quotes out of the one that deals with the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages.

Verses 13-14, here we find, “He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the

earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.” –Lying miracles that deceive people.

An image is something that bears an outward resemblance. What we have here, in terms of an image of the beast, is a system that is set up. The papacy and the establishment there really was, in that sense, an image. It was a reflection. Here was a church government that was organized on exactly the same pattern as the old Roman Empire.

I'll read some quotes. It describes that, “during the age of Constantine, the Roman Empire was divided into dioceses, 13 in number, made up of numerous provinces over which bishops with the title of metropolitans or primates presided.” The point is that they used the Roman Empire as its model. It used the structure of the Roman Empire and, in that sense, it was a religious model of the secular realm.

Verse 15, they insisted, “...as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” This man-made church governmental structure of the Roman Catholic Church insisted that those who would not give their loyalty and devotion to the image of the beast should be killed. During the Middle Ages, if you would not conform to that system and give your loyalty, allegiance and devotion to the religious and civil system, you were in danger of being killed. That ultimately is going to happen again. What occurred then was a type of what is going to occur again in the Great Tribulation.

Verses 16-18, “And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.” Let's notice several things relating to this.

Let's first note the mark of the beast. A “mark” is a “sign or an insignia that is *forced*.” It is like a brand. We are told that it is a mark on the hand and the forehead.

Deuteronomy 6:8, God's people are told God's law is to be what? “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” *The law of God is a “sign” for God's people.*

Exodus 31:13, “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.”” God's

law is a sign that is to be carried on the hands and between the eyes—in other words, the forehead of God’s people. Your hand is the means of action. If I work, labor or do something, I do it with my hands. If I think, I do it with my mind. God’s law is to control our thought and our actions. The Sabbath is tied in to our thought and our actions. We rest and observe the Sabbath in our minds and by what we do.

Verse 17, ““It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; ...”” The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people forever. It was a sign of obedience.

Here, in Revelation 13:16, we have a sign of disobedience, a mark or brand of disobedience.

Revelation 14 talks about the wrath of God.

Revelation 14:9-10, “...‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God,””

Colossians 3:6, notice, “Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience...” On whom is the wrath of God poured out? It’s poured out on the children of disobedience. *The mark of the beast is a brand of disobedience to the law of God; the Sabbath is a sign of obedience to the law of God.* The wrath of God is poured out on the children of disobedience.

Revelation 14:12, “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” We are looking at a distinction between keeping the commandments and not keeping the commandments.

In Exodus 31, God uses the Sabbath as the sign of obedience to God. It is the commandment that is pointed out as the test commandment—the one that is used as the sign of obedience.

What is the sign of disobedience? –The breaking of the Sabbath and the observance of pagan holidays (Sunday, Christmas, Easter and all the pagan holidays) in replacement of God’s Holy Days.

Why is it called the mark of the beast? The beast was the Roman Empire. Did you know Constantine proclaimed Sunday the official day of rest throughout the Roman Empire? Do you know what it’s titled? I don’t have my copy here, but I could read it to you. Eusebius was a Catholic historian who was actually the secretary who kept the minutes at the Council of Nicaea and recorded Constantine’s decree. Constantine referred to it as “requiring all to keep the venerable day of the sun.” The sun god! The old Babylonian sun god! The old Babylonian Mystery religion! The worship of the sun god!

This was the day of the sun. It was the day that was viewed as holy to the sun god. That’s why it had his name.

You see different days were holy to different gods. If you were a particular devotee of a certain god, well, you paid special attention to this day or that day. Different ones had different things, different rituals that took place. Each day was sacred to a particular god. It connected with various things. It connected with astrology and all kinds of things. We don’t need to get into it, but Sunday was the mark of the beast because it was a day that had its origin in the old Roman-Babylonian system. It was adopted by the church and used as something that is set out as a brand of disobedience.

If you look at Christmas, Easter and the various pagan holidays, they go back to pagan antiquity, and they are tied in with the old Babylonian-Roman system. They are a part of something that was foisted off and enforced. Constantine issued the decree that made Sunday a day of worship. He closed Roman courts on Sunday and all of those things. I will try and remember to bring the book with some of the material because we will go through more on this. We are going to get into Revelation 14 next time. There are parts of it that we are going to get this time and parts of it we will pick up next time.

Here is a brand of disobedience that is going to be enforced once again. There is going to be an attempt at a unified one-world system. Unity is great if it originates with God. Unity is horrible if it originates with the devil. You’d better not be united with the devil.

Nearly the whole world is going to look at us as being sort of the odd ones out. They are going to say, ‘Everything would be great if you oddballs would conform. Then we could all be unified.’ We don’t want conformity with the devil; we want conformity with God. God is the One we want to conform to. If there’s only one person obeying God and 9,999 who aren’t, who needs to change? Who needs to get in step with Whom? It doesn’t matter how many people want to repeal the Ten Commandments. That’s not up for debate. That’s not on the ballot because God is the One who decrees it, and they stand by God’s authority.

Here we have a brand of disobedience. A brand that is symbolic of ignoring the law of God and replacing it with festivities of pagan origin.

There is also the reference to the number of the beast, 666. In earlier times, alphabets like the Greek and Hebrew alphabets had numerical value. When we were in school, most of us learned about Roman numerals. “V” is five, “X”

is ten and “L” is 50. We learned Roman numerals. Do you realize that’s the way that math was done? Can you imagine having to do all your math additions and subtraction with something like that?

It was up into the early medieval period before we had what we call our “numbers,” which were called Arabic numerals. The Arabs didn’t actually invent them, but they served to transmit them. They were adopted as a separate means of numbers.

In Greek and Hebrew in which the Bible is written, all the letters had numeral value, so every name had a number attached to it. It wasn’t numbers that you made up. You could simply figure it up in Roman numerals. Some names would have numeric value. Take, for instance, “Louis” in Roman numerals. The “L” would be 50. The “O” doesn’t have value. The “U” was a “V” in Latin; the alphabet’s the same. That would be “V,” which is five. The “I” would be one. The “S” doesn’t have a value. That would be a Roman numeral value of 56.

Names are not spelled the same way in different languages. You have to translate a name from one language into another. In French, you would spell Peter, “P-i-e-r-r-e.” In English, you would spell it “P-e-t-e-r.” In Greek, you would spell it as “P-e-t-r-o-s,” and in Hebrew, you would spell it “C-e-p-h-a-s.” There’s different ways of spelling it out in a different language.

If you take the name “Romulus,” translate it into Hebrew and spell it out in Hebrew script, it adds up to 666. That’s the numeric value. If you translate it into Greek and spell it out in the Greek letters, it adds up to 666. It’s the only word, that I am aware of, that when translated into Hebrew and spelled out in Hebrew script, adds up to exactly the same numeric value as when you translate it into Greek and add it up in Greek script.

Romulus was, of course, the founder of the Roman Empire—the Roman system. The name Rome and Roman derives from him. In effect, that name is labeled here. Now, many things tie in with the Roman system that in Greek, Hebrew or Latin will add up to that. But the two biblical languages are normally where you would expect it, not in some man-devised thing. You could spell out anybody’s name, invent your own number value and make it add up. If I had time, I would show you several little tricks you can do of adding up things. It doesn’t prove anything, but when you go back to where you would actually expect to find this, you would expect that the languages of the Bible would be the ones

that you would look to try to find this numeric value.

Nero Caesar, the emperor at the height during much of the New Testament period and the height of persecution during the New Testament period, his name in Hebrew adds up to 666.

There are various names associated with the Roman Empire and the Roman Government that add up to 666. There were signs all over Italy during the time of and previous to World War II that said, “Viva el duce.” These were signs of support for Mussolini. If you add it up to numeric value in Roman numerals, it adds up to 666. There are a lot of different things that certainly stamp this number on the Roman system. What we are looking at is the Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church and the whole Babylonian system that is stamped through and through. We will cover more of this part next Bible study. We will cover other portions as well.

This sort of brings us toward a conclusion. There’s so much material to cover here. When we started into Revelation and said we were going to cover Revelation in seven parts, we said we would not go into such detail that we would cover everything. I think you are already seeing that covering Revelation in seven parts still means you are just skimming the surface because there’s so much detail. Some books in the Bible are written where there is so much detail packed in, if you are going to get anything out of it, it takes a little more time.

You have this chart. I will have some other material for you next Bible study that will supplement this and hopefully the two together will be helpful. When we get into Revelation 17, we will cover some of the material that we did not have a chance to cover this evening, in terms of the beast power and its resurrections. These are things that are very applicable for us because they help us understand where we stand in the context of what God is doing.

As we look at the world scene, God wants us to understand where we stand. One of the purposes of prophecy is to understand where we stand in the scope of world affairs and world events. God doesn’t spell out every detail where we can pinpoint the day and the month and the year. That’s not the point, but God does want us to discern the times. So, hopefully, some of the material we are going through in this Bible study and some of this handout material will be helpful to you in that regard.

Next Bible study, we will cover Revelation 14—18.

Prophetic “Babylon”—The Successive Reigns of Gentile Kingdoms

Image (Daniel 2)	4 Beasts (Daniel 7); Ram and Goat (Daniel 8)	Beasts from Sea and Earth (Revelation 13)	Harlot Riding Scarlet Beast (Revelation 17)	Symbolic Meaning	Historical Fulfillment	
Head of Gold (vv. 32, 38)	Lion (7:4)	7-Headed Beast from Sea with Lion Mouth,		1st Head of Beast	Neo-Babylonian (or Chaldean) Empire, 625–539BC	
Chest and Arms of Silver (vv. 32, 39)	Bear (7:5); 2-Horned Ram (8:3–4, 20)	Bear Feet		2nd Head of Beast	Medo-Persian Empire 558–330BC	
Belly and Thighs of Bronze (vv. 32, 39)	4-Headed Leopard (7:6); Male Goat with Large Horn and 4 Notable Horns (8:5–8, 21–22)	and Leopard Body (v. 2)		3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Heads of Beast	Hellenistic Empire of Alexander the Great and Its 4 Divisions 333–31BC	
2 Legs of Iron (vv. 33, 40–43)	Beast with Iron Teeth and 10 Horns (7:7, 23–24)	7th Head of this Beast Has 10 Horns (v. 1)	7-Headed Scarlet Beast (v. 3) (ridden at some point by Harlot described below)	7th Head of Beast	Roman Empire 31BC–476AD	
					(Constantine declares “Christianity” official religion in 324AD)	
		Deadly Wound (v. 3)		Apparent End of Beast	Fall of Rome (476AD)	
	1st Horn (uprooted)	1st Horn		3 Successive Horns (barbarian followers of Arianism destroyed on papal authori- ty—this period called the “transition age” in Philip Myers’ <i>Ancient History</i> , p. 571)	Kingdom of the Vandals 429–533AD	
	2nd Horn (uprooted)	2nd Horn			Heruli (under Odoacer) 476–493AD	
	3rd Horn (uprooted)	3rd Horn			Kingdom of the Ostrogoths 493–554AD	
	Little Horn among the 10 (7:8, 20–22, 24–27)	2-Horned Lamb-Like Beast from Earth and Image (vv. 11–18)	Royally Clad Harlot named Mystery, Babylon the Great (vv. 1–6)	False Christian Religion Ruling the Beast	Roman Catholic Church under the Pope (in the “image” of the Roman civil government)	
	4th Horn	1st of Last 7 Horns; Deadly Wound healed	Beast Continues 1,260 Years after Healing (v. 5) 554–1814AD	1st Head of Scarlet Beast ridden by Harlot	Revivals of the Beast: The 7 last horns of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 are the same as the 7 heads of the Scarlet Beast of Revelation 17 (5 of which are “fallen” when Napoleon is defeated in 1814—v. 10)	Imperial Restoration of the West under Justinian (554AD)
	5th Horn	2nd of Last 7 Horns		2nd Head ridden by Harlot		Carolingian Empire (Charlemagne crowned in 800AD)
	6th Horn	3rd of Last 7 Horns		3rd Head ridden by Harlot		Holy Roman Empire (Otto the Great crowned in 962AD)
	7th Horn	4th of Last 7 Horns		4th Head ridden by Harlot		Hapsburg Dynasty (Charles V crowned in 1530AD)
	8th Horn	5th of Last 7 Horns		5th Head ridden by Harlot		Napoleon’s Empire 1804–1814AD
	In 1814, 1,260 years after the Deadly Wound was healed in 554AD, the “Holy Roman Empire” ended with Napoleon’s crushing defeat. According to Willis West’s <i>Modern History</i> , “so closed a government that dated from Augustus Caesar” (p. 377).					
9th Horn	6th of Last 7 Horns		6th Head ridden by Harlot	“One IS” (Revelation 17:10)— understood by God’s Church in end time (Daniel 12:9–10)	Italy and Germany ending in the Hitler-Mussolini Axis 1870–1945AD	
10 Toes on 2 Feet of Iron Mixed with Ceramic Clay (vv. 33, 42)	10th (Final) Horn	7th of Last 7 Horns	7th Head ridden by Harlot (with 10 Horns); 8th System if Beast itself is 1st (v. 11)	Other Revival That Has “NOT YET COME” (Revelation 17:10)	Last Revival of the Roman Empire (10 national rulers under a single leader)	

Bible Study # 98
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Mr. John Ogwyn

Book of Revelation Series—Revelation 14—18

If you didn't get the handout that I handed out last time, you might want to go ahead and do so now. The handouts I have given you will simply make it easier for you to follow the Bible study because we are in that section of the book of Revelation that gets a little bit technical as far as keeping horns, heads and all sorts of things like that together. If you have the chart to follow along, it will perhaps be a little bit easier for you to do so.

Last time we finished up going through Revelation 13, which is a rather detailed exposition on who is the beast and focusing in on the succession of revivals of the Roman Empire. I brought something along and I want to read a few quotes just in preface of this Bible study this evening. This is a college text from the "Problems in European Civilization" series. This particular book is titled *The Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages*. It has selections from top authors in the field on analyzing the significance of the Holy Roman Empire. I don't want to get off into all of that, but there are a number of things that are sort of interesting. It's amazing how much is recognized even in the secular realm.

Did anybody see the editorial cartoon in the paper today? Anybody take note of that? It's very interesting; I think I will post it on the bulletin board. It shows this setting out in front of this old building in Argentina. Of course, Argentina is where all the Nazis fled after World War II. It shows these two old geezers sitting out there. One is obviously Adolph Hitler and the other is his buddy. They are sitting there and the Nazi flag is in the background. It shows these guys pouring gasoline in the boats. Hitler is sitting there in his wheelchair and his buddy is sitting there in his wheelchair. Hitler is reading the paper. The headlines are: "German Riots, Neo Nazis Attack Immigrants." He looks at his friend and he says, "Pack your bags Borman. It's time."

It's interesting that even the secular media has picked up on the significance of some of what is going on because whoever did this didn't have a particular religious "ax to grind." But it's like even the world is beginning to grasp that something is happening, and it makes them a little bit uncomfortable. They don't quite know.

We can have understanding as to what is happening, to where it is going to lead and how it will culminate. Not that we know every detail and can plug in dates and specific names for every specific thing. God hasn't revealed all of those details to us, but He has revealed a broad outline, an overview. He revealed something that enables us to make sense of the world in which we live and to understand from whence we came, where we are going and how the events in which we are living are going to culminate.

I am going to do it a little differently this evening. We finished up in Revelation 13. I **want to carry that over into Revelation 17, which sort of picks it up, and then I am going to come back to Revelation 14 and 15.**

I want to read a couple of quotes out of this book, *The Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages*. This is from one particular historian, Johannes Haller. He says, "In the memory of the German people, the old empire [speaking of the Holy Roman Empire] lives on as a time of greatness and splendor that must one day come to life again." That's sort of an interesting thing and in many ways, sort of ties in with the little editorial cartoon.

Last Bible study in Revelation 13, we talked about the image of the beast and how the papacy and the structure of the Roman Catholic Church derived from the structure of the old Roman Empire.

James Bryce, who was a famous British historian, a professor at Oxford University and also ambassador to the United States, wrote an article titled "The History of the Holy Roman Empire Must Be Deduced From Its Theory." He says, "Thus the emperor [speaking of the Holy Roman emperor] answers in every point to his antitype, the pope. His power being yet of a lower rank, created on the analogy of the papal, as the papal [system] itself had been modeled after the elder empire."

This makes the clear statement that the papacy was modeled after the elder empire, the old Roman Empire. Keep that quote in mind.

Revelation 13:14, "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived." Who was the beast that was wounded? The old Roman Empire came to an end, so they said, 'We should make an image of the beast (v. 15).' He says that the papacy itself was modeled after the elder or the old Roman Empire.

Haller says, "The parallel holds good even in its details, for we have seen the churchmen assuming the crown and the robes of the secular prince. The Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire are one and the same thing seen from different sides. Catholicism, the principal of the universal Christian society, is also Romanism. That is, it rests upon Rome as the origin and type of its universality, manifesting itself in a mystic dualism...."

I like that expression, and it seems like we read about mystic things here. In fact, we read of something called Mystery Babylon the Great.

It says, "...manifesting itself in a mystic dualism as divine and eternal, its head is the pope to whom souls have been entrusted as human and temporal the emperor commissioned to rule men's bodies and acts."

Just a couple of other things: this was part of the teaching; this is speaking in the latter part of the 13th century. It is a book that was written about the Roman Empire and its translation to Germany. It goes through and the point that it makes is: 'It was the will of God, not of men, that led to the granting of the Roman Empire to Germany.'

Maybe just one or two others: "The empire was always viewed as the city of God and the emperor as the vicar of Christ. His first duty being the furtherance of justice and law."

A couple of other quotes: "The task of the empire was to be God's protagonist on earth, to fulfill His aims here, to protect Christianity and the church, to preserve the righteousness of God and the divine order of the Universe on earth."

That's just a fancy way of saying that when you read about the mark of the beast and about how the papacy exercised the power of the first beast, their allegiance must be given to the empire.

Revelation 13:12, "And he exercises all the authority of the first beast [the old Roman Empire] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." It pointed people toward the fact that their devotion, allegiance and loyalty must be given to the empire. The beast ultimately enforced a mark and persisted in these things.

Haller says, "The most important struggle assigned to the Holy Roman Empire was the fight against infidels. [Infidels were somebody who didn't believe what *they* believed; this was the basis of all the religious persecution.] The Holy Roman Empire was made synonymous with the people of God, with Christendom. In the imperial symbols, this claim was displayed to the

whole world with the imperial apple filled with earth from the four corners of the world. The emperor holds the whole world in his hands. The royal gold of the crown signifies the dominion over the world."

The Holy Roman emperors were crowned and one of the things that they received was this golden apple. In this apple were four spoons of earth taken from what were considered symbolically the four corners of the earth. Four extremities symbolized the fact that he ruled the world as God's vice regent. He didn't exercise real power over the whole world, but as far as he was concerned, he did. And this was accepted. You've heard the song, "He holds the whole world in his hands." Did you know the Holy Roman emperor made that claim?

The imperial crown was called "*corona urbis et orbis*." In other words, "The crown of the city and of the globe"—speaking of the crown of Rome and of the world. That was the way it was. The title he carried as Holy Roman emperor was "*caput mundi*" which means "head of the world" and "*dominator orbis et urbis*" which means "lord of the globe and of the city." He was the head of the world, the ruler of the globe and the ruler of Rome. Rome was sort of on a level with all the rest of the world. I think it's interesting to understand that this is the symbolism, and these are the claims to which the Holy Roman Empire laid claim during the Middle Ages.

Here's another thing that ties in with the matter of the image of the beast. Speaking of the original Roman Empire before its collapse, Haller says, "The dismantling of the emperor's priestly powers were paralleled by the pope's accumulation of the titles, ranks, offices and duties of the emperor [This of course happened; even the title "Pontifex Maximus," which is commonly used by the pope, was previously a title of Roman emperors.]. The Roman church was the unique legitimate successor of the Roman Empire, the empire of ancient Rome [Only papal Rome could be Rome's heir.]. The pope was the only lawful inheritor of the rights and authority of the old Roman emperors."

Anyway, enough quotes. I think it gives you a flavor that, certainly, even secular historians, who are not writing from any religious standpoint, focus in on the correlation between the Roman Catholic Church and the old Roman Empire and ultimately the Holy Roman Empire, which was revived by the papacy during the Middle Ages.

If you have the chart, you can follow that down and look at the 1,260 years of continuation of

that Holy Roman Empire through the various emperors that were crowned.

Revelation 17:1-3, we find, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, ‘Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

To call itself the “Holy Roman Empire” was, in itself, a blasphemous title because “Holy and reverend is God’s name” (KJV, Psalm 111:9). Here was a title that was attached. This was not really the Holy Roman Empire, but this was the way they termed it.

A woman, of course, is used in prophecy to symbolize a church. Here, we find quite a contrast to the true Church, which is symbolized as a chaste virgin waiting for Jesus Christ who’s coming back as the husband to marry the Church (Revelation 19:7-8).

We find a woman who is pictured as the very opposite of a virgin. She is described as a great harlot.

Verse 5, she is, we are told, “...THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” She entered into illicit relationships with kings of the earth.

The true Church is compared to a virgin, in that the Church does not enter into relationships with the civil governments of this world. The Church looks to Jesus Christ as the One who is in the role of the Protector and Provider for the Church.

We find a description of a church that has entered into many alliances and relationships with all sorts of civil governments, and she has harlot daughters. Her daughters are the offspring of her relationship with all of these kings of the earth. Right? If she is the mother, then who is the daddy? There’s a bunch of daughters and all of them have different fathers. You find that nearly all of the churches that came out of the reformation were national churches. The Lutherans in Germany, the Church of England, or the Anglicans in Britain—you had all of these different churches that came out that were national churches. They held on to the basic traditions that came from “Big Mama.” They held on to Sunday, Christmas and Easter—the whole overview and perspective that they had

derived from her, but they each had a nationalistic flavor. You had state-churches in all of the various Protestant nations: Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, England and Scotland. All the Protestant nations had their own state-church. You had the Dutch Reform Church or you had the Lutheran Church, which was the state-church in each of the Scandinavian nations plus Germany. Each one of those had its own little brand. The Church of England—the Anglican or Episcopal Church—was the state-church of England. The Presbyterian Church was the state-church of Scotland. They were the daughters. They were fathered by the kings of the earth and were mothered by the Great Harlot of Babylon—just to be very plain and say what the Bible says.

Verse 5, we are told she is called, “...MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” This is the mystery religion that originated in Babylon now grown great.

Verse 6, “And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

Verses 3 and 7 describe a beast that is ridden by the woman. When someone rides a horse, they are astride the horse, but sometimes you mount a frisky horse, and he doesn’t always do exactly what you want him to do. Sometimes he sort of gets away from you for a while.

If any of you have ever ridden very much, you know that if you are sitting in the saddle, you are supposed to be in control. Sometimes you are not in as complete control as you would like. Sometimes he tries to throw you off. Sometimes he takes off running, and you spend quite a while trying to slow him down or keep him from trying to jump something he’s going to jump or from going in the direction he wants to go in. If you manage to sit in your saddle, you can eventually regain control, but he may be a frisky creature.

Well, that’s the history of the woman and the beast. She’s ridden the beast. She’s managed not to be knocked off and thrown out of the saddle. Sometimes the beast was a little more docile when she said “whoa” or when she said “giddy-up.” Other times he sort of had a mind of his own and she just held on for the ride. That has sort of been the history of the woman and the beast that you read of down through the period of the Middle Ages. She’s continually remained in the saddle. She hasn’t always been able to exercise as total a control as what she would like, but she never got bucked off. She always

managed to sort of ride it out. If you have that picture in mind, then when you read the history of the events, you can sort of visualize it that way.

Notice on your chart, it lays it out in several ways. Daniel 2, Daniel 7, as well as Revelation 13 and Revelation 17 are laid out as the main groupings. There is Daniel 8 as well, which focuses in on the ram and the goat.

You will find that Daniel sees the beast from his perspective. He was writing almost 600 years before John was writing. Daniel saw it at the time when the beast was first arising. Daniel actually saw four different creatures, but there were seven heads between them. He saw them as distinct empires: Babylon came up, Persia came up, Greece came up, which split into four heads. Then the fourth terrible creature (the Roman Empire) came up. It had the ten horns, the successive revivals of it. He viewed it that way.

When John was writing about 600 years later, the Babylonians, the Persians and the Greeks had passed into history and the Romans were on the scene. The Romans had swallowed up the aspects of all the predecessors. John looked at it as one creature. It had seven heads and out of that seventh head came ten horns.

In Daniel, the fourth beast had the ten horns, but if you count heads, it was the seventh head. That's what John saw. He saw it as one creature. The seventh head was the focus that he placed attention on because that was what was viable in his day. He saw these ten horns. He saw that creature dying. He saw that succession ending. He saw the old Roman Empire collapsing—the deadly wound. Then he saw it revived and it was revived in a particular way.

When you come to Revelation 17, we pick up something a little different. Notice on your chart that the entire creature of Revelation 17 is ridden by the Harlot. The only part of the beast of Revelation 13 dominated by the woman (the church) was the last seven horns. The Catholic Church did not dominate Babylon, Persia, Greece, the original Roman Empire and the first three successor states to it (the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths). None of those were dominated and controlled by the Catholic Church. Beginning with the Imperial Restoration in 554 A.D., there was a period of papal domination.

The final seven horns of Revelation 13 are comparable to the seven heads of Revelation 17. It is laid out on the chart in that way. What we are focusing on, in Revelation 17, is simply the creature that the woman rode.

Revelation 17:11, we are told, “And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition [destruction].”

That's sort of a very ambiguous statement. If you break it down, “the beast that was” was the Roman Empire; “is not,” it ceases. What comes back when the wound is healed is really, in effect, sort of “the eight” if you're looking back to Revelation 13 where you had the seven-headed creature. The beast that was and then is not because it's cut off, receives a deadly wound. When it is revived, in one sense, it is like the eighth. It is like another entity that has come up and, yet, it's really of the seven. It's just a continuation. In some ways, it looks like something different and, yet, it's really just a continuation of the previous creature. It is ultimately going into perdition. It's going into destruction.

Speaking of the seven heads, a very interesting thing comes out.

Revelation 17:10, “There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.” Have you ever stopped and thought about that? The statement, “five are fallen, one is and one is yet to come,” can only be true at one precise short period of time. He didn't say that “one is fallen and six are yet to come” or that “three are fallen.” He says, “five are fallen.”

If you go down through the historical period, you are looking at Justinian the Great and his Imperial Restoration, which began the revivals of the beast. It is the beginning of this creature that the deadly wound was healed. Justinian the Great, the revival under Charlemagne, the revival under Otto the German, the revival under the Habsburgs (Hapsburgs in English) and the revival under Napoleon—that's five. And they are fallen. The time setting for verse 10 is after Napoleon because five of the kings are fallen.

The sixth revival was what? The sixth revival began with the unification of Italy under Garibaldi in the 1870s and culminated with the revived Roman Empire of Mussolini that ended at the end of World War II in 1945—“one is.” The other is “not yet come.” That's the one that still has not yet come. Today we wouldn't say the “five are fallen and one is and the other is not yet come.” Today we would say, “six are fallen and one is not yet come.” The time setting of verse 10 makes sense in the context of the time when Mr. Herbert Armstrong came to understand these things back in the late 1920s/early 1930s.

That is the period that was specifically prophesied of.

When Daniel wrote the prophecies, he didn't know what they meant. Was he told, 'I gave you these things to confuse you because nobody will ever know what they mean?' That's not what he was told.

Daniel 12:9, he was told, "...Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

Verse 10, then he was told, "...and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." If we are in the time of the end, then the wise should understand. If somebody doesn't understand, perhaps they are not wise because it says the wise will understand. Right?

Where do you get wisdom?

Psalms 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments."

It's interesting. When God began working with Mr. Herbert Armstrong, the first thing he learned was about the Sabbath and the Holy Days. That was the starting point. His willingness to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days was the basis by which God opened his mind to understand other things. If he hadn't been willing to keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days, he never would have understood the rest. That was the starting point. *Obedience* is the key. That is the starting point.

Daniel 12:4, the angel told Daniel, "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end:" But at the time of the end, the wise will understand.

Verses 9-10, it is important to understand and to realize that because the statement is made, "And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined [KJV, "tried"],'" That's God's Church down through the ages. People have been called out. They have been purified, made white and cleansed by God's power. They have been tried. They have gone through trials and difficulties.

Verse 10, continuing, "...but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." That is a very clear-cut promise and a very clear-cut prophecy. You can go through many scriptures to understand all about where wisdom comes from. We shouldn't be surprised that the wise understand. We shouldn't be surprised that some of these things are understood. As we move forward in time and we get closer to the end, even more details become apparent.

It's sort of interesting that in Revelation 17:10, the time is zeroed in. God already had the time period in mind because God knew when the time of the end was. Right? He didn't just start wondering if it is at the time of the end.

Isaiah 46:9-10 says, "...for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure...'" God declares the end from the beginning. He knows where He's going before He ever starts, which is part of the basis of our faith of trusting Him.

Revelation 17:12-13, we are told, "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they received authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast."

We have a picture of ten kings, ten rulers, in Europe that merge their power and relinquish power to one great super ruler. Traditionally, that sort of thing has only happened in the context of a crisis. People get scared. When you put other prophecies together, I think we have pretty clear indications of some of the things that are going to scare them.

You have to realize what Europe has gone through. I should give a sermon on this. I don't want to take too much Bible study time or we won't get to the rest of the Bible study.

You have to realize what has happened to Europe in the 20th century. Europe completely and totally dominated the world at the beginning of the 20th century. You know what happened to Europe? Ethnic strife in the Balkans got out of hand in the early part of the century—1910, 1911 and 1912. It had been simmering and finally erupted. Europe was drawn more and more into it until it finally erupted in 1914 as World War I—the bloodiest, deadliest war in which Europe was ever engaged.

When the war was over, Europe was in shambles. All the old continent-based empires—the German Empire, the Austrian Empire and the Russian Empire—had all collapsed into shambles. Within a generation, it set the stage for the things that produced Hitler and Mussolini coming to power. Again, the world was plunged into World War II, which was sort of retribution. The Germans were really sort of "licking their wounds" for what had happened a few years earlier. World War II ended in 1945. Britain and France, who possessed overseas empires, had managed to hold on and even flourish in the

aftermath of World War I. By the time World War II was over, everything in Europe was exhausted. The Russians dominated all of Eastern and Central Europe. That “scared the daylight” out of Western Europe, which was too exhausted to do anything else. The empires of Britain and France now dissolved in the aftermath of World War II and Europe was in the very humbling position of having to be dependent on the United States to protect them for a period of several decades.

Now everything on the world scene has changed. What are they looking at now? They are looking at a situation where—guess what! They are still “going at it” down in the Balkans, and it’s about to get out of hand again. There are already some that are afraid because this thing keeps spreading.

What happens is every one of these little, tiny entities there in the Balkans has friends elsewhere. Serbia, historically, has had connections with Bulgaria and Russia because they are all Orthodox. In portions of the rest of it, they had connections with Turkey because they are Muslim. In Bosnia and some of that area, there is a great deal of animosity. They are already looking at the potential of Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey and Albania being dragged in.

There are tremendous arms sales going on right now. In fact, Greece has bought all sorts of armaments that the United States is discarding in Germany. The Germans have turned around and sold them to the Greeks. What do you think the Greeks are going to do with them? Well, why are they buying them? They are buying them because they are preparing to shoot somebody with them. What the Greeks haven’t bought, the Turks have bought.

There are no two people that hate each other any more than the Greeks and the Turks. They have been “going at it” for the better part of 1,000 years. They have been “at it” ever since the Turks came into that area of the world. You are looking at a bubbling caldron of hatreds and animosities that is getting out of hand. The only time those people have ever had peace is when some empire has sort of ruled over them and kept them in check. As soon as everybody else leaves them alone, they start shooting at one another again. That has sort of been their history, but the thing is that other people get dragged in.

That doesn’t have the effect on us that it has in Europe. It “scared the daylight” out of them because they know what happened the last time they stood by and let things get “out of hand” in the Balkans. It cost them world domination for

the better part of a century—for three-quarters of a century. It totally disrupted them. They spent the 20th century rebuilding and trying to recoup what they lost; they don’t want to go through that again. It frightened them in a way that it doesn’t frighten us because they saw what happened the time it had gotten “out of hand.” It blew up into a mess for them. That scares them.

As this thing continues to go along and as the situation gets more and more volatile in Europe, they see their future, their peace and their prosperity threatened. Crisis in the Middle East and trade war with the Anglo Saxon powers is coming. Whether it erupts over this particular issue or not, it’s in the air and it’s building. God is the One who knows the timing of it. I don’t necessarily expect the situation in the Balkans is going to bring full-scale trade war, but it heightens the tensions and is setting the stage.

We have a lot of things going, and, of course, we have a very sizable percentage of the good Catholics in America and probably a majority of the house of bishops who are ready to tell the pope, ‘Go fly a kite. We will ordain women if we want to.’ They are not quite prepared to tell him in those words, but I’m sure he gets the message and I don’t think this pope cares for it very much. The problem with American Catholics is they want to put everything to a vote. When he tells them something “infallible,” he expects them to accept it. Things are building and we read of it right here in Revelation 17.

Now, let’s go back to Revelation 14. It is an inset and it pictures the Lamb standing on Mount Zion and the 144,000 with Him.

Verses 1-4, we are looking at a time after Christ’s return—a time when He will stand on Mount Zion and the 144,000 are with Him. They learned a song that no one else was allowed to learn. The 144,000, we are told, represent the firstfruits.

Verses 6-9, we see three angels who fly in the midst of heaven. Remember there are three heavens in Scripture. The heavens can refer to where the clouds are and where the birds fly—the birds of heaven or the clouds of heaven. Outer space is referred to as the heavens. We use that term; we talk about looking up into the heavens, speaking of the stars, the moon and the sun. Then there is what the Apostle Paul calls in 2 Corinthians 12:2, the third heaven, which is the heaven of God’s abode. Three different places are designated as heaven.

Verses 6-7, when this angel flies through the midst of heaven, this is obviously the first

heaven because he's preaching. He proclaims a message that the hour of judgment is come.

Revelation 14:8-10, immediately after him, "And another angel followed, saying, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.'"

We read that these things are going to be poured out right at the time when Christ returns.

Verse 12, we are told, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." The saints are defined as those who keep God's commandments and have the faith of Christ.

Verses 14-16, "And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.' So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped." It describes the events that were going on.

It goes right on. We see the **seven last plagues** beginning to be poured out.

Revelation 15:1-3, "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, !..."

If the Old Testament has been done away as a lot of Protestants think, why would they be singing the song of Moses?

It mentions this sea of glass. The Bible makes reference back in Ezekiel 1 to a very amazing picture. Ezekiel saw something and he was certainly amazed by it. He saw what originally looked like a whirlwind. It looked like a tornado coming toward him. Of course, that scared him. When it got closer, it looked even worse. It

looked like there was fire in it and was enfolding itself. Well, you can imagine. He's just standing there and sees this thing getting closer and closer. Then when it gets even closer and he can make out something out of it, he sees out of all of this the most awesome sight he's ever seen. There appears to be this great sea of glass and on it was a throne. There was all the brilliance of color, the rainbow and the One like the Son of God sitting there. Under it were these creatures that had an amazing look to them.

You couldn't call it a UFO because it is fully identified. It's not an unidentified flying object; it's an identified flying object. It was like some conveyance by which God transported Himself and it appeared to Ezekiel. You find described this sea of glass, a crystal sea.

Evidently, when you put Revelation 14, 15 and 16 together, when Christ returns, we are told that He returns in a cloud.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, we are told, "...And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

Now, we know from Zechariah 14:4 that "in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives." But does He just come down instantly? Well, it says we meet Him in the clouds, so there's a point at which we meet Him. What happens at that time?

Let's put chapters 14, 15 and 16 together. In Revelation 14, it describes Him there in the clouds watching these plagues being poured out. We are told in Revelation 14:10 that they are poured out in His presence. Revelation 15:2 describes the saints standing on the sea of glass. Very likely, as Christ returns, there is a period of about a day that these things are actually poured out. We are there in the area of the clouds. It is a time when rewards are given out. It is a time when we see the things that are transpiring because all of these things are poured out in His presence.

Revelation 15:2-3 describe the resurrected saints standing on this sea of glass and singing praises, singing the song of Moses.

Verses 6-8, then there is a vision of what happens in heaven when the seven angels come out of the temple having the seven last plagues. And then, Revelation 16:1, the **first angel** pours out his bowl.

Revelation 16:2, "So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the

mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.”

I don't think we can necessarily prove this 100 percent, but I think the clear indication is that these plagues have a duration of hours, not a day, weeks or months. My basis of saying that is looking at some of the plagues.

Revelation 16:3, the **second angel**, “Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.” How long could life on the planet survive if all the sea became blood and everything in the sea died? –Hours or maybe a day or two. This is not a plague that could endure for weeks or months. There simply would be no life on the planet within a very short period of time. You are looking at something that very likely could only go on for hours.

Verse 4, the **third angel**, “Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.” Well, life on the planet can't survive with that. You are looking at maybe hours before everything that's left alive begins to die.

Verse 8, the **fourth angel**, “Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.” We find the scorching heat, solar flares and activity. People are scorched.

Verse 10, the **fifth angel**, “Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness;” You are looking at things that can only last for very short durations of time.

Verse 12, the **sixth angel**, “Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great River Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.”

Verses 13-14, “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

These demon spirits are allowed to go forth and to bring about this convergence of armies. How long does it take armies that are ready and mobilized to converge? How long does it take airplanes and helicopters to fly 100 miles? We are not talking about days and months. We are not talking about people having to ride for nine months to get somewhere. We are talking of military buildup that's already there and ready.

These demon spirits are allowed to go out and stir up this convergence at Armageddon to strike at this time. We are looking at something that will culminate with the seventh plague and Christ Himself returns to the earth.

Zechariah 14:4, we are told, “And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,” His coming is a deliberate coming. We are told in other places the saints meet Him in the heights of the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:17). We meet Him at cloud level.

Revelation 14:14, evidently we remain there for a period of time because he said, “And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.”

Verse 10, we are told, “...And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”

When the seventh trumpet sounds, the seven plagues are poured out. The seventh trumpet is also the signal for the return of Christ and the resurrection. You are looking at events that everything culminates within a very short period of time.

There's a reason why it has to get so catastrophic. People have to come to a point of utter desperation where they give up on everything else. People can go through a lot and still think that somehow they can do it. The only way the world is going to surrender to God is to come to a point where they have bottomed out so much that they are absolutely convinced that they are totally powerless to solve the problem. Everything becomes unmanageable and they give up.

We're not at that point, yet. People think all they have to do is elect “so and so.” People think, ‘We have a new Democratic President. He will be able to work with the Democratic Congress and that will solve all the problems.’ If any of you hold to that illusion, I hate to disappoint you, but I don't think that's going to happen. That's not going to solve all the problems. If we had reelected President Bush, he couldn't have solved all of the problems either. The point is not that somehow we are going to elect the right guy and he's going to fix it. If man could fix it, he'd fix it. People have to be convinced; they are not convinced. They think they don't need Christ to come back. ‘We can fix our own problems—they are not that bad.’ God's going to say, ‘Just all come down.’ The kind of things that begin to happen is incredible. It's going to take the very

supernatural intervention of God Himself to put a stop to these things.

Revelation 16:17, the **seventh angel** pours out his bowl into the air.

Revelation 16:18-21, when Christ comes back, we are told, "...and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, every hailstone about the weight of a talent [about 120 pounds]." Now, that's incredible!

I didn't bring it, but there's an interesting article in the newest *Newsweek* magazine. It talks about what would happen if meteors and things of different weights and sizes fell on the earth and the things that can happen. It's just incredible. We have historic records of some things that have happened. There are geologic records of things far greater that have happened, which go back, undoubtedly, to some of the great cosmic battles of Satan's rebellion. Scientists don't understand that's what it was, but we are told.

Of course, the whole basis of the Tribulation is that Satan is thrust back down. You may very well, in the tantrums that he throws, find cosmic things occurring. Even in some of the plagues, we are looking at consequences that are unleashed. In effect, God lets man have the consequences of what he has produced and what he has done by following the devil's way.

You're looking at an earthquake that is so tremendous that it just totally reshapes the topography of the earth. That's important because there are a couple of things that happen with that earthquake. Prophecies in the Old Testament talk about mountains being made low and valleys being made high. That doesn't mean everything is going to be made flat as a tabletop. It just means that the earth is made a more viable place.

Do you know why we have some of the problems in terms of climate that we have? Take rain for instance. We have the great American desert. Do you know why we have the great American desert? —Because the Rocky Mountains are high enough that they block off the flow of the rain that blows in from the Pacific and so much of it doesn't cross over. You have the same thing in Africa with the Sahara Desert—the Atlas Mountains block off certain things. If you look at a globe, you'll find that you

always have deserts on the other side of mountains. Look at the Himalayan Mountains. You have the great Gobi Desert of China. Mountainous areas divert and disrupt the flow of clouds, the moisture and rains that come in.

What are you going to do if you are going to make the deserts bloom like a rose (Isaiah 35:1)? Well, you are going to have to change the topography of the earth a little bit to where it changes the flow of the clouds that blow in from the sea. When the rain blows in, it doesn't all get dumped on one side of the mountain. It's able to flow across and provide a more even distribution.

We have vast areas of the earth that are uninhabitable. Perhaps somebody can live at the South Pole—we have scientific camps that are set up down there—but the South Pole is not a viable place to live. If you couldn't bring in food from other places, you couldn't live down there because you can't grow your food. It's too cold. There are vast areas of the earth that are too hot, too cold, too dry or too wet to be useful to man.

It's not that everything is going to become the same, but it's going to be balanced out enough that the entire earth is basically usable. If you have decent rainfall, then things open up and are usable in different ways. You won't have vast areas of desert that are uninhabitable.

You have vast areas that are now productive farmland. People can grow crops, run cattle, graze sheep and do things that are useful and viable. You go through great stretches of places like Nevada, Arizona and Colorado and you have vast areas where there's no life or very little life that can be supported because rainfall is so sparse. The climate pattern needs to be changed. That's why there's this great earthquake that totally rearranges a lot of the earth's topography.

One of the things it's going to do was brought out in one of the sermons at the Feast when it was talked about how the Dead Sea becomes the living sea. You remember when Christ returns at the Mount of Olives, it splits in two—it divides—the great East-West Rift Valley. Part of the mountain moves to the north; part of it moves to the south. You have this Great Rift Valley that runs through. It connects the Dead Sea with the Mediterranean. There is a bubbling fountain called in Zechariah a fountain of "living water" that breaks forth from under Mount Zion (Zechariah 14:4-8).

Revelation 16:3, notice, "Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died."

Just hold your place and turn to Ezekiel 47.

Ezekiel 47:1, “Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east,”

Verses 2-8, there’s this bubbling fountain that comes out and it turns into a river. He saw the river and it stretches out and flows all the way to the Mediterranean. It flows across there.

Verses 8-9, notice what it says, “Then he said to me: ‘This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.’”

What’s going to happen to all these fish that died? Did you know fish are going to be resurrected? What it is—there is a healing that takes place. In other words, when this great earthquake occurs, this Great Rift Valley forms and this bubbling spring begins to come up. It is symbolic. It is there to remind us that life is going to flow forth from Jerusalem. This water will flow forth in this new channel. As it hits the Mediterranean, everywhere it touches, all of a sudden, it’s like a ripple effect and life very rapidly begins to spread around the earth. The waters that were like blood begin to change to be like water. All of a sudden, dead, stinking, putrid fish are healed and it becomes a living sea. Can you imagine what that’s going to be like and the impact of something like that? Immediately Christ begins to heal a wrecked and destroyed planet.

Some of the great calamitous events of Revelation 16 may very well endure for merely a matter of hours or in some cases days. Then there begins the removal of those consequences. Tremendous events begin to take place.

Revelation 17 provides an inset. It describes the woman riding the beast. We’ve already talked about that.

Revelation 17:18, “‘And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.’” What was the great city? What city would John have called the great city that dominated the kings of the earth? That is Rome. In fact, in verse 9, it even alludes to the woman sitting on seven mountains or seven hills. Rome, of course, has traditionally been called the city of seven hills.

Revelation 18:1-2, “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen [We’ve already seen that this was the second angel’s message; here, we see details as to what that meant.], and has become a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!’”

Where are Satan and his demons going to be restrained? Revelation 20:1-3 tells us that he is going to be put in a great bottomless pit—a great abyss, a great hole in the ground. Here, in Revelation 18, you’re told where the hole in the ground is going to be; it’s where modern Babylon is. It’s going to become the habitation of demons, the prison of every foul spirit. It’s going to become the place where they are all going to be locked and restrained. *What you find, and just to be very plain (we will see as we go through Revelation 18), that where Rome is, is going to become just one big giant nuclear crater into which Satan and his demons ultimately will be confined for the duration of the Millennium.* What is called the “eternal city” will henceforth be known literally as the “infernal city.” That’s what it says. Babylon is fallen and it has become the habitation (the location) of all the demons. That’s where they are going to be.

Verse 3, “‘For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,’” She has intoxicated the nations with her false doctrines and teaching. What has come out from her has intoxicated the nations. It uses intoxication, a state of intoxication or stupor to describe the state of the nation. When somebody is intoxicated they have lost their sense of perspective. Their conduct and everything is all exaggerated. It’s out of control. That’s what we are looking at if you look up some of those words and terms in the dictionary. It’s a lack of and absence of sobriety. Sober conduct is conduct that is restrained, controlled and balanced, so you are looking at what’s out of control, out of balance and unrestrained. That’s the state of the world.

Why is the world in the state that it’s in? Well, the world has imbibed of something that has given it a false sense. It’s interesting that when someone is intoxicated, they often have a very distorted sense of their own power and ability. If you try to argue with a drunk and tell him that he is too drunk to drive, there’s one thing he knows, and it’s that he can do anything. He doesn’t need

for you to get in his way. He knows what he's doing. In fact, it's sort of proverbial about the drunk who's ready to take on everybody else in the bar; he can whip anybody in there.

From a spiritual standpoint, we are looking at a world that has become that way. Their sense of their own limitations is totally distorted. Just everything is distorted. It's out of control and exaggerated and that erupts in the situation that exists.

You see, rather than recognizing limitations and dependence upon God and having balanced sober judgment, we find that the world is described like being on a spiritual drunk. What the world has been supplied by Babylon the Great.

Verse 4, God says, "...Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." God's message to His people is, 'Don't be part of Babylon the Great.' God is going to deal with her.

Verses 8-10, "Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. And the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'"

That, to me, is a pretty graphic description of a nuclear blast. You are "standing at a distance for fear of her torment." You see "the smoke of her burning." What is it you see from a distance when a nuclear weapon has been dropped? You see this great mushroom-shaped cloud. You can see it for miles away. What do you do? You stay away for fear of her torment, for the radiation that's going to come down with it. You have the original blast, which is a great burning and melting. The heat is just incredible. If you read what happened when we bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it's just incredible. I won't even go into the details because they are enough to turn your stomach when you realize some of the things that happened.

You realize, in terms of power, the weapons we have today so far overshadow those. The heat that was generated and the melting point of certain things—you talk about utterly burned with fire. You're talking about something so hot that literally concrete is melted and disintegrated. It's not just blasted to smithereens. You know, when you melt concrete, you've gotten hot!

You're looking at something that, at the flashpoint, the air catches on fire. That's what happens at the flashpoint. The air itself catches on fire because you reach the ignition point of oxygen and all the gases in the air. The air itself is burning. That's an incredible thing. Even though we have the technology to do it, it just boggles our minds because it goes beyond what we are familiar with in our everyday life. That's what happens when one of these things occurs.

Verses 17-18, "For in one hour such great riches came to nothing." And every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What is like this great city?"

These big ships that are out to sea converge and see this cloud going up. They know what's happened and they lament. Why? —Because the whole system and this city, which symbolized the very focal point of it, has collapsed.

Revelation 18 focuses more on the economic aspect.

Verse 11 talks about how all the merchants who have been made rich will weep and mourn because nobody buys their merchandise.

Verses 12-14 describes their merchandise.

Verse 15, "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing..."

Verse 17 talks about the shipmasters.

Babylon the Great is a great religious, military, political and economic combine. Revelation 13 focuses in on the military and the political aspects; Revelation 17 focuses in on the religious aspect; Revelation 18 focuses in on the economic aspect.

It is centered in Europe and centered in Rome. It is a great economic combine. That's why we have always understood that the European Common Market, in some ways, sets the stage for it. Not that the Common Market is going to evolve into the beast, but it is the basis. That's what they are trying to do. They are trying to build a great economic combine that will dominate the world economically, but they are reaching the point where they are being forced to understand that they won't successfully dominate the world economically unless there is military and political power to go with it. That's what they are being confronted with right now. Then they are going to have to face the fact that they are going to need a "glue" to hold everything together; that's where religion comes in. That's the part religion will play. It will be an emotional "glue" to hold things together.

The whole system is going to collapse at this point as described in Revelation 18.

Verse 21, "...Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore." We have the destruction of that system. This world's society is headed toward a climax and a conclusion. As we look at the world and see what is transpiring on the world scene, we are seeing the coming together of some of these things. We are looking at something that is going to come together, and it is shaping up on the world scene right now. We have just little bits and pieces all around the world. We have the situation in the Middle East, the situation in the Balkans and the unsteadiness in Eastern Europe. We are seeing all of these things that are going on. Europe recognizes the need to do something. They recognize the need to put it together and, of course, a strong revived Germany right at the heart and core. Events are shaping up.

We don't know the exact time frame. God hasn't revealed those details, but He certainly gives us enough insight to understand the times in which we are living. These prophecies were written so that, at the end time, the wise would understand. They are not put in the Bible just to take up space. It's not that God wanted to write a book of so many pages and couldn't think of anything else to say, so He threw in a few prophecies that take up a third of it that nobody would ever understand. You know, that doesn't make sense. God doesn't waste any words. What He says is there and it is for our benefit. We have an overview, and as we see some of these things begin to come together and begin to converge, we need to really take heed to it.

We are almost to the end of our series on the book of Revelation. We have one more Bible study on Revelation. At that point, we will have completed going through the entire Bible.

Now you know everything you always wanted to know about the Bible, right? You have all the answers? No, there's plenty more. Plenty more!

I will mention, again, that we do have a question box in the back. Because of the nature of a lot of these Bible studies of recent date, we haven't been taking Bible study questions. I don't want you to think we will never have a chance to ask questions at Bible study again. No, if you have some that you want to send up, you can put in the box. When we finish the series on Revelation, we'll take what we have. If we have enough, we will make a Bible study out of it. If we don't, we'll answer the one or two that we

have and we will go into a new series. With that we will be concluded this evening.

Bible Study # 99
December 8, 1992
Mr. John Ogwyn

Book of Revelation Series—Revelation 19—22

It has taken us five and one-half years to complete, but we **are at the point of concluding this series of Bible studies this evening. We are down to the last four chapters of the last book, the book of Revelation.** I think we've had some of you who have been here for just about all of this. You've had the opportunity to go through the entire Bible, and that's good.

We've gone through the Bible in terms of books. After we've covered Bible study questions next time, I think we are going to get into a study of doctrines of the Bible. We will go into some things in that regard. No matter how many times you study the Bible, there's always more there that you can go back through, but this has given us an opportunity to go through it systematically.

There is one thing I would like to mention as we finish up the material for this evening. The last couple of Bible studies were focusing on the mid-section of Revelation—particularly the material involving the successions of the beast power and the things of that sort. The last time, as we were going through Revelation 17, we looked at the seven revivals of the Roman Empire that were to be dominated by the church—the woman of Revelation. Of course, that was pointed out on the chart that I handed out and in the Bible studies. That series of succession began with the Imperial Restoration in the west by Justinian (the Eastern Roman emperor) in 554 A.D. That is when the “deadly wound” was healed (Revelation 13:3). That's what's called the “Imperial Restoration.”

Now, I would like to give you a little bit of background. We said that these were the specific revivals and the church dominated them. What is our basis of drawing that conclusion?

I have a couple of books I want to quote from. One is a volume entitled *The Age of Faith* by Will Durant. It's part of a multi-volume history. The other is an interesting book. It's entitled *The Bad Popes*. If they looked at all of them, perhaps the book could be longer than this, but it focuses in on seven medieval popes. It's not a religious attack on them. It focuses in on certain crisis periods of the medieval church. There are some interesting quotes. I will share a few of them with you.

When the Roman Empire collapsed in the West in 476 A.D. (if you look at your chart), that was prophetically called the “deadly wound.” At that point, the Roman Empire became divided between two successor states: the Heruli under Odoacer (also known as Odovacar) and the Vandals.

The Vandals took over the southern part of Italy and North Africa. They had come through Rome a little earlier. What they did to Rome is why the word “vandal” is in our English vocabulary today. That was originally the name of the people, but what they did to Rome has sort of given meaning to their name. Now, we talk about people “vandalizing” things, which means they did “like the Vandals did.” So, you can get a pretty good guess as to the way the Vandals did things. The Vandals wound up occupying the Western Roman Empire in terms of North Africa and up into the southern “boot” of Italy.

The Heruli under Odoacer came down and occupied the northern part of Italy and Rome. The Eastern Roman emperor recognized (he sort of de facto) those rulers as patricians and gave them a title and a rank. While they took the title “king” and ran the empire themselves, they continued the Latin language and many of the outward trappings of the Roman government. So, in that sense, they were a part of the Roman order but were greatly at odds with the papacy. The reason was that they were adherents, not to Catholicism, but to a particular brand of religion called Arianism. The Arians had certain heresies that they introduced. They were opposed to the doctrine of the trinity, which was fine, but their own explanation and approach in the other direction was just about as wrong as the Catholics. They introduced a different set of heresies.

The Vandals and the Heruli both claimed to be Christians but were Arians, not of Catholic persuasion. This, of course, was a considerable threat to the primacy of the bishop of Rome and the brand of Christianity to which he adhered. So, he besought Zeno, the emperor in the East (in Constantinople), to send troops to uproot and get rid of the Heruli and the Vandals. The emperor in the East didn't have any troops to send, but he paid the Ostrogoths (a Germanic people up north of Italy) to invade. They were also Arians. He paid them to invade and to cast out the Heruli, which they did.

His successor, Justinian, sent troops into North Africa at the behest of the pope and cast the Vandals out of North Africa. In the meantime, as Theodoric (who was the king of the Ostrogoths)

took over, the situation continued. Again, the papacy considered itself threatened. He appealed to the emperor Justinian. There was a war of about 18 years duration called the Gothic War that finally ended in 553 A.D. By that point, all three—the Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths—had been uprooted from the Western Roman Empire. If you remember Daniel’s vision, when he saw the seventh head (the Roman head of the beast), it had ten horns. Then there was a “little horn” that came up out of it that had the first three horns plucked up (Daniel 7:7-8). The “little horn” was the papacy, which at his behest had the first three successive states, the Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths, “plucked out” because their brand of Christianity was a different brand. They were Arians as opposed to Catholic in their doctrine. So, this was the case.

Then 554 A.D. is called the date of the “Imperial Restoration.” Here is what the Imperial Restoration entailed. In 554 A.D., Justinian promulgated a decree. He had cast out the Vandals, Heruli and the Ostrogoths. How was he going to govern Italy? He promulgated a decree requiring that “fit and proper persons, able to administer the local government, be chosen as governors of the province by the bishop and chief persons of each province” (Durant, pp. 519-520).

The bishop of Rome was now given the “deal” that was cut. When Justinian cast out the Vandals, Heruli and the Ostrogoths, he acquiesced to the right of the pope to choose the rulers in Italy. In that sense, they were to be subservient, looking to him as emperor in the East, but the actual rule in Italy was to be done by those who were chosen by the pope. It marked the Imperial Restoration. The imperial powers—the powers of the Roman Empire—were restored. The power of the emperor was restored in the West.

That situation continued along for a short period of time. Justinian died and another group of people, called the Lombards, invaded Italy from the north. They invaded northern Italy and came down and took Rome. They were content to rule as vassals of the Roman emperor in the East, and they continued to send tribute to him. They were allowed to exercise power on behalf of the Eastern Roman Empire. This situation continued down.

Of course, the Imperial Restoration under Justinian was the first restoration. That continued for a period of time, and then an issue came up in 726 A.D. This is about 170 years later. Here is what arose.

This is quoting from the book entitled *The Bad Popes*, “The primitive Christians had attacked image worship as the work of the devil and there had been wholesale destruction of every type of idol when Christianity had at last triumphed. But over the succeeding centuries, the images crept back appearing under new names, but to the critical eye was an identical role [Which, of course, is exactly right; all the old pagan insignias continued.]. It was the Christians of the East who first began to feel that much of the pagan religion that their forefathers had destroyed at such cost in martyrs’ blood was insensibly being restored. Disturbed by the mockery of the neighboring Muslims, a decree was issued.”

Trouble came up. Let’s come down. Roman emperor Leo, III solved the problem.

“In 726 A.D., the Eastern Roman emperor Leo, III, issued an edict commanding the breaking of all images throughout the empire in the West as well as the East.” –The breaking of the idols.

Gregory II was pope. He was in the 11th year of his reign. He wrote two letters to the emperor defying the edict and urging him to return to “the true path.” This meant idol worship. The result was that finally in 731 A.D., a decree was issued by the pope at Rome pronouncing to “excommunicate all those who would attack the images of the saints.” Things had come to a head over the issue of idol worship. There was a decline of Byzantine power in the East. The pope sort of severed the situation when he excommunicated the emperor and his adherents to the East for wanting to break idols. Oh, that was terrible to break all these pretty images!

Now he was faced with difficulty because the Lombards were making the situation even worse. They were pouring in. He sought to the Franks, to a man by the name of Pippin. In 755 A.D., the pope made a long journey to the Frankish court and besought Pippin to come down. Pippin, who was king of the Franks, came in and drove out the Lombards. The situation continued along.

Pippin is not very well known, but his son, Charlemagne, is much better known. Fifty years later there continued to be problems. The Lombards were coming in and Rome was threatened. Finally, Charlemagne came in and cleaned out things.

I will read this quote, “Charlemagne had hastened to Rome at the appeal of Pope Leo, III, to put down a rebellion. In return, on Christmas day 800 A.D., Leo crowned him emperor of the West.”

To give you a couple of details out of the other book, *The Age of Faith*, “Christmas day, Charlemagne, wearing the tunic and the sandals of a Roman patrician, knelt before St. Peter’s altar in prayer. Leo suddenly produced a jewel crown and set it on the king’s head. The congregation cried out, ‘Hail to Charles the Augustus, crowned by God, the great peace-bringing emperor of the Romans.’ The royal head was anointed with holy oil. The pope saluted Charlemagne as emperor and offered him the act of homage that had previously been reserved for the emperor in the East.”

First, there was the resurrection under Justinian; now, the resurrection under Charlemagne. This created a problem because now there were two emperors. The emperor in the East was a little bit miffed at the fact that somebody else was claiming to be Roman emperor, but finally in 812 A.D. (12 years later), the Greek emperor recognized Charlemagne as co-emperor of the Romans; Charlemagne gave certain portions of Italy to the Eastern Empire.

A couple of other quotes, “Charlemagne and his advisors conceived of this new authority as a revival of the imperial power.”

It was a revival, a restoration, of the Holy Roman Empire. That’s what was taking place.

The situation continued. After Charlemagne’s death, it says, “One hundred fifty years passed since Charlemagne had been crowned emperor of the West by the pope. During the century and a half, the crown of the empire had become the debased pretext for faction and war, even sort of a hollow title that continued on. Finally there were, again, invasions by revival of some of the Lombards and again invasions of Northern Italy. The pope again needed to look for a champion. This time he looked to Otto the Saxon German king. Otto came in, invaded Italy at the pope’s behest and finally reached Rome in 961 A.D. and cast out the Lombards at the behest of the pope.”

Then we are told, “Above the shrine of Peter, Otto knelt and received that crown, whose weight eventually crushed the crown of the German kingdom. On February 2, 961 A.D., the Holy Roman Empire came into being tying Italy and Germany together.”

Otto was crowned. We could go through the other revivals. I am not going to go through them all, but you can come down to the Habsburgs (“Hapsburgs” in English). The final emperor to be crowned in the 1500s was Charles V. Charles the Great and the pope, having come in at his behest, again crowned the Habsburg emperor. You can go through the story of the crowning of

Napoleon by the pope. The restorations of the empire are very much tied together. I think it is good to realize that even from secular sources we can document the outline that we have utilized.

Let’s continue. We covered Revelation 18 last time. We covered the destruction of the Babylonian system as it is outlined here.

Revelation 19:1-4, “After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude [angels] in heaven, saying, ‘Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.’ Again they said, ‘Alleluia! And her smoke rises up forever and ever!’ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, ‘Amen! Alleluia!’”

Verses 7-9, “‘Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”’....”

The bride represents the Church, the firstfruits, which are God’s called out people. You could go through Hebrews 11 and start out with righteous Abel all the way down through Enoch, Noah, Abraham and down through the centuries, down through the New Testament era and all the way down to our time and the time immediately ahead of us. We are told that the wife has made herself ready. ‘She is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints.’

The priests of ancient Israel wore white linen robes. Those things have significance. The white linen was symbolic of righteousness. We have to put on God’s righteousness.

Psalms 119:172, “...all Your commandments are righteousness.” It is righteousness that has to come from God because it’s not just the commandments in the letter. It goes beyond the letter to the spirit of the law as Christ magnified and amplified it. Those who will be in the marriage supper are clothed with fine linen.

That is the danger being pointed out to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3.

Revelation 3:17, ‘they are poor and wretched and miserable and naked and blind.’ They have taken off their clothes and are too blind to know it. That’s the problem you see.

Verse 18, they are told that they need two things: ‘they need to anoint their eyes with eye salve that they can see, and they need to get some white garments that the shame of their nakedness may not be revealed.’ What do they need to be covered with? –With righteousness! We are told that any Laodiceans who are going to be a part of this are clearly those who have gotten spiritual sight where they could see; you can’t work on a problem you don’t see. The most dangerous problems are the problems you don’t see. You can never work on something you don’t see. The greatest affliction of the Laodiceans is that they don’t see their condition. They are spiritually blind to the state they are in because if they could see themselves for what they were, then they could work to rectify the rest of it. Any of the Laodiceans that are going to be in this group are: 1) those who have gained some spiritual sight to where they could take stock of themselves and see what Christ sees, and then 2) to have obtained spiritual garments from God to obtain righteousness.

The Church collectively is described symbolically as the bride of Christ. The firstfruits are at the marriage supper of the Lamb. John was overwhelmed with this.

Revelation 19:10, “And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’”

Jesus provided the testimonies (witness) that is the spirit of prophecy. The spirit is what gives life. God breathed into Adam the breath of life or the spirit of life, and Adam became a living soul. He didn’t *have* a soul; He *was* a soul. What gives life and animation to prophecy is the testimony of Jesus—that which Jesus Christ bore witness of. Of course, the book of Revelation together with Matthew 24 and the parallel accounts are the backbone of the prophetic witness that Jesus bore. Much of the book of Revelation is direct quotation from Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:1, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place.” It was given as a revealing, as an unveiling.

Daniel 12:9-10, Daniel was told, “...‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. ...none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.’” It was intended to be opened up; that was the whole purpose. God didn’t give all this section of the Scriptures (a third of the

Bible) to have a padlock on it until after Christ returned. If that was the case, He could have saved Himself (and us) the trouble and the extra space in the Bible.

We can only understand prophecy in the context of the gospel message that Jesus Christ brought and the specific things that He gave which provide so much of a framework.

Revelation 19:11-13, “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.”

“The Word of God” is a name that John uses throughout much of his writings in reference to Jesus Christ.

John 1:1-3, you read, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

Verse 14, as you come down, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The “Word of God” is a reference to Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:14-16, “And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Christ is going to have to strike (KJV, “smite”) the nations. He is going to have to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Why? –Because at the time of His return, there are many that are still going to be rebellious. Human will is a very difficult thing to break, and it’s the reason as to why many of these horrible events have to occur. Before you can come to a point of total and unconditional surrender to God, you have to come to a point where you recognize that your life, managed by you, is not good. Your life is unmanageable by you. You must admit that things are out of control and you can’t fix it yourself. You have to be at the “end of your rope” to where you are ready to turn loose of self-will and unconditionally surrender.

It's interesting that in working with alcoholics, they say the first step an alcoholic has to take is to come to a point of admitting that they are powerless over their addiction and that their lives have become unmanageable. They have to recognize and accept the hopelessness of their condition. That is an interesting parallel because God draws a parallel with the world as on a spiritual drunk.

Revelation 17:2, “with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” He says that all nations have become drunk on the wine of the great harlot. The world has been intoxicated with the false doctrines and teaching of the false religious system.

Behavior that is controlled by intoxication is behavior that is out of control. It's exaggerated. It lacks balance and proper perception. That's a pretty good description of the state of the world. It's out of control. Behavior and conduct is exaggerated. There is a lack of perception of what's normal and what's appropriate. The world is going to have to hit bottom. The world is going to have to come to a point where people are at the “end of their rope.” They will have to finally come to take that first step and to realize that they are absolutely powerless to fix it because they don't know how to fix it.

People don't think that right now. Oh, they think, ‘We have a new president in there and he's going to solve it. We have a new governor in; he'll fix it.’ How many have we already had? How many of them have fixed it? How many presidents have we already had, and how many leaders do we have around the world that were going to fix it? Back in the 1950s, the nation of Somalia thought all it had to do was get its independence from France and their problems would be solved—they'd have independence and they'd have freedom.

Look around the world. In effect, the whole world is going to have to be in that sort of “basket-case” condition for people to realize it's not in man to direct his own steps.

Jeremiah 10:23, “...the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”

That's why Christ is going to have to come back with a rod of iron.

Isaiah 66:2, He's not going to use the rod of iron on those who have a ‘humble and contrite spirit and tremble at His word.’ The rod of iron is reserved for those who are still puffed up and cocky and “nobody's going to tell me; I know

what I am going to do” attitude. They are going to find out that God says, ‘No, your time is over.’ The sun will have set on man's six-day week. The millennial Sabbath will have started.

Revelation 19:16, God is going to say, ‘Your time is over. Christ is coming back as King of kings and Lord of lords.’

Revelation 19:19, “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.” These armies have converged at Armageddon; suddenly they are going to turn their weapons on the returning Jesus Christ. This sort of reminds you of Psalm 2.

Psalm 2:4, “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;” You know, little puny man!

They are going to come together. You know what Christ is going to do?

Revelation 19:20, He's going to pick up the beast and the false prophet. He will carry them and throw them alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. Suddenly, the emptiness of that system is going to be shown. These two individuals, the beast and the false prophet that ride atop of it, are going to be picked up and cast in that lake of fire.

Evidently, this lake of fire is in the Valley of Hinnom outside of Jerusalem. It is between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, known in New Testament parlance as Gehenna.

There's a great earthquake that's going to hit at the time of Christ's actual return. The Mount of Olives splits in two (Zechariah 14:4-5)—tremendous earthquake activity.

Where are you going to get a lake of fire? That sounds like some sort of volcanic activity or something of that sort. A vast crater opens up and all of this bubbling, molten magma begins to come up. Instead of spewing out, it's just going to be coming up and bubbling up. We know there are things like that on earth. There are geysers that come up under tremendous pressure and all sorts of things.

When this gigantic earthquake hits, it's going to shift things around in such a way that there is actually going to be a lake of fire that is going to be there in this valley outside Jerusalem. The first two candidates for it are the beast and the false prophet. That sort of gets everybody else's attention. By the time the armies are consumed and the beast and false prophet are thrown in the lake of fire, then it's a matter of looking around and saying, ‘Okay, anybody else have any questions?’

All of a sudden, you are going to find that everybody is in a listening mode. Rebellion is not going to be tolerated. This lake burning with fire is going to be there throughout the Millennium. It will be there as a symbol of what's going to happen to individuals who are incorrigible, individuals who cannot be taught and will not submit.

Evidently, these two are the only ones tossed into this lake of fire at this time because the armies are consumed. They are literally consumed by the birds, by the buzzards and things of that sort. In fact, you can go back in other scriptures and find that there's going to be other things that come in. In one case, there's going to be an invasion and it takes seven months to clean up after that and to do all the burial (Ezekiel 39:11-14).

When Jesus Christ returns there are these great dramatic events that surround His return.

Revelation 20:1, "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit [The bottomless pit is a great chasm as far down as can be imagined or measured; there's no discernable bottom, certainly, by human beings.] and a great chain in his hand."

Verses 2-3, "He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, ..." This is not the lake of fire. It's a bottomless pit.

We read in Revelation 18:2 that when Rome is destroyed in these atomic blasts, there is a great crater that is left that becomes the habitation of every demon and every foul spirit. So, this is clearly the bottomless pit. There are caverns that are uncovered there that stretch down into the depths of the earth. Satan and his demons are confined there. They are not confined physically in the sense they couldn't get out; they are confined to that geographic location and are not able to get out because God doesn't allow them out. Undoubtedly, God places angels there and Satan is not allowed to come out throughout this thousand years.

Verses 3-6, continuing "...and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark

on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

It's interesting that this is the first place in the Scriptures that clearly defines the reign of the Messiah as being of one thousand-year duration.

There is a brief allusion in Psalm 90:4. The term "thousand years" is mentioned, but it's a very vague poetic allusion. Peter quotes and paraphrases this section from Psalm 90 in 2 Peter 3:3-9 where he talks about scoffers thinking that the Lord delays His coming, that all things continue as they were and it's way off somewhere. They think it's remote and God's not going to intervene.

Peter goes through in 2 Peter and outlines it in a more definitive way. He gives a much clearer allusion to the fact of the parallels between the thousand years as with a day in God's plan. When you put it together with the allusions of the Old Testament to the reign of the Messiah being like a Sabbath, you certainly get an implication.

Isaiah 14:7 and other places allude to that. You get something that's implied, but you don't get a real clear-cut statement that the time of the Messiah is one thousand years. Peter explains and draws the allusion of the week—"one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day." The Jews, to whom Peter wrote, were very familiar with the fact that the time of the Messiah was compared to a Sabbath.

Isaiah 14:7, "'The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.'" That is the expression that is used. The whole earth is at rest or is observing a Sabbath because the word "Sabbath" is the Hebrew word for "rest." The whole world is Sabbatizing and they break forth into singing.

The allusion was understood, but you have to get to Revelation 20 (the very end of the Bible) before God really spells it out clearly. There is a progressive revealing of truth. But the progressive revealing is in the Bible.

A lot of worldly religions think the progressive revealing is the fact that the Bible was fine for its day, but as time goes on, people become a little smarter and they figure out a little more. The Catholics take that approach. That's the way they

justify changing up the Bible with their own tradition. When they talk about progressive revelation, they mean that every generation understands things a little differently; each generation's experience sort of adds to it and God reveals through that.

God's revelation to man is complete in the Bible. Progressive revelation, from a Biblical standpoint, is the fact that God didn't tell everything there was to reveal in Genesis. You have to get to the book of Revelation before you get the end of the story. There is a progressive revelation, but the progressive revelation is between Genesis 1:1 and Revelation 22. There are more details that are continually added through the story, and when you get to the end of Revelation, we have everything we need.

We are going to notice that a little later. There's not some other revelation apart from the Bible. There may be deeper understandings of the Bible. But many of the Protestants believe that Biblical revelation isn't enough.

The flak going on today is that a lot of pressure is on the Catholic Church about ordaining women to the priesthood, and the same issue has come up in many of the Protestant churches. Their concept is that Biblical revelation isn't enough. They say, 'They didn't do it back then, but we have progressed a lot. Obviously, God should have changed with the times, has changed with the times and He would do it now. He just didn't do it back then.' The Bible is not where they go.

The Catholics are sort of in a "pickle" on it because they don't want to ordain women. But if you will notice, they don't quote Scripture as proof. They just say they have the model that Christ didn't choose any women for the 12 apostles, and they lay claim to the apostolic succession. They don't quote Scripture. They don't quote 1 Corinthians 14:34 and others about women not preaching in the churches. The reason is because...

[Editorial Comment: Some wording was lost when the tape was turned over.]

...sort of inference from other things and ignore the plain teachings of Scripture on it. They don't call on the strongest verses because if they started calling on verses to prove that, then people would pretty soon start calling on verses to prove a lot of other things, like images in the church and things of that sort. They don't want to get into having to cite chapter and verse on things.

The mindset of people tells us a little bit of the way people look at things. What it amounts to is people are reading contemporary culture back into the Bible. They operate under the illusion that somehow everything that is changed in human culture represents progress.

2 Timothy 3:13, well, the Bible says, "But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." The Bible doesn't teach historical progress in the sense of moral and cultural progress. It prophesies that there would be technological progress, but there's a vast difference between technological progress and moral and cultural progress.

Some people say the solution to all the problems is education. It's interesting. Do you know what the first totally literate society in history was? In the late 19th century, Germany had total literacy—and they also had Adolph Hitler. Education didn't solve all their problems. Everybody in Germany could read and write. They prided themselves in being the first totally literate society. They had total, 100 percent, literacy. It's not a matter of if you can read; it's what you read. If you were reading Hitler's *Mein Kampf* rather than the Bible, you'd be better off if you couldn't read.

The whole foundation underlying the world's approach is faulty. The whole foundation on which our society is built is faulty. In Ezekiel 13:14, it talks about the foundations being uncovered. They are going to be uncovered and shown the hollow shells that they are.

We are going to reign for a thousand years. We could go back to the Old Testament and go through a lot of things about what those thousand years are going to be like. Revelation does not give us those details because they are found elsewhere.

Revelation provides the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10). It gives us a means of putting everything else together and making sense of it. If you had the book of Isaiah and you didn't have the book of Revelation, you wouldn't be able to put it together in terms of what's going to happen—when and what these periods are going to be. You'd know that there was a time of the Messiah, but you wouldn't know when and you wouldn't know after what.

If you go through some of the Old Testament prophecies, in some of these books you find a chapter here that talks about "this," and then it skips over to "something else." It does not go through sequentially; it's topical. It will talk about the Tribulation here, and it will talk about

the Millennium there. Then it will talk about the Day of the Lord, then about the Tribulation again, and then about something else. It just kind of hops, skips and jumps around.

When you understand the book of Revelation, then you have a framework. You can go back and plug in those chapters where they fit because you have a framework of a sequence of events. You have to have the book of Revelation to understand the sequence of events, and you have to have Matthew 24 to understand the book of Revelation. That's where the seals are opened up. It gives a broad outline. Now, there are details we are not going to understand until we get right down to the time. We will understand at the appropriate time, but there's a broad outline, and the closer we get to the events, the more details we will understand.

Revelation 20:7-8, "Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog," This is Gog and Magog spiritually because Gog and Magog physically are in one corner of the earth over in the East.

You read in the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 38) that just a few years into the Millennium there is an invasion of the Middle East from the areas of the Far East—Gog and Magog, the areas of what used to be called Soviet Central Asia, China, Mongolia, up into Siberia, some of the vast gigantic areas of the East. They are going to come in at the beginning of the Millennium and they are going to have to be put to a stop.

At the end of the Millennium when Satan goes out to deceive the nations, they are spiritually Gog and Magog. In other words, these are people at the end of the Millennium that still have the same mindset that some did at the beginning. The ones at the beginning haven't learned yet. They are going to be resurrected and dealt with.

God is going to have to get their attention. Nothing can get their attention so much as being struck dead. Then when they wake up, they'll be ready to listen. Christ can do that. He wakes them up and says, 'Alright, now that I have your attention, let Me explain some things to you.' All of a sudden, they are very receptive.

Here are these people at the end of the Millennium; spiritually speaking, they are still in this attitude.

Verse 8, continuing, "...to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea." It's an undefined number. It gives the idea that there will be a number of them.

Satan is loosed. God does things to test His people. God ultimately sets a choice before everyone.

Deuteronomy 30:19, Moses told Israel, "...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, ..." God said, 'I set before you a choice.' And He even told them what to choose. God gives us a choice, but He tells us what to choose. He defines what the choice is. He says, 'I set before you a choice—good and evil, life and death.'

Verse 19, continuing, "...choose life, that you and your descendants may live..." God compelled them to choose.

It's easy to go along when all the pressures are that way. But how much is internalized? It's an incredible thing. We read this, and I am amazed every time I read it because during the Millennium, people are going to have the Bible. They are going to be taught out of the Bible. They are going to read this in the Bible, so how in the world could somebody be deceived? They will have been reading in Revelation 20 how Satan is going to be turned loose at the end of the Millennium and he's going to deceive the people. How could people be deceived?

Brethren, there are prophecies in the Scriptures. There are prophecies in Jude and 2 Peter and other places about deception that is going to occur. There are many warnings to the Church in the Bible.

Matthew 24:48-50, Jesus mentions, "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of..."

I can remember reading that scripture years ago and wondering, 'How in the world? The closer we get to the time, why would anybody say, "My Lord delays His coming"?' How would that scripture apply to anybody? How could people in the Church wind up doing that?'

There are warnings that are there. It's amazing how we can sometimes be blindsided. The real key comes down to what we are internalizing—what we are putting in ourselves and to what extent we are walking with God personally. Are we going along in order to get along? Going with the flow is one thing, but it's a vastly different thing from walking with God. It's vastly different.

God is going to put us in situations. He wants it clearly evidence how many of us are simply

going along in order to get along and how many of us are walking with Him.

It's going to come up at the end of the Millennium. A lot of people are going along. As long as the devil is locked up, they'll go along. They are not giving any trouble. But when Satan is loosed, they are receptive to it. They get caught up in it. That should be a lesson for all of us.

Revelation 20:9, "They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city [This is evidently referring to Jerusalem.]. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them."

Verse 10, "And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*." If you have a King James or New King James Bible, notice the "are." It says, "...where the beast and the false prophet *are*." You'll notice the word "are" is in italics. There's no verb in the Greek. "The beast and the false prophet" simply modify "the lake of fire and brimstone." The emphasis in the verse is that the devil is cast into the same lake of fire that the beast and the false prophet were thrown into a thousand years earlier.

Now the translators, operating under the illusion that man has an immortal soul, supplied the word "are" to make it more readable in English because they assume the beast and the false prophet were still there. But that's reading something into the Bible. The Bible just defines the fact that the devil is thrown into the same lake of fire the beast and the false prophet were thrown into a thousand years earlier. You have to go elsewhere in the Bible to find out what happened to the beast and the false prophet.

Ezekiel 18:4, you're told, "...the soul who sins shall die." The beast and the false prophet died. They were burned up. The devil doesn't burn up. He's just thrown into the same lake of fire that they were thrown into earlier.

Revelation 20:10, continuing, "...And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." He's going to be tormented. He'll be tormented because he's spirit. He is not tormented by the fire; it's not that the fire burns him. He's tormented because he is going to see the destruction of everything for which he worked.

The book of Jude indicates that he and the demons ultimately are going to be exiled into some further reach of outer space.

Jude 13, they are referred to as, "...wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." –Perhaps some black hole out there somewhere. Science thinks they have

discovered black holes in the universe. They don't know what they are for. Perhaps that's what they are for.

He's going to be cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:11-12, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened [The books of the Bible are opened.]. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

Verses 13-14, "The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." This is a period of judgment at the end.

I went into that in detail in Pensacola, Florida on the morning of the Last Great Day, so I am not going to go back into detail this evening for lack of time.

This culminates God's working with man. At this point, every human being who has ever lived has had an opportunity for salvation. They have either accepted that opportunity or have rejected it. At the end of this time, whoever is not found written in the Book of Life is cast into the lake of fire. The Book of Life is opened again at the beginning of this time when the dead, the small and great, are raised. The first resurrection is better (Hebrew 11:35) because if you are raised in the first resurrection, you're raised to immortality. You don't have to worry about a second death. There is a mortal resurrection and a second death. The Book of Life is opened so that there is a choice. At that point, you have an opportunity to either have your name written in or not. At the end of this period of judgment, if your name isn't in there, you go into the lake of fire. If your name is in there, then you enter into life.

2 Peter 3:12, Peter describes, "...the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?" The earth is purged with fire. The earth will have been cleansed twice: once by water and once by fire. It was cleansed by water in the days of Noah; it will be cleansed by fire in the future. You can wash something with water, but you have to use fire in order to sterilize it. God is, in effect, going to sterilize the earth because everything that has ever in any way been tainted with sin is obliterated. The only

thing that survives is that which has been made spirit.

Revelation 21:1, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” The sea was totally vaporized when the earth burned. All of the elements melted with a fervent heat.

If you do a little reading in science, you’ll find out what kind of temperatures we are talking about where literally the air catches fire. Exactly what transpires and the things involved in that is just an amazing thing.

Verses 2-5, “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I made all things new’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’”

New Jerusalem comes down. That is compared to a bride because that’s going to be the dwelling place for the bride of Christ—the Church. The Church was married to Christ a thousand years earlier (Revelation 19:7-9). When the New Jerusalem that’s adorned like a bride comes down, that will be the dwelling place of the Church, of the firstfruits. The rest of the earth will be inhabited by all of the other billions that have come into the God Family. We will see that as we come down.

Verse 6, this is a time when all who are there will have free access to the water of life. It’s a time of eternal life.

Verse 7, we are told, “‘He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.’”

Verse 8, those who won’t be there are mentioned, “‘But the cowardly [KJV, “fearful”], unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.’”

The fearful are the first mentioned. Everyone has fears. This is not saying that if you are ever afraid of anything you won’t be in the Kingdom. Why are the fearful excluded? These are people

who don’t simply have fears. Everybody has fears. What do your fears do?

Remember Israel who came out of Egypt. Why didn’t that generation enter the Promised Land? –Because they were afraid to follow where God led. The spies came back and told them about the giants. Their fears paralyzed them and they wouldn’t follow where the Spirit led (Numbers 13:31-33; Numbers 14:1-9).

God had been leading them. Remember? –A pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day (Exodus 14:19-20). They wouldn’t follow.

You can’t get into the Kingdom if you won’t follow God. You can’t get there if you quit going. When fear takes control, it produces either paralysis or panic. Everybody has fears, but what do our fears do? As long as we keep following God, keep putting one foot in front of the other and following Him, we will get there. These are things that keep people out. They are being paralyzed or panicked by their fears and turning away from God.

“The unbelieving [They do not believe God.], abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers.” The Greek word is “pharmakon” or “pharmakeia.” It would certainly include the whole realm of the drug culture and the terribly devastating spiritual effects that something like that has.

“Idolaters, and all liars.” People can’t hold on to those patterns of conduct and be in the Kingdom. That’s not what God wants to perpetuate forever. We have to be willing to follow Him. We have to believe Him. We have to be willing to change the way we live, think and act. It doesn’t mean that we attain perfection in the flesh on our own strength. It means that we don’t want to hold on to the world’s way. We put those things to death.

Verses 9-10, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...”

Jerusalem is the dwelling place of the bride.

Verse 11, “having the glory of God. And her light was like a most precious stone, like jasper stone, clear as crystal.” It’s described here.

Verse 12, “Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel...”

God had a plan from the beginning. In the book of Genesis, you read that Jacob had 12 sons. In the book of Revelation, you read that the New Jerusalem has 12 gates named for those 12 sons. It's not an accident that Jacob had 12 sons. God didn't look down one day and notice this guy had 12 sons and was so impressed with that, He decided to build a city and name the gates after them. God had a plan in mind from the beginning.

Why were there 12 tribes of Israel? Why are there different branches of the human family? Why are there different races and ethnic groups? Why are some of these things? Is it accident? Is it evolution? No, God had a plan in mind. Before He ever started He knew where He was going to end up.

God had a Family in mind—a great universe-ruling Family that is organized and has a structure to it. The whole structure is a family structure.

When God placed animals on the earth, we are not told that God originally created a male lion and a female lion and that all the lions that ever existed descended from them. Or that back in the Garden of Eden, God made only one bull and one cow and that every cow on earth is descended from those two. There's no indication that God did that or that God only created two fish or whatever it was.

But God created two people, a man and a woman. Why? It's not important that all the dogs be related or that all the lions be related, but God is building a Family. He could have created many different people. He could have created 1,000 people simultaneously and put them in groups in different places. He chose to start with two because it was His purpose that every human being that would ever live be a part of the same family descended from Adam and Eve. We are all part of the same family, one family grown great. God made Adam and Eve.

Your children bear whatever heritage you have. That's just the way we are. If a man and a woman are Oriental and they get married and have children, their children have Oriental heritage and appearance. If two people are white, if two people are black or whatever it may be, God built that in. God did it in a way people would have never thought of. It was important that everybody be related. We all go back to Adam and Eve. We are all part of one family because God is building a Family. There's a family relationship. God designed it that way.

But He built in something unusual. He built in the genetic heritage in the ovum that was inside

Eve's body. He built in the genetic blueprint to give rise to all of the different races and groups because that was a part of God's plan, too. It was His plan that there would be one family that would sub-divide into various other families but would be a part of the same family.

Verse 24, it's interesting because we can see as we come down a little bit further, "And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light [speaking of the New Jerusalem], ..." The Greek word for "the nations" is "*ethnos*." That's part of the organizational structure. The Church—the bride, the firstfruits—which is called out of every nation, is going to be there in the New Jerusalem. But then all the other millions and billions that come in after the firstfruits are described as being structured using the family patterns because all of the various ethnic groupings are just branches of the same family. It's like one family.

Can you imagine the White Throne Judgment? It will be like a giant family reunion. When people are resurrected in one particular area, you will literally be able to line it up. Here is old Grandpa and Grandma. They are the progenitors of this whole branch of the family. You have the next generation, the next generation, the next generation, perhaps coming down for 20, 30, 40 generations. All these generations come down; it all comes down.

There's a family structure that God has built in. God is building a Family. He has devised things to where there is a family structure that is built in, over and over and over because the family ultimately originates with God. God created the first two human parents. They gave rise to everyone else, and that is subdivided into various identifiable families. Those families maintained identity and come down as various families. All ultimately become a part of one spiritual family. We started out as one physical family, and we wind up bound together as one spiritual family. God knew where He was going before He ever started. It's not an accident. It's not happenstance; it's not blind chance or evolution. God had a destination in mind. It's not going to be some giant mob scene where He has billions of people sort of swarming around. There's structure and there's organization.

The whole topography of the earth has changed at this point.

Verse 16, we are told the city is 12,000 furlongs for length, breadth and height. Twelve thousand furlongs is like 1,500 miles. That is centered evidently where Jerusalem is today, but the

whole topography of that area has totally changed.

Here's a city that stretches 1,500 miles. That's like from El Paso, Texas to Atlanta, Georgia. That's 1,600 miles. That is a vast area. If you took something 1,500 square miles and set it down in the United States, it would take up almost half the country; between a third and a half of the whole country would be taken up by a city that size.

Verse 17, the wall around it is 216 feet in height. That's like a 21-story building that surrounds it. This is going to be an incredible city.

Verse 21, there are streets of gold and brilliance. The gold is translucent. It's almost like you can see through it and, yet, it's gold.

Verse 14, it describes the foundations that are visible, the stones that are there and the 12 apostles have their names in the foundation. It's not an accident that there were 12 apostles. It's not that Christ couldn't find 15 or something else. There was a structure that's built in. Twelve is the number of organization. God structures His whole government on the number 12. His Family into eternity is structured on the number 12.

Verses 12-13, we are told there are 12 gates. The gates are the access to the city. There are 12 gates and each gate is a giant pearl (v. 21). It is just incredible. These gates of pearl—can you imagine a pearl that's equivalent to 21 stories tall? It's a vastly incredible thing. It so boggles our minds that we can't even imagine it.

Verse 25, "Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there)." God, Himself, is there. The brilliance of the Father, of Christ and of the firstfruits is there. This is a brilliant glowing place, a city like you have never seen.

There are 12 gates, so that means everybody who enters into the presence of God in the New Jerusalem comes in through one of the 12 gates. That's a structure based on the 12 tribes. Everybody is assigned to one of the 12 gates, to one of the 12 tribes. Everybody has free access to come and go because everybody is part of the Family.

The whole earth is transformed. There must be smaller versions of this city all over.

A garden spot, that we cannot begin to imagine, has been made the headquarters of the universe. There's a government structure that starts with the firstfruits. The structure that God has imposed stretches to all humanity as a part of a great extended family structure. God is building a Family. There is a universe into which we will expand with the New Jerusalem serving as the headquarters. Why are there so many stars? How

many of them have their own solar systems? We don't know. Why is all this spread out there? We are told that God will put all things under our feet.

Hebrews 2:8, "You have put all things in subjection under his feet.' For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him." The Moffatt translation renders "all things," "the universe." We are told He has not withheld anything. Here we are in this vast plan.

Revelation 22:1, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Verse 2, we see the tree of life here.

Verse 3, there's no more curse.

The book of Revelation provides the answer to what we encounter in the book of Genesis. In the book of Genesis curses are introduced. First came sin and then came curses. God provides the solution to sin. When He solves the problem of sin, He solves the problem of pain and sorrow. The curse that came upon mankind will be removed. It's amazing how Genesis and Revelation correspond when you put them together.

Here are two books written in two different languages, composed across a time span of over 16 centuries; yet, they so perfectly correspond together. They are written by two men in totally different cultures, totally different languages, separated by a period of 16 centuries. Sixteen centuries ago was the fall of Rome. That's a long time.

Genesis opens with the garden. It opens with the river, with the tree of life, with man being expelled, being cut off from God and being denied access to the tree. It introduces the curse.

Here in the book of Revelation, we read of a reversal of all those things.

Verses 3-7, "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. Then he said to me, 'These words are faithful and true.' And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. 'Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.'"

John was so overwhelmed.

Verses 8-14, "Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, 'See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.' And he said to me, 'Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.'"

The way to have access is through keeping the commandments, "Blessed are those who do His commandments." If Christ did away with the commandments, why is the very last thing we are told in the book of Revelation, "Blessed are those who do His commandments." If you want to be blessed, you need to keep the commandments. People think the commandments were nailed to the cross.

It's interesting. What's the last thing God tells us in the Old Testament, right before it starts the New Testament?

Malachi 4:4, "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." Immediately, people turn the page. They get to the book of Matthew and they say, 'Well, we can certainly forget the law of God, the Law of Moses which was commanded in Horeb.' The last thing God tells us in the Old Testament, "Remember the Law of Moses My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb."

You get to the book of Revelation (the last book of the Bible) and you find that the saved are singing the song of Moses (Revelation 15:3-4).

The last thing He says now, "Blessed are those who do His commandments." They will be the ones who have access to the tree of life and enter into the gates and into the city.

Verse 15, "But outside [KJV, "without"] are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie." The outside is excluded—not that these are sort of outside the wall, but "without" in the sense of excluded, not a part

of them. "Dogs" is a slang term referring to "false prophets." It originally referred to "male prostitutes." It was a Hebrew slang-term in that way. Then it became a term that the Jews used to make reference to false prophets who, in a sense, sold themselves for hire. You know, preach "whatever" for a price.

Verse 16, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." He is the Root from which David sprang and the Offspring, in the sense of the descendant.

Verse 17, this is the time when everyone who is thirsty can come and drink of the water of life.

Verses 18-21, "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

The scripture clearly shows that the book of Revelation is to be the finality, the capstone of the Bible. There's no room to add anything. You don't add anything else to the Bible.

There's no room for the book of Mormon or something else that was purported to be some later revelation. There's no room to add on some other revelation later. The book of Revelation is the end. That's the concluding part of the Bible.

When you come to the end of the book of Revelation, you obviously have come to the end of the story. You are on the brink of eternity. You are standing on the threshold of eternity as a part of the Family of God. Everything you need to know to be a part of the Family is given. Our minds can't fully grasp and comprehend all the details of what it's going to be like to be a part of that Family, but you see, if we get this far, the rest of it is taken care of. We have everything we need to know to get this far.

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.'" He is going to come. He is going to bring to culmination the very plan and purpose of God. We have it outlined here for us.

I hope that this has been a helpful series for you, as we have gone through, concluding now with the book of Revelation and wrapping up

our Bible study series. With that, we will be concluded.

I see we have an announcement:

Mr. Rice: Mr. Ogwyn, on behalf of the Lafayette congregation, they asked me to present this card for all of your dedication and hard work in presenting this Bible study series and for the many years of hard work. They have a reception planned after Bible study.

Mr. Ogwyn: I don't get caught speechless very often, but thank you very, very much. That's...very pleased, thank you.

Question: What language did Adam and Eve speak?

Answer: Some have speculated that it was a form of Hebrew. It was the original language. We are told in Deuteronomy 32:8 that God separated the sons of Adam.

Question: Does Satan hear our prayers to God? Can he partially answer them and how would we know that he was?

Answer: It gets back to knowing what God's will is. There are ways that God conveys to us in terms of understanding His will. The first way is through what God has revealed in the Scriptures. God reveals things in several different ways. God reveals in a statement of Law—"you shall do this; you shall not do this." "You shall not steal," etc. That is a statement of absolutes of law. It's easy to know God's will in something like that.

There are other ways that God conveys His will. Everything is not completely listed as 'you shall or you shall not.' There are principles of wisdom stated in the Bible.

Proverbs 12:24, "The hand of the diligent will rule," Stop and consider the principle of it. It takes careful, consistent work. It takes that to get ahead. That is an explanation of how God wants us to go about our work, etc. If we want to know God's will, look and see what's pleasing to God. When you are looking for what God wants you to do, is it in harmony with God's laws and the principles brought out in the Bible?

Another principle is seeking the right counsel.

Proverbs 18:1-2, "A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment. A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart." Somebody that isolates himself is simply seeking to do what he wants to do. Their mind is made up and they are going to do what they want to do.

Proverbs 12:15, "...he who heeds counsel is wise." Seek wise counsel from those who are tuned in to God.

We have to be very careful of dragging God into anything that happens. How do you know? We have to be careful of reading God's will into circumstances. There are times when God does open doors and things just come together. You first start with the Law. That is a plain statement. The Law is a statement of fact. The Writings are

the application of the Law. The Prophets are examples; they amplify. We look at this as our starting point. If it is good, then it is better when you talk about it. Talk to those who we respect and exude certain wisdom in their life.

It gets back to: How can you know whether it is God's will? Humanly, one of the hardest things we ever have to do and the hardest prayer is, "Not my will, but Your will be done." Too often we spend our prayer time in talking God to our way. We need to see it God's way. Sometimes God gives us what we ask for. If it is our way, then we may come to regret it. What we want to do is to seek God's will. Then we can discern the difference of what is God's answer or the devil's counterfeit.

Question: Where are Enoch and Elijah?

Answer: They are dead and awaiting the resurrection.

Hebrews 11:5 mentions that Enoch was translated, "...Enoch was translated so that he did not see death," Then we have to wonder. What happened? What does it mean to be "translated"?

Hebrews 11:5, "By faith Enoch was translated so that he did not see death, 'and was not found because God had translated him'; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Verse 6, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him,"

Verses 7-11, it goes on to discuss Noah, Abraham and Sarah.

We are told these all died, including Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah.

Verse 13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Enoch died and he died in faith. It clearly states that Enoch is dead, "These all died in faith."

What does it mean, "He was translated that he should not see death"?

We are told there are two deaths.

Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment..."

We are told of the second death.

Revelation 20:14, "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." There are two deaths. "It is appointed for men to die once." Everyone dies the first death. Even Jesus Christ died the first death.

Colossians 1:18, "...the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

So, the idea that Enoch and Elijah did not die would give them preeminence over Jesus Christ. That would mean that they had an honor that Jesus Christ Himself never had because He died. For that matter, even the doctrine of the assumption of Mary would tie in with the same thing. It would actually give her preeminence over Jesus Christ because it would say that she ascended into heaven in place of dying. That assumption is just that—an assumption—and it is an erroneous assumption. It is erroneous to assume the assumption, if that makes any sense. It is appointed for men to die once, but after that, the resurrection and the judgment.

John 3:13, Jesus said this to Nicodemus, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven [And John adds in a parenthetical statement.], that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.”

At the time John was writing, it was 60 years after Christ had said it. Jesus Christ was back in heaven, so, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.” We are told that Jesus Christ is the only One who has ascended to heaven, which means Enoch did not ascend to heaven, nor did Elijah.

2 Kings 2:11, “...Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

We must realize that there are three heavens spoken of in the Bible. In some cases, we are told about the birds flying in the midst of heaven. In other cases, we are told about the stars of heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:2, we are also told about what is called the “third heaven.” The term “heaven” can be used to refer to the earth’s atmosphere—the birds in the midst of heaven or the heavens giving forth rain. When we talk about looking up into the heavens, in the sense of outer space or the stars, we are talking about the second heaven. The third heaven is the heaven of God’s abode.

Which heaven was Elijah taken up into by a whirlwind? Well, a whirlwind operates only in the first heaven. When you get above the first heaven, there’s no air. So, the whirlwind Elijah was taken up into simply transported him from one geographical location into another.

2 Kings 2:11, God used ‘horses and chariots of fire.’ Since a jet aircraft wasn’t available and God didn’t choose to make it available at that time, He used a horse and chariot of fire, which would be a very effective means of traveling. It was effective. God wanted Elijah removed and He removed him!

Hebrews 11:5, “By faith Enoch was translated [transferred] so that he did not see death...” Clearly, this is speaking of the second death because all have died.

Verse 13, “These all died in faith,”

Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...”

So, Enoch was translated or transferred. His allegiance, his loyalty, his citizenship was translated or transferred from the kingdom of this world to the Kingdom of God, and he died in faith. Evidently he was physically removed, perhaps to a different geographical location.

Question: Did Moses and Aaron suffer the first three plagues along with the rest of the Israelites? (Exodus 7-8)

Answer: The first three plagues were: 1) the Nile turned to blood (Exodus 7:20), 2) the frogs (Exodus 8:5), and 3) the lice (Exodus 8:16). Certainly, everyone who lived in Egypt was affected when the Nile turned to blood and there were frogs and lice all over the place. These were things that everyone had to contend with.

Exodus 8:22, after this third plague, God put a division between the Israelites and the Egyptians. I would take it from this that everyone would certainly have been affected by the Nile turning to blood, in the sense that the whole thing was blood. It didn’t matter who you were; you were impacted by that. There were frogs and lice everywhere—that kind of nuisance.

Question: Exodus 11:2, “Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold.” What was the gold and silver used for?

Answer: It was used for a variety of things. Israel carried out some of the physical wealth of Egypt—gold, silver and jewelry. A lot of it was used in the construction of the tabernacle a little bit later on. Probably the bulk of it was used in the building of the tabernacle, the priestly garments and things of that sort.

Question: Exodus 12:34, “So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders.”

Answer: I’m not exactly sure what the question is, except that I might comment that the normal process of leavening was that they let the bread sit out. They used a sourdough process, as I have mentioned before. Since they did not have

commercially prepared yeast, they used the old methods of leavening, which was basically sourdough. You make up a dough, let it sit out, and it will rise. It will begin to ferment and to sour. It will speed up the process if you make what they call a “sponge” and put it in the dough. That will feed it and get it going. But if you just make it up, knead it and let it sit out overnight, you will find that it will begin to sour and rise a little bit.

Unleavened bread was the bread of haste—of urgency—because you didn’t have time to let it sit out and rise. They had everything packed up. Since their kneading troughs were packed up, the bread that they ate was unleavened because it had not been allowed to sit and rise.

The Jews have strict regulations in the preparation of Matzos, as to how long the dough is allowed to sit before it is cooked because if you allow it to sit long enough, it will begin to sour and the sourdough process will begin to set in. So, they have Rabbis spending great lengths of time sitting around, debating how many minutes the dough could be allowed to sit before it could be baked and still be considered unleavened. They tend to go in for all of that.

Question: Exodus 13:2, “Sanctify to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and animal; it is Mine.” Are the firstborn males that open the womb still sanctified?

Answer: It’s interesting that the spiritual application of this is brought out.

Hebrews 12:23, we are called, “...church of the firstborn...” We are!

In Numbers 3, the Levites were established as the priesthood. They took a census of the firstborn males in Israel and they substituted the entire tribe of Levi as the firstborn—instead of the firstborn of each tribe—as the priesthood. The priesthood was concentrated into one tribe. God took that tribe in lieu of the firstborn of each tribe. The Church today, collectively, represents the “church of the firstborn.” So, in that sense, the firstborn are sanctified to God, and we are part of that.

Question: As the Israelites crossed over to the Promised Land, how were they able to communicate with the inhabitants of the land? Weren’t their languages different?

Answer: That’s a good question. Yes, the basic languages were different, though there were probably certain things that they had in common. There were certain languages that

were commonly used, and there were second languages, just as we would have in most areas of the world today. We have languages such as English, French or Spanish as second languages, in many areas of the world, to provide a basis.

The Israelites would have spoken Hebrew as their own native tongue, as well as some of them being fluent in the Egyptian language.

In the land of Canaan, there was contact back and forth, and certainly there would have been at least a limited use of the Egyptian language by some of the people.

Aramaic, akin to Hebrew, was a kind of language of trade and commerce throughout a large part of the Middle Eastern area.

For the most part, I don’t know if there’s any indication of a lot of communication back and forth. There was obviously some. You have the account of Rahab the harlot. She was able to make herself understood to the spies and they were to her. We are not told what language they communicated in. Likely, it was some form of Egyptian.

In some of these areas, particularly where there was trade and commerce, you tend to have a language of trade and commerce. Even if people are not fluent in it, they can get by. This was an area that was on the route of what’s called the Fertile Crescent and the caravan route. While not every individual would have had knowledge of other languages, there certainly were people who were in contact with the public and caravans and would have probably tended to have at least a limited knowledge of a dialect and Aramaic as well.

Question: Were there flags in Israel and what did they look like?

Answer: That is an interesting question. When Israel was encamped, as recorded in Numbers 2, there were standards, or flags, that were raised. They were camped three tribes to a side of each of the four sides represented. There were three tribes to each of the four sides. There was a particular ensign or standard, which was just another term for flag, that marked the area of that tribe. There are references to it in Jewish tradition and some things that have been preserved.

Numbers 2:2, we might notice briefly, “Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard [flag], beside the emblems of his father’s house;”

Verses 3-9, on the east side—Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.

Verses 10-17, on the south side—Reuben, Simeon and Gad.

Verses 18-24, on the west side—Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin.

Verses 25-31, on the north side—Dan, Asher and Naphtali.

Concerning the particular things that pertain to it, there is not a specific description of the flag in the Bible, but there are references in the book of Deuteronomy to things that were described as having relevance to each of these tribes. In Jewish tradition, the pictures of the ensigns of Israel have been preserved.

One of the interesting things to note is that most of the things that made up the ensigns have been preserved in the royal coat of arms of Great Britain. Also, portions of it are preserved in that of the United States, France and some of the other nations of Israel.

Deuteronomy 33:17, the statement describing Joseph, “His glory is like a firstborn bull [KJV, “bullock”], and his horns are like the horns of the wild ox [KJV, “unicorn”]; together with them he shall push the peoples [Gentiles] to the ends of the earth; they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.”

It is interesting because if you were to look on the royal coat of arms of Great Britain, you would see the unicorn pictured on there. The bullock also figures in it.

Genesis 49:9, Judah is described as a lion’s whelp. The lion was the symbol of Judah.

Revelation 5:5, Christ was called “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” The lion, of course, was symbolic of Judah and is descriptive because from Judah was to come the kingly line. That’s why the lion is also in the royal coat of arms of Great Britain.

The Queen (Queen Elizabeth) is a direct descendant of King David. She occupies the throne of David. The very coronation stone over which she was crowned is Jacob’s pillar stone (Genesis 28:18; Genesis 31:13), which the children of Israel carried through the wilderness.

2 Kings 11:14 and 2 Chronicles 23:13 describe it. It was the stone, the pillar, on which the kings of Judah were crowned, coming all the way down.

It was a physical rock that literally followed with them through the wilderness because they took it there. It was taken by Jeremiah to Ireland at the time of Judah’s fall, later transferred to Scotland, and then overturned the third time and brought down to England. It’s there as a physical sign of the covenant that God made. It is preserved there under the chair of the throne of King Edward and

labeled. They recognize what it is. Even the very label that’s there identifies the coronation stone as “Jacob’s pillar stone.”

You have united in the coat of arms the insignias that represent Ephraim and Judah because the royal family in Britain is the descendant of the kingly line of Judah ruling over the tribe of Ephraim, the chief of the tribes of Israel. You find that much of the insignias, the material of the coats of arms, and the flags that are described are identified with the British Isles and actually date back to that particular time that is described here.

Question: Joshua 1:12, “And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying...” What is the meaning of “the half-tribe of Manasseh” and why were they a half tribe?

Answer: Manasseh was the only tribe that couldn’t get along with itself, and they still can’t! The bloodiest war we ever fought in this country was the war between one half the tribe of Manasseh and the other half of the tribe of Manasseh. Interestingly enough, the major battle at the beginning of that war was known as the “Battle of Manasseh’s Junction” and the “Battle of Bull Run,” but the term that was primarily used in the South was the “Battle of Manasseh’s Junction.” This is an interesting term.

If you trace it back, you will find that Manasseh had a wife and a concubine. Part of his descendants came from the wife and part of them came from the concubine. They never really got along very well between and among themselves. When they came up to the Promised Land, half of the tribe of Manasseh wanted to settle on the east side of the Jordan River. They didn’t want to cross the Jordan River. They were more agricultural, particularly involved in cattle raising and this type of thing. They desired the pastureland on the east side of the Jordan River. So, half of the tribe of Manasseh was given its inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River along with the tribes of Gad and Reuben.

Then the other half of the tribe of Manasseh crossed the Jordan with the other tribes of Israel. The Jordan River, of course, was the dividing line, so half of them were on one side and half on the other side. The half that descended from the wife were on the west side. “Gilead” often refers to the area inhabited by Reuben, as well as the area inhabited by one of the half-tribes of Manasseh. The term “Gilead” goes back to that. Just as we find that distinction in ancient Israel, you find it preserved right on down.

When this country began to be settled, there were basically two fountainheads. One was in Virginia, which was kind of a fountainhead of the South, and the other was in Massachusetts, which was the fountainhead of the North. Those were the two centers.

When you come to the American Revolution, prior to Andrew Jackson (our seventh president), every president of the United States before him was either a Virginian aristocrat or a Massachusetts' Adams. Those two areas dominated the early history of this country, and settlement primarily spread out on an east to west basis, coming from New England or coming across from Virginia and the Carolinas. That was the tendency and the distinction then. You could even track it back to the British Isles and to different areas that they came from, which gets into a different story, but, anyway, it's kind of an interesting subject.

Question: Deuteronomy 16:5, ““You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates...””

Answer: The point of “not in your gates” simply meant that you were to congregate where God said to congregate and not just pick your own spot. You couldn't say, ‘Well, I am not going to go up to the temple in Jerusalem this year; I'll just stay and do it here.’ In terms of the sacrifices, they had to be performed at the place where God had set His name. That was the principle on it. Basically, all the sacrifices were performed in Jerusalem, originally at the tabernacle and later the temple. And that, by the way, is the answer to why the Jews, though they observe the evening, do not sacrifice the Passover lamb at the time of Passover. The reason is that there is not a temple, and they are told here not to do it within their gates but to go to the place where God has set His name. So, that is their reason on it.

Question: 2 Chronicles 7:14, ““...My people who are called by My name...”” is the specific matter that is asked for explanation.

Answer: Notice verse 11, “Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house; ...”

Verses 12-14, we find, “Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: ‘I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called

by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.””

The question relates to “the people who are called by God's name.” I think the simplest way of saying it is that it is a reference to the people of God. In the context of 2 Chronicles 7, we are looking at Old Testament Israel and the time of the dedication of the temple. It was a national reference to Old Testament Israel who were the people of God. The point is that if they departed from their relationship with God and God's punishment came upon them, if they would humble themselves (that is fasting and prayer) and really turn to God with their whole hearts, God would hear. God would listen and God would restore His blessing.

I think the clear implication is that, in principle, this would certainly apply to us today as God's Church, God's people spiritually.

Duality is something that runs throughout the Bible. A basic principle of understanding much of Scripture is God's use of duality. He uses it in prophecy. He uses it in many ways. He uses it with God's people nationally (referring to physical Israel) and also God's people spiritually (the Church of God). Israel was, in that sense, both the Church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) and God's people nationally.

That's why the Tribulation is two things. The Great Tribulation is the wrath of Satan. We've explained this, of course, when we went through the Bible study on Revelation. The Great Tribulation is the wrath of Satan directed against whom? It's the wrath of Satan directed against physical Israel. Primarily, physical Israel is the United States and British Commonwealth nations.

In Jeremiah 30:7, the Tribulation is called the time of Jacob's trouble. It is directed at physical Israel, but it's also directed at spiritual Israel—at least the portion that Satan can get at.

When you go to Revelation 12, you read of the Church. When you tie it in with Revelation 3, it refers, in that context, to the Philadelphia stage or era of God's Church.

Revelation 12:14, “But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place [a place of protection; a place of safety], where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time [the duration of the Tribulation], from the presence of the serpent.”

Verse 17, we find, “And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with

the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The remnants are those that are left behind. They’re in the Church of God; they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. It is basically a reference to the Laodiceans.

The point is that Satan’s wrath is directed two-fold: It is directed against God’s people nationally—physical Israel. That’s why it’s called the time of Jacob’s trouble. It’s also directed against God’s people, spiritually. That’s why Satan goes to make war with the remnant of her seed. The remnants are those of the Church that are left behind.

The principle of applying this statement, “My people called by My name,” is certainly that the Church of God is God’s people called by God’s name. In that sense, Israel is called by God’s name because God’s name actually makes up part of the name Israel. When Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, the ending “el” has to do with God. “El” means “God.” It’s a contracted form of “Elohim.” “Israel” means “prince of God” or “prince with God.” So, the name “Israel,” in that sense, reflects God’s name. God gave His people that name nationally. It was a national promise to the people at the time of the dedication of the temple, but the principle would apply all through time.

When you study the story of the people of God down through the centuries, you find the ups and downs that reflect the story of the people of God. The principle is always (whether collectively as a Church, individually in our own lives or even nationally as a nation) that if the people of God find themselves in affliction and really turn to God with prayer and fasting and really seek Him, God will hear and God will listen.

Question: 2 Chronicles 21:17, “...so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.”

2 Chronicles 22:1, “Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place, ...”

Answer: It is not uncommon for kings to have more than one name and you see at least a couple of names that are used. I think that clearly, in the context, the two names refer to the same person. Perhaps he was known by one name as a prince and another name as king. That is not uncommon. Royal children will have several names and, in certain contexts, use different ones.

Question: Ezra 2:63, “And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummin.” What does it mean for a priest to consult the Urim and Thummim?

Answer: We read of that in the Old Testament from time to time. The high priest had a breastplate, and on that breastplate, there were 12 stones. The name of each of the tribes was inscribed in Hebrew on those stones. The consulting of the Urim and Thummim had to do with a way in which God would answer the high priest and would reveal His will by, evidently, causing certain of these stones to light up and the result of it spelled out a message. The Urim and Thummim makes reference to the breastplate and the stones.

According to Josephus, we are told that John Hyrcanus, who was a high priest of approximately 100 or so years prior to Christ, was the last high priest whom God answered through the Urim and Thummim. Basically, he seems to have been the last high priest. Even Jewish tradition acknowledges that God no longer answered the high priest through the Urim and Thummim after that time. I think it was a matter that they simply had gotten far enough away from God that God did not respond to them in that way.

Question: Where does Job come in, in history? Where does his life take place? What country?

Answer: Job 1:1, we are told, “There was a man in the land of Uz, ...” We are not given a lot of details about where this land of Uz was.

Genesis 10:23, it mentions the sons of Aram, who would be the grandsons of Shem, “The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether and Mash.” Aram was the father of the Arameans or the Aramaic people. They were kindred to the Hebrews. Armenia takes its name from Aram, primarily through the son Hul. Anciently, the area of Uz was in the area kind of between Egypt and Syria. That anciently was the general area of Uz. You might look on a Bible map and get the area if they show the Arameans. If you were to look on there, it would have been the area to the east of what became the land of Israel and north of Egypt and south of Damascus.

There is another reference to a similar word where it refers to the children of Abraham’s brother Nahor.

Genesis 22:20-21, “...it was told Abraham, saying, ‘Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram...’”

Job's friends are mentioned.

Job 2:11, "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite." It mentions them coming together.

Job 32:2, "Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram,"

In Genesis 22:20-21, we noticed the sons of Abraham's brother Nahor were Huz, Buz and Kemuel the father of Aram or Ram.

Elihu that is mentioned in Job 32:2 was a Buzite. In other words, he was a descendant of Buz. He would be at least a grandson or great grandson of the kindred of Ram, which equates with what is mentioned in Genesis 22:21.

Job 2:11 mentions Eliphaz the Temanite. Teman was a son of Esau (Genesis 36:10-11).

The Bible does not give or clearly define Job's lineage. We have speculated on certain things in times past. The thing that becomes apparent from the book of Job—from the friends that are mentioned and the information that is given about the location being an area that was on the border of Egypt—is that the people that were involved were people that were of the general stock of Abraham and Abraham's family.

We see that Elihu the Buzite would have been a descendent of Abraham's brother Nahor and Buz and down in that line, which would have made them kindred to the descendants of Abraham.

Eliphaz the Temanite was a descendent of Esau. This is several generations after Abraham. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—Jacob's generation was the generation of the grandchildren of Abraham.

Job's friend, Eliphaz the Temanite, would have been at least the generation of the patriarchs—the 12 sons of Jacob.

What you're looking at is that the general time setting would be prior to the time of the Exodus, but it would have been after the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is probably contemporary with the time that Jacob and his family were in Egypt. The events described in the book of Job involved some of the people of the general family of Abraham that were nearby, but they were not in the direct lineage. The ones that are specifically mentioned by name, the indication is they were general relatives. They were kindred people and, yet, not necessarily the exact lineage.

We are told the book of Job traces back to Moses. In other words, Moses was responsible for its inclusion with the books. So, it was something that took place prior to Moses. I

think that's clear. When God's great power is described, there is no mention or allusion to the events of the Exodus. It mentions the events of creation and the flood but not the Exodus. It is something that predates the Exodus. It would probably be contemporary with the story of Joseph and his brothers. It would be in that general time setting and that generation.

Question: Psalm 51:5, why did David say, "in sin my mother conceived me"?

Answer: This is not a reference to the Catholic doctrine of original sin and their subsequent doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Most Protestants don't realize that the Immaculate Conception doesn't refer to Christ but to Mary. Their doctrine is based on their idea that original sin is transmitted through sexual intercourse and that a child is conceived in original sin. This is really what their doctrine is. This is part of it.

Another part of it is that Mary was conceived immaculately. Their story is that she was the only one who did not have original sin because her parents were evidently so righteous. They claim she was the only one not conceived in sin, and since Christ was born of a virgin, He didn't inherit original sin either. Of course, it's a bunch of pagan garbage.

Verse 5 doesn't have any reference to that. It was a poetic expression. It just means, "I was a sinner from the beginning."

Psalm 51:4-5, "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—.... Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me."

Verse 7, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He said, 'Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity; purge me. Get out the lye soap and clean me up.' That's really the sense of it. 'I am rotten from stem to stern; I'm a sinner from the beginning.' David is looking at his nature. There is no particular theological implication in the sense that, "in sin my mother conceived me." It is a poetic expression of David expressing the fact that, 'Look, I am a sinner, the son of a sinner. I come from a long line of sinners.'

We all do, by the way. 'I am just a sinner from the beginning. I am rotten through and through.' This is how David saw himself. He said, 'Oh God, please clean me up. Change me, transform me,' which is really the concept of what repentance is all about when we really grasp and see ourselves as David saw himself.

Question: The question involves several different scriptures and involves the matter of judging. When is it appropriate to judge and when is it not?

Answer: We live in a society today that prides itself on tolerance and people don't want to judge anything. If you say something about something, they say, 'Oh no, you shouldn't judge.' Several verses are brought to mind. The question is asked in terms of what's the proper application for us as God's people.

Let's notice some of the verses.

Isaiah 5:20-21, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"

Verse 24, coming down, "Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will ascend like dust; because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

Jeremiah 23:13-14, "'And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria: they prophesied by Baal and caused My people Israel to err. Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.'"

Isaiah 59:10, one more verse, "We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noonday as at twilight; we are as dead men in desolate places."

The point is, as it is brought out in these verses, God's law is a moral compass. To "judge" is to "make a distinction." That's what it means to judge. It means to "make choices, decisions or distinctions." We can distinguish between what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. God's law is a moral compass. If you cast away the law, you cast away the compass and you can't tell which direction you're going.

We live in a society that prides itself on tolerance. In reality, they've sort of thrown away the moral compass and want to treat all behaviors as though they are on the same level. That is certainly not valid from a Biblical standpoint. We can and should judge conduct in terms of what is appropriate and inappropriate. We have the criteria for judging that right here in the Scriptures.

What we cannot judge and what is God's prerogative to judge is the hearts and minds of individuals. God looks on the heart. We can see what someone does and judge the conduct as inappropriate. We don't know how much that person knows and understands and to what extent God is working with them. God looks on the heart. I can't tell you how sincere someone is. God knows. He looks on their heart. Now, sincere or not, I can tell you based on the Bible whether they're wrong or whether they're right in what they're doing.

There is the kind of judging that only God can do. God is the One that has to look in the heart. He is the One that has to evaluate a person's motives and understanding. God evaluates those factors. That's not for us to judge. They ultimately have to give an account to God.

What we are to judge is whether this is right or wrong or whether we should follow this or follow that. We have judging to do as well. Our judging is not the hearts and minds of individuals. Our judging is the appropriateness of various conducts and whether it is something that we should follow or not. We have to make those judgments. God gives us a criterion. God gives us the basis. He gives us His Word; He gives us His law. It is a moral compass.

He puts us in situations where we are confronted with having to make choices. We have to make choices in our daily life. We are pressured from every direction and most of those pressures are in terms of choosing the wrong way. We have to take responsibility. Every time you make a choice, you've judged something.

If you say, 'Well, I'm not going to judge,' then, in effect, you've judged that everything is on the same level and that everything is okay. To say that something is a sin is not judging the heart and mind of the individual. God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." If somebody commits adultery, that's a sin. I'm not judging them to say that. I'm not judging them as an adulterer or that they've committed adultery if I know that to be a fact. That's not judging them as a person.

God ultimately is the One that is going to judge them in terms of their relationship with Him, to what extent they have repented and to what extent God is working with them. God will consider all these factors. In terms of the ultimate destiny, God is the One who has to judge that, but we can certainly judge and should judge that adultery is wrong and that we are not going to do it. If we can't judge that, then we're in trouble.

That's where the world comes in. The world says, 'Well, who's to decide what pornography is?' It really shouldn't be that hard to figure out. Anybody that wants to open their Bible can pretty well figure out some of these things.

Any judgment you make has to be based on something as a criterion. If you say, 'that's too long' or 'that's too short'—what was your criteria? You had something that you used as your standard.

Maybe someone measures a board and you say, 'You've cut that too long. You're going to have to cut two more inches off of it.' You judged. You used a standard of judgment. You used a tape measure, a yardstick or whatever.

God gives us a spiritual standard of judging. It is the basis by which we are to judge conduct. It is the basis by which we judge the appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain actions. We have to make those judgments. There are a lot of things we're confronted with on a daily basis. God evaluates us on the basis of how well we take and apply His word. God evaluates us on how well we apply His Word in circumstances that we face.

Question: Matthew 2:14, "When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt..." Can we know by the Bible or history how long Joseph, Mary and Jesus stayed in Egypt?

Answer: There's no specific reference, nor am I aware of a tradition of an exact amount of time.

Matthew 2:19-20, we are told, "But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead.'"

Christ was born in the fall of 4 B.C. and Herod died the following Passover. So, it would have been shortly after the spring Feasts—probably sometime between Passover and Pentecost—that Joseph and Mary returned. Christ would have been less than a year old. They, perhaps, were in Egypt for no more than a matter of months—maybe one, two or three months, something of that sort.

Question: Matthew 5:25, "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison."

Answer: The basic principle is: don't involve yourself in a bunch of litigation. Try to settle out

of court peaceably. If you get entangled in this world's legal system, there is no telling what kind of trouble you will wind up in before it is all over. It's a principle; don't have this adversarial, 'I am going to hold out and demand that I get everything that's coming to me,' rather than having a peaceable attitude. Be willing to settle. Try to work out a peaceable arrangement. If you have a problem with someone or some type of dispute, seek to work it out in a peaceable way. Realize that even if you have to accept things that aren't exactly right, chances are you are still going to come out better than if you get yourself entangled in this world's legal system. There are problems any way you "slice it." It's an emphasis on trying to settle things peaceably.

Question: Matthew 8:4, "And Jesus said to him [the leper], 'See that you tell no one;'" Mark 5:43, healing of little girl, "But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it," Luke 5:14, "And He charged him [the man with leprosy] to tell no one," Why couldn't anyone tell of their healings?

Answer: It wasn't that they couldn't, but often Christ would tell those that He had miraculously healed not to mention it because He knew that as soon as the notoriety spread, persecution was going to intensify and He would have to leave the area because of the religious leadership being stirred up. Particularly in the earlier part of His ministry, He did not seek to call a lot of public attention to Himself because He knew what the consequences would be. So, in many cases, when He would heal someone, He would simply say, 'Look, keep it quiet. Don't make a public issue of it.' He knew the effect of the notoriety.

Question: Matthew 19:13, "Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray," This is a question concerning the blessing of little children who are not in the Church but whose grandmother or grandfather is in the Church.

Answer: Basically, the principle would be those who have responsibility for the child. In some cases, the grandparents are raising the child and that's a little different. I think one thing to realize is that with God's blessing comes responsibility. We will probably go through some of this in the sermon on the Sabbath. If we are going to claim God's blessing, we must be prepared to follow through with our responsibility. We can't just lightly claim God's blessing as though it were some magic wand and then not exercise our responsibility.

That would be the problem with children that are perhaps related or friends or whatever. Unless you have responsibility or someone is prepared to exercise the proper responsibility in rearing the child God's way, then for God's blessing to be fulfilled, that blessing must be accompanied by obedience.

There are certain things and certain principles in the Scriptures that you can go through concerning blessings. God desires to bless us, but there are responsibilities that we have. Anytime God offers His blessings, there are other things that are involved with it; there are responsibilities that we have. Perhaps that will clarify, as far as what's involved.

Question: Why, in Matthew's account (Matthew 20:20-21), the mother of James and John asked Jesus to grant her sons' to sit on His right and left hand, and in Mark's account (Mark 10:37), it states that James and John were asking?

Answer: It is just one of the occasions where the two accounts complement each other. James and John were "in" on it; they wanted it. Mark tells it in a more succinct fashion—the fact that they wanted it. Matthew adds in that they had brought their mother into the circumstance. She was the sister of Jesus' mother, Mary. They had brought their mother into it. Matthew simply adds in a detail Mark ignores because the basic fact of it was that James and John were kind of striving for status there.

Question: Matthew 26:41, what did Jesus mean by, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation."?"

Answer: The very fact that if we are not remaining vigilant and not staying close to God through prayer, we will be caught up in various temptations that come along. The key to not being enticed and entangled in some of these temptations is to be vigilant and alert, not simply to world conditions but to ourselves. Be alert to what is going on, what's happening. Be alert, pray and stay close to God.

Question: Explain Mark 7:27-28, "But Jesus said to her, 'Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.' And she answered and said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs.'"

Answer: Verse 26, this is a reference to the Canaanite woman who came to Christ.

John 1:11, we are specifically told that Christ came to His own in His first coming—primarily

to the Jews. He was in Judea and Galilee and didn't travel throughout the world. He concentrated His message in the area in Judea and Galilee. This woman came up and Christ, in one sense, was testing her attitude. The English translation is a little harsher than the Greek. The reference is really, let's say, to puppies underfoot.

It was a matter of priorities. Christ was not dealing with everyone at that time. Yet, the woman displayed an attitude of humility when Christ told her that. She said, 'Well, that's true, but even little puppies there under the table eat the crumbs that fall.' Christ was impressed with her attitude and, in a sense, dealt with her ahead of time. It was simply not God's time to deal with everyone. Christ's ministry was directed to the Jews. It was in God's time schedule that they be given that opportunity, and they, of course, rejected the proclamation that was given to them.

But there were individuals among the Gentiles that evidenced outstanding attitudes of faith, and Christ, in a sense, dealt with them ahead of time. It was simply not the time that He was directing His efforts toward a broader spectrum, but there were individuals, as this woman and the Roman Centurion (Acts 10), that evidenced an attitude that Christ took note of. It is a matter of realizing that God may be dealing with certain ones, and, yet, God will take note of an attitude of humility and faith even if that's maybe not where He would primarily be working.

Question: Mark 9:35, "And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.'"

Answer: They were disputing who should be the greatest. He said, 'Look, if you want to know how to get to the top, it is to serve the most. Be willing to lower yourself and be the least. As you look around, the examples you see in the Roman world and your idea of status is that the guy on top does nothing and has everybody else wait on him.' He says, 'I am telling you, the one that really is the greatest is the one that is serving, helping and willing to do whatever needs to be done—the one who is willing to humble himself as a little child, to help and serve others.' Christ showed that God's view of what is important is a little different than man's view.

Question: Mark 9:38-42, "Now John answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your

name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.’ But Jesus said, ‘Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.’”

Answer: Realize that in Jesus’ ministry, He came among the Jews who had been, to various extents, practicing the religion that God had given through Moses. Judaism, as was normally practiced in the New Testament period, really was not the religion of Moses; it was a humanly devised religion that had a lot of human tradition and “dos” and “don’ts” attached to it. But there certainly were many who were sincere to whatever degree, who were observing God’s laws and with whom God was working to one extent or another. Jesus makes the point to the disciples that it was not their job to get out and tell others, ‘No, you can’t do this or that.’ He said, ‘Look, if he is not against us, if he recognizes My authority and is not speaking evil of us, leave him along.’ In effect, He told the disciples to mind their own business and let God take care of His.

Verses 41-42, in terms of offending one of the little ones, Christ says in effect, ‘The way you treat My disciples, I take it personally. If one of My representatives does something in a positive way for My sake for one who follows Me (for one of My disciples), that counts to his credit, and if one causes offense, that counts to his discredit.’ It is a matter that God takes note of. God takes note of the way we treat His children, which ought to give all of us cause to consider and realize that the way we treat one another is a serious matter.

Question: Mark 10:25, “‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’”

Answer: It’s explained in the context. Verses 23-24, “‘Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, ‘How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!’ And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, ‘Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!’”

That really is the problem—those who put their trust and confidence in physical wealth. It’s very difficult. Through a comparison, He is using a statement that’s obviously an extreme statement. It’s an attention-getting statement.

Verses 26-27, “‘And they were astonished beyond measure, saying among themselves, ‘Who then can be saved?’ But looking at them, Jesus said, ‘With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.’” It’s not that anyone who has any wealth will not be in the kingdom, but there is a problem. The human tendency is to put our trust and confidence in what we can see, taste, touch and feel. The more we put our trust and confidence in what we have and what we can see, the less we put our trust and confidence in Whom we can’t see and the more we open ourselves up to trouble. Certainly, God can work with those who have wealth or those who don’t.

Question: In John 16:7-8, 13, why is “Him” and “He” used instead of “It” in referring to the Holy Spirit?

Answer: I think the simplest explanation is the fact that in the Greek language and in most languages other than English, you don’t have the neuter in the same way. For instance, in the French language, it is masculine or feminine. If you were talking about the table, it’s spoken of in the feminine or if you were translating it literally and you were referring to something, it would be either “he” or “she”—even though in English we would refer to it as an “it.”

Other scriptures show that the Holy Spirit is not a person. Matthew 1:18, one of the simplest ways to prove that is that we are told that Mary was with child of the Holy Spirit. If she conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit were a person, then that would make the Holy Spirit the Father, right?

John 14:16, yet, Christ prayed to the Father to send the Spirit. Mary was with child of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, the Holy Spirit was not a person, else that would have been the Father. Think that one through.

There are various other places where it talks about the Spirit being “poured out” from on high (Acts 10:45). You don’t pour out a person. The Holy Spirit is a power that emanates out from God (Luke 1:35; 24:49; Acts 1:8).

Many times when the masculine or feminine pronouns are used, they are rendered into English as the neuter “it” in many contexts. Here, the translators didn’t do that because they did not understand the fact that the Holy Spirit

was not an individual. Since the translators themselves believed in the doctrine of the trinity, they simply rendered it this way. If you were reading this section of Scripture in the French Bible, the question would not arise because everything would be rendered as masculine or feminine. If you were reading it in the Greek, the same would be the case. In English, we make a distinction between “he,” “she” and “it.” It creates a little problem or causes a misunderstanding.

Question: Acts 7:25, “For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.” Did Moses know before leaving Egypt that he was to deliver Israel?

Answer: Moses had come to understand that God was going to use him to deliver Israel. He thought God had put him in the position as prince of Egypt and God would use him to help the people. The people were unwilling to accept him in that role. He thought he knew how God was going to do it. Then during the 40 years in the land of Midian, he probably thought God was not going to use him. God did it a totally different way. We try to second-guess God. God delivers us from our problems. Very, very rarely does He do it the way we anticipate it. We have to walk by faith.

Question: Why does it say in Acts 9:7 that the men heard the voice and then in Acts 22:9, it says the men did not hear the voice?

Answer: Acts 9:7, “And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.”

Acts 22:9, “Now those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me.”

They did not understand what was said. They heard a noise, but they did not comprehend the message that was spoken. That is the sense of it.

Question: Acts 16:4, “And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.” Are the “decrees” of this verse referring to Acts 15:29? Can decrees be imposed on us? Were the decrees nailed to the cross?

Answer: They felt to be baptized you had to become a Jew. The sign of the covenant of Abraham was circumcision. It was an issue. It was difficult for many Jews to accept the fact that Gentiles didn’t have to be circumcised. The

issue had gone to Jerusalem. When an issue arises and it cannot be resolved on a local level, it goes to headquarters—specific matters of Church government.

In Acts 15, a decision was made. The decree was written up and sent out. One of these decrees had to do with circumcision.

Were the decrees nailed to the cross?

Colossians 2:14, “having wiped out [KJV, “blotted out”] the handwriting of requirements [KJV, “ordinances”] that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” The decrees are not what it is referring to. What is blotted out?

Acts 3:19, “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, ...” Our *sins* are blotted out. What does that have to do with the handwriting of requirements? If you were to look up the phrase “handwriting of ordinances” (Greek, “*cheirographon*”), it means “something handwritten.” This is a manuscript, specifically, a legal document or bond, a handwritten bill. It is a written record, like a signed handwritten bond of indebtedness. It was a term often used in the Greek world referring to a debt. Our handwritten bill of debt was blotted out. Christ paid our debt in full. The catalog of our sins—our personalized debt—was paid in full. We owed our life and Christ paid the penalty. It was against us, contrary to us and He took it away. Our sins were nailed to the cross. He took all of our sins. As a result, our sins were nailed to the cross.

Can decrees be imposed on us? Yes.

Matthew 16:19, the authority for that is where the Apostles were told, “And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Binding and loosing had to do with official judicial decisions. The judgment was to be made based on the law. The law doesn’t change; circumstances change. That comes on down today.

The Scribes and Pharisees were in that office, but they weren’t doing what they were supposed to do.

Matthew 23:2, “... ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.’” “Sit in Moses’ seat” is to make judgments.

Matthew 21:43, “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” It will be taken from the Pharisees and given to the Church.

How do you know which days to celebrate as Holy Days? We know from the Hebrew calendar. Who made that determination? God revealed it, but the Jews have preserved it.

Question: Why do Protestants most often quote the Apostle Paul as their authority? Peter was the chief apostle (the leader of the Twelve), John had a very special relationship with Jesus and James was the brother of Jesus. Why is it that almost all scripture references used are from Paul instead of these three?

Answer: Paul wrote more of the New Testament than any other one person, so there is a lot to quote from Paul. He wrote 14 books.

2 Peter 3:15-16, the reason the Protestants like to quote from Paul the most—one factor is the fact that Peter says, “...as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

Peter said centuries ago that Paul wrote some things that are a little hard to be understood. Paul was a deep thinker. He frequently dealt with philosophical concepts. He wrote some things that are a little more difficult to understand. Peter made reference to that. It was hard to be understood at the time that it was written. Peter said Paul wrote some things that are a little more difficult to understand and those that are unstable and unlearned twist them, just like they do the other scriptures—but they particularly like to twist what Paul wrote.

They take certain things out of context. This was the case centuries ago at the time of the New Testament (Peter himself warned about it), and it is certainly our case today. We find that there is an emphasis given to what the Protestant world terms “Pauline theology.” That is simply based on what Peter expressed.

God used Paul in a very remarkable way. He was deeply educated and grounded in the Old Testament Scriptures, and God used him to write more of the New Testament than any other one person. God also included the writings from James, Peter, John and Jude, as well as the four gospels. That’s why, when we started going through the New Testament in the order in which God inspired the Greeks to preserve it (the manuscripts are inevitably preserved throughout the Greek world and the so-called Byzantine texts), the General Epistles of James, Peter, John

and Jude preceded Paul’s epistles. They set the stage. That’s why, when we went through them, we went through them in that order. When you go through James, Peter, John and Jude, you go through faith, hope, love and warnings against apostasy. By the time you come to Paul, you are a little more grounded to understand some of the things Paul wrote. You understand Paul in the light of James, Peter and John. In that sense, that’s why they need to be understood first because they deal with more basic subject matter.

Question: 1 Corinthians 15:29, the question is concerning the phrase, “baptized for the dead.”

Answer: The whole context deals with the resurrection. If there isn’t a resurrection, what is going to happen to those who are dead?

1 Corinthians 15:29, “Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead [“baptized for the hope of the dead” is the sense of it], if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the [hope of] the dead?” This is a gross misunderstanding.

Question: 1 Timothy 3:1, “This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.” Why don’t we have bishops?

Answer: We do. We don’t normally use that term in English; bishop is a Middle/Old English term. The term in the Greek language is “*episcopos*.” It’s the Greek word from which the Episcopal Church takes its name. “*Episcopos*” simply means “overseer.” It is one of several terms that is used to refer to the ministry. Certain churches—the Catholic Church, Episcopal Church and others—use “bishop” as a title to refer to an individual in a church hierarchy. In reality, all elders are bishops. They are overseers, individuals responsible for the oversight of the congregation. We don’t generally use the term simply because it is a term that has been misused by the world and carries the connotation that is not scriptural. We more commonly use the term “elder.”

In reality, there are four basic terms that are used in the New Testament. One is the Greek term “*presbyteros*,” which means “elder.” A second term is “*episcopos*,” which means “overseer.” It is translated “bishop” in the King James. A third term is “*poimaino*,” which means “shepherd.” It’s the word that’s translated “pastor.” Any time you see the word “pastor” in the New Testament, it is translated from the exact same word that is also translated “shepherd.” Then, also

the term “*diakonos*,” which means “minister.” Those four terms—bishop, elder, overseer and minister—would be pretty much interchangeable, used in the sense of referring to anyone, whether a local elder or another rank. The term pastor (or shepherd) would refer basically to the one who had the oversight of the flock or the congregation.

Question: 1 Peter 5:13, “She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.” Is this physical or spiritual Babylon?

Answer: The book of 1 Peter is a straightforward letter or book.

1 Peter 1:1, KJV, it is addressed, “to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia...”

1 Peter 5:13, “She [the Church] who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.” It is written from Babylon. Babylon was the capital of the Parthenon Empire. This was one of the major areas where the ten tribes of Israel were. Babylon had a large Jewish community. There’s no reason to take that he was in Babylon, other than in a literal fashion. If it is not symbolic, then it is to be taken literally.

Another aspect of demonstrating that it was the literal city of Babylon, the Catholic Church wants to claim that it was Rome. They should go back to Revelation 17. When it comes to 1 Peter, they claim Peter was in Rome being the pope. They want to leave out Revelation.

Also, if the letter is coming from Rome, it would be coming from the west, and there’s no way you would start a letter from up in the northeast corner of Pontus. You would have to start it probably in Asia and come through another way. We would take the expression, “Babylon,” literally. To whom were they sent? They were sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

Question: 1 John 5:7-8 appears to support the trinity.

Answer: 1 John 5:7-8, “For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.” “In heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth” is not a part of any of the original Greek texts. Basically, any commentary will bring that out. Most modern translations simply show the verse

with a footnote. Verse 7 does not appear in any Greek manuscripts; it only appeared in the Latin Vulgate.

It’s an interesting story as to how it came to be a part of the King James translation. The King James translation (1611 A.D.) was primarily made from the *Greek Textus Receptus* (as it is called), as published by Erasmus of Rotterdam (in the late 1400s), who was a scholar a couple of hundred years earlier. He was responsible for and helped to compile an authoritative Greek text that was utilized in the western world. When he came out with his Greek text, it, of course, did not have this verse because it was not in any of the Greek texts. It stirred up quite a bit of controversy. Basically, it came to be put in under threat of his life by the local Catholic bishop. It’s a story that will be brought out in any of the commentaries. So, from that standpoint, it can’t be utilized as a proof of the trinity because it really has no authority in the Scriptures. It is not actually a part of inspired Scripture. It is not in any of the Greek manuscripts that we have or that there is any record of.

Question: Is the Laodicean Church era to come after the Philadelphia Church era?

Answer: Yes. In Revelation 2 and 3, we have the Church addressed.

Revelation 1:20, John sees seven lampstands and this is explained. Christ is pictured as standing in the midst (v. 13). The entire Church is being pictured by seven lampstands. It was to be a light to the world. These are not the only Church congregations in Asia Minor. They were to typify the Church of all times.

Revelation 1: 1, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place,” John was given this vision to be revealed, to reveal “things which must shortly take place.” It was a prophecy. It was something that had implication way beyond the seven little congregations which were addressed here in chapters 2 and 3. These seven were selected out. They were stops on a Roman mail route. There was this particular order in which they were addressed. We have something that was typical and representative of the Church of all time. It typified the entire Church because God’s number of completion is seven. Each of these congregations had characteristics selected out.

From a standpoint of prophecy, we begin in Revelation 2 with the Church at Ephesus. This is a particular time period of the Church. There are seven distinct eras. It was successive, as in the

nature of the mail deliveries. They also have an application to individual Christians of all time, but these messages are primarily a prophecy. It begins with the time of the Apostle John and projects itself out to the time of the Lord. The Laodicean era is the final or seventh one mentioned; Philadelphia is the sixth.

It became plain in the early 1950s (about 1951-1953) that an understanding of some of this had opened up. Mr. Herbert Armstrong had been puzzled. Those in Oregon clearly were the Church of God, yet, they were so small and totally lacking in vitality, life and power. It was a paradox and he could not understand. If it was the Church of God, why was it was lacking in power? He puzzled over that through the years. In the time around 1951-1953, those coming out of college began intensive study in certain sections of Scripture. It became plain that this was the revelation in chapters 2 and 3. Sardis was told that it was at the point of death, and then Philadelphia, which had little strength and, yet, had kept God's Word, had set before it an open door. It was plain that God had raised up Mr. Herbert Armstrong for the Philadelphia era. Revelation 3:10, this was the era that was prophesied to be kept from the Great Tribulation. It became apparent that the scriptural description of these people (Sardis) was identified here in Revelation. They were pictured as lacking power and they did. The understanding of the history of the Church from the apostles to our time became clear.

Yet, there remains one final era characterized as the Church of the Laodiceans. Some of the specifics remain to be seen. The distinction between Philadelphia and Laodicea will be apparent prior to the Tribulation and is something that we will simply have to wait and see. It should serve as a warning for each of us, as to what God says is going to occur to some. We find an attitude, described in chapter 3, characteristic of the Laodicean Church and characteristic of this age. We live in a permissive society. We live in a society that tends to have a very watered-down, lukewarm, type of approach to life. We would all do well to be warned of that. Perhaps at a later time we will go through an entire Bible study on Revelation 2 and 3.

Question: Revelation 6:6, "And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, 'A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.'" What is the oil and the wine that is not to be hurt?

Answer: That is a reference to the horse of famine. It describes the four horses of the Apocalypse. The third horse is the horse of famine. It describes, in symbolic terms, that he has a balance scale, a type of scale that was used in time past.

Revelation 6:6, "... 'A quart of wheat for a denarius [KJV, "penny"], and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.'" It describes rationing, where they are rationing out this small increment of grain. There is severe famine, and it describes grain, the very staff of life, being rationed out.

The term that is translated "penny" in the King James is a reference to the sum of money that was a day's wage for a common laborer—not exactly a penny as we think of it, though some of you can probably remember when you worked for a few cents a day. Our concept of money today is vastly different than the concept of money simply 40 or 50 years ago and much more so back then.

"Do not harm the oil and the wine" is simply describing commodities that are in short supply. They are told, 'Be very careful, we are rationing grain and some of the luxury items like oil and wine.' They are being very, very carefully rationed out because of severe shortage.

Question: Who are the two witnesses?

Answer: Would you like for me to name names? No, I won't name names. The reason I won't name names is because I don't know names. There was a time, a number of years ago, when several of us thought we had them figured out, and it's very apparent that we didn't. So, I don't think I am going to nominate anyone new to the job.

Revelation 11:3-4, the two witnesses are mentioned, "'And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands [KJV, "candlesticks"] standing before the God of the earth.'"

You find reference to them in Zechariah 3 and 4. You find symbolism of God's two representatives. You can find parallels to the two witnesses in the person of Moses and Aaron, God's representatives who went in before Pharaoh. The plagues that Moses and Aaron called down are very similar to what the two witnesses will be calling down.

The two lampstands mentioned are representative of two Churches. Some have speculated on this that they are Philadelphia and

Laodicea. I don't think that is necessarily the case. Understand that candlesticks, as we know them, did not exist back then. A more accurate translation would be lampstand because wax candles simply did not exist at this time in history.

What was utilized at that time resembled a pottery bowl. In some cases, it was a bowl that was set on a stem that came down and you filled up the whole thing with oil. You would have, maybe, a high stem and then you would have stems that would come out. You would fill up the main stem with oil, and the oil would keep the lamp lit. You would fill up the main stem that came up higher with oil, and the oil came up to a little bowl on each side. So, it was the oil that was burning.

Generally in the Middle East, they used olive oil because that was the most readily available source. God uses olive oil as a type of His Holy Spirit. Many analogies are drawn from the Bible from the use of olive oil. The fuel source that was used in the tabernacle and later in the temple was olive oil. Olive trees would be, of course, the source of olive oil. The two lampstands that are filled with olive oil represent a type of God's Spirit. In other words, the two individuals are filled with the Spirit of God.

At that time, God's representatives serve as a contrast to the two other individuals in Revelation 11 who are Satan's representative—the Beast and the false prophet. Who does God have? He has two witnesses, two individuals who are undoubtedly alive on the face of the earth right now, and we, in terms of knowing exactly who they are, cannot lock in on that right now. The point is that when the time comes, God selects whom He will and places those individuals in that office. The individuals may very well be around.

We look on the horizon and we try to figure things out, but we are doing so on the basis of things as they are now. But if we're talking about 10, 15 or 20 years in the future, then there's no telling. Things can change drastically. Things can change drastically in five years or even in one year. You see, that is the problem in trying to zero in on a specific individual.

There will be two men that God will utilize in that capacity as His direct representatives to serve as witnesses to the world and, in effect, call the hand of the Beast and the false prophet. This is in much the same way that Moses and Aaron went in before Pharaoh as God's representatives and contended with Pharaoh's magicians, Jannes

and Jambres, and there was the contest back and forth.

You find various analogies. You can draw an analogy to Joshua and Zerubbabel and their function in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. In the book of Zechariah, they are the two olive trees and a lampstand with seven lamps. Zechariah 3 and 4 are the chapters that refer to that. It's clear in Zechariah 4 that's the analogy of the two lampstands and the two olive trees of Revelation 11:4 clearly typify Zerubbabel and Joshua in the book of Zechariah. They were the two individuals who were leaders in God's work. They were doing God's work at that time and were representing God to the people in dealing with foreign rulers. They were dealing with the enemies of the faith. Some of that ties in with the way we got the Bible.

But to try and zero in on two specific individuals is not possible at this time. The point is that at certain times in history, God has utilized a team, as in the case of Moses and Aaron or as in the case of Zerubbabel and Joshua. God has not always chosen to utilize a team in quite the same way. You will find in the New Testament at the beginning, Peter and John stood out in a special way. They were kind of a team. You would find them as a team being brought before various ruling groups. There are other times when you find an individual mentioned in the singular fashion and you don't find any mention of someone else. God has sometimes done it a little differently. The two witnesses are simply going to be God's chosen representatives at the time of the very end. During the time of the Tribulation, there will be those two individuals whom God will use to hold out as His witnesses and warning to the world in much the way that Moses and Aaron did.

Question: Revelation 20:7-10, "Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are [were cast]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." Are those that perish lost forever? Is there hope for them?

Answer: The Millennium is a time of judgment. God is not judging the world right now, but He is going to be judging during the Millennium. The scripture does not teach a second chance; it teaches a chance of salvation—an opportunity for an individual to have his mind opened by God to understand God’s calling and purpose. But realize that when we know and don’t act on what we know, that’s our chance. It’s not a matter of second chances and third and fourth chances, over and over. It’s a matter that once we really know and understand, God has dealt with us. We understand and we are having our opportunity. We have to make a commitment. There will be those who make the wrong choice, those who simply choose the wrong fate.

From the time setting, it would appear, here in Revelation, that we’re looking at a period at the end of the Millennium. Here are individuals who have had an opportunity to fully know God’s way. God has been working with them. They have had an opportunity and they simply have not availed themselves of that opportunity. They have allowed themselves to be deceived because they did not believe the warnings. Don’t you think there will be sermon after sermon after sermon preached on these scriptures, particularly as we get toward the end of the Millennium? Don’t you think we will warn people of what’s going to happen and to be aware lest it happen to them? There are going to be individuals who sit there and think, ‘That could never happen to me.’

I had a point very vividly impressed upon my mind. We were at the Feast of Tabernacles and Mr. Herbert Armstrong called a meeting for the ministry. He addressed the assembled ministry. He opened the Bible to the section in Acts where Paul talked to the Ephesians elders (Acts 20:17-38).

Acts 20:28, he went through the section of scripture where it says, “take heed.”

Verse 30, “Also from among yourselves men will arise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” ‘Some of you will depart and will seek to lead away a following.’ This was a charge to the Ephesians elders.

Verses 28-30, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse

things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”

Mr. Herbert Armstrong read this to us and he said, ‘Fellows, this is not a statement of what has happened in the past; it’s a prophecy of what’s going to happen in the future. This is going to happen again. Don’t let it happen to you.’ I remember that very emphatically and the point emphatically made as only Mr. Herbert Armstrong could make it. I had never heard Mr. Armstrong go through this scripture in that way either before or after. But that Feast, for some reason, he was inspired and I think I know why he was.

He was inspired of God to go through that section in his address to the ministry and to really drive it home. ‘This is going to happen! Don’t let it happen to you!’ What really impressed me was that just a matter of weeks later, there were a number of those in the room who heard those words, who did allow it to happen to them—some within a matter of weeks, some within a matter of months, some over the course of the next few years. The point is that people can be warned and they don’t always heed the warning.

There are going to be those in the Millennium who are going to be warned, ‘Look, Satan is chained up right now. The time is going to come when he is going to be turned loose and he’s going to try to deceive you—and this is the way he’s going to do it. Don’t let it happen to you.’ There are going to be those who ignore that, and it will ultimately lead to their destruction. The whole world ultimately has a choice set before it—good and evil, right and wrong. Israel of old had that choice (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19). We have that choice today. The people who live in the Millennium ultimately are going to have to be given a chance to choose.

For a period of time, they will have the right way instilled in them. Satan won’t be around to “muddy the waters.” We will be able to create a society without Satan’s influence, but they are going to have to make a decision to reject that influence. God has to know that if they had a choice, they would choose the right. If they never had that choice, it would be a little different.

Question: In the book of Revelation, it talks about the various tribes and it talks about the 12 tribes. The question relates to the fact that most people, even in the Israelite tribes, have some level of mixture in terms of a tribal mixture. If they are going to be separated out, there are

many who would not be totally of one specific tribe and the same would be for ethnic groups as well.

Answer: I think the principle is the fact that God is ultimately the One who will tend to that. In cases like that, people normally take after one side of the family or the other, and there is a sense of identity that is there. Many things are obviously clear. Some things or some issues may not be as clear. That's why some of those things will have to be resolved when Christ comes because He is the only One that knows how to sort out the details in the appropriate way. Perhaps much of it would not be unclear, but some would be in terms of how God would allocate things and assign individuals as He reallocates the earth as recorded there in Revelation.

Question: Is it permissible for a baptized member to date a non-baptized individual under any conditions?

Answer: The basic principle of dating, of course, goes back to marriage. For one who has made a commitment to God—who has been baptized and is converted—to become involved with someone who is not, is not appropriate.

In the context of the Church and young people who have grown up in the Church and who are here as a part of the congregation, we sometimes have situations where there are some who are baptized and some who are not—basically, that young adult age spread. In terms of single dating and in terms of anything that would involve romantic involvement, something of that sort really shouldn't go that far. There needs to be a common bond in terms of commitment to God's way.

It may be partially on what you mean as a "date." In the context of Church socials or participating in young adults group activities, something of that sort, it is a little bit different. It would be best that if someone has a specific question on that, it is the kind of thing that's best handled on an individual basis. If someone has a specific question, they can check with me on it personally.

Question: The question involves the fact that the Catholic Church has issued a new catechism. The Catholic Church, in issuing the new catechism, states, "doctrines and scriptures should be understood to reflect more accurately the current mood and consciousness of society." This is stated in the introduction of the Catholic Bible Course. The question relating to that is:

Would that be accurate from a Biblical standpoint?

Answer: The scripture is very clear that Jesus Christ came preaching the gospel or the good news of the kingdom of God. God's message is not designed to reflect the current mood and standards of society. Society has cut itself off from God and chosen to go its own way. Jesus Christ came with God's message.

Malachi 3:1, you might notice, "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. 'Behold, He is coming,' says the Lord of hosts."

What do we find here? We find that Jesus Christ was to come as the Messenger of the covenant. He came proclaiming the message of the New Covenant. It was a prophesy that a messenger would be sent to prepare the way before the One who was coming as the Messenger of the covenant.

Acts 10:36-37, you might notice, "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached..."

You want to know about the gospel or the origin of the gospel that Jesus preached?

Mark 1:14-15, we're told, "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'"

Peter said in Acts 10 that this message was "the word which God sent." So, who's the origin? Where did the message originate? It originated with God. It was "sent to the children of Israel." Jesus Christ was the Messenger and the message had to do with peace. It began to be published, starting in "Galilee, after the baptism which John preached."

Mark 1:14, when we come back, we see, "after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God..." That's the only way to peace. The good news of the Kingdom of God is the way that peace is coming, and that is the only way. That is the good news that holds the key to peace.

This was a message about the New Covenant. What is the New Covenant? The New Covenant has to do with God writing His laws in our hearts and in our minds (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Hebrews

8:10). Jesus did not come with a message that was going to do away with the law. He came with a message that had to do with putting the law in our hearts and in our minds.

The gospel was the message of the Kingdom of God. What does a kingdom have? First and foremost, a kingdom has a king, doesn't it? It has laws, it has subjects, and it has territories. Jesus Christ came with a message that made all of those things plain.

You remember Daniel 2:32-35. We've gone through this numerous times. You remember the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw: the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, the feet of iron and clay and the ten toes. The stone cut out without hands comes down and smashes the image on its feet, and the image turns to dust and blows away. The stone becomes a great mountain that fills the earth.

Daniel 2:44, we're told, "'And in the days of those kings [the final ten] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.'"

The God of heaven is going to set up a kingdom. Where is it going to be set up? It's going to be set up on the earth. It's going to rule over all the kingdoms of this world.

Revelation 11:15, we read, "... 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'"

Revelations 19:16, the kingdom of God is going to hold sway over all the earth. Jesus Christ is going to rule as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Isaiah 2:3, the law will go forth from Zion.

Jesus Christ came with a message of the good news about how peace is going to come and how we can have a part in that.

Matthew 25:34, the kingdom of God is something that we can inherit.

John 3:5, it is something that we can enter. That gets into a whole different subject. I've gone into that in some of the outlying Bible studies.

Jesus Christ did not come with a message that simply reflected the spirit of the age. He came with a message that reflected the Spirit of God. The spirit of the age has been different things at different times. The spirit of the age has never been in tune with the Spirit of God. It's not in our time and it wasn't in the time of Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:22, Paul brings out the statement, "...I have become all things to all

men, that I might by all means save some." Paul used psychology, in a right way, to help them to understand.

In terms of the way Paul approached the subject, let's notice a couple of examples in the book of Acts. Let's notice the different approach with a different audience.

Acts 17:22, notice, "Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious...'" - 'You're exceedingly religious.'

Verses 23-26, "'for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation...'"

Verse 28, "'for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.''" Here he quotes from one of the Greek poets.

Verse 29, "'Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.'"

Verse 31, coming down, "'because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.'"

You can go through this whole section of Acts 17 and you'll find that Paul did not start out by quoting scripture. There aren't any verses that he quoted. In fact, the name Jesus Christ is not mentioned in this specific section. Paul was speaking to people who were not familiar with the Bible. He was talking to people who were unaware of Jesus Christ or any of the controversy that had surrounded Him. Paul introduced the subject starting from where they were to bring them to the fact and reality that there is a Creator God who is going to intervene and judge the creation, and there is One that He has borne testimony of through the resurrection as being the instrument of that judgment. It was an introduction. It was not everything there was to say, but it was the way Paul approached the

subject, dealing with people who didn't have any knowledge of the Bible.

Go to Acts 22 where he's speaking to Jews (people who were familiar with the Scriptures).

Acts 22:1-2, he said, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear my defense before you now.' And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent." He spoke in Hebrew to really get their attention. He certainly didn't speak in Hebrew on Mars Hill; on Mars Hill he spoke in Greek. He approached the people from that standpoint. He started out by introducing himself.

Verse 3, he said, "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today."

He starts out emphasizing his relationship with the Jewish community—acknowledging and pointing out his study of the law.

Verses 4-14, he recounts the story of his conversion and goes on through.

You could notice other accounts that are directed toward the Jewish community. You could notice Peter's sermon in Acts 2 or you could notice Stephen's sermon in Acts 7, where Stephen started out with God appearing to Abraham (vv. 2-8), then gives sort of a synopsis of the Old Testament (vv. 9-53). Stephen was addressing Jews in Jerusalem who were familiar with the Scriptures.

If you're speaking to people who don't even know what a Bible is and you start quoting

verses of Scripture, that's not an effective starting point. You have to first lead them to the realization that the Bible is the Word of God and then prove to them what it says.

It doesn't do any good to prove to a Buddhist what the Bible says when you haven't even proven to him that the Bible is the Word of God. You have to start with people based on where they are. The message is the same; the standards of God don't change, but their technique and approaches are different. You can go through the book of Acts and find that there were different approaches used with different audiences, but they weren't coming to different conclusions and they weren't preaching different gospels. They simply used a different introduction to capture their attention and help them relate to the message they were conveying.

We have traditionally done that over the years. Years ago, when Mr. Herbert Armstrong was traveling in some of the foreign countries (particularly in non-Christian areas), he used an approach modeled much more after Acts 17. When he was speaking to audiences that had a general familiarity with the Bible, his approach was different. We have, I think, an appropriate way of approaching the subject, but it does not allow for different gospels. The one gospel that Jesus Christ brought from God—the message that He came proclaiming—is the good news of the Kingdom of God which He bore witness. That is God's message.

CONTENT CORRECTIONS

[Editorial Comment: Last revision was completed in June, 2017. The posted lessons on the website reflect these corrections.]

CORRECTION – Bible Study #1,
page 7, L, par. 2, line 2—"there has (add "not") arisen in Israel a prophet...

CORRECTION – Bible Study # 2,
Page 1, R, par. 5, line 3—"This next period was at the time of David and Samuel."
Move sentence to end of paragraph.
page 9, chart, line 15, should be Joshua-Judges not Joshua-James.

CORRECTION – Bible Study #3,
page 4, L, par. 5, line 4—"...that was built (not "build") many years ago....

CORRECTION – Bible Study #8 & 9,
Page 7, L, par. 1—"If we go through Genesis 10, the European stock primarily comes from Shem (not "Ham"), the African stock comes from Ham and the oriental and certain eastern European stock comes from Japheth. Ham's wife was Naamah, a descendant of Cain." (Check the whole paragraph; there are several corrections.)

CORRECTION – Bible Study #14,
Page 2, L, par. 3—look that up on the website. We changed a good portion of the paragraph and you'll see and can correct your copy.

CORRECTION – Bible Study #17,
Page 11, R, par. 5, line 1-2—"The Roman Emperors had the title going back through the Pontifex Maximus of Pergamum (not "Rome").

CORRECTION – Bible Study #20,
page 13, L, par. 8—Joshua 17-21 should be Judges 17-21; par. 9, Joshua 17 should be Judges 17; par. 11, Joshua 17:10 should be Judges 17:10; R, par. 1, Joshua 18:1 should be Judges 18:1.

CORRECTION – Bible Study #20 Question sheet,
Question #14, "What was the ancestry of the "preacher for hire" (not "preacher on fire").

CORRECTION – Bible Study # 24,
Page 8, L, par. 4, line 2—"articles of silver (not "sliver").

CORRECTION – Bible Study #26,
page 13, R, last par., lines 4, 7, 10, 14—the month is "Ab" NOT "Ob"...

CORRECTION – Bible Study #27,
page 1, L, 7 lines from the bottom—"to the time Ezra came" NOT "to the time Zerubbabel came"—
page 1, L, par. 1, line 6—"...was a subsequent invasion a few years later in 596 B.C. (not "592 B.C").

CORRECTION – Bible Study #28,
page 2, R, last par., line 2—"You see, the Persian Empire had not gone that far east (not "west")." We made several correction and suggest you reprint your copy.

CORRECTION – Bible Study #41,
Page 8, L, par. 5, line 4 and 11—"...went to Cyprus (not Cypress)..."
Page 12, R, par. 7, line 1—"what Paul and Silas (not Barnabas) were doing."
page 13, L, par. 5, line 1—"Paul went from there to Athens (not "Rome")."

CORRECTION – Bible Study #47,
page 4, L, par. 5, line 2—"...Isaiah's life, but according to Jewish tradition he was sawn in two by the order of the wicked king Manasseh during the first year of his (Manasseh's) reign."
page 6, R, par. 5, line 1—"Jeremiah began his ministry, as I mentioned, a couple of decades prior to the time that Judah began to go into captivity. Jeremiah began his ministry 100 years or more later than Isaiah. Jeremiah 1:1-2, he began his ministry during the 13th year of King Josiah, which would date it to 625 BC and about 60 years after the death of Isaiah."
page 8, R, par. 4, lines 7-8—"Manasseh, evidently, put Isaiah to death at the beginning of his reign (not "at the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry"), and there wasn't an active, prophetic ministry that was done openly."

CORRECTION – Bible Study #54
page 1, R, last line—"and setting up camp outside (not "inside") the walls of..."
page 10, L, 2nd to last par. line 3—"Revelation 17:2, John (not "Jeremiah") describes the Beast power...
page 13, L, par. 1, line 4—"...king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan (not "Nebuchadnezzar"), the captain of the guards....

CORRECTION – Bible Study #55
page 5, L, par. 4, line 9—"...and it shall be besieged (not "besiege"), and you shall lay...."

CORRECTION – Bible Study # 56

page 9, R, par. 8, line 4—“...a number of decades after (not “before”) Ezekiel wrote.”

CORRECTION – Bible Study #70

page 8, R, under "Third", line 2—"One of the great roles (not "rolls") ...

page 9, L, par. 1, line 3—"...weekly news (not "new")....

CORRECTION – Bible Study # 91

Page 23, L, 2nd to last par., line 8—“anniversary of the establishment of Christianity in Russia (not Rome).

CORRECTION – Bible Study # 92

Page 7, R, par. 1, last 3 lines—“Then God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (not “a prophet”), and Zerubbabel (not “and he”) finished the temple.”

CORRECTION – Bible Study # 106

Page 5, R, par. 2, line 10—"The Queen of the South, who flourished nine centuries after (not "before") the people of Sodom and Gomorrah—...."