Journey Of A Lifetime

LESSON 46 . . . THE BOOK OF REVELATION (PART 1)

NOTES

This book was written by the apostle John during a time of terrible persecution under Domitian, a cruel, infamous emperor. John had been exiled to the Isle of Patmos (1:9), where he was probably made to work in the mines. Some Christians had been killed, and others imprisoned by Domitian. While in exile during this terrible time, John received the visions we know as the book of Revelation.

Revelation was written to encourage Christians during this severe persecution. The various symbols used in the book would mean little to the Roman authorities, who were just looking for an excuse to increase their persecution of Christians. However, its message to believers was clear—Christ is Lord, and He is coming to execute justice. Despite present conditions, the Christians' future will be glorious.

The author of this study makes no attempt in the following lessons to interpret all the visions in the book of Revelation. It is obvious much of it cannot be fully understood at this time.

According to Daniel 12:9, when will the prophecies of the future be revealed?

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However, the method used in interpreting this book will obviously determine its message to us today. There are four modern views:

(1) **Preterist**. This view teaches the events in this book describe John's day and everything in the book was fulfilled in early church history. The word *preterist* simply means "past."

(2) **Historical**. This view says all events in the book of Revelation take place during the history of the church. Those who hold this view see the visions in the book as symbols of the rise of the papacy, the corruption of the church, etc.

(3) **Spiritualist**. This view holds that everything in *Revelation* should be taken figuratively or metaphorically, not literally. It pictures *Revelation* as an allegory of the age-old struggle of good and evil.

(4) **Futurist**. This view teaches all events from chapter 4 on are future tense. The futurist interpretation is accepted by the vast majority of Christians who are called "evangelicals" and is a more literal approach. When this approach is followed, one must conclude most of the events in the book are still in the future. No judgments in history have ever equaled what is described in chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16. Certainly these judgments, the resurrections, and the return of Jesus as described in chapter 19 have not yet transpired.

The futurist interpretation will be used in these lessons on *Revelation* because the author feels we as Christians have an obligation to interpret scripture as literally as possible. If a scripture passage is to have any real meaning, it must be taken literally, unless it is obviously poetic, or unless it simply will not bear a literal interpretation.

Regardless of which view is used when interpreting the book of Revelation, one must be careful not to miss the message of the book. On the one hand, there is the danger of reducing it to a timetable of events through which every present-day event must be interpreted and somewhere inserted. On the other hand, we must be careful not to reduce parts of this book to mere fantasy or mysticism. To guard against both dangerous extremes, a few basic rules of interpretation must be followed:

1) First, this book is rooted in the Old Testament. Therefore, it is in the Old Testament we will find clues to the meanings of many of the various symbols and passages.

2) Obscure passages should always be interpreted in light of clear passages, not the other way around.

3) *Revelation* is mostly a book of visions. Therefore, John is not overly concerned with details but with projecting the main thrust of his visions. We should always treat visions as we do parables—looking for the main teaching rather than getting bogged down in the details.

4) Locate the place of activity. Confusion will result in a study of *Revelation* unless one keeps clearly in mind whether the scene takes place in heaven or on earth.

5) The events in this book are not necessarily to be taken as a sequence of chronological events. It is impossible to understand this book if one expects to follow a chronological sequence. The eastern mind is not nearly as preoccupied with chronology as is the western mind, and God certainly didn't write *Revelation* just for the western mind.

With these basic principles in mind, let's look at the book of Revelation.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE BOOK (Revelation 1:19):

I. "THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN" (chp. 1)
II. "THINGS WHICH ARE" (chps. 2-3)
III. "THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER" (chps. 4-22)

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I. "THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN" (chp. 1)

Revelation is addressed *to the seven churches in Asia* (1:4). We find here that near the end of the first century there are already individual churches that have their own ministers and deacons.

Look at 1:7, and describe what method Christ will use for His return, and how many people will be aware of it:

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In 1:12, John sees *seven golden candlesticks*, which could very well have reminded him of the golden candlestick that stood in the tabernacle and in the temple. Just as that candlestick lit up the darkness in the tabernacle and in the temple, so the *candlesticks* John saw were to light up the world with the Gospel.

According to 1:20, what do the *candlesticks* represent?

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In 1:13, we find *in the midst* of the *candlesticks* was one like *the Son of man.* This tells us where Jesus is now—*in the midst* of His churches. He said where two or three come together in His name, He would be there also (Mt 18:20).

There is a description of the Son of man in 1:13-16. In former times, and even now in some parts of the world, the long robe is a token of dignity and honor. In the Old Testament, the priestly dignity was marked by a robe of the nature mentioned in verse 13. The *golden girdle* is symbolic of service.

In 1:14 we are told His head and hair were white as wool or snow. What do you think the white hair represents?

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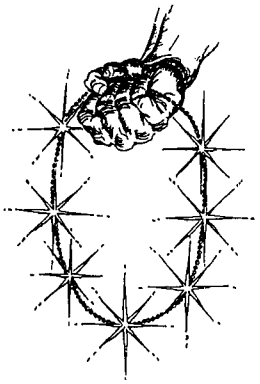
His eyes were as a flame of fire (1:14). This shows all-penetrating intelligence and power to read secrets, to bring hidden things to light, and to search all hearts at a glance. These are the eyes that will judge us at the last day.

His feet were *like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace* (1:15). This indicates the trials He experienced in His earthly life, which made Him an all-knowing and experienced Judge. Feet of brass also represent strength and stability.

His voice was like *the sound of many waters* (1:15), which represents authority.



In 1:16, we are told He *had in his right hand seven stars*. These *seven stars* are the *angels* of the churches (1:20). The word *angel* means "messenger." So, these *angels* are the messengers or pastors of the churches. Being in the *right hand* has to do with the divine calling of a pastor. It does not mean a pastor is closer to God, but he is to lead the church in the will of God.

Comparing Revelation 1:16 with Hebrews 4:12, what does the *two-edged sword* represent?

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His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength (1:16). How does this compare with the experience of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus in Acts 9:3-9?

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This vision is almost too much for John to behold, so he falls as dead at the feet of the Son of man (Rev. 1:17). How would you react in the presence of Jesus in all His splendor and majesty?

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Journey Of A Lifetime

LESSON 47 . . . THE BOOK OF REVELATION (PART 2)

II. "THINGS WHICH ARE" (chps. 2-3)

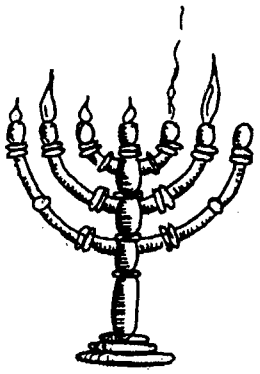
NOTES

The seven churches addressed in chapters 2 & 3 are significant in several ways. First of all, at the time John wrote the book of Revelation, these were actual churches in the cities mentioned. They were apparently not the most prominent churches of that day, since only two are previously mentioned in the Bible. Which two are these?

1. *Ephesians 1:1* _____ 2. *Colossians 2:1* _____

In addition, these seven churches represent all churches of that time, as well as all subsequent churches. Just as *1 Corinthians* and *2 Corinthians*, though written to the church at Corinth, have a message to all churches everywhere and at all times, so these letters are for all churches past, present, and future.

Why are **seven** churches addressed? The number *seven* is a sacred number, referring to fullness and completeness. Therefore, these seven churches represent **all** churches of **all** generations.



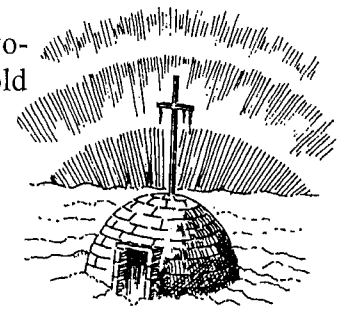
Why did Jesus not address some of the more prominent churches, such as those at Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, or Corinth? Because the seven particular churches He chose to address have in them the spiritual characteristics Christ finds in all His churches and followers throughout the centuries. So, through these seven churches Christ illustrates the spiritual condition of the church and of believers from the first century to the end of time. Now, let's look briefly at these seven churches . . .

1. The Church at Ephesus (2:1-7)

Ephesus is the first church addressed. The name *Ephesus* means "desirable one." Our Lord commends this church for several things: their *works* and *labour*, their *patience*, or endurance, as well as their discernment and rejection of false teachers (2:2).

Even though the church at Ephesus looks great from the outside, the keen, penetrating, and flaming eyes of our Lord (see 1:14) find fault in this church. For what does our Lord condemn them in Revelation 2:4?

It appears their service for Christ has become mechanical. Their devotion is routine. They have lost their enthusiasm and have become cold and formal. What warning does this have for us today?



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2. The Church at Smyrna (2:8-11)

The city of Smyrna was located about 40 miles north of Ephesus. It was a very patriotic city, thereby winning the privilege of building the first Roman temple in honor of Tiberius. Quite naturally, Smyrna readily accepted the principle of Caesar worship. Many Christians refused to participate in this type of worship; therefore, they were persecuted, even to the point of execution.

Christ says to this church, *I know thy works, and tribulation* . . . (2:9). Our Lord is saying He **knows** the persecution and problems the Smyrna Christians are facing. He knows and completely understands them. How is this possible? Because He experienced this persecution while He was here on earth.

Christ is also aware of our *tribulation* today. He takes note of those who are ridiculed at school or at work because they are faithful Christians. He knows of those who are passed over for promotion because they will have no part in dishonest business practices or deceitful solicitation. Whenever you, as a believer, feel ostracized because you can't go along with the crowd, listen closely and you will hear the Lord Jesus say, ***I know.***

3. The Church at Pergamos (2:12-17)

We can understand these verses more clearly when we know Pergamos was the capital city of Asia Minor, and royal officials were everywhere. They filled the city with palaces, temples, and pagan idols.

The temple of Octavius Caesar was at Pergamos, so the worship of Caesar flourished. Each citizen was required to offer incense and declare Caesar was "lord" at least once a year. Also at Pergamos was one of the wonders of the ancient world, an altar to Zeus. No wonder Christ says Satan's throne is there (2:13)!

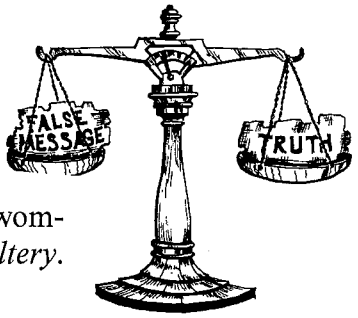
After commending the church at Pergamos, the all-penetrating eyes of Jesus bring their sins to light. Two false doctrines He hates are prevalent in the church at Pergamos. What are they (2:14-15)?

1. _____ 2. _____

The doctrine of Balaam is a reference to the Balaam who drew God's people away by using pagan women to entice the Israelite men into sexual sins (Num. 22-25). It is the teaching of compromise with the world. No one can say for certain what *the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes* refers to, but the Greek word literally means "laity-conqueror." Some believe this refers to the doctrine of some false teachers in John's day who claimed to have special divine authority. They tried to replace the leadership of the true apostles, such as John, by gaining control of believers and their possessions. Though no one knows for sure what Nicolaitanism is, the one thing we do know is Christ hates it.

The letter to the church at Pergamos reminds Christians of all times it is God's purpose to keep His children separated from all evil and from all compromise with the world, whether moral or doctrinal.

4. The Church at Thyatira (2:18-29)



It is strange the longest of the seven letters is to Thyatira, the church about which we know the least. It is, therefore, very difficult to reconstruct the situation there. We do know there is no threat of persecution from without, but the problem is inside the church. There is a woman in the church called *Jezebel*, who is leading the church into *adultery*. The *adultery* mentioned in verse 22 probably means spiritual adultery.

Under the guise of promoting spirituality, the *Jezebel* at Thyatira is advocating carnality and compromise, while degrading holiness and doctrine. She has actually set herself up as a *prophetess, to teach and to seduce . . .* (2:20).

This is a church with a deceptive leader who tries to cause people to follow him rather than the Lord Jesus through the study of God's Word.

5. The Church at Sardis (3:1-6)

The city of Sardis was the capital of ancient Lydia and was about 30 miles southeast of Thyatira. In John's day it was known for being a wealthy, wicked city, existing on past political and economic fame. Apparently the church at Sardis had become like the city.

What does the Lord say about this church (3:4a)?

The problem with the Christians at Sardis is not false doctrine, like the believers at Thyatira, nor is it opposition and persecution like the church at Smyrna. Instead, the church at Sardis is living on its past reputation. The days when they did great things for Christ are long past.

6. The Church at Philadelphia (3:7-13)

This church is one of only two of the seven churches that received not a single word of condemnation; the other is Smyrna (2:8-11). The name *Philadelphia* means "brotherly love." It is chosen by our Lord because it has characteristics of certain churches and believers of every generation. Therefore, it has a very special message, not only to its original readers but also to churches and believers of all time.

It represents the faithful, evangelistic, missionary church or believer who endeavors to carry out the Great Commission. It is also a church with great opportunities to share the Gospel. How might Revelation 3:8 refer to this?

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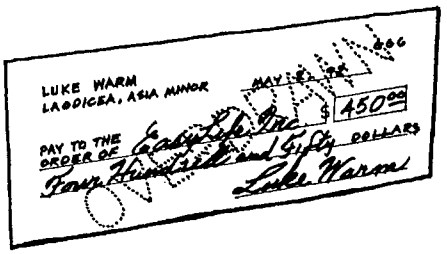
7. The Church at Laodicea (3:14-22)



There is not a word of commendation from the Lord to the church at Laodicea. This church is apparently the most disappointing of all to Him, for He is so disturbed He is nauseated by it (3:16).

What condemnation does our Lord have for this church (3:15-16)?

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This is apparently a church with great material means, and yet it does not accomplish what other churches do with much less.

We have now covered all seven churches mentioned in this book. Which one do you think is most similar to the Christian church today?

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Why do you think so? _____

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Even more important, which one of the seven churches is most like you?

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Journey Of A Lifetime

LESSON 48 . . . THE BOOK OF REVELATION (PART 3)

III. "THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER" (chps. 4-22)

NOTES

In chapter four of *Revelation* we come to the third and final section of the book, as it is outlined in Revelation 1:19:

1. "things which thou hast seen"
2. "things which are"
3. "things which shall be hereafter"

We will study this third section of the book by chapters.

CHAPTER 4:

At the beginning of chapter four we enter the final consummation of the age, which is the great period of God's judgment upon the earth after His people are taken away.

Until chapter 4 the churches occupied the central place in God's view of history. But at the end of chapter 3, the churches disappear and are not mentioned again until chapter 19 when we see the church at the end of the age. There she is referred to as the bride of Christ and is taking part in the *marriage supper of the Lamb* in heaven (19:7-10).

HOW DID THE CHURCH GET TO HEAVEN?

Study Revelation 4:1, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, and Matthew 24:36-41, and write your explanation below:

The rest of the book of Revelation is a description of that awful and terrible period when God, after removing His people, pours out judgment upon the

earth. This time of judgment, which begins in chapter 4, is called the Tribulation.

What is the meaning of the jasper and sardine stones in Revelation 4:2-3a (see Exodus 28:15-21)?

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Everywhere the high priest went in the Holy Place he wore these stones, which represented all God's children, over his heart to stop God's judgment. This was their security.

Who performs the ministry of intercession for us today (1 Timothy 2:5)?

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Look at Revelation 4:3b. What does the rainbow represent? To find out, we must observe the "law of first mention," which is an important rule to use in interpreting the Scriptures. This law says "the first time a word, incident, or phrase occurs in the Bible gives the key to its meaning elsewhere in Scripture."

Let's use this law to find the meaning of the rainbow in Revelation 4:3b. The first time we find a reference to a rainbow is in Genesis 9:12-16. It was God's *covenant* with the earth, as well as with Noah. A storm and a sun are required to make a rainbow, but the rainbow always appears after the storm is over. This is precisely what has happened in Revelation 4—earth's redemption has come, so the church's storm is over, and the new day dawns. That is why John sees a rainbow about the throne.

Verses 4-11 symbolize God's power, glory, and faithfulness. The 24 elders represent all of God's faithful people, and the four beasts probably symbolize all of creation. All join together to honor and praise God (4:8 & 11).

CHAPTER 5:

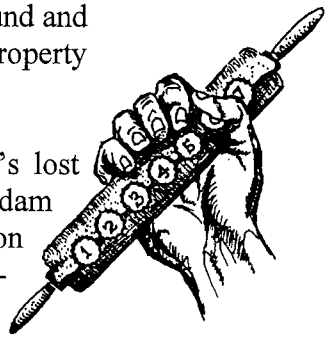
Chapter 5 is a very important chapter because the major part of the book of Revelation deals with the seven-sealed book and its contents. Remember, the word *book* in the Bible does not refer to a book as we have today. Rather, a *book* is a scroll.

To understand the *book*, or scroll, in chapter 5 we must go back to Leviticus 25. In these regulations were laws dealing with the redemption of three things: a wife, a slave, and a possession or land. The redemption of land is what sheds light on Revelation 5.

When the ancient Hebrews lost possession of land because of poverty or hardship, a scroll was written. This scroll explained the reason for the forfeiture and was then sealed.

Sealing a scroll was a common practice in biblical times. The wills of emperors and Caesars were sometimes sealed with seven seals. The scroll would later be read a section at a time as the seals were broken. The sealing of the scroll was done for the privacy of the family and to keep unauthorized persons from tampering with or reading its contents.

The Hebrews wrote the conditions for redeeming, or buying back, the lost land on the outside of the scroll. When a qualified redeemer was found and the requirements of the redemption were met, the one to whom the property had been given returned it to the original owner or his descendants.



The seven-sealed scroll in heaven, therefore, must represent man's lost inheritance. It is the title deed to the earth, which was given to Adam but lost to Satan because of sin. Satan is now the prince of the air on earth. However, the earth legitimately belongs to Adam's descendants, so a qualified redeemer must be found if it is to be reclaimed for the human race.

Who was found to be worthy to open the seven-sealed book (5:5-6:1)?

CHAPTER 6:

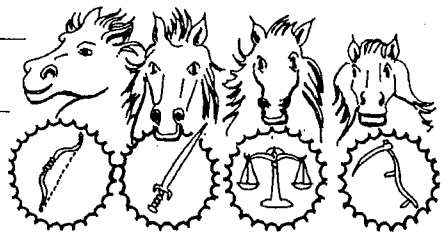
In chapters 6-19 we find a picture of the worst tribulation the world will ever experience (Mt 24:21-28). In chapter 6, as the kinsman redeemer opens the first seal of the scroll, judgment upon earth begins. Fourteen of the 22 chapters of *Revelation* describe this terrible period.

1) First Seal—A White Horse (6:1-2). The first seal is broken, and a *white horse* comes forth. The *white horse* is symbolic of **peace** and **victory**. The rider upon the horse is the Antichrist, who has a *bow* but no arrows, meaning the world will know peace through diplomacy. He will convince the world the golden age of peace has come. Then, he will lead an unsuspecting world into war.

2) Second Seal—A Red Horse (6:3-4). The red horse represents **war**. The period of peace will be shattered, and the entire world will enter the greatest war of all time.

3) Third Seal—A Black Horse (6:5-6). The black horse symbolizes **famine**, which always follows war. The rider has a balance in his hand, which indicates everything must be weighed because of severe shortages.

4) Fourth Seal—A Pale Horse (6:7-8). What is the name of the rider on the *pale horse*, and what was he given power to do (6:8)?



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The riders on these four horses in Revelation 6:1-8 are called the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

5) Fifth Seal—(6:9-11). At the breaking of this seal, the scene suddenly shifts from earth to heaven. This is the most difficult of the seals to explain. The saints' language here is strange to us as Christians, but we must remember they will pray according to the ruling principle of that period.

6) Sixth Seal—(6:12-17). This seal deals with the physical phenomena on the earth and in the heavens. If you closely read the 24th chapter of *Matthew*, you will find a broad outline of the book of Revelation. This sixth seal is described in Matthew 24:29.

When these terrible catastrophes take place, what do the people of all classes do (6:15-17)?

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Chapter 6 clearly reveals God's destructive power against those who reject Him and His plan of salvation. It ends with the question, *Who shall be able to stand?*, which is answered in the next chapter.

Journey Of A Lifetime

LESSON 49 . . . THE BOOK OF REVELATION (PART 4)

CHAPTER 7:

NOTES

Chapter 7 is a parenthesis, or interlude, between the sixth and seventh seals. The opening of the seventh seal in chapter 8 will begin judgments so terrible and destructive that . . . *except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved* . . . (Mt 24:22).

The judgments of the Tribulation will be suspended for a brief period until these faithful ones have been sealed. Then, they will do the work of evangelists for the rest of the Tribulation.

WHO ARE THESE 144,000 IN *REVELATION*?

Due to widespread confusion in regard to these 144,000, we must take time to examine them closely. Numerous religious groups have tried throughout the years to maintain they are the 144,000, but none have been able to establish their identity with one of the 12 tribes.

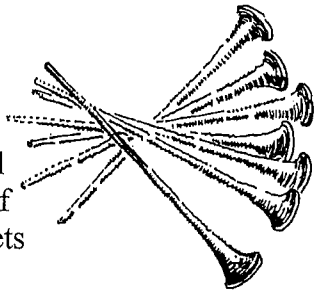
However, if we just let the Bible speak for itself, it can clearly be seen these 144,000 are **Jews** (7:4). It is part of God's plan that for the time being, Israel has lost its identity. There is not a Jew in the world today who knows from which tribe he is descended. If the genealogical records, which are temporarily lost, were discovered, identification of the twelve tribes would be simple. The Jewish records, which were maintained during Old Testament times until the destruction of Israel in 70 A. D., were the most intricate and accurate of any people of the world. Although no Jew today knows which tribe he is from, God knows. God has a perfect record of the history of the world and of the 12 tribes of Israel.

THE LORD IS NOT FINISHED WITH THE JEWS!

We must never forget the prophets were all Jews, our Lord was a Jew, and all the apostles were Jews. Furthermore, thousands of Orthodox Jews still today earnestly anticipate the coming of the Messiah. After the church is gone from the earth, God will take the veil from many of their eyes, and they will embrace Jesus Christ as the true Messiah.

What did Paul write in Romans 11:25-26 concerning the spiritual restoration of Israel?

CHAPTER 8:



7) Seventh Seal—The opening of the seventh seal, recorded in 8:1, ushers in the seven trumpet judgments that introduce the final drama. The seven trumpets do not follow the seals; they are part of the seventh seal. This seventh seal has 14 parts—the Seven Trumpets and the Seven Vials of Wrath.

The seven-sealed scroll is now completely opened in the hand of the One upon the throne.

Trumpet 1 . . .

What happens when the first angel sounds his trumpet (8:7)?

Trumpet 2 . . .

When the second trumpet sounds (8:8-9) one-third of the sea will become as blood, killing one-third of the sea life and destroying one-third of the ships of the ocean. Some scholars believe the giant burning mountain in verse 8 is a giant meteorite or possibly a well-placed nuclear missile aimed at a fleet of enemy ships.

Trumpet 3 . . .

What happens when the third trumpet sounds (8:10)?

Wormwood is a translation of the Greek word APSINTHOS (ap-sin-thos), from which we get the English word "absinth," a strong, bitter herb. What happens when the *Wormwood* falls into the rivers (8:11)?

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Trumpet 4 . . .

In contrast to the first three trumpet judgments that affected the land, sea, and rivers, the fourth trumpet affects the sky.

What happens when the fourth angel sounds his trumpet (8:12)?

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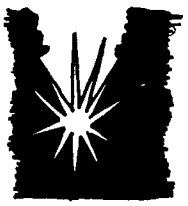
CHAPTER 9:

Trumpet 5 . . .

In 9:1, the fifth trumpet sounds, and John sees a star that has fallen from Heaven. John did not see the star fall. The verse should read . . . *and I saw a star having fallen . . . .*



We are told this *fallen star* is given the key to the *bottomless pit,* or *abyss* in Greek. *Abyss* is looked upon as the darkness in which are imprisoned those fallen spirits who are reserved unto the day of judgment (Jude 6). In Luke 8:31, when Jesus met the Gadarene demoniac, the demons in the man cried out to Jesus *that he would not command them to go out into the deep.* The word *deep* in the Greek is *abyss* or darkness. This *abyss* is apparently a prison from which there is no release, except by divine permission.

What were these creatures from *abyss* to do (9:4)?

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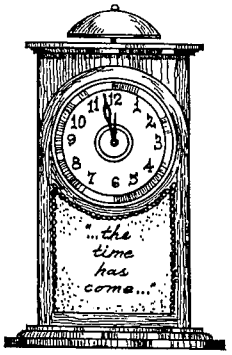
In 9:11, they are declared to have a king over them, and he is called *Abaddon* and *Apollyon. Abaddon* is Hebrew for *destruction,* and *Apollyon* is Greek for *destroyer.*

Trumpet 6 . . .



At the sound of the sixth trumpet (9:13), judgment continues. At the opening of the fourth seal in Revelation 6:8, one-fourth of the world's population was destroyed. Now, at the sounding of the sixth trumpet, one-third of the remaining three-fourths are killed. This adds up to about one-half of the population of the world being destroyed.

What does *for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year . . .* seem to indicate (9:15)?

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Many Bible students believe 9:17-19 is John's description of a scene of modern warfare. He could be making the closest comparison he could think of to describe modern weapons. Nevertheless, it is an awesome picture of a powerful military force capable of destroying all that oppose it. Horses, lions, and serpents all speak of deadly warfare.

What happens as a result of these judgments (9:20-21)?

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The hearts of the people will be exactly like the heart of Pharaoh when God sent the ten plagues on Egypt—they will **not** repent. This is like the world we live in today—a world that resists the one true God to the bitter end and prefers to make its own gods so it can set up its own standards of behavior.

Journey Of A Lifetime

LESSON 50 . . . THE BOOK OF REVELATION (PART 5)

CHAPTER 10:

NOTES

This chapter describes a break, or interlude, between the sixth and seventh trumpets, just as there was between the sixth and seventh seals.

God delays but doesn't cancel His final judgment. In verse 1 *a mighty angel* brings John a message for the world (verse 11). John derives no joy from this message he must make known to those who reject God.

CHAPTER 11:

In this chapter we can see without question God is dealing with the Jews. The Jewish temple has been rebuilt, and the Jewish nation is worshipping there again.

What will the Antichrist do to this temple (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Daniel 9:27, and Matthew 24:15)?

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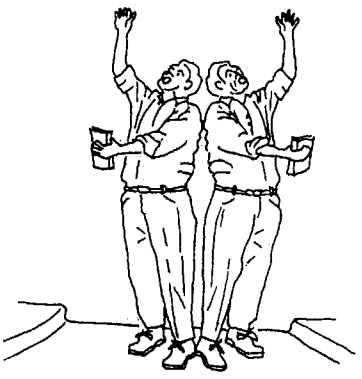


How long will *the holy city* be trodden *under foot* by Gentiles (Revelation 11:2)?

_____

In 11:3, we meet the *two witnesses*. The two miracles they perform in 11:5-6 remind us of what two Old Testament characters (Exodus 7:19-12:36, 2 Kings 1:10-14, and 1 Kings 17:1)?

_____ and _____

What happens to the two witnesses (Revelation 11:7-10)?

_____

_____

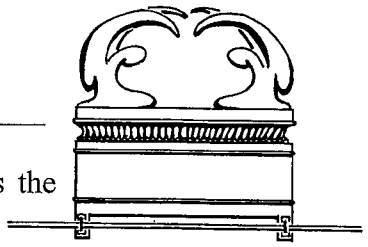
_____

The ability to see this happening all over the world could indicate the use of a television satellite.

Trumpet 7...

In 11:15, *the seventh angel* sounds, and we see a brief preview of what is to happen during the remainder of the Tribulation.

What does John see in *the temple of God* in 11:19?



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The *ark* is a symbol of God's presence with Israel and indicates the time of Jacob's trouble is almost over.

CHAPTER 12:

Chapter 12 is a description of war, first on earth (vs. 1-6), then in heaven (vs. 7-12), and then on earth again (vs. 13-17).

There are two main characters in this chapter: the woman and the dragon. The woman represents God's chosen people, from whom the Messiah (vs. 5) and through Him the Church (vs. 17) were born.

Who is the dragon, and what does he try to do (12:3-4, 9)? _____

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CHAPTER 13:

In this chapter there are two beasts. The first beast comes from the sea and is a composite of the four beasts that represent successive world empires mentioned in Daniel 7. However, it is clear this world power goes far beyond any historical world power that has yet existed (vs. 6-8).

But there is another beast described in Revelation 13:11-18. The purpose of this second beast is to promote the worship of the first. At no time does he promote himself (13:12).

What does this second beast try to do in 13:13-15? _____

_____

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The second beast will force people to receive *a mark.* The word *mark* means "to impress or to stamp." Without this *mark* they will be unable to buy or sell (13:16-17).

What is the *mark*, according to 13:18?_____

_____

_____

No one knows for sure the exact meaning of that number, but it will play a principal part in identifying the Antichrist.

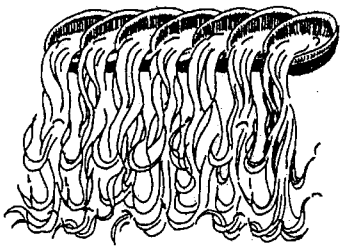
CHAPTER 14:

This chapter is really a miniature glimpse of the rest of the book. It is like a table of contents for the remainder of *Revelation.* It describes very briefly the establishment of the kingdom (vs. 1-5), the vials of *wrath* (vs. 6-13), and the Battle of Armageddon (vs. 14-20), all of which we will study in detail in later chapters.

CHAPTER 15:

This chapter is a prelude to the *seven last plagues*, which are not described until chapter 16.

The people mentioned in this chapter are apparently those who suffered persecution and death from the beast in chapter 13. *They sing the song of Moses*, praising God for His mighty acts (Rev. 15:3 and Ex 15:1).



In Revelation 15:5-8, John sees *seven angels* coming *out of the temple* in heaven. They are commissioned to pour out *the seven golden vials,* or bowls, *full of the wrath of God.*

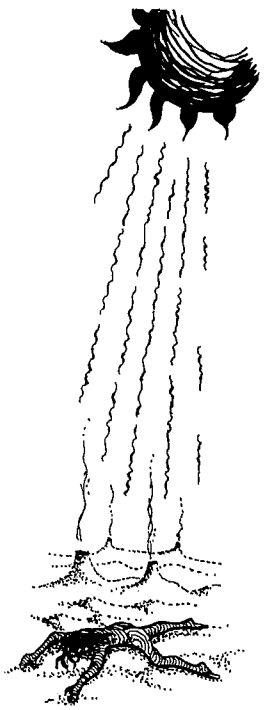
CHAPTER 16:

1) The First Vial—Sores (16:2). Some believe the method of marking people with the mark of the beast will cause the mark to become infected and incurable.

2) The Second Vial—The sea turns to blood (16:3). Already one-third of the sea life has been killed, but now everything in the sea dies.

3) The Third Vial—Rivers turn to blood (16:4-7). This judgment, which is very similar to the third trumpet yet much more severe, will now affect all the rivers, and most of the world's water supply will be lost. That means loss of life on an unimaginable scale. Those who have rejected Jesus' blood will now be forced to drink water that is like blood.

4) The Fourth Vial—The sun (16:8-9). In this judgment the sun intensifies, so men are scorched with the heat. Some believe nuclear weapons will destroy the ozone layer that protects the earth from the harmful rays of the sun.



What do the people do as a result of this vial (16:9)?_____

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5) The Fifth Vial—Darkness (16:10-11). This vial is directed to the throne of the Antichrist. This *darkness* will have grave psychological effects on people. What will they do (16:10-11)?

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6) The Sixth Vial—The Euphrates dries up (16:12-16). The Euphrates River will no doubt be the eastern boundary of Israel at this time. In a covenant between God and Abraham concerning the Promised Land, what does God promise in Genesis 15:18?

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Some have argued persuasively that Israel at one time possessed all the land promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18, as a study of 1 Kings 4:20-21 and 2 Chronicles 9:26 is supposed to prove. There is a resemblance between the borders of Solomon's kingdom and the land promised by God to Abraham. However, even at the height of the kingdoms of David and Solomon, only a part of the land was actually possessed, and tribute was received from the rest. Therefore, at **no** time in history have the Israelites actually possessed **all** their inheritance.

Look at the map of the Middle East today on page 216, and answer the following questions:

Today, if Israel were to possess the inheritance promised in Genesis 15:18, what countries or portions of countries would they have to conquer?

1. _____ 4. _____

2. _____ 5. _____

3. _____ 6. _____

What modern-day "super power" would this edge them closer to on the northeast?

_____

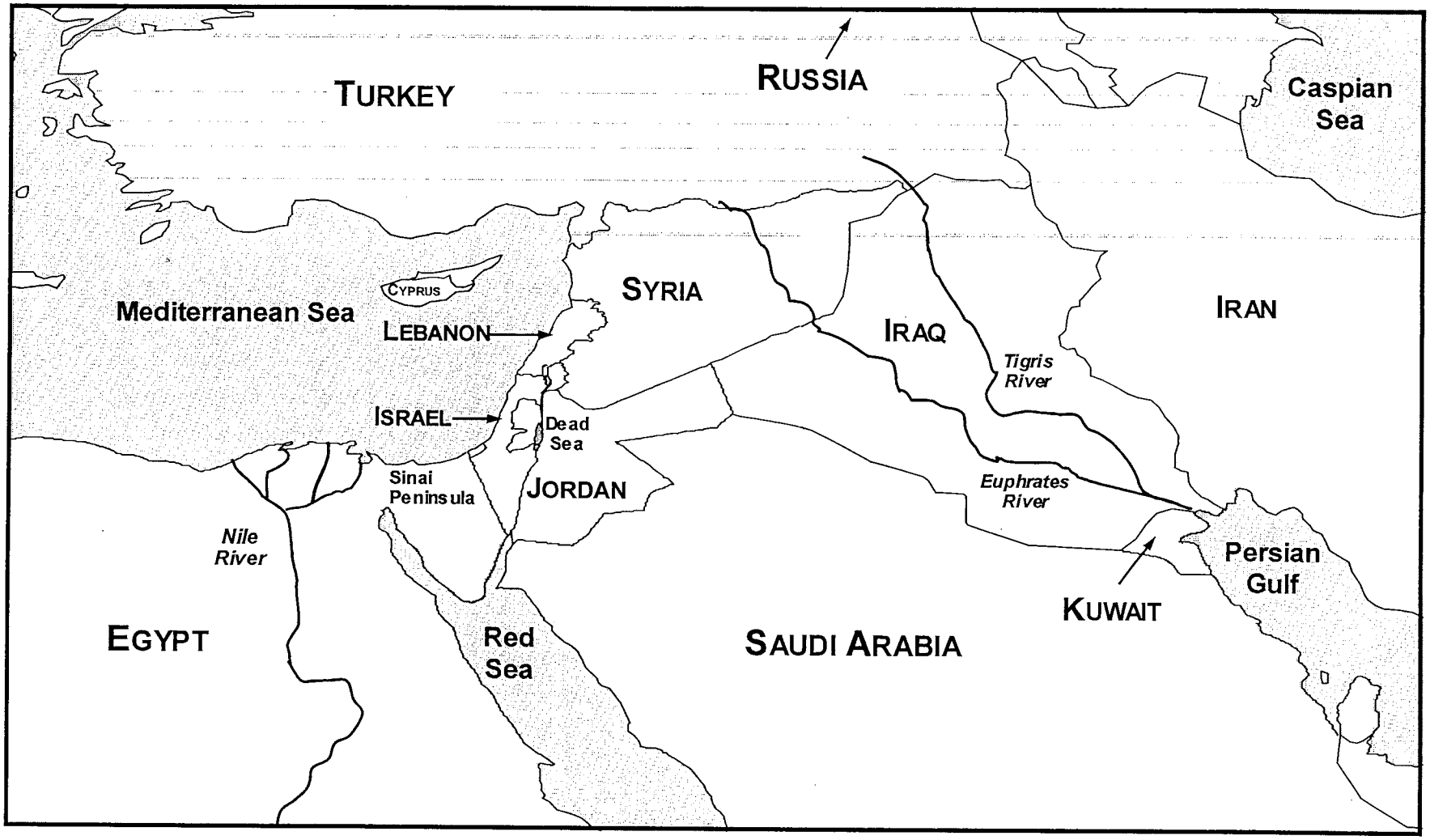
It may seem an impossibility for Israel to conquer all this any time soon, but one must remember in the seven-day war of June 1967 the Israelis more than doubled their territorial borders.

Verses 13-14 of chapter 16 describe the *three unclean spirits*, probably Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, who deceive the nations into a last desperate rebellion against God. The nations gather at a place called *Armageddon*. The word *Armageddon* means "mountain of Megiddo."

7) The Seventh Vial—Earthquakes and hail (16:17-21). This will be the world's most devastating earthquake. It appears there will be a complete renovation of the earth caused by this quake. To add to this catastrophe, hailstones weighing a talent (approximately 75 lbs.) will fall from the heavens.

In spite of the severity of these judgments, some people will survive and will continue to blaspheme God (16:21).

THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY



Journey Of A Lifetime

LESSON 51 . . . THE BOOK OF REVELATION (PART 6)

CHAPTER 17:

NOTES

Chapters 17 and 18 of *Revelation* are an interlude describing the doom of Babylon. The literal Babylon was so often denounced by the Old Testament prophets it became synonymous with human pride and corruption. For the apostle John and his readers, Babylon was the capital of the decadent Roman Empire, and his reference to it is clear in 17:9. However, it is also evident this chapter not only refers to the Roman Empire but also goes further to include the final world system that will be the final Babylon, which epitomizes the greed, dishonesty, and evil that rejects God.

According to 17:6, how does Babylon—this last evil system—treat Christians?

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This chapter also makes it clear this present and future evil system is doomed. According to 17:12-14, what is the fate of Babylon?

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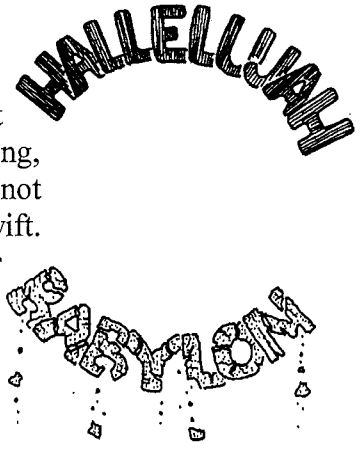
CHAPTER 18:



Chapter 18 describes the fate of the last evil system in more detail. It appears from 18:4 the rewards of this system are tremendously enticing, so much even true believers are warned to *come out of her*. Though not specifically described, we see in 18:8 & 10 God's judgment will be swift. Some believe it may be as instantaneous as the explosion of a nuclear bomb (18:17-19), while others think it may be economic destruction like the stock market crash of 1929. Whatever it is, it will be sudden and unexpected.

CHAPTER 19:

Chapters 4-18 have almost exclusively dealt with the judgments on earth, so we have temporarily lost sight of the Church that was raptured in 4:1. While the Lord is judging the nations on earth, there will be two exciting events taking place in heaven.

First, there will be the *judgment seat of Christ*, before which all Christians must stand (1 Cor. 3:11-16 and 2 Cor. 5:10). This will be a time of rebuke, confession, and cleansing that should have been made while on earth. Some Christians will be rewarded, and some will suffer loss, according to 1 Corinthians 3:11-16. After this judgment, the Bride (the Church) will be ready, as we read in Revelation 19:7, *His wife hath made herself ready.*

This brings us to the *marriage supper of the Lamb*, the second event in heaven during the judgments on earth (Rev. 19:9). Concerning this *supper*, what did Jesus say at the Last Supper in Matthew 26:29?

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Keep in mind we have studied in earlier lessons how the armies of the world have gathered in the Holy Land to oppose the Beast and his armies, but they apparently forget their animosity toward each other and unite to oppose Christ and His holy army.

The Beast (the Antichrist), the False Prophet, the ten kings or rulers, and all who received the mark of the Beast are defeated in this battle. Then, what happens to the Beast, the False Prophet, and their followers (Revelation 19:20-21)?

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(Note: This is part of the Battle of Armageddon described in Revelation 16:16-21. Chapters 17 and 18 are an interlude, explaining Babylon and her sin.)

CHAPTER 20:

The Beast and the False Prophet have been defeated and have been cast into hell (chapter 19). Now, in 20:1-3, Satan is cast into the bottomless pit, but this is not his final judgment (20:3b).

Verses 4-6 of chapter 20 briefly describe the millennium. What does the word *millennium* mean, and from reading Revelation 20:4-6, what will it be like? (Also refer to Isaiah 2:4, 11:7-9, 29:18, and 35:1-2.)

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At the end of the millennium (20:7), Satan will be released from a thousand years of torment in the bottomless pit, but he will not have changed at all. He will immediately go about his old schemes of deceiving people.

The final battle is described in 20:8-10. The Gog and Magog mentioned here personify the cosmic forces of evil. They come from the *four quarters of the earth* and are led by Satan himself. God then demonstrates His power over them in verse nine by devouring them with fire. Reference to Gog and Magog is also found in Ezekiel 38.

After his followers are destroyed, what happens to the devil (20:10)?

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Now, we come to the most awesome passage in the Bible—Revelation 20:11-15. Who are these people who appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (20:5-6 and 20:13)?

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(Note: The word translated *hell* in 20:13 is *hades*, which is the place where lost people have gone through the centuries to await judgment.)

Hades gives up its souls, the graves give up their bodies, and they come together in this last resurrection. Finally, they stand before God to receive their eternal destiny. The record books are opened. Every thought, word, and deed are brought forth as evidence upon which God will pronounce His verdict concerning the degree of their eternal punishment (20:12).

Read Matthew 11:21-24 and Luke 12:47-48, and explain what you think Jesus meant about the judgment, as recorded in these two passages:

_____

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There **will** be degrees of punishment in hell. God will take into account the opportunities each person had to accept Christ, the amount of knowledge each had, and even the environment in which each lived, as well as the severity and frequency of each person's sin.

CHAPTER 21:

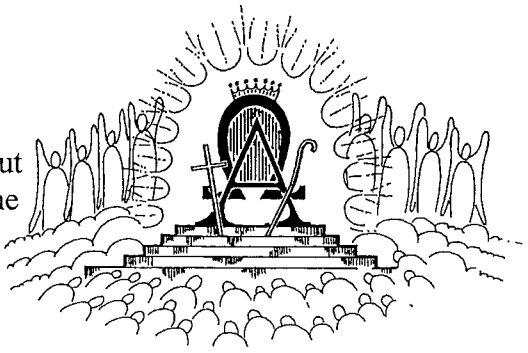
The *new heaven* and *earth* (21:1) are made possible by the passing away of the old ones. What happens to the old heaven and earth (2 Peter 3:7 & 10)?

_____

In 21:9-21, we find a fairly detailed description of the New Jerusalem. There are 12 gates, 12 angels, 12 foundations, the names of the 12 apostles, and 12 pearls. There is much debate as to whether these details and the dimensions in verses 15-17 are to be taken literally. However, we must remember it has not entered into man's mind the things God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9). Therefore, it was necessary for John to try to describe a city that words cannot adequately describe. He had to use terms that mortals could understand.

The most important description of the New Jerusalem is found in Revelation 21:4, where we are told . . . *there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain* . . . . If it is that kind of place, it doesn't matter where it is or of what material it is made. It will be the most wonderful place the hand of God can create.

CHAPTER 22:



The first five verses of chapter 22 give us even more details about life within the New Jerusalem. Then, beginning in verse 7, as the book comes to a close, three times the Lord Jesus says, *I come quickly*. The words *I come quickly* do not mean Jesus intended to come in John's day, but when these things begin to happen, there will be no delay.

What final warning is given in 22:18-19?_____

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