

the book of

REVELATION

TEACHER NOTES FOR CLASS



Detail of Landscape with Saint John on Patmos, Nicolas Poussin - 1640

CLASS MATERIAL AND NOTES BY STAN COX

Notes:

- These teacher notes can be used with the Powerpoint presentation. The slide numbers in the notes correspond to the slides in the presentation.
- The curriculum, notes, Powerpoint file, and 81 audio and video files of the material presented are available at the following URL: <https://soundteaching.org/online-bible-study/revelation>
- (The material was presented at the West Side church of Christ, in Fort Worth, TX from 8/20 to 3/22)
- Material is free for use and distribution. Copywrite of the material is preserved. Please do not make changes to the material without asking permission from the author, Stan Cox. (I don't want to be charged with teaching something I didn't teach. Contact information can be found below).
- Primary sources used in the preparation of this material include: Homer Hailey's commentary on Revelation, More Than Conquerors by Hendriksen, and Robert Harkrider's Truth Commentary on Revelation.
- Special acknowledgement is made to Harkrider's work. The presentation borrows heavily from his commentary, as the author is greatly in agreement with Harkrider's position. This material is intended to be notes in teaching a class, and is shared with no intent to represent originality in thought.

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THE HERMENEUTIC OF THE APOCALYPSE

Slide 1

- **People generally fall within one of two camps regarding the book of Revelation**
 - Even if they are completely ignorant of the scriptures, they are enthralled with the book because of the speculative and false claims made about it.
 - False teachers can make absurd claims that can't be sustained by context and get away with it because of the ignorance of their listeners.
 - Their interpretations of the book violate what is taught in the rest of scripture, but it catches the imagination of their students, because of physical conflict, fantastical conspiracies, and claims of upcoming global conflict.
 - Others (too often faithful Christians) are intimidated by the apocalyptic language and are convinced that study of the book is futile and a waste of time. (Can't be understood).
- **The fact! The book is a glorious capstone to God's inspired word!**
 - It is well worth our study and time
 - It has a grand, easily understood theme (which we will speak of in a moment).
 - It serves to encourage Christians with thrilling language and images.
 - While written to encourage the disciples at the end of the first century, it is as relevant to us today as it was to them.

Slide 2

- **What is the theme of the book?**
 - Consider the following passages, and then we will answer that question. (1:7-8; 2:7,17,26-28; 3:5,12,21; 6:15-17; 7:16-17; 11:16-18; 14:13; 17:14; 19:1,6,15-16; 20:10; 21:6-8; 22:5,16)
- **Question: What is the Theme?**
 - The victory of God and Christ over Satan
 - The ultimate victory of God's people, and defeat of evil.

Slide 3

Introduction:

- We begin our study with an important warning against dogmatism. [READ QUOTE ON SLIDE] While there are many obvious erroneous interpretations of the book of Revelation, (which we will expose), the symbols of the Apocalypse can be difficult to understand. The date of writing itself is under dispute. An adaptation of a particular date of writing will influence the resulting interpretation of the book.
- **The theme of the book (as we noted from the readings in the previous slide) is beyond dispute.**
 - "The grand theme of Revelation is that of war and conflict between good and evil resulting in victory for the righteous and defeat for the wicked" (Hailey, 51).
 - "Always keep I mind that the theme of Revelation is the victory of Christ and His church over Satan and his allies" (Robert Harkrider, *The Book of Revelation, Truth Commentaries*, xii).
 - "The theme of this book is: **the victory of Christ and of His church over the Dragon (satan) and his helpers...**" "Throughout the prophecies of this wonderful book the Christ is ever pictured as the Victor, the Conqueror, 1:18; 2:8; 5:9ff; 6:2; 11:15; 12:9ff; 14:1,14; 15:2ff; 19:16; 20:4; 22:3. He conquers death, Hades, the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the men who worship the beast, etc. **He** is victorious; hence so are **we**! Even when we seem to be hopelessly defeated. Do you see that band of believers?" (More than Conquerors, W. Hendriksen, 12-13).
- Keeping the theme always at the front of our mind will help us to be both consistent in our interpretations of the signs of the book, and will also serve as a great encouragement to us as we struggle against our "*adversary the devil*" (cf. 1 Peter 5:8).

- Note: You will see that though the imagery is of war and conflict, those who take the side of Satan do so because of his insidious influence. It comes through temptation and sin. They become loyal to his cause voluntarily, and as such make war against God and His people.
- We resist Satan by resisting temptation (James 4:7-10)
- We turn the world to our cause through the preaching of the gospel (Ephesians 4:17-21)

Slide 4

The Author of the Book of Revelation (Revelation 1:1-2)

- **The writer calls himself by the name John on four occasions** (1:1,4,9; 22:8)
- **There are some who question whether John the Apostle is the writer... Why?**
 - He does not identify himself explicitly as the author, and there are other John's who have been considered
 - (John Mark) (John, that by tradition was as an elder in Ephesus) (Another writer seeking authority by using John's name).
 - Dionysius of Alexandria (circa 250 AD) expressed a belief that another John wrote the letter. He did not cite any testimony or knowledge that we would not have access to, however.
 - He believed if it was the apostle he would have identified himself as such.
 - He believed that since he identified himself by name, it wasn't the same John because John the apostle didn't identify himself by name in his gospel or epistles.
 - The grammar used in the gospel was different from the Apocalypse (Many say the same thing today).
 - Others claim the difference in grammar indicates that Revelation was written before the gospel, but by the same John.
 - The idea of different grammar is not compelling. For example, my writing style changes depending upon purpose!
 - It must be recognized that the apocalyptic language of Revelation can explain any differences in grammar or writing style, and that such arguments do not compare to the overwhelming evidence that the apostle was the author of the book. (They are very subjective, and can lead to very different conclusions, as seen above).
- **It is widely recognized that John the apostle is the author of the book. No legitimate evidence exists in denial of this view.**
 - Justin Martyr, Eusebius, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Victorinus all assign the book of Revelation to Paul's pen.
 - **Justin Martyr** (A.D. 110-165) in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (LXXXI) says, "There was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied by a revelation," and then refers to the thousand years, the resurrection and the judgment of Revelation 20. (Hailey, 21).
 - **Irenaeus** (AD 120-202) who had heard Polycarp, a disciple of John the apostle, wrote in his *Against Heresies* (IV. XX. 11), "John, also the Lord's disciple...says in the Apocalypse," and then quotes profusely from that book.... Irenaeus says later: "In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse" revealed certain things, which the writer proceeds to discuss (V. xxi.l). (Hailey, 21)
 - **Clement of Alexandria** (A.D. 153-217) in his treatise, *Who is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved?* (XLII), writes of "the apostle John" who "returned to Ephesus from the isle of Patmos" after "the tyrant's death." The tyrant is unnamed. (Hailey, 22).
 - Regarding the language of the book, consider some words that John the apostle uses in his writings that are almost unique to him. (Do a concordance search for details).
 - The Word (logos) identifying the Christ (only in John, 1 John & Revelation)
 - To overcome or conquer (nicao) John (1), 1 John (7), Revelation (17)
 - True (alethinos) (the rest of N.T. only 5 times: John (8), 1 John (4), Revelation (10))
 - Lamb (arnion) (John 21:15, of his disciples); Revelation (29 times)

Slide 5

- **The Date of Writing**
- **In AD 64, the emperor Nero was the first of the Caesar's to persecute God's people simply because they wore the name Christian**
 - Most scholars believe that Nero's persecution was not ideologically driven, but rather to shift blame from himself for setting Rome on fire. Christians were not popular.
 - The earliest persecution of the church was brought by the Jews, not the Romans (Acts 8:1-4; 12:1-19; 13:50-52; 14:2)
 - At this point in history, there is no evidence that the Romans were particularly intolerant of religious beliefs. However, any perceived criminal activity or sedition against the state was punished by Rome (cf. Acts 16:21-22; 1 Peter 2:12; 4:14-16)
 - Nero, however, did set a precedent for Roman emperors who would follow.
- **Those who believe the book of Revelation was written in response to Nero's persecution of Christians ascribe an early date of writing to the book. (AD 54-69), prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. (Commonly referred to as the "early date").**
 - Colors their interpretation of the book
 - They consider the fall of Jerusalem to be the thrust of the book of Revelation
 - "*Babylon has fallen*" would be reference to the fall of Jerusalem, rather than Rome.
 - **Note:** The change in interpretation does not change the general theme and message of the book, only some of the particulars in the details.
- **(Robert Harkrider):** "Advocates of the early date who see the book written near the end of Nero's reign in AD 68 almost always interpret the fall of Babylon in chapters 17 and 19 as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in AD 70, fulfilling Jesus' words recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17 and 21. Proponents know that the early date must be established or else their exegesis instantly fails. However, several problems soon arise. They must neutralize, or else explain away, external evidence found in statements from the earliest of church writers and historians; they must negate sound exegesis of internal evidence; and they must discount the view of the majority of Bible scholars who have agreed through the centuries that the time of the writing of Revelation was about AD 95-96." (page xxxiii)
- **The visions of Revelation seem to indicate a more systemic persecution of God's people, visited upon them not because of any perceived wrongdoing, but simply because of their faith.**
 - By the time of the emperor Domitian, the worship of Caesar as divine was uniformly enforced in the empire.
 - Those who refused to address Domitian as "Master" or "God" were charged as atheists. Since Christians would not do so, they (like Daniel and his companions), were persecuted for their faith.
 - Persecution was less because Christians worshiped God, and more because they refused to worship the emperor. Most historians accept that persecution under Domitian was widespread.
- **Those who believe the book of Revelation was written during the time of Domitian's persecution of Christians (or shortly after) ascribe a date of (AD 95-96) for the writing of the book. (Commonly referred to as the "late date").**
 - Other Roman emperors who persecuted Christians included Trajan (98-117), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), Commodus (180-192), Septimus Severus (193-211), Caracalla (211-217), Maximus I (235-238), Decius (240-251), Valerian (253-260), Diocletian & Maximian (284-305), Galerius (305-311), Maximus II (305-313)
 - During the reign of Constantine (306-337, who co-reigned with Maximus II for the first 7 years of his reign), the emperor ordered religious toleration in the empire.
- **Reasons for accepting the late date for the writing of the book of Revelation**
 - If the reference to the great harlot Babylon can be ascribed as symbolic of Rome, the prophecy of Revelation can be correlated to the prophet Daniel (2:31-45; 7:13-28).

- The late date better explains the breadth of persecution that is predicted and was occurring for God's people (2:10; 2:13; 3:10).
- John was exiled to Patmos (1:9). Domitian throughout this reign exiled political and religious enemies. (There is no evidence that Nero ever did). The accepted tradition, corroborated by early writers, is that Domitian exiled John to Patmos, and that John remained on the island until Domitian's death. While the early date necessitates the major persecution to be because of the Jews, the language of Revelation indicates a more systemic, state persecution (13:7; 13:15).
- The deterioration of the church in Ephesus from AD 62 (the date of Paul's writing of his epistle, Ephesians 1:15-16) to a congregation that had lost its first love (2:4) is improbable in less than a decade.
- The sect of the Nicolaitans did not seem to be active until very late in the first century.
- Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 61. But, by the time of John's writing Revelation 3:17, the city had become rich. Unlikely in only 7 or 8 years.
- Most external evidence (early church fathers) attribute the writing to the later date.
- **Irenaeus** (AD 120-202): Wrote of John and his visions, "For that was seen not very long since, but almost in our own day, toward the end of Domitian's reign" (Against Heresies, V. 30. 3)
- **Victorinus** (died AD 303): Commenting on Revelation 10:11 wrote, "When John said these things he was in the isle of Patmos, condemned to the labor of the mines by Caesar Domitian. There, therefore, he saw the Apocalypse" (Commentary on the Apocalypse, A-N-F, VII. P. 353).
 - **Note:** Harkrider, in his commentary, argues convincingly that an analysis of Daniel's prophecies in Daniel (2, 7, 9) better fit with a later date view of Revelation (*xxxix – xliii*)
- **Note:** Some commentaries (notably, brethren such as Foy E. Wallace, Jr. and Authur Ogden, argue for an early date).

Slide 6

- **How to Interpret the book of Revelation**
- Apocalypse "*the Revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ*" (1:1). **Thayer** – laying bare... a disclosure of truth (concerning things before unknown).
 - Literature broadly termed as apocalyptic (for its use of signs and symbols to vividly unveil truth) include the Old Testament books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah.
 - The major characteristic that apocalyptic writings share is the use of symbols.
- **Harkrider on Apocalyptic writing:** "Adversity usually furnished the background out of which this type of writing grew. Persecution and days of difficulty often tempt one to doubt and compromise his faith. The purpose of these writings was to look beyond the present time to a dramatic intervention by God. They gave answers to such questions as, 'Is our faith worth enduring this suffering?' 'What does the future hold?' In glorious contrast to the near despair of its setting, the apocalyptic writers always set forth a future of deliverance and triumph. Thus this type of literature was intended to reveal a message that would bring hope and encouragement as God promised the overthrow of evil and a final victory for his righteous cause." (*lvii*)
- **A principle rule of interpretation is that a literal meaning should be ascribed to any text, unless the context requires a symbolic interpretation. In Revelation, the danger is to ascribe a literal meaning to what is obviously symbolic language and intent.**
 - When Premillennialists use the book of Revelation to give credence to the theory, they often arbitrarily ascribe literal meanings to the numbers and visions in the book. In this, they are both inconsistent, and guilty of *eisegesis* (reading into the text a meaning that corroborates their theory).
- **Harkrider's Three Rules for Studying Apocalyptic Literature** (*lix*)

- *Picture*: Read the context; close your eyes and visualize the scenery described. If you do not see the picture, you will never understand the point.
- *Principle*: After feeling the emotions depicted by the symbolic language, then analyze what point is intended.
- *Practice*: Upon determining the principle lesson intended, then make the application first of all to those who originally received it and then determine its abiding lesson throughout all ages.
- **Note**: This is one of the reasons the scene pages are presented as they are (Remind them of this)
- Recognize the danger of getting caught up in the trees (details), and missing the point (forest). While we can't be dogmatic in our understanding of every detail, we can discern the basic points being made in the book.

Slide 7

- **The Structure of the Book of Revelation** (Taken from Hendriksen's, *More than Conquerors*)
- **Note**: Our outline and worksheet divide the book up into the various scenes that constitutes the visions given to John on the Lord's day (cf. 1:10). Consider the following, adapted from W. Hendriksen's introductory material (22-30)
 - "The book consists of 7 sections." (W.H.) (1-3; 4-7; 8-11; 12-14; 15-16; 17-19; 20-22)
 - "These seven sections run parallel. Each of them spans the entire dispensation from the first to the second coming of Christ. This period is viewed now from one aspect; then from another." (W.H.)
 - Consider the references to judgment given either explicitly or implicitly in each section (1:7; 6:12-17; 11:15,18; 14:14; 16:20; 20:10-15)
 - Different sections ascribe an identical duration to this period. *"forty-two months"* (11:2); *"one thousand two hundred and sixty days"* (11:3; 12:6); *"a time and times and half a time"* [3½ years] (12:14)
 - So, the section on the trumpets (8-11) runs parallel with the battle between the Christ and the Dragon (12-14).
 - "the seven sections fall into two groups" (W.H.) (1-11; 12-22)
 - "In the first group, chapters 1-11, we see the struggle among men, that is, between believers and unbelievers. The world attacks the church. The church is avenged, protected, and victorious." (W.H.)
 - "In the second group of visions, chapters 12-22, we are shown that this struggle on earth has a deeper background. It is the outward manifestation of the devil's attack upon the Man-Child. The dragon attacks the Christ. Repulsed, he directs all his fury against the church. As his helpers he employs the two beasts and the great harlot. All these enemies of the church are defeated in the end." (W.H.)
 - "Each section gives us a description of the entire Gospel Age, from the first to the second coming of Christ, and is rooted in Israel's history under the old dispensation to which there are frequent references." (W.H.)
- In effect, the book of Revelation recaps in symbolic language and vivid pictures the exact prose of the rest of scripture that predicts the kingdom, establishes its presence, and prophesies its deliverance to God in the end (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:25-28).
- "One more remark and this chapter is closed. We have concentrated our attention on the division of the book. Yet, it is not the division but the unity of the book, the very close relationship between all the parts, that should be emphasized. This is often forgotten." (W.H.)

Slide 8

- **How Men Interpret the Book of Revelation** (Taken from Hailey's Commentary, 48-51)
- **The Futurist Position** – "holds that the book reveals the conditions and events which will immediately precede the second coming of Jesus." (H.H.)

- **Though perhaps not the most popular, it is certainly the way of looking at Revelation that captures the fancy of the public. It is exciting, because the typical view is that our generation is the one that will be living when Christ comes again!**
- This is the view held by millennialists. That chapters 4-19 refer to events that have yet to happen.
 - Though there have for centuries been those who hold to such speculative theories, they have been popularized by Jehovah's Witnesses (Charles Taze Russell), then men such as C.I. Schofield & Herbert Armstrong.
 - This is why in just about every protestant denomination there is at least small groups who hold to the doctrine
 - In the Lord's church, a battle was fought in the 1940's when R.H. Boll (a Tennessee preacher, began advocating the theory). It was debated (Foy E. Wallace, Jr. had a lead role), and fortunately defeated by truth. Unfortunately, there are some Christians that have been touched by the error in our time as well.
- Typical claims of the premillennialists
 - Jesus was thwarted in His effort to establish a physical kingdom, on David's throne, when the Jews rejected Him. (Mark 9:1) **{would therefore be a broken promise}**
 - That only the righteous will see Jesus when He comes (a secret rapture). **(1:7 refutes this).**
 - That Jesus will set up a physical kingdom on earth, reigning for 1,000 years **[a misinterpretation of Revelation 20]**, and that the destruction of the wicked will not take place until after that date. Well after His second coming.
 - Note: Christ's throne can't be on earth, and Him be both Priest and King! (Hebrews 8:4)
 - Also, the wicked will be destroyed AT His coming! (2 Thess. 1:8-10)
- This view does not take into consideration the fact that the book was intended to give comfort the Christians in the first century, *things which must shortly take place*" (1:1).
- "This position is exceedingly speculative and gives rise to numerous false interpretations of Scripture." (H.H.)
- **The Continuous Historical Position** – "holds that the book is a forecast of the church's history and fortunes from John's day to the end of time, and thus some parts of the book have been fulfilled and some parts have not." (H.H.)
 - Those who hold this view will interpret the symbols to include the rise of the Catholic church, Islam, the Protestant Reformation, etc.
 - It holds the same disadvantages as the futurist position. No comfort for the first century saints, and extremely speculative interpretations of the symbols.
- **The Philosophy of History Position** – "advocates see in the book symbols representing forces at work rather than specific historical events and persons which these symbols signify." (H.H.)
 - "This view has more to recommend it than do the first two; however, it seems to overlook certain historical settings which gave birth to the book, and which it was intended to deal with. The view falls short in too many areas." (H.H.)
- **The Preterist Position** – "holds that the book was written for the people of John's day and was fulfilled in that general period." (H.H.)
 - Definition: Preterist – one who holds that all prophecies and references to the end times have already been fulfilled. (Realized Eschatology – AD 70 Doctrine)
 - Just like Premillennialists, many flavors and distinctions in the doctrines.
 - Most view the fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
 - Others hold that the entire fulfillment is seen in the conflict with the Roman Empire
 - Note: Regardless of how the text of Revelation may be viewed, the Preterist doctrine itself is false, and destructive to faith
 - It is also a cause of division among brethren today!

- **The Historical Background Position** – “advocates see in Revelation a book written for the people of that day, set in a definite historical background and fulfilled in the events of the first two or three centuries.” (H.H.)
 - Note: Harkrider holds to this view, though modified a bit in keeping with the caveats expressed by Homer Hailey below
 - Very similar to the Preterists, but hold that there are certain principles found in the conflicts that bring out very important principles and truths for all time.
- **Note:** Homer Hailey feels that all five positions are a bit too structured and limited. Consider his concluding words in that section:
- “The book has a concrete setting in a definite period of history and deals with very real problems faced by Christians of the period. Diverse figures symbolize powerful moral and spiritual forces involved in a violent clash in which the forces of God are ultimately triumphant. By their faith and steadfastness to Christ and to truth, the saints of that day found encouragement and gained the crown of victory. The particular instruments through which the satanic forces and powers of John’s day warred against the saints have long since fallen. But the message of that defeat continues to instruct and encourage God’s people today and will always sustain them when they face similar conflicts...”
- “...Some of the prophecies are yet to be fulfilled; examples of these are the passing of the present order, the resurrection, the judgment, and the final reward and punishment of the righteous and the wicked. Consequently, some futurist aspects of the book are to be recognized.” (H.H.)

Slide 9

Conclusion:

- The extensive nature of this first lesson is designed to give us a basis upon which we can correctly determine the truths to be found in the book
- While details may differ, and some details found in the symbols may be beyond our grasp, the intent will be to be consistent and careful in our teaching and learning about the book, and refrain from subjective speculations and hobbies.
- Please study this material carefully, and keep both the structure and the theme in mind throughout our study.

Slide 10

A Consistent Interpretation

- (From Robert Harkrider’s commentary, *lxxii-lxxiii*)
- Remember that Revelation was written by John primarily for the encouragement and edification of the Christians of his own time.
- Remember that Revelation is written largely in symbolic language, thus it cannot be taken literally throughout. One can ill afford to be dogmatic in interpreting symbols, but he must strive to be certain his interpretation agrees with the context of the book as well as with the rest of the Bible.
- Remember that Revelation uses Old Testament terminology with New Testament meaning. John has used much of the terminology of Ezekiel and Daniel, but has adapted them to his own message. An understanding of the Old Testament prophets and their use of symbols would be helpful because over 400 allusions to the Old Testament are made in Revelation.
- For the true meaning of Revelation, one must seek to grasp the visions or series of visions as a whole without pressing the details of each symbol.
- Understand difficult passages in light of clearer passages. Make all interpretations consistent with the teaching of the whole Bible.
- Note that pages 10-15 of the curriculum contain an extensive outline of Revelation, divided up into 24 scenes which will be used as the structure for our study going forward...

Slide 11

Introduction (1:1-3)

- **(22:10) [End of book mirrors the beginning]**, *“And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.”*
- Revelation of Jesus Christ – **Things which must shortly take place** (1:1)
 - Given by God, (indicating inspiration – both in writing, and in the visions themselves. They are God’s work)
 - Revelation (apokalupsis) – reveal, uncover, disclose
 - Signified by an angel – the origin of the visions/signs.
- Revealed to John, and a blessing to those who read and keep it (1:2-3) (Psalm 119:62-64)
- **John’s Greeting to the Seven Churches of Asia** (1:4-8)

Slide 12

7 Churches of Asia

- Asia a Roman Province (Western part of Modern Day Turkey)
 - Look in your Bible at the back, if you have a map.
 - These 7 churches (and the letters written by the Lord) occupy our study of Chapters 2 and 3.
 - Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea
 - Note: At least 3 other churches in Asia noted in the New Testament. Troas (Acts 20:5); Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13); Colossae (Colossians 1:2)
 - What is significance of number 7?
 - It signifies perfectness, completeness, wholeness
 - Depicts the Lord’s church as a whole!

Slide 13

- From the eternal God, seven Spirits before His throne and Jesus Christ (1:4-5)
 - Him which is, and which was, and which is to come. (The eternally existing Heavenly Father)
 - 7 Spirits (number used to describe the perfection of the Holy Spirit). (Also found in 3:1; 4:5; 5:6)
 - From Jesus Christ (many different descriptions and names in this book about Jesus)
 - Faithful witness (cf. John 8:14)
 - Firstborn from the dead
 - Ruler over the kings of the earth
 - Note: This list includes all three persons in God.
- Description of Jesus Christ/His second coming (1:5-7)
 - Who loved us, and washed us from our sins (Savior)
 - Made us kings and priests to God (note: already the theme of victory is being shown here)
 - He is the one who has dominion forever and glory (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:16-17)
 - He will come again! (in Judgment. All will see him).
 - The idea of mourning comes to those who are ungodly (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10)
- Christ’s self-declaration (Alpha and Omega/Almighty) (1:8)
 - Note: Perhaps more accurate to say that this is God the Father speaking (the last phrase, “Almighty” is used in Revelation exclusively to Him. cf. 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7,14; 19:15; 21:22).
 - My first thought was that since the Son is the subject of verse 7, it is the Son speaking in verse 8. Maybe not.
 - First and last letters of Greek alphabet (God is from A to Z)!
 - Signals fullness and completeness. Sovereignty.
 - He is eternal (is, was, is to come). (cf. John 1:1-ff)
 - He is Almighty (omnipotent, see above).

- Now that we are finished with the introductory material, we get to the first scene.
 - Unlike others, it is lengthy, and so we will break it up into two parts. This may cause problems with the sheet, so either write small, or perhaps make a copy of the sheet so that more room can be placed for information
 - Part 1: (1:9-20); Part 2 (Chapters 2 and 3)

SCENE 1 – THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA (1:1 – 3:22)

Slide 14

Note on Your Scene Page the first section

Picture the Scene (give your impressions and emotions)

- The loud voice and the trumpet sounding from Behind. (Would startle - abrupt, significant). Imagine Jesus sneaking up on you! (1 Thessalonians 5:2-4)
 - Also, Loud Voice and Trumpet an appropriate introduction of Royalty!
- What does the description of the Christ elicit from you emotionally?
 - Me? The use of the color white (denotes purity) elicits a feeling of awe and reverence
 - The feeling I get of this figure is size (voice of many waters), and fierceness (2 edged sword). Brings the “fear of God” into my mind. (Matthew 10:28)
 - John’s response is understandable, *“I fell at His feet as dead”* (17)
 - But, Jesus comforts Him. Interesting (note: Matthew 10:28 again), the things that make Jesus comforting for those who are His should bring terror to those who are not!
- Emotions quickly run from surprise, awe, fear, dread to relief, joy and confidence as Jesus is identified.

Slide 15

Principle: Analyze the point/points that are being made in this part of the vision.

- **Jesus describes Himself as the Alpha and the Omega**
 - Just as in 1:8, it indicates the eternal nature of Jesus
- **The vivid picture of Jesus described evidences his Purity and His authority. He commands John to write what he sees.**
- **Jesus is shown to be caring, with a message to be shared with His church. Notice the time frame of the visions, (cf. 1:1). *“Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this”* (1:19)**

Slide 16

Practice: What is the application to Christians of that day and to us.

- **This one we have established clearly in our introductory comments**
 - Our Lord had something important to say to the Christians in the first century
 - As we will be seeing in our study of the book, this authoritative “revelation” of Jesus Christ is one that will bring comfort and confidence to His disciples.
- **In the same way, the message for them can benefit us today. Jesus has authority. He is all-powerful. He can comfort us and protect us.**

Slide 17

The Characters and Symbols that are found in (1:9-20)

- **Jesus Christ (10-16)**
 - Jesus is the primary character (the Protagonist) in the visions revealed to John
 - There will be many different descriptions given of Him
 - This description and His words bring the idea of self-existence, purity, fierceness and strength.
- **7 Golden Lampstands (12)**
 - The number 7 denotes perfection or completeness

- Gold is a precious metal, indicating value
- A lampstand gives forth light
 - Zechariah uses the imagery (Zechariah 4:1-13)
 - Here the image refers to the 7 churches (cf. 1:20) (Philippians 2:14-16)
- **7 Stars (1 star for each of the “churches”)**
 - Identified as the angels to the churches (1:20)
 - Angel – (angelos) – a messenger (context determines whether divine or human).
 - The word derives from a root that means “to lead”
 - In this context, I believe it would have reference to the leaders of the congregations. Those who were most responsible for condition of each congregation
 - Elders, deacons, teachers, preachers, influential members.
- **Sharp 2-edged sword (out of Jesus mouth) (1:16)**
 - Coming out of His mouth... His words (Hebrews 4:12-13)
 - God’s word saves (Rom. 1:16), but it is also the standard of judgment! (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)
- **Keys of Hades and Death (1:18)**
 - Keys indicate authority. The one who holds the keys has the authority!
 - Example: Jailor has the keys to lock and unlock a prison door
 - Jesus, through His resurrection, has gained the victory of death and it is he who determines who will live eternally, and who will die eternally! (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)
- **Angels of the churches (1:20) (See 7 stars above).**

Slide 18

Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation (Letters to the 7 churches of Asia)

- Note the similarities in the 7 letters
- Note the differences in the 7 letters
- Note recurring themes
 - Different designations describing Jesus
 - Evaluation of the churches including what is right, and what is wrong
 - The references to judgment
 - The final exhortation to hear

(Revelation 2 & 3)

- How would you feel if you received a letter from Jesus Christ? **Joy?** (Psalm 119:12-16)
- What if that letter had criticism? **Godly Sorrow?** (2 Corinthians 7:8-9)
- What if the letter had praise? **Relief?** (2 Corinthians 10:17-18)
- What if the letter gave you instructions regarding needed changes? **Resolve?** (Psalm 119:9-10)
- **Joy, Sorrow, Relief, Resolve.**
- **Question: Any other feelings or perceptions that you want to introduce to our study?**

Slide 19

Principle: Analyze the Purpose of this particular vision

- **Each of these 7 churches received a direct communication from the Lord.**
 - These letters were significant, authoritative, serious.
 - The point is straightforward: Jesus expected them to listen and act upon what they heard. (Matthew 7:24-29; James 1:22-25)
- **Consider the ramifications of having a lampstand removed from its place, and the importance of repentance.**
 - God rejecting a church because of its spiritual condition. Because its light was no longer productive.
- Repent, or else! (Luke 13:3)

- Consider the validation of being praised by God. We do not seek approval of men, but of God.

Slide 20

Practice – Application to them and us

- **In this vision we are going to do this separately (Not all the churches as one group)**
 - Jesus intended that they address what was lacking in their congregation (each congregation was unique)
 - He intended that they heed his words (repent when necessary)
 - He wanted them to avoid the removal of their candlestick
- **For us it is the same**
 - However, we are unique as well. What is right, and what is wrong about West Side
 - Are our deficiencies the same? Or different?
 - We need to repent in order to avoid having our candlestick removed from His presence

Slide 21

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapters 2 and 3

- **Jesus Christ (Consider His self-designations, and their significance)**
- **Ephesus (2:1)**
 - We have discussed this. Christ is among the churches (the lampstands). The seven stars being the angels of the various churches. (1:20 identifies the lampstands and stars).
 - He knows the good and the bad. The trials and the suffering.
 - He is not far away and unconcerned. He is near and accessible. (Hebrews 4:14-16)
- **Smyrna (2:8) – “the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life”**
 - He is eternal in nature (always has been always will be (cf. John 2:1-2)
 - Death could not contain Him (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
- **Pergamos (2:12) - “He who has the sharp two-edged sword”**
 - The word of God described in this way (Hebrews 4:12)
 - Converts the poor in spirit (humble). Judges those who reject it (John 12:48)
- **Thyatira (2:18) – “the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass”**
 - The phrase “Son of God” is a direct reference to the Deity of Jesus
 - His eyes (*like a flame of fire*) may reference the fact that we can’t hide our sins from Him (Heb. 4:13)
 - “Feet like fine brass” indicates standing firm, strength, durability (Hebrews 13:8)
- **Sardis (3:1) – “He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars”**
 - Jesus Christ possesses the fullness of the Holy Spirit (John 3:34-35)
 - His possession of the seven stars (angels) probably is an indication of His authority over the church (Ephesians 1:22-23)
- **Philadelphia (3:7) – “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”**
 - He is holy and true (attributes that we have long established (cf. 1 Peter 1:15-16; John 14:6)
 - Key of David, Opening and shutting is again, a reference to Jesus’ sovereignty and authority. (Remember, it is He alone who is able to loose the seals on the book)
- **Laodicea (3:14) – “the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God”**
 - Or, the “so-be-it” of God. An affirmation of the truth (John 7:28-29)
 - As He is from God, his testimony as a witness is always true!
 - Beginning of Creation is not a statement of being the first created, rather of being the source of creation. He is preeminent! (John 1:1-3)
- **False Apostles (2:2) – Apostles are those who share and disseminate truth. False apostles would be those falsely making the claim to be disseminating truth.**

- The church in Ephesus was defending the truth! (1 John 4:1)
- **Nicolaitans (2:6,15) (Ephesus/Pergamos)** – Little is known of this group other than that the Lord hated their doctrine
 - This might be another argument as to the late date of writing, if this religious error was just gaining a foothold in the church (Pergamos to be exact)
 - Some believe this was Gnosticism in an incipient form (What the flesh does is immaterial and did not affect the spirit).
 - If so, this would explain how some in Pergamos (a compromising church) might would rationalize their actions and still claim to be spiritual.
- **Tree of Life (2:7)** – A reference to the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24). Here would symbolize eternal life to those who ate of it.
- **Paradise of God (2:7)** – the phrase paradise indicates “a garden of pleasure.”
 - Jesus used the word to refer to a part of the Hadean world (cf. Luke 23:43)
 - It seems here to refer to heaven itself. (cf. John 14:1-6) Mansions...
- **Synagogue of Satan (2:9; 3:9) (Smyrna/Philadephia)** – Jews who rejected the Son of God rejected God. Their worship would be vain, and their claims to be followers of God would be blasphemous.
 - They would be religious (go to the synagogue to worship), but would be serving Satan rather than God. (Romans 2:28-29)
- **The Devil (2:10) Smyrna**
 - **Satan** (*satanas*): *Adversary* (one who opposes another in purpose or act), cf. Job 1:6
 - **Devil** (*diabolos*): *Accuser, slanderer*, John 8:44. Deceives the world and accuses our brethren, (12:9-10). He maligns, misrepresents, lies.
- **10 Days tribulation (2:10) Smyrna**
 - 10 Days indicates a full or complete measure for those in Smyrna
 - Either in time or in limit, their tribulation would continue for a while, but would end.
 - Faithfulness even to death (cf. 2:10) would bring them a crown of life.
- **Crown of Life (2:10) Smyrna**
 - The eternal reward of the faithful (1 Corinthians 9:25)
- **Second Death (2:11) Smyrna**
 - The first death has reference to physical death (when the spirit separates from the body, Hebrews 9:27)
 - The second death has reference to eternal separation from God (Revelation 21:8)
- **Satan’s Throne (2:13) Pergamos**
 - This would be figurative, indicating Satan’s control over the populace of Pergamos
 - Imagine as a Christian living in such a place, like Sodom and Gomorrah before it.
- **Antipas (2:13) Pergamos**
 - There is no other reference to Antipas. We know only he was killed for his faith in Christ (17:6)
- **Doctrine of Balaam (2:14) Pergamos**
 - A reference to idolatry. Balaam taught Balak (king of Moab) to entice Israel to eat a sacrifice in recognition of a pagan idol (cf. Numbers 25:1,6; 31:16).
 - Note: The eating of meats sacrificed to idols, and the practice of fornication are trappings of idolatry.
- **Hidden Manna (2:17) Pergamos**
 - References God’s supplying the spiritual needs of the church there (as God supplied Israel with manna)
 - Remember Jesus’ words, being the true bread from heaven (cf. John 6:58)
- **White Stone (2:17) Pergamos**
 - Indicating purity, the stone would signify their acceptance from God
 - (Note: ancient courts would sometimes give either a black or white stone to the accused as a verdict)

Slide 22

- **Jezebel (2:20) Thyatira**
 - The woman was reminiscent of King Ahab's idolatrous wife (1 Kings 21:25)
 - An influential woman who was leading some in Thyatira into sexual immorality and idolatrous practices
- **Satan (2:24) Thyatira**
 - See Devil from previous slide
 - **Satan** (*satanas*): *Adversary* (one who opposes another in purpose or act), cf. Job 1:6
- **Rod of iron (2:27) Thyatira**
 - (cf. Psalm 2:9) Christ's rule is from God, as such it is absolute
 - The "rod of iron" indicates complete domination and strength. Destruction of those who oppose His power.
- **Morning star (2:28) Thyatira**
 - Most probably a reference to the planet Venus, during certain seasons the planet would be bright just before dawn, and was considered the harbinger of the coming dawn.
 - Overcoming persecution would bring with it a new dawn, and the reception of Christ's eternal blessings.
- **White garments (3:5, 18) Sardis/Laodicea**
 - White indicates purity. It is appropriate that white would be a symbol of the dress of the saints
 - Interestingly, a Roman custom was for the nobles to march through the streets of Rome in white garments after a military victory.
 - Walking with Christ in white is an indication of honor in victory!
 - Note: In Sardis, some had them... In Laodicea, the Lord encouraged them to purchase the garments.
- **Book of life (3:5) Sardis**
 - The divine register that has the names of those who belong to God
 - Found in numerous Biblical references (cf. Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28; Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3) as well as several references in Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27)
- **The Father's angels (3:5) Sardis**
 - Jesus confession of the faithful would be before the heavenly host. The context would indicate actual angels. (cf. Luke 2:13-14)
- **Open door (3:8) Philadelphia**
 - An open door indicates an opportunity, providentially given
 - Philadelphia had the opportunity (and responsibility) to share the gospel
 - (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 16:8-9; Acts 14:27; Colossians 4:3)
- **Hour of trial (3:10) Philadelphia**
 - "Hour" is used to describe a season or a period of trial.
- **Pillar in the temple (3:12) Philadelphia**
 - In this context, as one who overcomes, the Pillar would be a reference to a permanent and important position (1 Peter 2:5)
- **New Jerusalem (3:12) Philadelphia**
 - Jerusalem here on earth symbolized to Israel the dwelling place of God (in the Temple)
 - The imagery of a New Jerusalem would reference the habitation of God's citizens, the church. (Hebrews 12:22-24)
- **New name (3:12, see also 2:17) Philadelphia**
 - The name or complete manifestation of Christ Himself (too glorious to perceive in the flesh). (cf. Colossians 3:4)
- **Gold refined (3:18) Laodicea**
 - To buy this gold would be to do whatever is necessary to obtain it (salvation). Refined gold is an indication of the removal of any impurities

- **“My” throne / “My Father” ‘s throne (21) Laodicea**
 - Those who serve Christ on earth will be privileged to rule with Him in eternity
 - This would not necessarily be an indication of two thrones, but of the two reigning, and Christians there with them in eternity (Ephesians 1:20; Revelation 7:15-17; 2 Timothy 2:11-12)

Slide 23

Having discussed all of the characters and symbols, as well as the intent of this first scene in our visions. What I want to do now is simply give an overview of the admonitions and approval shown to each of the churches.

Let’s begin with Ephesus. (2:1-7) [Loveless church]

- **First, note that at the time Paul wrote his letter to the church there, the congregation was well thought of by Paul** (Ephesians 1:15-16)
 - There is no criticism of the church there by the apostle Paul in his epistle (AD 62)
 - This may be an indication that the book of Revelation was written several years later, as the church is criticized for having left its first love.
- **What was good in Ephesus**
 - Labor, patience / Perseverance in labor (2,3) (1 Corinthians 15:58)
 - Testing of false apostles (2) (Jude 3)
 - Hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans (6) (Proverbs 6:16-19)
- **What was bad in Ephesus**
 - Left first love (4)
 - **Note:** There must be a differentiation between a loss of love, and apathy or a lack of perseverance.
 - “Their warmth of love had given place to a lifeless orthodoxy. Compare Paul’s view of faith so called without love” (Jamieson – Fausset-Brown) (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
- **Warnings given**
 - Repent and do the first works (5)
 - Those works that characterized their initial love and devotion
 - Note: Gk. word also can have reference to that which is first in IMPORTANCE (Matthew 22:35-40)
 - Let him hear (7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22)
 - We will only cover this once, as it is found in every letter given
 - This phrase is typical of Jesus (Matthew 11:15; Mark 4:23, 7:16)
 - (Albert Barnes) “It is a form of expression designed to arrest the attention, and to denote that what was said was of special importance.”

Slide 24

Smyrna (2:8-11) [Persecuted church]

- **(Note: From early in the first century, Smyrna was loyal to Rome. As such they were rewarded as the site for building a temple in honor of Tiberius - Caesar of Rome).**
 - Not surprising that it was a center of paganism, and emperor worship.
 - Also shows how the church in Smyrna would be subjected to persecution
- **What was good in Smyrna**
 - Works (9)
 - Letter to Smyrna one of only two (Philadelphia) without criticism
 - Despite enduring persecution, they were commended for their fruitfulness and diligence to the Lord (John 15:8)
 - **Note:** Aware of suffering [tribulation, poverty] (9)
 - Despite their being physically impoverished, they were rich toward the Lord
 - Unlike the church in Laodicea (3:18)

- The opposite of the foolish Rich man (Luke 12:21)
- **What was bad in Smyrna**
 - Nothing! They understood loyalty (Deuteronomy 6:4)
- **Exhortations given**
 - Do not fear tribulation/persecution (10) (Matthew 10:28)
 - Be faithful unto death to receive reward (10)
 - Let him hear (11)

Slide 25

Pergamos (2:12-17) [Compromising Church]

- **Of all 7 of the Asian cities, Pergamos was the most corrupt religiously. Thoroughly pagan. Contained temples to Zeus, Athene and Dionysus. (Devoted to sensuous worship). From the time of Augustus (29 BC), loyalty to the Caesar was required as this was the official capitol of the region.**
- **Good**
 - Held fast to Jesus' name (13)
 - This, despite the fact that they dwelt where "*Satan's throne is*"
 - It is interesting that Jesus did not tell the Christians to leave this wicked city, but to stay there and fight!
 - **MAJOR POINT:** We can either be influenced by our surroundings, or stand as a light to the world, as a positive and uplifting influence among the lost
 - Remember the confession of Jesus! (Luke 12:8-9)
 - Did not deny the faith despite persecution (13)
 - This was persecution unto death in the case of Antipas
 - And yet, they were willing to stand up and be counted.
- **Bad**
 - Some hold the doctrine of Balaam (14)
 - While they were willing to die for their faith, doctrinal purity was not important to them (as it was to Ephesus).
 - Consider those today critical of the Lord's church. Claim: Major in doctrine, but aren't loving and "spirit filled."
 - In truth, it is not one or the other (Consider Ephesus/Pergamos), but both that are necessary!
 - It is not surprising that idolatry would have an effect upon the church in Pergamos (it did in Israel, as an example).
 - Consider Balaam's influence, as recorded in Numbers 25:1-3
 - Some hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (15)
 - It doesn't matter the doctrine under consideration, souls are endangered, and God hates that which is false!
 - Perhaps that was what the Nicolaitans believed. A little compromise or a few concessions to fit in with society wouldn't matter to God?
 - Think about what the Roman Pontiff has just stated... Homosexual marriage is acceptable. (Compromise with the age). (Galatians 1:9)
- **Warnings Given**
 - Repent (16) **REPENT OR ELSE!** (The "or else" should be taken seriously) (cf. Luke 13:3)
 - Let him hear (17)

Slide 26

Thyatira (2:18-29) [Corrupt church]

- **Thyatira was a city economically dominated by local trade guilds.**

- The guilds sponsored idolatrous feasts and other immoral practices
- The pressure to participate in order to prosper was great
- Such economic pressure then could have contributed to their compromises. And us today as well (for example, social drinking at office parties. Being a team player, etc.)
- I remember Darryl Treat telling me that “being a team player” in the military made it hard for him to stand for his convictions spiritually.
- **Good**
 - Love, service, faith, patience (19)
 - Love is the essence of faithfulness. (And no doubt led to the other positive attributes). (Matthew 22:37-40)
 - Service would have reference to our actions toward others (cf. Good Samaritan, James 1:27)
 - Faith is what saves us. Faith is also what sustains us in our salvation (leads to obedience)
 - Patience – perseverance... describes the constancy of devotion in the face of trials.
 - Works, last more than first (19)
 - Progress is important! (If you aren’t going forward, you are going backward). (Hebrews 5:12, 2:1)
- **Bad**
 - Allow Jezebel to teach and seduce (20-23)
 - The teaching would involve Christians into participation with idol worship (Perhaps in reference to the trade guilds mentioned).
 - The word seduce – (Greek - planaō), **Thayer Definition:** to cause to stray, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way
 - Specifically, sexual immorality & idol sacrifices
 - Shouldn’t be too surprising that if Israel could be corrupted by idolatry, Christians could be as well.
 - **Note:** Allowing someone to teach error and practice sin is endorsement (cf. 2 John 9-11; 1 Corinthians 5:6-7,11)
- **Warnings**
 - Hold fast “till I come” (25)
 - Two possibilities: 1) Final judgment; 2) Judgment of Jezebel and her followers (cf. 21-23)
 - Jezebel’s judgment would be a message to all the churches (cf. 23). Harkrider believes this is the proper reference.
- Let him hear (29)

Slide 27

Sardis (3:1-6) [Dead Church]

- Also a trading center (convergence of 5 important trade roads)
- The Greeks viewed it as of great importance
- It was believed to be a rich and decadent city.
- No indication that the church was suffering in any way from outside persecution (at this point).
- **Good (Note, cover bad and warnings first)**
 - (For only a few): A few had not defiled their garments, and thus were worthy (4)
 - Important to note, Judgement is individual in nature, not by congregation
 - These individuals were righteous, though the church as a whole was not
 - Your reward or condemnation will be determined by your own faithfulness to God (Matthew 25:44-46)
- **Bad**
 - You are dead (1)
 - **Note:** Their reputation was they were alive.
 - Reputation often disguises one’s true spiritual condition (what others say rather than reality)

- Numbers, money, influence, acceptance in city, eloquent preacher. None of these have a bearing on actual faithfulness.
- Works not perfect (2)
 - **Robert Harkrider:** Two kinds of peaceful churches can exist: 1) Repose after it has conquered many trials, or 2) A peace born of lethargy and brought about by carelessness and overconfidence. Sardis was of the latter, somewhat like a well organized, peaceful cemetery where only death reigns. The Lord urged the church at Sardis to fortify the lingering bits of truth, faith and love that might have survived neglect and inactivity.
- **Warnings**
 - Be watchful, and strengthen what remains (2)
 - See Robert Harkrider quote above:
 - Similar to Hebrews 5 & 6. An admonition to stop the bleeding, and get back to what you are supposed to be! (1 Corinthians 15:58)
 - Hold fast and repent (3) (2 Timothy 1:13-14; Acts 8:22)
- **Let him hear (6)**

Slide 28

Philadelphia (3:7-13) [Faithful Church]

- Was known as a missionary city in the sense that it was founded by the Greeks to introduce the Greek culture and language to the area. A major road (Roman) was ran by. Destroyed in 17AD by an earthquake, and rebuilt with the help of Tiberius Caesar.
- **Good (Note: “I know your works” not met with trepidation by this faithful group.)**
 - You have a little strength (8)
 - This phrase should not indicate weakness on their part.
 - However, it may indicate a lack of resources or numbers
 - Note: Size and wealth do NOT indicate ability to do the Lord’s work (Mark 12:41-44)
 - The Lord can use whatever we have for His purposes (Note below what they had accomplished).
 - Have kept Christ’s word (8)
 - Obedience to Christ costs us nothing, and yet requires everything we have to offer (John 14:15)
 - Have not denied Christ’s name (8)
 - Confession is necessary to become a child of God (cf. Romans 10:9-10)
 - Continuing to confess Jesus is necessary throughout life. (Matthew 10:32-33)
 - Kept His command to persevere (10)
 - This came with the promise of God’s protection
 - Did not mean that God would keep them from the trial itself. Rather that God would supply protection and strength to overcome.
 - It would impact the entire world. Those faithful to Christ would have Him to lean upon!
- **Bad**
 - Nothing
- **Exhortations given**
 - Hold fast what you have (11)
 - Knowing that Christ would help them should give them confidence and steadfastness in the midst of their trials. (Philippians 4:13)
 - Overcoming will bring victory (12) (Romans 8:37)
 - Let him hear (13)

Slide 29

Laodicea (3:14-22) [Lukewarm Church]

- In Roman times, due to prominent trade routes that converged there, Laodicea was the wealthiest of all the cities in the region of Phrygia. In AD 60, the city was destroyed by an earthquake, and was rebuilt without the help of Rome. It may be that such an attitude of independence infected the church there as well.
- **Good**
 - Nothing
- **Bad**
 - You are lukewarm (16)
 - Laodicea was afflicted with lukewarm water, brought from hot springs several miles to the south. (Hebrews 6:4-6)
 - To be anything less than burning with zeal is unpalatable to God (Romans 1:14-15)
 - Wretched, miserable, poor, blind & naked (17)
 - “You say”, sad words as it indicates self-delusion. Lack of perception of their true condition.
 - Laodicea was the banking center of Asia Minor
 - The clothing center was world famous. (Famous for fine black wool)
 - Famous Medical school there (Phrygian powder, used as remedy for eye problems).
 - Christians make a mistake when they trust in material prosperity. Only spiritual riches matter! (Luke 8:14; Matthew 6:33)
 - Amounts to nakedness & blindness (18)
- **Warnings Given**
 - Buy gold and white garments (18)
 - True riches are found only in Christ! (Titus 2:11-14)
 - Anoint eyes with salve (18)
 - Be zealous and repent (19) (Proverbs 9:8)
 - Let him hear (22)

SCENE 2 – THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD (4:1 – 5:22)

Slide 30

PICTURE:

- **Note:** In scene 1, we looked at what I wrote down as a way of illustrating how you are to do the work of filling out the scene pages. Then, I asked for any other input. From now on, I would like for you to begin the discussion, then we will finish with my perceptions of the scene.
- **Question: What is your emotional response to the second scene in Revelation 4 & 5. What perceptions do you have of the scene?**

My Introductory Thoughts:

- **(Harkrider)** – “Chapters 4 and 5 present the sovereignty of God who is on His throne and whose righteous rule is vindicated by the work of Christ. Though it may sometimes appear that the wicked rule, all things are actually controlled by God.”
- Imagine how impressed you would be to be able to walk into the Oval office in Washington, or Buckingham Palace in London, etc.
- Here, John is shown the throne room scene of God
- **He witnessed:**
 - Majesty, glory, royalty, divinity, Preeminence (God on His Throne, and the Lamb at His right hand) (1 Chronicles 29:11)
 - Authority & worship (God, who was worthy)... 4 living creatures and 24 elders. (Psalm 150)
 - **Note:** These living creatures had a singular purpose in their creation, to worship the Almighty God... (cf. vs. 4-8), “*They do not rest day or night*” (to worship Him).
- **Reading the account elicits strong emotions!**

- Awe – John was in the presence of God
- Confidence – The omnipotence of God is on display (2 Chronicles 32:7-8)
 - The Lord sent an angel that cut down “every might man of valor, leader and captain the camp of the king of Assyria (vs. 21). 185,000 Assyrians.
 - That same God is on our side!
- Joy – (Psalm 122:1).
- Thrill – Is it not thrilling to be a witness of great and wondrous events? What event greater than the opening of God’s scroll!
- Note: John was sad when no worthy one was initially found who could open the scroll (Wouldn’t we be as well?)
- The relief and joy of John at the revelation of the lamb of God is obvious. Surely we can relate. (1 Corinthians 15:17-22)

Slide 31

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn? Why is it found here early in the book?

My Thoughts:

- **A discussion of the trials and tribulations, their cause (principalities and powers), and the consequence to God’s people will follow in the book.**
 - How important it is to begin by showing who is on our side, and of what They are capable!
- **Remember the theme of the book, established in our very first week of study:**
 - The victory of God and Christ over Satan
 - The ultimate victory of God’s people, and defeat of evil.
- **God wants confidence, peace and surety for His people!** (Romans 8:31-32, 37-38; Revelation 11:16-18)

Slide 32

- **Practice – Application to them and us**
- **Note: In every sense, the message of Revelation 4 & 5 is timeless. So, the applications that the 1st century Christians would make from the vision is exactly the same as we today!**
 - God is in control (1 Chronicles 29:12-13)
 - His will shall be accomplished on the earth (What is that will?) (The scroll in the vision) (Acts 17:26-27)
 - We are not the center of the universe, but God is the center of all things! (Theocentric view of reality).
 - Recently viewed Video: Hubble telescope, focused on one section of black space.
 - Picture developed. Two stars, and then hundreds and hundreds of galaxies, each with millions and millions of stars.
 - How much of the universe? Hold a dime at arm’s length, size of the eye on Truman’s face.
 - The earth is nowhere near the center of the universe, and is small and insignificant
 - Think of the sun the size of a soccer ball. The earth would be 26 yards away, the size of the head of a pen.
 - But, look at it from behind the curtain! (Concentric circles, ripples in the center of a pond)
 - (Revelation 4:2) God on throne (5:7) Jesus beside him
 - (4:4) 24 thrones with 24 elders
 - (4:6) Around the throne 4 living creatures
 - (5:11) Angels surrounding the throne (10,000 X 10,000, and thousands of thousands)
 - (5:13) The rest of creation

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapters 2 and 3
Identify and define

- **Open Door (4:1)**
 - Typically, the use of the word “door” symbolically indicates an opportunity (cf. 3:8) (1 Cor. 16:8-9)
 - Here it indicates access. John had the opportunity to enter the throne room of God!
- **Voice like a trumpet (4:1)**
 - The voice is not identified, but the sound of a trumpet is piercing and clear
 - The voice compelled John to come witness the scene
 - The image is found elsewhere in scripture (Exodus 19:16-19; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52)
- **Throne (4:2)**
 - The throne of God. (Mentioned 17 times in this scene/at least 40 times in the book)
 - Signifies the “infinite power, rule and dominion of God over His creation” (Harkrider)
 - A similar vision to Micaiah during Ahab’s reign (1 Kings 22:19)
- **God on Throne (4:2-3)**
 - Not an anthropomorphic representation of God
 - The two gemstones represent the Divine attributes of God as Spirit
 - Gemstones associated with radiance and value
 - **Jasper** – (Note: in 21:11 – “clear as crystal”) Such clarity would rightly emphasize the righteousness and holiness of God
 - **Sardius** – (**sardino**) a sardius, a precious stone of which there are two types, the former is called a carnelian (because flesh coloured) and the latter a sard (Thayer)
 - Most scholars say the sardius stone, however, references the “sard” which is a red/reddish brown stone. This would emphasize God’s justice (Hebrews 12:29; Psalm 89:14)
- **Rainbow (4:3)**
 - The rainbow has from Noah been a symbol of hope and mercy (cf. Genesis 9:12-17)
 - Picture in your minds eye a beautiful emerald (precious stone) rainbow all around the throne.
- **24 elders/ sitting on 24 thrones (4:4)**
 - “Why are there 24 seats around the throne? Again the apocalyptic use of numbers must be discerned. Perhaps the most logical answer is that since “twelve” is symbolic of “God’s people,” when one combines the 12 tribes of Israel with those who followed Christ as taught by the 12 apostles, one gets the number 24, which represents the sum of God’s covenant people.” (Harkrider).
 - Leaders of God’s covenant people (both physical and spiritual). Sons of Israel/Apostles.
- **White Robes (4:4)**
 - Rainment of the 24 elders.
 - White indicates purity. (Washed in the blood of the lamb). (7:13-14)
- **Crowns of gold (4:4)**
 - Worn by the 24 elders.
 - The crowns signify their reign in victory over God’s enemies (2 Timothy 2:12)
- **Lightnings, thunders, and voices (4:5)**
 - A very similar display before Israel on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16)
 - When God is present, there is reason to tremble, and be in awe at His magnificent presence.
- **7 lamps of fire (4:5)**
 - In the text, described as the 7 Spirits of God (already identified as the Holy Spirit). (1:4)
 - Harkrider notes that since the work of the Spirit is “that of illumination of the truth” the lamps of burning fire offer “a graphic portrayal of this mission.
- **Sea of Glass (4:6)**
 - The interesting thing about the sea is the contrast here with the scene in Revelation 21:1-ff
 - Indications are we are describing the same basic scene with God on His throne (cf. Revelation 5)
 - But in Revelation 21 there is no more sea (cf. 21:1)
 - Where the sea at present separates God from man, after judgment, we will be in His presence!

- **Four Living Creatures (4:6-8)**
 - Remember – Symbolic language (with analogues to the Old Testament) Consider (Ezekiel 1:1-14)
 - In Ezekiel the four creatures each had four faces (Lion, Man, Ox/Calf, Eagle) Just like in Revelation
 - Lion – Represents Strength
 - Calf/Ox – Represents patient service and endurance
 - Man – Signifies intelligence, reason and wisdom
 - Eagle – Penetrating vision and swiftness
 - They are strong, smart, swift, with a desire to serve the Living God. (Always worshipping the Almighty)
 - Isaiah’s throne room scene shows a similar worship being offered to God (Isaiah 6:1-3)
- **Scroll (5:1) (KJV – BOOK) & Seven Seals (5:1)**
 - Basic statement of what the scroll is – The entirety of God’s will, to be revealed to man in the breaking of the seals.
 - As Matthew 13:11 states, *“the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.”*
 - 7 seals – 7 is a number of perfection (A perfect seal – only to be opened by one who is worthy)
 - Harkrider – The fulness of the book and the guard of seven seals denote the completeness of Revelation (Jude 3; James 1:25)
 - The significance of the opening of the seals, revealing God’s will shall become evident as the study progresses
- **Lion of the Tribe of Judah (5:5)**
 - A reference to the Messiah (Lion indicating strength) Judah was the kingly tribe from which Jesus came. (cf. Genesis 49:9-10)

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- **Root of David (5:5) Here defined as root in (22:16) as David’s offspring or descendent**
 - Root indicates David’s source. This an indication of Jesus’ authority and deity (Matthew 22:41-46)
 - They didn’t understand Jesus, the Christ as God’s son (Both Deity and Humanity). So, they couldn’t answer Him.
 - His association with David indicated the Messiah’s rule on the throne (Acts 2:30, 36)
- **A Lamb as though it had been slain (5:6)**
 - Interesting, He was told to look at the Lion of Judah, the root of David, and when he looked, He saw a lamb
 - Remember, the view that the Israelites had of a conquering Messiah, rather than a suffering Savior! It is through His sacrifice that victory and power came! (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29)
- **Harps (5:8)**
 - Just like the bowls of incense represent prayer, the harps are symbolic of musical praise.
 - If harps are literal (thus authorizing use of mechanical instruments) then the bowls are literal as well
 - Notice the Singing of a new song (Ephesians 5:19) (Colossians 3:16).
- **Golden Bowls of Incense (5:8)**
 - The prayers of the saints (1 Corinthians 14:15)
- **New Song (5:9-10)**
 - The song is new because it is about the appearance of the one who is capable of redeeming mankind. (Hebrews 11:13)
 - Before Jesus came, Redemption was unattainable. It was only hinted at until the fullness of time.
 - The appearance of the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, the slain Lamb. Redemption (and victory) comes through the actions of God’s son! (cf. Psalm 98)
- **Many angels (5:11)**
 - Imagine the scene (100,000,000) angels, plus thousands more, singing adulation and praise to God!
 - Again, remember the symbols regarding the numbers. Not literal, rather incalculable.

- Escalating finally to the entirety of God's creation!
- **Every creature (5:13)**
 - The entirety of creation expresses their adulation for the worthy God and the Lamb, (cf. Psalm 148)

SCENE 3 – OPENING OF THE FIRST SIX SEALS (6:1-17)

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- **The scene establishes the omnipotence of God. This message at the beginning of the book would help to equip Christians during their suffering at the end of the first century.**
- **This glorious vision is good for us as well. Any Christian should thrill at this scene of Almighty God, and His redeeming Son. All the heavenly host praised them, and we should as well!**
- **The four living creatures are identified as cherubims in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 10:20-22)**
 - Cherubim are presented in scripture as a high order of angels, who execute God's will, and are assigned the work of guarding holy things. (Genesis 3:24)
 - Representations on the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:18-22)
 - Spoken of as being in God's presence when He reigns in heaven. (Psalm 99:1)
 - **(Harkrider)** "These living creatures are special servants of God – strong, swift, intelligent, and always vigilant. The highest of the heavenly host serve the Father."
- **The songs of praise sung give explain the worthiness of God and the Lamb!**
 - CREATOR (4:11) READ (Psalm 19:1-4)
 - SLAIN LAMB AS SAVIOR (5:9-10) READ, (5:12) READ
 - He has redeemed us to God
 - He has bought us with a price (His precious blood) (1 Peter 1:18-19)
 - BOTH FATHER AND LAMB AS PREEMINENT GOD ON THRONE (5:13) READ (Psalm 148)
- **The opening of the seven seals**
 - Our next scene (6:1-17) relates the events which occurred at the opening of the first 6 of the 7 seals of the scroll
 - The book also refers to the blowing of 7 trumpets, and the pouring out of 7 bowls of wrath
 - We will be discussing the parallels of these events throughout our study of Revelation.
 - The opening of the seals indicates the carrying out of God's divine will. Who can (as Harkrider asks) "open the book, extricate and then execute its contents?"
 - Only the lamb that had been slain. (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Acts 2:30-36)
- **A reminder: Reality has God at the center. This encompasses more than the physical. It encompasses both God's creation (physical and spiritual realms) and God's own self-sufficient/eternal nature. This must always be remembered by God's children.**

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Introductory thoughts to be stated BEFORE the reading of the text:

- **This is the first of 3 "sevens" contained in the book**
 - 6:1 – 8:5, the unsealing of the 7 seals
 - 8:6 – 9:21, the sounding of the 7 trumpets
 - 15:1 – 16:21, the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath
- **These three series run parallel to each other (with the trumpets and bowls offering more detail)**
 - **Robert Harkrider:** "The information revealed in the seven seals is more general in nature as the first six seals give a panorama of God's dealings with mankind on earth, beginning with the coming of Christ and culminating in the scene of final judgment."
- **So, all three sevens, for the most part, are simultaneous**

- **Harkrider again:** “From the background of heaven, John describes them one after the other by revealing from different viewpoints the judging and restraining action of God.” ... “The symbols are a panoramic overview of the constant struggle between Christ and Satan, truth and falsehood. When the picture is completed, the thread that ties it all together is this: truth and righteousness will prevail.”

My Thoughts:

- **A mixed bag in this text, as we begin to see the plight of the Christians in the first century.**
 - However, even in the midst of these horrible sights, there is reason for the Christian to remain hopeful.
- **Emotions and Impressions**
 - Awe, because of the power of the vision, with the four horsemen
 - “Four horsemen of the Apocalypse” (Does not fully envision the control of God over the circumstances. He utilizes them, limits them, dismisses them when their work is done. God is in control!
 - Sobering idea of mayhem, scarcity, death, persecution and fear
- **The ultimate question in verse 17: “For the great day of His [the Lamb’s] wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”**

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- This chart helps to picture the simultaneous nature of the seals, trumpets and bowls of wrath as we consider the next 10 chapters of the book.
 - Robert Harkrider quote: “The information revealed in the 7 seals is more general in nature as the first six seals give a panorama of God’s dealings with mankind on earth, beginning with the coming of Christ and culminating in the scene of final judgment” (Truth Commentary – Revelation)
 - The 7th seal opens the second series (trumpets) which are warnings God issues to the wicked before the judgment. From the 7th trumpet come seven plagues (bowls of wrath) showing the successful defeat of the wicked.
- **Note:** This chart appears on page 79 of Robert Harkrider’s Revelation commentary (Truth Series)

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What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **The events covered by Revelation began with the coming of the Messiah, as the battle against Satan was joined in His advent**
- **Though the end is certain, Satan is allowed to impact the lives of the faithful while they are here on the earth.**
 - For example, consider the response to the loud cry of the martyrs mentioned in verse 10 (6:11)
- **In the end, the wrath of the Lamb can not be withstood. God wins.**

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Practice – Application to them and us

To them:

- **They would be afflicted by Satan**
 - Persecution unto death
 - Economic deprivation
 - Plagues, famines, wars
- **God’s judgment would come upon the world**

To us:

- **Persecution will continue until all is “completed” (vs. 11)**
- **Though the persecution then was especially bad, each of us can expect a measure of that same attack of Satan (2 Timothy 3:12)**

- **Note: As we will soon see in the vision, the answer to the question asked in verse 17, “who is able to stand” against the wrath of the Lamb in that great day IS ... the faithful! (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10)**

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Note: This slide is an appendage to the study in general. It was added because in the previous week I had received my COVID vaccine, and then came across the false teaching of this preacher. It serves to establish a few principles that will be beneficial in our study.

- **(Revelation 13:11-18), The Beast of the Earth**
 - Mark on right hand or forehead
 - No one could buy or sell unless they had the mark
- **A Dispensationalist Preacher named Robert Breaker recently preached a sermon on the subject, attributing the Corona Virus with the mark of the Beast**
 - First, he noted that the Word Corona, when the number of the letters, and the numerical value of each letter is taken, leads to the number 666.
 - Second, he noted the claims of some regarding the technical name COVID-19
 - **COV** – Certificate of Vaccination
 - **ID** – To Identify all who have been Vaccinated (Only those will be able to buy and sell)
 - **19** – AI (Artificial intelligence) used to monitor those who are vaccinated
 - Inject something into the arm (via vaccination)
 - Bill Gates – (false claim, rebutted) Quantum dot tattoo that can be used to monitor who has and who has not been vaccinated
 - Gates here is a big contributor to the World Health Organization / Fauci also in favor of mandatory certificates
- **These kinds of speculative theories regarding the meaning of the number 666, have been common for 100's of years**
 - Did you know when you translate Nero Caesar from the Greek language into the Hebrew, and give the letter equivalents, you also get 666? Some feel NERO is the beast.
 - I met a man used numbers to claim in some convoluted way that JFK's name equalled 666. He called JFK (this was less than a decade after his death) the Anti-Christ
 - Revelation 13:3 (Mortally wounded head that healed). Thus, JFK was the Antichrist, alive, and going to bring about the end days
 - [CLICK] Some thought that Ronald Reagan was the beast because of his name.
 - [CLICK] Others think that the World Wide Web has beastly qualities. Claiming that Satan's minions would only allow buying and selling on the WWW
- **Certainly don't have time to debunk them all, but... let's deal quickly with the latest**
 - First, coronaviruses are not new. At present 7 have been discovered that impact humans, including the common cold
 - Second, the naming of the Virus is far different that this man (and the crazy websites where he got his information) claim.
 - **CO** (Corona)
 - **VI** (Virus)
 - **D** (Disease)
 - **19** - Originated in Wuhan, China in 2019
 - **Third, it would be silly to think that the only way a book written in Greek can be understood is to ascribe an ENGLISH word to its interpretation!**
 - The word Corona is applied to the viruses because of the common definition of the word:
 - Corona – a part of a body that looks like a crown; Gaseous envelope of the sun and other stars
 - In other words, it is named because of the way it looks under an electron microscope

- **Fourth, the context! (Remember, these are things impacting Christians in the first century!) (1:1-3)**
 - Not referencing the struggle between Catholicism and the Muslims during the crusades
 - Not referencing World War 1, the war to end all wars
 - Not referencing World War 2, nor Adolf Hitler
 - Not referencing the Cold War, and the Soviet Union
 - Not referencing Social security numbers, computer chips injected into the skin, or the European Union.
 - Any effort to speculate is misguided and has been disproven again, and again, and again by the failures of previous speculations.
- **Why are such speculations constant, convincing so many?**
 - Because people are credulous (naïve and often ignorant!)
 - Conspiracy theories trouble too many (including too many Christians)
 - It is a sign of a person who is credulous, naive and spiritually immature to take at face value any view. (Done all the time by Christians on social media).
 - It is a sign of nobility to research claims, and reject the false and erroneous information or disseminated teaching! (Acts 17:11)
- **Fifth, you can't make symbolic language literal!**
 - The text defines the number 666, *"for it is the number of a man: His number is 666"* (13:18)
 - The number 7 is divine. The number 6 is one less than divine, it is human
 - The divine is from above and perfect. The human is from below and is imperfect
 - The conflict being described in Revelation is GOD VS Satan. Good VS Evil. The Divine VS Sinful Mankind.
- **I like Robert Harkrider's conclusion to Revelation 13, which we will study in more detail later:**
 - "The number 6 is a stand-in number for man, just as the number 7 exclusively represents God. Any occasion where man is in conflict with God, man will fail. Therefore the "wisdom" referred to in this text is that all who stand with God shall win, but possessors of the mark of the beast shall see failure upon failure upon failure!"

Slide 41

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in Chapter 6

Identify and define

- **Lamb (6:1)**
 - **Q: Who is the lamb?** Already identified, the reference is to the Lord
- **Four Living Creatures (6:1)**
 - **Q: Who are the living creatures?** Angels (seraphim/cherubim) who worship God continually
- **White horse (6:2) (First seal)**
 - The horses are similar to the vision of Zechariah (6:1-3) (Zechariah 6:1-3)
 - So, the imagery would be familiar to the Jews
 - If there is any significance to the horse, it is in the color white (same with other horses, only the colors have any significance. The rider is the agent bringing the events of the seals to pass).
 - (What have we noted regarding the color white? It signifies righteousness or purity)
- **He who sat (6:2)**
 - Two major views regarding the one who sat on the white horse (not identified)
 - Picture of a Parthian general, signifying conquests against the Roman empire
 - Parthia (Iran/Persia) was the most capable opponent of Rome at this time
 - The Victorious Christ going forth as the conqueror of evil in the world
 - Harkrider, Hailey and Hendrikson all agree with this view
 - Consider Hendrikson's arguments on the matter:

- Context: The Lamb (opening the seals) is said to have “conquered/prevailed to open the scrolls” (5:5). It seems warranted that the conqueror in chapter 5 & 6 is the same person
- Word Study: “White” associated with that which is holy/heavenly. “Crown”, consider (14:14). The word “conquer”, with only two exceptions, only has reference to Christ or believers, consider (John 16:33; 3:21; 5:5; 6:2). Hendrikson: “Meditate on this exalted phrase. We feel pretty sure that, had you never heard another interpretation, you would at once have said: ‘This is the conquering Christ.’”
- Parallel passage of (19:11)
- Conclusion by Hendrikson: “Frankly, we do not see how any one is justified in saying that the Rider on the white horse in 6:2 means one thing, and in 19:11 something else. Why not permit the Apocalypse to explain its own symbolism?”
- **Bow (6:2)**
 - A weapon of warfare/conquest (Psalm 45:3-6, a Messianic Psalm)
- **Crown (6:2)** (note: stephanos, rather than diadem) victor or conqueror vs royalty. Both Apply to Jesus
 - Royalty/authority. A conqueror. (16 times the Greek word for conqueror is used in Revelation, 14 of those times referencing the victory of either God/Lord or believers)
 - **Harkrider:** “Christ conquered the devil’s unchecked power over sin and death, and he continues to conquer every effort of this destroyer of the kingdom of God.”
- **Fiery red horse (6:4) (2nd seal)**
 - Red – symbolizes judgment. Also slaughter or bloodshed (Context would indicate latter)
- **One who sat (6:4)**
 - Second rider would seem to be signifying one who persecutes
 - Good point: Wherever the gospel is preached, it is followed by the sword of persecution! (Matthew 10:21-22a, 34-36)
- **Great sword (6:4)**
 - No peace on earth. Men killing men. The sword of persecution great in the extent to which its reach would be felt. (Same Greek word as in Matthew 10:34 above)
 - Note: Greek word (rhomphaia/6:8) used to describe the long heavy sword used in warfare
 - Here, Greek word (machaira) would symbolize persecution
 - Early Christians were killed with swords and knives, mauled by wild animals, burned alive at the stake, nailed to crosses, thrown into boiling oil. There was no rest for them during this time. Only the promise of danger and violence.
- **Black horse (6:5) (3rd seal)**
 - Hailey: “Black portrays grief and mourning. In it is no light” (Jeremiah 4:27-28)
- **He who sat (6:5)**
 - He does not signify famine, as there is plenty of oil and wine (6)
 - However, the idea here does signify scarcity. Perhaps the lot of Christians to be persecuted through economic deprivation. (Not all persecution is physical/violent)
 - Hailey: “The rider of the black horse therefore symbolizes grief, woe and mourning, the lot of persecuted saints who followed the preaching of the gospel.”
- **Pair of scales (6:5)**
 - A means of measuring out (Note: a penny was a full day’s wage)
 - Consider the plight of a Christian whose entire day’s wage would only buy a single portion of the most basic necessities needed to feed one person.
 - Note: Christians who were unwilling to worship the emperor or engage in the evil practices of the trade guilds, they were removed from jobs, or forced to accept lower wages.
 - Consider the test to all Christians: Reject faith, and enjoy the food and advantages of those in the good graces of the empire. Or serve Christ and suffer persecution, both physical and economic.

- **Pale horse (6:8)**
 - Pale: A sickly, gruesome color symbolic of disease and death (Harkrider)
- **Death (6:8)**
 - So far we have noticed Satan's efforts to Persecute, and Economically oppress
 - Also, there are normal frailties and struggles that are common to men (disease and death)
 - Such will continue until Christ comes again. Men are afflicted with all kinds of fleshly troubles, whether from warfare, famine, disease or "beasts" (death by accident or danger).
 - Consider the end of 25% of the earth, in addition to persecution & deprivation Christians would suffer!
 - (**Harkrider:** When these common woes of mankind are added to the specific persecutions brought on the saints, one can easily understand the agonizing plea of souls under the altar embodied in the fifth seal.) "How long!"
- **Hades (6:8)**
 - Not Hell: Hades goes hand in hand with Death. The realm of those who are dead (Matthew 16:18)
 - Though Hades is the present reality of those who die, it has no lasting power because of the resurrection of Christ.

(Consider with the 5th seal, there is a change in the vision. The horses, and their impact on earth are gone, and now we have the martyrs of God under the altar).

- **Martyred Souls (6:9)**
 - "Slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held." (9) (Acts 7:57-58, 9:1-2; 12:1-2)
 - **Tradition** (year killed): Philip-stoned (54); Hierapolis (54); James (John's brother)-beaten to death; Barnabas-burned alive (64); Mark-dragged to death (64); Peter-crucified (69/Nero); Paul-beheaded (69/Nero); Aristarchus (70); Epaphras (70); Priscilla, Aquila, Andronicus, Junia (70). Silas-scourging (70); Onesiphorus and Porphyrius-tied to wild horses (70); Andrew-crucified (70); Bartholomew-beheaded (70); Thomas-burned to death (70); Matthew-beheaded (70); Simon Zelotes and Judas Thaddeus-crucified/beaten to death (70); Luke-hanged (93); Antipas-roasted alive (95); Timothy-stoned (98)
 - **Note: Consider their plea** (vs. 10)
- **White robe (6:11)**
 - Symbol of righteousness
 - As given to them, it indicates their glory and victory
- **Servants & Brethren (6:11)**
 - Others would die for Christ
 - Persecution would continue (and continues even today).
 - No specific end date is noted here. Persecution will not end until Christ comes (2 Timothy 3:12)
 - When he does, avenging will happen, Justice will be meted out by the Lord.

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 6 continued

Identify and define

- **Note: The sixth seal brings a "day of the Lord" – Judgment on the wicked**
 - OT writers often use such language (earthquakes, heavenly bodies changing appearance, etc. to signify judgment against wickedness). Cf. Joel 2:10; Isaiah 13:10; Jeremiah 4:23-24; Matthew 24:29).
 - Hailey believes this a judgment in that time against forces of evil persecuting the saints. He thinks that the promise to the martyrs would be fulfilled in that time frame.
 - Harkrider believes this judgment to be one reference to the final judgment of God (connecting it with the triumphant scene in 7:9-17, which seems to depict "an eternal, heavenly state")
 - As with many of the "days of the Lord" in the OT, it is difficult to go to history to ascribe any specific day as a fulfillment. In fact, the language is symbolic. **No need to look for earthquakes in that era, or astronomical occurrences.**

- **Sackcloth of hair (6:12)**
 - Total blackness (Sun not shining, covered with this sackcloth) (Isaiah 50:3)
 - Garment of dark, coarse cloth, made from the hair of animals. Used as a sign of mourning.
- **Moon like blood (6:12)**
 - Discoloration of moon would accompany the darkening of the sun as a sign of judgment
 - Red – a color indicating judgment
- **Kings of the earth (6:15)**
 - First of seven classes of men mentioned who quail at the judgment from God. They can't stand before God's wrath. No man can.
 - Make applications to our nation at present, who stand against God, and fall into these categories.
 - Kings would be the most powerful, rulers of nations
 - Our politicians (especially national ones, who rule our nation)
- **Great men (6:15)**
 - Men of learning. Arts and Sciences. Celebrities. Athletes. Influencers. Those who are admired.
- **Rich men (6:15)**
 - Consider the effect of technocrats, their influence. (Men like Elon Musk, Jeff Besos, Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates).
- **Commanders (6:15)**
 - Military leaders: Maybe not direct correlation in our nation. But in history, these men could not stand against God – Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Roman emperors).
- **Mighty men (6:15)**
 - Men of influence because of their ability or might (Economic, physical, position, etc.)
 - Macho idea of physical strength indicating power pales in the face of God Almighty
 - (Think about the comic book Superheroes/ or Greek Gods/ as contrasted with Jehovah)
- **Slave & Free men (6:15)**
 - Societal situations have no bearing on whether you will escape God's judgment.
 - If none of the others apply to us, these surely do. (Romans 14:10b-12; Philippians 2:9-11)
- **Great day of wrath (6:17)**
 - The contextual description of this "day of the Lord" or judgment against the wicked.
 - Question: "*Who is able to stand?*" (17)
 - Answer: None who oppose God, or who God brings His wrath upon.
 - However, in the next chapter we will see a group who will be able to stand in that day!

SCENE 4 – THE 144,000 SEALED SERVANTS OF GOD (7:1-8)

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- **The opening of the seals is the unveiling of the entirety of God's will, to reveal it to man.**
 - As Matthew 13:11 states, "*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.*"
- **A time of conflict, ending in an unavoidable "day of the Lord." The "great day of His wrath."**
 - The cry of the martyrs reminds me of 2 Thessalonians 1 (6:10) (2 Thessalonians 1:3-10)
- **The inevitability of judgment. God's will shall be done in all things!** (2 Corinthians 5:9-11)

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Introductory thoughts:

- **After the opening of the first six seals, we have a new vision recorded by John**
 - Notice: "*After these things I saw*" (7:1)

My thoughts

- **Our discussion of this text will have to include some response to Jehovah's Witness doctrine regarding the 144,000.**

- It is very problematic, in that it claims a literal, though inconsistent, interpretation of the number and text.
- **We will also discuss why the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are not counted among the twelve tribes which make up the 144,000.**
- **Emotions and Initial perceptions**
 - (AWE) The vision again indicates a coming of God's wrath.
 - Consider the power of God – 4 angels given the power to hurt the earth and the sea.
 - (THANKSGIVING) There is reason to be thankful and relieved. God protects those who have His mark upon them.

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What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **We have observed from 6:17, no man is able to stand against the wrath of the Lamb of God.**
 - You will note that this particular day of wrath will be visited upon the “four corners of the earth.” That is, the entire earth!
 - Wind blowing is a common OT symbol used for God's power to destroy (Jeremiah 49:36-37, 51:1-2)
- **The vision here shows that those who belong to God will receive His protection at the execution of God's judgment.**
 - The Biblical concept of a seal indicates a number of things: 1) Protection; 2) Ownership; 3) Certification
 - We will discuss these further when looking at the characters and symbols of the chapter
 - However, here note that the 144,000 who received the seal are thereby signified as belonging to Him.
 - Until all were identified and marked, the day of wrath was delayed.
 - They are identified and contrasted with those who receive the mark of the beast in numerous places in the book (7:3; 14:1; 15:2; 20:4; 22:4) Mark of the beast (13:15-18; 9:4; 14:9-11; 16:2; 19:20)
- **The 144,000 refers to the sum total of God's people who are on the earth when God's day of wrath is visited upon the world.**
 - The number is symbolic, and we will discuss it in more detail. It is a number of fullness or completeness. It is not a literal number.

Slide 46

Practice – Application to them and us

To them:

- **As seen in chapter 6, God's protection does not guarantee escape from persecution and life's difficulties** (2 Timothy 3:12-15)
- **However, it does guarantee salvation** (Romans 8:37-39)

To us:

- **Both of these lessons are as applicable to us today as they were to those Christians living in the first century.**

Slide 47

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 6, part 1

Identify and define

- **Four Angels (7:1)**
 - One who brings a message from God
 - Sometimes glad tidings (Luke 2:13-14)
 - But here, to execute God's judgment upon the earth. Given the authority to harm the earth, sea and trees at the time determined by God.
 - **Adam Clarke:** “Instruments which God employs in the dispensation of His providence...”

- **Four corners of the earth (7:1)**
 - Not literally four corners (earth is spherical, not a cube or square).
 - Intended to encompass all the earth
 - Note: This judgment is a world wide event, not just limited to Judea, or some other region
- **Four winds of the earth (7:1)**
 - Wind from every direction: North, South, East, West
 - As already noted, wind is and OT symbol of God's power to destroy
 - These winds, as indicated by the text, are fully under God's control (Note: The angels were "holding" the winds, preventing them from harming the world until they had received the go ahead by God). (Mark 4:37-41, the ability to control wind a sign of Deity)
- **Another angel (7:2)**
 - This angel ascended from the east. (Any significance of east? Don't know... likened to the rising sun, but no way of knowing is there is any significance to the quarter from which he came).
 - This angel was bringing a message to the other angels who were holding back the wind.
 - This angel was holding the seal of God.
 - His message from God, that the judgment should not commence until all the servants of God have received the seal on their foreheads.
- **The seal of the living God (7:2)**
 - This type of language found in the OT (Ezekiel 9)
 - God determined to slay the wicked in Jerusalem
 - Six men (angels of God) appeared with battle axes to bring God's judgment
 - One man has a writer's inkhorn in his hand (Ezekiel 9:4-7)
 - From (6:15), no man, no matter how powerful, would be able to avoid God's wrath in that day
 - Who would escape that judgment? Those who had the seal of God on their forehead.
 - Not a literal seal, any more than the mark of the beast is a literal mark.
 - **(Harkrider)** "Only the ones whom God knows as His own shall be able to stand."
 - Biblical concept of a seal
 - Protection against tampering (Christians are under God's protection, obvious from the context) (Matthew 27:66)
 - Ownership (God is a jealous God, We are His!) "*You shall have no other gods before Me*" (Exodus 20:3). (cf. Song of Solomon 8:6)
 - Certification (Christians are certified by the Holy Spirit to be God's children) (cf. Esther 3:12; Ephesians 1:13-14)
- **144,000 servants of God (7:4)**
 - How is the number arrived at?
 - Number 12 in apocalyptic writing represents God's covenant people
 - **Note: 24 elders (scene 2)** "Why are there 24 seats around the throne? Again the apocalyptic use of numbers must be discerned. Perhaps the most logical answer is that since "twelve" is symbolic of "God's people," when one combines the 12 tribes of Israel with those who followed Christ as taught by the 12 apostles, one gets the number 24, which represents the sum of God's covenant people." (Harkrider). Leaders of God's covenant people (both physical and spiritual). Sons of Israel/Apostles.
 - Number 10 is the apocalyptic number for fullness or completeness
 - $(12 \times 12 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 = 144,000)$
 - Therefore, symbolizes all of God's people, every servant upon the earth. God knows them all, and God will protect them all when the day of wrath comes! (2 Timothy 2:19)
 - Any claim that God may "miss" one is a false claim (Isaiah 40:26-27)
- **The tribes (7:5-8)**
 - The tribes signify God's covenant people.

- Not LITERALLY the tribes (only the Jews), just like not LITERALLY 144,000 (Galatians 3:28; Rom. 2:2-29)
- Only if needed (will be dealt with on last slide). Tribes of Dan and Ephraim were omitted. Joseph's tribe consists of 2 tribes Ephraim and Manasseh. So, Joseph is listed, and Manasseh too. Dan and Ephraim NOT. Why? Best explanation is...
 - Ephraim led Israel into idolatry through Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:26; 12:25-33)
 - Dan left his inheritance, and moved north to Laish where he practiced idolatry (Judges 18)
 - Therefore, they wouldn't be considered loyal to God, and properly represent God's covenant people.

Slide 48

- **Problems of Jehovah's Witnesses view of the 144,000**
- **The Jehovah's Witnesses believe:**
 - The 144,000 sealed will be given a spiritual body and spend eternity in heaven
 - This number is fixed, and already complete. No one now living will be added to that number
 - The remainder (the great multitude of 7:9-17) will live in a perfected fleshly body on a new earth.
- **First problem, taking what is clearly apocalyptic text as literal rather than symbolic**
 - This is typical of Adventist theology, and is rife with pitfalls
- **Second problem, inconsistency in applying a literal interpretation**
 - If the 144,000 is literal, then the individuals who make it up must be literally Jews
 - There would have to be 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes. Who are they, and how can they be determined since the destruction of the temple destroyed all genealogies.
- **Third problem, the 144,000 are said to be on earth, and the multitude in heaven**
 - The locations are inverted in Witness theology
- **Fourth problem, the NT does not speak of a renewed eternal earth, but the total dissolution of the physical universe!** (2 Peter 3:10-13)
 - The reference to new heavens and a new earth is obviously a spiritual location. It is a reference to our eternal reward in God's presence. (HEAVEN).
 - **(Clinton Hamilton)** "Peter spoke in 2 Peter 1:4 of the corruption that is in the world through lust. In this new order, there will be no such thing. Only the righteous will abide or dwell in this order of things. Evidently, this refers to the inheritance that God is to give the saints who are faithful, and it will be characterized as being incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:5). This is the new order and will not partake of the nature or quality of the old and thus is called *kainos*, new.
- **Problem with the idea of the 144,000 being literal Jews**
 - **The primary problem is that God's covenant people at the time of this writing are Christians, not Jews**
 - Premillennial views mistakenly claim that the Jew holds an eternal standing in God's scheme of Redemption
 - This goes against the teaching in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews (Galatians 3:28; Romans 2:28-29)
 - **Also, the twelve tribes mentioned in (7:4-8) who received the seal are not the actual 12 tribes**
 - Twelve tribes consist of: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin.
 - Remember that when the promised land was taken, Joseph's inheritance consisted of two "tribes" indicated by his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim
 - In our list, Joseph represents Himself (making Joseph and Manasseh redundant). Dan and Ephraim are omitted!
 - **Dan and Ephraim NOT in the list. Why? Best explanation is...**
 - Ephraim led Israel into idolatry through Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25-33; Note: Jereboam was of the tribe of Ephraim, 11:26).

- Dan left his inheritance, and moved north to Laish where he practiced idolatry (Judges 18:18-20)
- Therefore, as idolaters they wouldn't be considered loyal to God, and properly represent God's covenant people.
- The 144,000 is a reference to all of God's covenant people on earth at this time. All who had the seal.

SCENE 5 – THE GREAT MULTITUDE BEFORE GOD'S THRONE (7:9-17)

Slide 49

- **As the interlude continues, we see a great multitude around the throne of God**

My Thoughts

- **Note especially verse 14**
 - So, this would be the 144,000 at a later time, after having left the earth
 - We would presume this would include the souls mention in (6:9-11)
 - These are also referred to at the end of the book (20:4)
 - In other words, the saved of all ages make up the multitude in heaven!
- **What are your perceptions and emotions at a first reading of the text?**
 - Equality (Every nation, tribe, people, tongue)
 - God is no respecter of persons (Galatians 3:28-29)
 - Thanksgiving that salvation comes through Jesus Christ
 - Given by the Father (John 3:16-17)
 - Accomplished through the Son (Ephesians 1:3-6)
 - Worshipful Reverence (God is worthy of praise, as indicated in Revelation 4 and 5)
 - Gratitude at God's fairness
 - Here seen by God's treatment of the Righteous (2 Thessalonians 1:6-7)
 - Confidence (2 Timothy 1:12)
 - I can trust that I will neither hunger nor thirst anymore
 - No weariness from the sun's heat
 - No tears

Slide 50

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- Salvation is sure because salvation belongs to "our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."
- Remember the theme of the book: We are victors through our Lord Jesus Christ!
- God is worthy of our praise and worship
- Those who are saved and comforted in heaven are those who are faithful unto death!

Slide 51

Practice – Application to them and us

To them:

- **Remain faithful unto death to receive salvation in heaven**

To us:

- **Same: Remain faithful unto death to receive salvation in heaven**
- **Consider the persecutions of Christ's disciples early on... (Mark 13:9-13)**

Slide 52

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 6, part 1

Identify and define

- **Great Multitude (7:9)**
 - Defined in the context, verse 14

- “the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
- As they stand before the throne, these are the righteous who have inherited life!
- This is a picture of a triumphant, heavenly state for God’s people
- Consists of a multitude out of every nation, race and tongue
- **Lamb (7:9)**
 - Previously identified as the Christ, the Son of God
- **White robes (7:9)**
 - Previously identified – White indicates purity
 - Pure because they are washed in the blood of the Lamb (sins are washed away). (Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:4-6)
- **Palm Branches (7:9)**
 - Signified victory, adoration to the victor
 - Remember the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (John 12:12-13)
- **Throne (7:10) (of God, cf. Revelation 4 & 5)**
 - Identifies God’s authority over creation
- **Angels (7:11)**
 - Previously identified, created, heavenly beings here worshipping God at His throne (cf. Rev. 4 & 5)
- **Elders (7:11)**
 - Previously identified in chapter 4.
 - Symbolizes the leaders of God’s covenant people both physical and spiritual). Sons of Israel/Apostles.
- **Four Living Creatures (7:11)**
 - Previously identified in chapter 4
 - Angels, cherubim/seraphim (cf. Ezekiel 1:1-14)
 - With a strong desire to worship God (never ceasing, day and night before the Throne)
- **Blood of the Lamb (7:14)**
 - A reference to the shed blood of Christ on the cross at calvary
 - The means of redeeming man (Ephesians 1:7; Matthew 26:27-28)
- **His Temple (15) (note: The term (naos) perhaps better translated (sanctuary) - (heiron) is the more common term**
 - The spiritual analogue to the Jewish temple on earth
 - Note that the ungodly sought to hide themselves from the face of God (cf. 6:16)
 - In contrast, the faithful are before the throne, serving Him day and night in His spiritual temple (11:19)
 - Consider the temple was a type of heaven, the antitype (Hebrews 9:24-26)
- **Living fountains of waters (7:17)**
 - The child of God will be eternally satiated. Eternally nurtured. (John 4:13-14)

SCENE 6 – OPENING THE SEVENTH SEAL & SOUNDING OF THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS (8:1-9:21)

Slide 53

Introductory thoughts:

- The 6th scene (vision) was an interlude. A period of time between the opening of the first six seals and the seventh. (Elliptical, in other words)
- We saw a picture of God’s protection of His people on earth, and His reward of the faithful in heaven
- Now, with this text, we see the opening of the seventh seal, and the impact of it.

My Thoughts

- **A long scene, so there are several perceptions we might make note of...**
 - Consider the anticipation that John must have felt waiting for a whole ½ hour for something to happen!

- **The censer being thrown down to the earth, causing thunders and earthquakes. Awe at God's power!**
 - We are living in the time of special effects in movies. Makes it easier to see how powerful an impression that would leave on John
- **The horror and devastation upon the earth (and universe) at the sounding of the six trumpets elicits a sense of dread.**
 - All parts of the earth are struck: Vegetation, Oceans, Fresh water, Celestial bodies
 - Consider the warning: *"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!" (8:13).*
 - Nothing more fierce than the image of the army of locusts. (5th trumpet, first woe)
 - The killing of a third of mankind by the plagues brought by the four angels (6th trumpet, second woe)
- **Sorrow at the unwillingness of mankind to repent at these chastisements from God. (9:20-21).**

Slide 54

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **Remember our chart where we noted that the 7 seals would cover the entirety of Revelation's time frame, from Christ's coming to earth to the final judgment.**
- **We have emphasized the persecution of Christians, the reason for the writing of the book.**
- **The trumpets serve to signify God's chastisement of these wicked men, giving them the opportunity for repentance. (this would be among those things which must "shortly come to pass" (1:1; 22:6)**
 - (Harkrider), "The trumpets reveal the workings of God in calling men to turn from evil."
 - Men suffer physically because of God's wrath at their wickedness
 - The expression of God's displeasure is intended to bring us to repentance!
 - On this occasion, as with many others, the chastisement is ineffective because of the evil hearts of men (9:20-21)
- **God to rebellious Israel (Isaiah 30:8-15)**
- **Jesus words to Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-39)**
- **Note: When events like in the 1st century are repeated in later times, God will deal with the wicked in the same way, with chastisements and judgment.**

Slide 55

Practice – Application to them and us

To them:

- **God would respond to their prayers, by chastising the wicked who persecuted them.**
- **Consider one view of the incense in the censer**
 - William Hendriksen in his commentary, More than Conquerors, expresses the belief that the large amounts of incense indicates Christ's intercession on behalf of His saints. (Hebrews 7:24-25)
 - That censer, thrown to the earth, shows that when God hears the prayers and intercessions of the saints, He responds!
- **God's chastisement of men is designed to bring them to repentance**

To us:

- **God hears our prayers as well! (Hebrews 4:16)**
- **Ultimately, God is in control, not wicked men! (Acts 17:29-31)**
- **Remember, God chastises for a reasons (especially those who are his). So, heed it and soften your heart! (Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:7-11)**

Slide 56

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 8 & 9

Identify and define

- **Seal (8:1)**
 - The 7th seal picks up where chapter 6 left off (the opening of seals 1-6)
 - The seals closed the scroll introduced in Revelation 5. Only the Christ was worthy of opening them
 - Each of the first six seals signified the efforts of the ungodly to bring suffering to God's people.
 - The 7th seal signified preparation for the sounding of the 7 trumpets
- **Silence (8:1)**
 - An interlude in heaven, when no sound is uttered
 - ½ hour in duration, consider how this silence must have impacted John
 - **(Harkrider)** "This interlude wherein no sound is uttered must have been impressive. Reverence must have filled John's heart in the anticipation of something awesome about to take place."
- **Seven (8:2,6)**
 - The number indicates perfection, completion. A complete number. Exactly the right amount.
- **Angels (8:2)**
 - Messengers or servants of God tasked with carrying out His chastisements on Mankind.
 - 7 angels who were given the 7 trumpets to sound (8:2)
 - Another angel, given the golden censer (8:3)
 - An angel flying through the midst of heaven, pronouncing the three woes (8:13)
 - Angel of the bottomless pit (reference later) (9:9:11)
 - Four angels bound at the great river Euphrates (9:14)
- **Trumpets (8:2,6,13)**
 - **(Harkrider)** "The trumpets of God reveal the workings of God in calling men to repentance"
 - A pronouncement of the coming chastisements that God would bring upon men.
 - Examples of trumpets in Bible (Matthew 6:2; Numbers 10:1-2; 1 Chron. 15:28; Joshua 6:4-5)
 - Trumpets also symbolize a warning (calling men to repent) (Ezekiel 33:1-6)
- **Golden Censer (8:3,5)**
 - A firepan in which hot coals from the altar were placed, and grains of incense were burned on the coals to produce a sweet smell for the Lord (Leviticus 10:1; 16:12-13)
 - In Revelation 5:2, the incense represented the prayers of the saints, before the throne of God (Psalm 141:2)
- **Much Incense (8:3,4)**
 - Here, the incense is presented as separate from the prayers of the saints
 - William Hendriksen thinks the "much incense" represents our Savior's intercession in heaven for the persecuted children of God. (Hebrews 7:25)
- **Note here by Harkrider that is very good: Regarding incense...** "God continually hears the prayers of His people... What an assurance for the saints! Some readers of Revelation concentrated upon the fire, earthquakes, and other frightful events. Those who know the Lord read the same book and find comfort, peace and blissful hope. The difference in what one finds in Revelation is usually determined by the quality of life being lived and how much time is spent in prayer."
- **Noises, thunderings, lightnings and an earthquake (8:5)**
 - Fire taken from the censer, and thrown to the earth
 - Signifies God's response to the prayers and petitions made by God's people
 - The most powerful being in the universe is activated to deliver our escape because we appeal to Him
 - All of these noises and cataclysms indicate that God is beginning His work. Justice is coming.
- **To sound/sounded (8:6,7,8,10,12; 9:1,13)**
 - Each sounding of the trumpet reveals a chastisement/judgment from God
- **Hail & fire, mingled with blood (8:7) (First, trumpet, striking all vegetation)**
 - Burns up 1/3 of trees, and all green grass
 - (Consider what losing 1/3 of vegetation would do in affecting mankind).

- All of these calamities would be familiar to Israel (as many are similar to the plagues which came upon Egypt)
 - Hail (Exodus 9:23-25)
 - Water to blood (Exodus 7:20-21)
 - Darkness (Ex. 10:21-23)
 - Locusts (Ex. 10:4-15)
- Note, however, the book is written in symbols. (We should not be perusing history trying to find a time where hail and fire came down from heaven, literally mingled with blood)
- **(Harkrider)** “Since Revelation is written in signs and symbols, the trumpets evidently picture God’s warning judgments sent upon the wicked. What is being portrayed is that the God of grace always gives ample time for anyone to repent before meting punishment.”
- **Note:** Such physical calamities establish the truth that we are impotent. We are not masters of the world in which we live. (Hurricanes, Ice storms, etc., etc.).
- **1/3 (8:7,9,11,12; 9:15,18)**
 - Only a minority affected each time. A part of the whole. This would signify a “warning shot” from God to repent. (Vegetation, seas, sea creatures, ships, waters, heavenly bodies, mankind).
 - 1/3 is a minority amount, but significant. If you are penalized a third, it hurts.
 - Nevertheless, not the same as the final judgment of God, which will bring all the ungodly under condemnation.
- **Something like a big mountain burning with fire (8:8) 2nd trumpet (8:8-9)**
 - Picture a giant volcano, cast into the sea, poisoning the water, turning it to blood.
 - Note, this affects another aspect of nature. (1 – vegetation), (2-sea with its life, and man’s ability to trade and travel via ship).

Slide 57

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 8 & 9 (Part 2)

Identify and define

- **Great star (Wormwood) (8:10-11) (Third Trumpet)**
 - A poisoning of the land waters (rivers and fountains) 1/3. Many men die (bitter/poisoned)
 - A huge star fell named wormwood. Wormwood is a bitter plant, often mentioned in the OT, in conjunction with God’s chastisements (Deuteronomy 29:18; Jeremiah 9:13-16)
- **Three Woes (8:13) Fourth Trumpet (8:12-13)**
 - First, heavens struck (1/3 of sun, moon, and stars) 1/3 day without sun, and night
 - This familiar imagery to the Christians of the first century (re: warning to ungodly) (Joel 2:10-11)
 - Angel pronounces three woes. This attributed to the sounding of trumpets 5-7 (Note: Some translations render this an eagle who pronounces the woes instead of an angel.
 - Is there a differentiation between the first 4 trumpets, and the woes to follow?
 - First four trumpets – natural calamities (vegetation, seas, fresh waters, heavens)
 - Trumpets 5-6 – The role of mankind
 - Trumpet 7 – the final judgment of God against Rome
 - (Note: Scholars say Rome fell: 1) natural calamity; 2) internal rottenness; 3) outside invaders.
- **Star fallen from heaven (9:1) (Fifth Trumpet – 9:1-12/ First woe)**
 - Most common designation given to the Devil. Note, however, that Isaiah 14:12 (Lucifer/day star) refers to the King of Babylon, not the Devil
 - However, the bottomless pit is the abode of the devil and his angels (11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3)
 - Whoever designated by the star, given a key, indicating the ability to loose and bind
 - It is he who opens up the bottomless pit, and looses the locusts upon the earth
- **Bottomless pit (9:1,2,11)**

- Dark smoke ascends from the pit (indicating wickedness)
- These are evil influences being loosed upon the earth
- (Remember how the Devil works in the affairs of men!) (Romans 6:16)
- **(Harkrider)** “Portrayed here is the effect of the devil’s influence upon the Roman world. The anguish suffered because of moral degradation is my man’s own choice. Satan gains control only through enticing men by deception and delusion.”
- **Locusts (9:3-5, 7-11)**
 - Locusts were a common problem in the land of Israel.
 - They devastated crops, and were referred to in the OT as a means of chastising Israel (Joel 1:6-10)
 - They were to hurt only the enemies of God (4)
 - They would torment for 5 months (a limited time) (5)
 - The life of those they target would be miserable! (6)
 - Their appearance is grand and has beauty, perhaps indicating why men are enticed by what will bring misery to them. The deceitfulness of sin (7-8) (Hebrews 3:13)
 - Teeth, breastplates, tails like scorpions (8-10) indicating their power and invincibility (9-10)
 - Led by a king (Destroyer) (11)
- **Seal of God (9:4)**
 - Discussed before. God recognizes those who are His
 - The seal indicates protection, ownership, certification
 - Those with the seal would avoid the brunt of misery coming upon the ungodly
 - Men reap what they sow! (Galatians 6:7-8)
- **Angel of the bottomless pit (King over locusts) (9:11)**
 - Hebrew – Abaddon/Greek – Apollyon – DESTROYER
 - Already mentioned from 9:1, the one given the key (the Devil)
 - It is not surprising in mentioning the great evil powers of the world that the Devil would be king over them. (1 John 5:19; Ephesians 2:1-2; 6:10-12)
- **Four horns (9:13) (Sixth Trumpet – (9:13-21) 2nd Woe**
 - The analogue is the golden altar in the tabernacle/temple
 - The horns are protrusions on each corner of the altar (Exodus 30:1-3)
 - Notice the events that transpire here come from Heaven itself (God’s directed chastisements)
 - The voice that sounds comes from God (an answer to the incense of the saints!)
- **Four (9:13,14,15)**
 - Represents the entire earth. (Four winds, four corners. Four angels going out in each direction).
- **River Euphrates (9:14)**
 - Euphrates among the greatest of rivers in the ancient world
 - Central to great world powers: Assyria, Babylon, Persia. A source of dominance over the world.
 - One suggestion: Not the literal place, but a figure of “the fountain of world dominance” (Lenski)
 - **(Harkrider)**, “The Lord is the “ruler over the kings of the earth” (1:5). He has authority over the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates, and he will sustain His dominion by stirring up enemies to fight against the Romans (16:12). The external invasions of the Parthians did arise from the region of the Euphrates and were according to God’s purpose in bringing about the fall of the Empire.”
- **200,000,000 (9:16)**
 - An army of horsemen 200 million strong. If literal, an area one mile wide and 85 miles long.
 - This is obviously a figurative number indicating an irresistible force.
- **Horsemen and horses (9:16-17)**
 - The description of the horses illustrates the overwhelming nature of their power to destroy.
 - This army, unleashed by the angels, killed 1/3 of mankind.
- **Red, blue & Yellow (9:17)**

- Colors of the breastplates of the horsemen
- Other translations seem to tie them to the fire, smoke and brimstone coming from the mouths of the horses
- Red – literally, fiery; Blue - Jacinth (a dark blue); Yellow – Sulfer (Brimstone)
- **Fire, smoke & Brimstone (9:18)**
 - Indicate total destruction
 - Consider the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example

Slide 58

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 8 & 9 (Part 3)

Identify and define

- **Tails like serpents (9:19)**
 - The ability of these horses to kill came both from their mouths and their tails
 - Just like the locusts who had tails like scorpions
- **Note from Harkrider, finally describing the events of the 6 trumpets:** “It must be understood that this is symbolical language and that all these details are given to dramatize the pageantry. If the trumpets are literal, we are still awaiting their sound, for the world has not witnessed a one-to-one correspondence between the description of each trumpet and an actual event represented in the natural world. However, the trumpets portray a culture collapsing on itself. They represent the demise of the foundational institutions of society, such as government, family, and commerce. The invasions from insects and armies, coming like organized military forces, spread hurt and death everywhere. They represent the heavy toll that violence exacts upon society. Whether internal or external, this collapse finds its main cause in man’s rejection of God’s value system. Men bring this killing curse upon themselves.”

The final point of this section indicates that the chastisements did not lead to repentance. Thus, the bowls of God’s wrath would be poured out! (20-21)

- **Plagues (9:20)**
 - The events from God that chastised men in the blowing of the first 6 trumpets
 - Think of the 10 plagues God brought upon Egypt, likewise as chastisement to Egypt and Pharaoh
- **Demons (9:20)**
 - This would reference false Gods (1 Corinthians 10:20)
 - Since they were not truly gods, they were demonic (evil)
- **Idols (9:20)**
 - Graven images. The actual statutes that were worshipped as actual gods.
- **Sorceries (9:21)**
 - Pharmakeia - **Thayer Definition:** 1) the use or the administering of drugs; 2) poisoning; 3) sorcery; magical arts, often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it 4) metaphorically the deceptions and seductions of idolatry
 - Here, the emphasis may well have been on the immoral lifestyle that would include drug use and addiction.
 - What is the effect of sin in people who refuse to repent?
 - “They see daily what it does to others (and even to themselves), in such things as drug addiction, alcoholism, broken homes, shattered lives, imprisonment, and even capital punishment, and yet they continue to hug this deadly serpent to their breasts, receiving into their hearts and minds a constant flow of its poisonous venom.” (Winters) (Romans 1:28-32)

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A Summary of these two chapters:

- **The blowing of the first 6 trumpets**
 - Six different chastisements of God against those who are evil in the world.

- **First four natural calamities**
 - 1 – Hail and fire affecting Vegetation (1/3 of trees and all green grass burned up)
 - 2 – Great poisonous mountain into SEAS (1/3 of sea creatures & 1/3 ships)
 - 3 – Great star wormwood into FRESH WATERS (1/3 of waters bitter/ many die)
 - 4 – 1/3 of sun, stars & moon struck (dimmed)
- **Last two indicated great violence**
 - Woe 1 – Locusts from bottomless pit. Tormented men for five months (suffering)
 - Woe 2 – Great army of horsemen. Killed 1/3 of mankind.
- **Men did not repent!**
 - Of the works of their hands (idolatries)
 - Did not repent of immorality (murders, sorceries, sexual immorality, thefts)
 - **Note:** Like with the seals, there is an interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets
 - The 7th trumpet is not sounded until 11:15, which we will cover in scene 8.
 - This vision is fairly peculiar.
 - John has revealed to him things that God (at least at that time) would not let him reveal
 - There is another book that contains an unknown message, and John is told to eat it!
 - An important passage to remember (stated at the sounding of the 7th trumpet! (11:15)
 - We may struggle and even fail to understand some of the specific details contained in this book
 - But, this great underlying message (11:15) (i.e. – God is in control, and we win!) should not be understood by any careful reader.

SCENE 7 – THE MIGHTY ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK (10:1-11)

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Introductory thoughts to be stated BEFORE the reading of the text:

- **We have covered in this part of the book of Revelation**
 - The opening of the first 6 seals (Chapter 6)
 - An interlude where the sealed of Israel (144,000), and a great multitude before the throne of God are described (Chapter 7)
 - The opening of the seventh seal, introducing the 7 trumpets (8:1-6)
 - The blowing of the first six trumpets (8:7-9:21)
- **We now are going to look (in our 7th scene) at another interlude before the seventh trumpet is sounded.**
 - The Mighty Angel and the Little book
- **Note: Scene 8, that covers 11:1-19, that covers the sounding of the 7th trumpet, will bring to an end our discussion of the first half of the book. (As noted in our material, the book naturally falls into two halves, (1st half – 1-11; 2nd half – 12-22).**

My Thoughts

- **As Always, a feeling of AWE!**
 - We are again given a view of heavenly things, interacting with God
- **Impressed!**
 - The description of the Mighty angel – His size and the brightness of his countenance (1-2)
 - The noise that accompanied his presence (Roaring like a lion, pealing of the 7 thunders) (3)
- **Apprehension and Anticipation**
 - What did the angel mean when he said, *“that there should be delay no longer”*? (6)
- **Curiosity**
 - What was the message of the 7 thunders that John was not allowed to record? (4)
 - What does the little book reveal about God’s purpose? (8-11)

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What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **That God's intervention was imminent. There would be "no more delay"**
 - This precedes the pouring out of the 7 bowls of wrath bringing God's destructive force against the ungodly forces of evil (both spiritual physical)
- **That God has more forces that he can bring to bear that we do not, and will not know of. We know what God reveals. What He reveals is sufficient. It doesn't touch the hem of the garment regarding His power and abilities.**
 - This is seen by the refusal of God to allow John to write the message of the thunders. (Deut. 29:29)
 - All we need to know is that God hears the pleas of the righteous
 - And in His righteousness, He will punish the wicked
 - **Note:** Consider and explain 1 Peter 3:10-16
- **All that God had planned for the ungodly forces was about to be revealed (the mystery)**
 - This seems to be the significance of the little book in the hand of the angel

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Practice – Application to them and us

To them:

- **The trumpets had sounded the warnings, and now God's wrath was coming.**
- **God is powerful and in control**
- **Their persecution would come to an end**

To us:

- **God bears long, but will judge the ungodly (both physical and spiritual)**
 - Physical judgment (Acts 17:26; Daniel 5:26-28, 30-31)
 - Eternal, spiritual judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10a)
- **God is in control!** (Isaiah 41:10; Philippians 4:6-7)
- **Our distress, though it weighs upon us, is "but for a moment"** (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 10

Identify and define

- **Mighty Angel (1)**
 - In what sense Mighty? Note: Another "mighty angel" is identified in 18:21
 - Mighty – (Thayer – *ischuros*) 1) strong, mighty 1a) of living beings 1a1) strong either in body or in mind
 - "another" – possibly like the angel mentioned in 5:2 (strong, same word as above)
 - The context obviously shows an angel of great power or strength (Large and imposing)
 - Ranks of Angels
 - Jude refers to Michael the Archangel (9)
 - Cherubim/Seraphim (special class of angels)
 - The idea of angels with different ranks and purposes is not without defense
 - He "came down from heaven", indicating divine authority! (cf. John 16:27-28a)
- **Rainbow/Cloud/Sun/Fire (1) – The entire description speaks to the special nature of this messenger of God, and the importance of his work.**
 - *"clothed with a cloud"*

- **Hailey** – “Of the 25 times that the word cloud (*nephele*) appears in the NT, in all but three it is used in some relation to deity or of a divine appearance, often in judgment. This indicates that the angel before us comes clothed with a divine mission relating to judgment.” (242)
- “And a rainbow was on his head”
 - Only here and in 4:3 (Throne room) is the word “rainbow” found (iris)
 - Note: Rainbows are referenced 4 times in the OT. 3 times re: God’s covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:13-16), and once in Ezekiel’s vision in 1:28
- “his face was like the sun” – similar to the description of Jesus Himself (1:16)
- “his feet like pillars of fire”
 - **Hailey** – “The appearance of the angel with the rainbow as a halo upon his head, his face as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire indicates the angel’s close relation to God and Christ and the importance of his mission. As an angel his is a minister of Christ, serving as His messenger...” (242)
- **Little Book (2,8,9,10)**
 - (biblaridion, a diminutive of biblion) – a small book or booklet
 - Contrast with the book of chapter 5
 - Big book – sealed with seven seals, could be made known only by the Lamb of God. Sets forth the destiny and final end of God’s eternal purpose
 - Little book – already opened, could be read and known by John (assimilated and understood). Sets forth only one aspect of God’s purpose.
 - Hailey states that the angel’s setting his feet on sea and land indicates the far-reaching and inclusive nature of the Angel’s mission. The book would pertain to the entire unregenerate world.
 - **Note:** The image of the book being eaten is similar to God’s instructions to Ezekiel (2:8-3:3)
 - This is an indication of mastering the contents. (Assimilate and understand)
 - Note how it would be sweetness to Ezekiel as well, but in Ezekiel 3:14
 - Yet another example, Jeremiah (again, both sweetness and bitterness). (Jeremiah 15:16-18a)
 - Sweet and bitter (10)
 - **Hailey** – “The reception and comprehension of God’s Word is sweet, but fraught with bitterness of spirit in the condemnation of sinners and the proclamation of Scripture’s judgments against men and nations, declaring the consequences of disobedience, the wickedness of sin, and the error and finality of judgment.” (247)
 - What is the significance of the little book?
 - It could be the gospel, (salvation & judgment), but that would seem to be better covered in the book of chapter 5.
 - Consider the angel’s words in verse 11, “*And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings” (10:11).*
 - In coming chapters (11-22, there are judgments against not only ungodly men, but secular powers, religious forces, spiritual enemies.
 - John would prophesy both the sweet message of victory over evil, but also bitterly prophesy of sufferings of ungodly men, and the destructive judgment of God that would fall upon them.
 - (Consider that parallel with Ezekiel above)
 - Harkrider states – “The gist of that little book is contained in the remaining visions of the Apocalypse.”
- **Lion Roar (3)**
 - Commanding attention (Hosea 11:10-11; Amos 3:8)
- **7 Thunders (3,4)**
 - An indication of foreboding power and judgment (with these voices)
 - 7 is the number of the divine (divine power and judgment)
 - Old Testament Examples: (Exodus 19:16; 1 Samuel 7:10; Job 26:11-14)

- **Mystery of God (7)**

- **Note:** This mystery is tied in with the sounding of the 7th trumpet of God
 - A mystery is something that has not yet been revealed
 - In the sounding of the 7th trumpet, there would be a finishing of the mystery. Finishing in the sense that it will no longer be a mystery, because it will be made known!
- We will see that the 7th trumpet will reveal the bringing down of the force behind the persecutions being suffered by the Saints
 - An acceptance of the late date of writing would include the fall of Rome
 - It is God's kingdom that reigns forever! (Daniel 2:40-45)

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- **The interlude between the sixth and seven seals showed that the faithful of God were not forgotten even in the midst of persecution (chapter 7)**
- **The interlude between the sixth and seven trumpets assure that the witness of truth continues unabated and victorious (this will continue into chapter 11)**

SCENE 8 – THE TWO WITNESSES AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET (11:1-19)

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Introductory Thoughts:

- The blowing of the fifth trumpet introduced us to three woes (9:12), "One woe is past", (the locust plague from the bottomless pit), Behold still two more woes are coming.
- The blowing of the sixth trumpet introduces the army/horsemen that would kill a third of mankind. (9:13-21)
- An interlude comes into play in Chapter 10, introducing the mighty angel with the little book.
- Our text for this scene describes the completion of the second of the three woes. Notice (11:14), "The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly."
 - As chapter 10, and chapter 11:1-14 is describing the death and resurrection of the two witnesses, the second woe (as noted several weeks ago), most probably refers to the blowing of the sixth trumpet, bringing the horsemen.
- This would mean that the third woe is introduced with the blowing of the 7th and last trumpet. (11:15-19).

My Thoughts:

- **The temple of God is where God is**
 - (Note: Gk. *naos* – indicating the one building that includes the Holy place and the Most holy place, where God is present).
 - The measuring of the temple is a way quantifying it. To determine its dimension.
 - If we consider this a symbol, it would be another expression of God measuring or determining who is His (1 Corinthians 13:15-16)
- **The unmeasured outer court consists of all those who do not belong to God**
- **The treading underfoot of God's Holy City (those who are His) by the Gentiles for 42 months.**
 - 3.5 years. 1260 days. 42 months. All the same amount of time.
- During this persecution we know that God's witness will continue. The gospel will be preached. (Acts 8:4)
- **We don't know who (if anyone in particular) is intended in the reference to the two witnesses.**
- **They are killed by the beast (vs. 7), but resurrected in 3.5 days (vs. 11). (Despair and Rejoicing).**
- **The blowing of the 7th trumpet... A great demonstration of God's kingdom and victory, as God's wrath is coming, and the victory of His people is ultimately accomplished.**

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What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **It seems that this chapter contains a brief summary of the judgments that were coming against the wicked.**
 - The temple and the holy city here seems to have reference to the people of God (God identifies who are his) (21:2) (Hebrews 12:22-23)
 - The Gentiles are the wicked of the world, persecuting God's people for 42 months.
 - The two witnesses represent the preaching of the gospel during this time of persecution. (Similarly, Jesus sent out His disciples, 2 by 2. Cf. Luke 10:1)
- **The wicked seem to have obtained a victory over the righteous when the beast kills the witnesses (they rejoice and abuse the bodies of these martyrs)**
 - However, after 3.5 days, the resurrection of the witnesses who are vindicated in their exaltation
- **The sounding of the 7th trumpet (which will bring in the 7 bowls of wrath) announces the climax of the book before the throne of God. Christ Wins!**

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Practice – Application to them and us

To them:

- **God identifies those who are his.**
 - The measuring of the temple is a very similar image to the numbering of the sealed of God (144,000) in Revelation 7.
- **The battle with the ungodly will be very difficult, with great loss and seeming defeat a part of it.**
 - 3.5 years being trodden under foot by the ungodly
 - The death of God's witnesses/prophets at the hand of the beast
 - 3.5 days of humiliation and spectacle as the beast and his do despite to the bodies of the prophets
- **Ultimate victory**
 - The resurrection and ascension of the prophets, vindicated by God
 - The blowing of the 7th trumpet proclaiming the victory of the kingdom of God as it subsumes all other kingdoms. (11:16-18)

To us:

- **What identifies us is our measuring up to the reed, which is God's standard. His word!** (Matt. 7:21-23)
- **The proclamation of truth does not silence the faithful** (Acts 5:40-42)
- **Reward to the saints** (Colossians 3:23-25)

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 10

Identify and define

- **Reed like a measuring rod (1)**
 - If we identify the Temple of God as His people, (to be discussed next), the reed like a measuring rod represents the divine unit of measurement upon which God's people are measured. (His will or word)
 - Other example: In 1793, the meter, defined as 1/10,000,000 the distance from the North Pole to the equator, running through Paris, France. (When the figure was decided upon, a platinum bar of that exact length was created as the standard.
 - Later became much more sophisticated.
 - Lesson: Standards are important to establish exact legitimacy. (Objective rather than subjective or approximate!) (Matthew 7:21-23)
- **Temple of God (1)**
 - The word (naos) translated temple here has reference to the Holiest places (where God is).
 - This symbol corresponds with the Lord's church (the ekklesia, or called out. God's people)

- Note: The idea that here is a reference to the physical temple doesn't fit the symbolic language of the text. The temple, the reed, the witnesses, the 1260 days, etc., are all symbols, not to be understood literally.
- In fact, if you accept the late date of writing (AD 96), then the temple could not be literal because it was destroyed in AD 70. (Ephesians 2:19-22)
- **Outside Court (2)**
 - Not to be included in the measurement. Given over to the Gentiles (the wicked. Not to be measured with those who are God's. (Parallel – seal of God VS mark of the beast).
 - The court without represents everyone except for God's true disciples
 - Harkrider believes this includes:
 - Those who have rejected God's standard of divine authority
 - Worldly and indifferent Christians who are not faithful
- **Holy City (2)**
 - Tread underfoot by the wicked (Gentiles)
 - Again obvious, a reference to the persecution of the people of God. (So, the temple & the Holy City would both be representative of God's people.
 - Identified by the measure of the reed
 - Persecuted by the Gentiles of the outer court.
 - The church is referred to in scripture as Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-23; Revelation 21:2)
- **42 months (2)**
 - 3.5 years / 1,260 days / time, times & half a time. All refer to the same amount of time.
 - Half of the number 7 (complete, perfect, divine). Therefore, a broken, finite period of time.
 - During this time the gospel is preached, but severe persecution comes upon God's people
 - Consider the following:
 - Daniel referred to this time of persecution first (Daniel 7:25)
 - The woman who bore the male Child to rule all nations fled for protection for that period of time: (12:6)
 - The woman was nourished and protected for that period of time (12:14)
 - The beast out of the sea is given power to continue his blasphemies and persecute for that amount of time (13:5)
 - The two witnesses would prophesy for that period of time (11:3)
 - **Harkrider:** During this finite period of time the gospel is preached, but severe persecution is waged against the church. However, the saints will not be banished from the earth; instead, they will be nourished by God.
- **Two witnesses (3)**
 - Who are they? We can't determine for sure, though many have speculated: (Enoch & Elijah; Zerubbabel & Joshua; Elijah & Moses; the OT and NT; Holy Spirit & apostles (all examples).
 - What we can know: Two witnesses, who prophesy, are sufficient to establish the testimony! (Deuteronomy 17:6; 1 Timothy 5:19)
 - They are given the burden of teaching God's word during this great persecution
 - They had power to perform signs (cf. 11:5-6), which confirms they are from God (Mark 16:20)
 - Their message (5) (fire proceeds out of their mouths) is the standard that destroys the unrighteous
 - They are given power from God (6) which would sustain them and grant them victory
 - As a symbol, the most obvious interpretation is that they refer to those who preach the gospel during this time.
- **1,260 days (3)**
 - Another way of saying 3.5 years
- **Two olive trees (4)**

- A description of the two witnesses
- In conjunction with the two lampstands
- The olive trees support the lampstands, giving oil to the lamps
- **Two lampstands (4)**
 - A part of the description of the two witnesses
 - The lampstands support the light sent forth by God (Philippians 2:15)
- **The beast (7)**
 - Evil, coming from the bottomless pit, ruled by the fallen star (Satan) mentioned in chapter 9.
 - First reference to this beast (more will become known in chapter 13).
 - After the work of the witnesses are finished, the beast manages to kill them.
 - A prevalent view (which we will enlarge upon in our study of chapter 13) is that beast represents the Roman Empire. The evil power that at that time was persecuting God's people (13:7-8)
 - Mentioned first in chapter 9. The location of the fallen star, who leads the army of locusts.
 - The source of the evil that wars against God and His Son
- **Great City which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt (8)**
 - Early date – Usually make reference to Jerusalem
 - There are a number of times that the term “great city” is used in Revelation (14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10,16,18,19,21). It is called at these times “Babylon”
 - Words like Babylon, Sodom, Egypt all represent wickedness
 - Late Date: Rome – the capital of the empire that is persecuting saints.
- **Note:** If objection raised to Rome, because “where also our Lord was crucified”, then consider the following by **Harkrider**: “Since both ‘Sodom’ and ‘Egypt’ are figurative, the last description, where our Lord was crucified, must be figurative also. Although Jerusalem is the city where our Lord was crucified, to say that Rome is that city casts her in the same truth rejecting mold as Jerusalem. Rome, the great city, possesses the same attitude like Jerusalem who put to death the Author of truth.”
- **3.5 days (9)**
 - Mirrors the 3.5 years – the duration of the witnesses work
 - A broken, short period of time, where the wicked seem to have prospered before God's vindication of the witnesses.
- **Great earthquake (13)**
 - A cataclysm from God, vindicating the witnesses, and punishing the wicked that mistreated them.
 - This could reference any kind of upheaval. For example, political, wars, etc. (Isaiah 24:19-20)
- **1/10 of city (13)**
 - The destruction caused the death of a significant percentage of the city
 - Coupled with the number 7,000 it indicates the full number God intended to destroy for their sins.
- **7,000 (13)**
 - Only a partial part of the city fell, but 7,000 indicates a complete and whole number

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 10, Part 2

Identify and define

- **Seventh angel (15)**
 - The final angel with the 7th trumpet sounding forth
 - Messengers or servants of God tasked with carrying out His chastisements on Mankind.
 - 7 angels who were given the 7 trumpets to sound (8:2)
 - The 7th angel sounds, bringing the third woe of the three mentioned in (8:13).
 - First woe stated as completed in (9:12)
 - Second woe stated as completed in (11:14)

- The third woe coming quickly (11:14)
 - This third woe seems to be included in the defeat of the wicked powers, as stated in 11:15-19.
- **Temple of God (19)**
 - Here, the temple of God is used synonymously with God's throne room.
 - Where God is! (Revelation 21:2-3)
- **Ark of the Covenant (19)**
 - The ark of the covenant symbolizes the promise of God to remember the covenant that exists between Him and His people. (Ephesians 25:21-22)
- **Lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail (19)**
 - Amazing displays indicating the presence of God among His people
 - A very similar description as that given at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:16-20)

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(Zechariah:2:1-5; Hebrews 12:22-23; John 15:26-27; Revelation 13:7, 15-17; 20:10; Daniel 7:27; Eph. 1:20-23)

SCENE 9 – THE TWO WITNESSES AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET (11:1-19)

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Introductory thoughts: (Taken directly from Harkrider's commentary)

- **The first eleven chapters of Revelation have announced Christ as the One who controls the destiny of the world.**
 - He walks in the midst of the churches, completely aware of their works and their struggles.
 - He has the authority to carry out the plan of God revealed in the book sealed with seven seals.
 - When that book is opened, it summarizes God's dealings with the inhabitants of the earth from the period the gospel was first preached to the time of the final judgment.
 - The seventh seal, which contains the seven trumpets, recaps in greater detail the workings of God in calling men to repentance.
 - These trumpets reveal a series of warnings to unbelievers to repent, for the Lord always gives man opportunity to change before he executes judgment.
 - A little book then appears which holds even more imagery about this judgment upon men.
 - **A brief summary of that little book is given in chapter eleven, but a full explanation of how and why that result is reached is unfolded in the last eleven chapters of Revelation.**
- **A new beginning, one might say, is introduced in 12:1 which explains the magnitude of the heavenly conflict.**
 - The seven bowls of wrath are not poured out immediately, as one might expect, when the seventh trumpet sounds.
 - Rather, another interlude occurs to explain who the characters are and what the underlying reasons are for the conflict. (12-15)
 - Finally, the seven angels pour out the bowls of wrath. (16)
 - Thus the seven bowls, which were contained in the seventh trumpet, recap additional information about the wrath of God against the impenitent. (16)
- **Through these revelations the reader is made aware of the fact that all of God's judgments are just and righteous. (Final chapters)**
 - Faithful saints shall be avenged of their persecutors.
 - The might, dominion, and intent of Satan and his agents are terrifyingly real.
 - But let Christians be encouraged to know that the devil's harassment of the church is not because he is triumphant, but because he is desperate.

- He knows that he has but a short time. To be sure, martyrs are yet to die for the faith, but physical death means only that they shall enter the paradise of God. Satan, the beast, the false prophet, and all who have the mark of the beast shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.
- **What are the emotions and impressions you have, upon the first reading?**
- **Awe at the size of the conflict (Grand woman – Great dragon)**
 - The “great sign”, great in scope, but a cause for fearful dread at the conflict itself
 - Harkrider describes (vs. 1-6) as an explanation of the “conflict on earth from heaven’s point of view”
 - (Ephesians 6:11-13)
- **Fear at the power of the dragon**
 - The dragon is later in the chapter identified as Satan himself (12:9) (1 Peter 5:8)
 - This description indicates great intelligence, power and purpose (to destroy/devour the Child) Scary!
- **Gratitude at the intervention of God**
 - The child caught up to God and to His throne
 - The woman’s escape in the wilderness to the place prepared by God
 - God did not, and will not allow Satan to destroy either the Woman or her Child.
- **Enlightenment regarding the true scope of the conflict**
 - Satan’s attempt to thwart God’s scheme for redeeming man is not merely described by Herod, or the Jewish Leaders, or the proclamation of Pilate.
 - This battle is great, with the devil and his angels defeated, and the plan of God fully accomplished in His son.
 - Men discount what they don’t see. John gives us a glimpse of the true extent of God’s victory over the Devil and those opposed to His plan for redeeming man
- **Joy at the victory in heaven**
 - The victory is total. The devil is thrown out of heaven (Ephesians 3:10-11)
- **Trepidation at the Serpent’s persecution on earth**
 - Heaven rejoices at the devil being expelled
 - But, that means the devil now centers his attention upon those upon the earth (1 Peter 5:8)
 - Why does persecution exist? Because the devil is angry!

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What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **A revealing of the underlying motivation for the persecution that Christians were experiencing.**
 - The devil is now on earth, and pointedly focusing on the faithful
 - See (Job 1:9-11). He believes the same of us. If he can touch us, he thinks he can cause us to lose our faith in God
- **The underlying struggle is not merely an earthly conflict, but has its origin in heaven itself.**
 - The woman, the child and the dragon (Behind the scenes)
 - Michael and his angels fighting Satan and his angels
 - We do not often get to see “behind the scenes”. Remember Elisha (as an example) (2 Kings 6:15-18)
- **The reason why victory is sure, is that the struggle ultimately is between God and Satan! (12:10-12)**
- **The persecutions are not because the devil is winning, but because he is desperate! (12:12)**

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Practice – Application to them and us

To them:

- **Think outside the box (physical existence)**
 - John showed that the ongoing conflict was being won or lost in heaven, not on earth.

- **The faithful among God’s covenant people are protected by Him**
 - The woman (which we will see refer to the faithful who are tied by covenant to God) is protected and cared for by God
- **The Devil is to be feared**
 - The imagery shows his power. The ultimate enemy of the people of God, and God Himself. He, for a short while, would continue to trouble the people.
 - However, though to be feared (leading to dependence upon God for victory), he is not able to defeat God. He is like a hurt animal, lashing out in desperation.

To us:

- **Think outside the box (physical existence) (See what is behind the curtain!)** (2 Corinthians 5:6-8) (1:1).
- **The faithful among God’s covenant people are protected by Him** (Isaiah 54:17; Hebrews 13:5-6)
- **The Devil is to be feared (but with the knowledge that dependence upon God brings ultimate victory!)** (12:4,12) (1 John 4:4-6)

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 10

Identify and define

- **Woman (1,4,6,13,14,15,16,17)**
 - The protagonist of this scene (conflict between the dragon and the woman)
 - She gives birth to the male child (obviously a reference to the Christ)
 - Not a reference to the Virgin Mary (remember, this is symbolic language)
 - Some say the Jewish nation (doesn’t fit in with post birth of the child)
 - Some say references the church (doesn’t fit in with pre-birth of the child)
 - Best explanation is that the woman symbolizes the faithful remnant of God’s covenant people
 - The birth of the Christ came through the Covenant promise to Abraham (though, ironically the Jewish nation rejected the Christ).
 - The church came through the redemptive work of the Christ, it did not birth the Christ, so thinking of the woman as the church doesn’t quite fit.
 - Homer Hailey says: “The woman can best be thought of as the spiritual remnant of God’s people who, in faithfulness, had kept covenant with Him. (Micah 4:10)
 - According to Micah, the nation would be given up until the time that redemption came. The one brought forth in labor is a reference to the Messiah-King (Micah 5:2)
 - Isaiah identified the bearer of the man-child as the spiritual remnant of Zion (Isaiah 66:7-11)
 - Not only the birth of the man-child, but the new nation that would come through Him
 - Through the faithful remnant of Israel, the Christ was born, at last bringing into reality the new spiritual nation! The kingdom of Christ
- **Garland/12 Stars (1)**
 - Along with the woman being clothed with the sun, and the moon at her feet, an indication of great glory.
 - The garland of stars, like the sun and moon, represent light (therefore righteousness) (1 John 1:5-7)
 - Garland (Gk. Stephanos) – A mark of royal or exalted rank. The royal crown of victory. (Contrast with the crown upon the dragon. (Gk. Diadem) – a different type of crown. Some say there is a significance to the fact that Satan is never referred to as wearing the “stephanos” crown
 - 12 is a number indicating wholeness or completion. (The number of the tribes of Israel making up the nation).
- **Male Child (1,4,5,13)**
 - The male child refers to the Christ (the coming of the anointed).
 - Verse 5 clearly indicates the entirety of the Christ’s time on earth.

- The reference to His rule is indicative of His absolute authority! (Ephesians 1:20-23) (1:4-5)
- **Fiery Red Dragon (3,4,7,9,12,13,14,15,16,17)**
 - The question of “WHO” the dragon is, is answered in 12:9 READ
 - The significance of the description is found in his power and capability (9:11) (1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:10-13)
- **7 Heads/ Diadems (3) – ON the Serpent**
 - Number 7 indicates completion – hence, full of intelligence (2 Corinthians 11:3)
 - Diadems –Crown. A place of authority or royalty in the realm of Evil.
 - Note: A different word used than (stephanos) used in other places
 - Analysis of difference (Lenski)
 - “We note that Jesus received a stephanos of thorns and then was mocked as King of the Jews. Here the woman has the twelve stars as her stephanos, her symbol of victory... The dragon has no stephanos, not even a usurped wreath of victory, but only “diadems,” royal fillets of pretended kingship, symbols of arrogated dominion. (365).
- **10 Horns (3)**
 - **10 is a complete number indicating fullness or strength**
 - **The Dragon has mighty power, exercising sovereignty over the darkness of the world.** (Col. 1:13-14)
- **1/3 stars (4)**
 - Symbolic of the greatness of Satan’s power. Though it is limited by God.
 - Also, how ineffectual this power is towards the woman and her Child, though it seems so fearsome. (Because God is in control).
- **Devour (4)**
 - Satan has constantly sought to destroy (devour) the Christ, and even the promise of His coming. (Genesis 3:15; Luke 4:13)
- **Rod of Iron (5) – characterization of the male child’s rule**
 - An indication of the Messiah’s ability to wage war against evil
 - The rod indicates a firm rule. In control. (Ephesians 1:20-23)
 - It does not indicate despotism or tyranny (Matthew 11:28-30)
- **Wilderness (6,14)**
 - A refuge for those God protects. (Where the enemies of God are not present)
 - Where the woman receives nourishment (cf. vs. 14)
- **1,260 Days (6)**
 - 3.5 years. A period we have already discussed in Scene 8
 - The time in which the beast and the false prophet wage persecution (11:2-3) READ
- **Michael (7)**
 - Archangel (Jude 9)
 - One of the chief princes (Daniel 10:13)
 - ‘the prince of Israel’ (Daniel 10:21)
 - ‘the great prince’ (Daniel 12:1)
 - A leader of the host of heaven, battling against the dragon
 - **Harkrider:** “Michael was the leader of the army of holy angels whom God used to defeat the army of Satan in his heavenly attempt to destroy Christ. The effect of this battle is that the purpose and plan of God in Christ are fully accomplished (Ephesians 3:10-11).”
- **Cast to earth (9)**
 - The battle is won in heaven
 - Though persecution continues on earth, the devil is defeated, his time is short! (cf. vs. 12).
- **Wings of eagle (14)**
 - Eagle’s wings indicated God’s protection from Egypt, taken into the wilderness (Exodus 19:4)

- In the same way, refuge is given to the faithful. (This is spiritual refuge or protection). They will be able to resist the devil.
- Despite physical persecution, they will be *“more than conquerors”* (cf. Romans 8:35-39)
- **Time, Times & ½ time (14)**
 - 3.5 years. A reference to the same period of time as noted in chapter 11
 - **Harkrider:** “The gospel of God’s kingdom is being preached, but the recipients are under severe persecution from the Roman Empire. However, the promise being assured throughout Revelation is that God will nourish his people during the time of testing.
- **The flood (15,16)**
 - In the OT, a flood signified tribulation from the ungodly (Isaiah 8:5-8)
 - However, God is able to dry up rivers to protect His faithful! (Isaiah 42:14)

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 10

Identify and define

- **Earth (16)**
 - Represents the political powers and peoples who diverted and weakened the Roman Empire
 - Political uprisings, wars, conflicts were used by God to protect and sustain His people
 - God’s providence is seen in the affairs of men. (Though often not recognized). (Acts 17:26-27)
- **Make war (17)**
 - This an indication of the persecution being felt by the children of God
- **Woman’s offspring (17)**
 - In that present time, the people who are faithful to the covenant. Individuals who faithfully obey the gospel and live by it.

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- **Chapter 12 reveals the scope of the conflict which had engulfed the faithful at that time**
 - The protagonists and antagonists of the conflict are here introduced
 - The woman (Representing those who are of the covenant of God (faithful to Him)
 - The child (Representing the Messiah)
 - The dragon (Representing Satan, 12:9)
- **The plot is simple**
 - The devil is defeated in Heaven (God’s victory through His redemptive scheme is assured)
 - The efforts of the devil on earth is due to his desperate realization that time is short (12:12)
- **The comfort for the godly is obvious from this text**
 - In every way, God thwarts the efforts of the Devil, His defeat in heaven is total, and his time is short. Faithfulness begets eternal reward

SCENE 10 – THE BEAST FROM THE SEA (13:1-10)

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Introductory thoughts:

- **Here in this text we see the way in which Satan wars against the seed of the woman on the earth (12:17)**
 - There are two beasts introduced in the 13th chapter. The first is the beast from the sea, and we will next be introduced to the beast from the earth.
 - So that you will have some understanding from the beginning of this reading
 - The beast from the sea represents political power (as a parallel, study Daniel 7)
 - The beast from the earth (also referred to as the false prophet) references religious power

- Their efforts are to *“make war with the rest of her [the woman’s] offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*

- **What are the emotions and impressions you have, upon the first reading?**

My Thoughts:

- **The description of the beast from the sea is similar to that of the dragon in the previous chapter**
 - While similar in description, they are not identical, and they are two different individuals.
 - Note verse 2, *“The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.”*
- **The beast is obviously a political power, with a throne and authority**
- **The political power was worshipped by men**
- **Regarding Emotions:**
 - Revulsion at the beast (Dangerous, powerful & evil (on his heads a blasphemous name)
 - Despair at his initial success against the saints (cf. vs. 7)
 - Joy at the important message of verses 9-10
 - If anyone has an ear, let him hear!

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What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **The evil of the world powers that make war against the saints of God.**
 - The Philistines and other nations in Canaan that warred against the people of God
 - The Pharaoh of Egypt, who showed such disdain for God’s power, even to death
 - The Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, who initially considered himself God’s equal
 - The Roman emperors, who decreed that they be worshipped by their subjects as Gods, persecuting those who refuse
 - The secularists of our day, who deny and ignore the power and might of the Almighty, no longer retaining God in their knowledge.
- **The fact that we can expect such powers to have success in persecuting and even killing the saints.**
 - It always has been that the world persecutes and kills those who follow after God (Matthew 10:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:4-10)
- **The credulous nature of worldly men that cause them to fall down and worship God’s opponents.** (Acts 17:22-25)
- **Such evil and hurtful powers will be killed as they have killed others. With patience, we are victorious.**
 - In Matthew 26:52, after Peter lopped of the ear of the high priest’s servant, Jesus said much the same.
 - Violence begets violence.
 - Each empire throughout the history of the world, no matter how great, was overcome by another.
 - Even the Roman empire fell.
 - (So will America)
 - But, we are victorious in the end because God is with us! (Romans 8:31-37)

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Practice – Application to them and us (Same for both in this text)

- **We need to recognize the world as the enemy. The powers to be, as well as those under their thrall. The Christian should maintain an US VS THEM attitude.** (James 4:4; Romans 12:1-2)
- **The Saint will endure and overcome if he hears God’s word, believes and steadfastly endures.**
 - Here in this text, the knowledge that the beast (Roman empire) would be brought low helps the Christian to endure.
 - We know today, that no matter the darkness of the moment, God’s will shall eventually be brought to fruition (Isaiah 35:3-4; Joshua 1:9)

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- **Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 10**
 - **Identify and define**
- **Beast rising up out of the sea (1)**
 - Note: Different translations vary with regard to who stood on the sea.
 - One variant – “I”, meaning John. The second variant refers back to the previous chapter “he”, meaning the Dragon. (Reason? No pronoun in the original, only the word for “stood”)
 - Regardless, the vision teaches the same thing.
 - Consider the similarity of this vision to Daniel’s in Daniel 7. (7:2-3, 27, 19-26)
 - Like David, the beast of John’s vision is a world empire. Our view of the date of writing coincides with the fourth beast of Daniel’s vision. The Roman Empire
 - Described as like a leopard (swift destructive power), feat of a bear (crushing power), mouth of a lion (tearing power) Note: Coincides with the four beasts of Daniel 7
- **Seven heads (1)**
 - An indication of completeness. As with the dragon an indication of full life and intelligence
- **10 horns (1)**
 - Number 10 is a whole number, indicates the magnitude of the beast’s great power on the earth (cf. 17:12, another designation of horns – the scarlet beast)
- **10 crowns (1)**
 - Here differs with the description of the dragon (7 heads with 7 crowns)
 - Here, 10 horns with 10 crowns
 - Diademata (royalty and great authority). Note, not the victorious crown (stephanos)
- **Blasphemous name (1)**
 - We are told in verse 6 of the beast blaspheming against God.
 - (blasphemy – vilification against God. Slander, evil speaking)
 - An attack against God, a demeaning of His name.
 - Harkrider states that the blasphemous name is an arrogant self-exaltation. Deification of the emperor, in the place of God.
- **Dragon (2)**
 - Satan (cf. 12:9)
- **Wounded head (3)**
 - Would indicate that the mortal death of a single head would not bring down the beast
 - Perhaps the recognition that the empire would continue, regardless of the death of an emperor
 - Some claim that it refers to the death of Nero
 - Others that it refers to a time in the kingdom, where persecution ceased for a time.
 - Harkrider believes the beast to not refer to any one kingdom, but all kingdoms of men that are opposed to God, and persecute His people. Hence, if one kingdom is dealt a death blow, the beast remains alive, and continues to antagonize God’s people in a different guise.
 - Regardless, the indication is the defeat of the beast can come ONLY at the hands of the Lamb (19:20)
- **Mouth (5)**
 - An opportunity or voice to rail against God
 - God (6) – speak arrogantly against His eternal nature and authority.
 - His Name (6) – speak against what He stands for
 - His tabernacle (6) – His dwelling place, including the church on earth
 - Them that dwell in heaven (6) – the angelic beings and host of God’s faithful
- **42 months (5)**
 - Mentioned previously, a significant, but limited amount of time to prevail
- **Book of life (8)**

- Those who are named in the book of Life are those in a relationship with God. The life here is eternal life.
- Note: These names can be blotted out! (22:19)
- Be sure to maintain holiness, that your name may be present “unto death”
- **Captivity (10)**
 - The present position of God’s people on earth. Subject to oppressive government.
 - While the beast makes captive God’s people (eventually the beast will be “captured” by the Lamb

SCENE 11 – THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH (13:11-18)

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- **The devil has given power and authority to evil governments to persecute and overcome God’s people.**
- **Though the beast seems undefeatable, he is not!**
- **The devil has given power and authority to evil governments to persecute and overcome God’s people.**
- **Though the beast seems undefeatable, he is not!**

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Introductory thoughts:

- **As we will see in our discussion of this beast from the earth, it represents false religion**
 - There are other references to this beast in Revelation
 - He is spoken of as “the false prophet” (16:13; 19:20; 20:10)
- Knowing the end from later verses, this beast is nevertheless described as dangerous and intimidating.

My Thoughts

- **A sense of dismay as I see a second beast arise, much like the first (2 Corinthians 4:3-4,7-9)**
- **The second dragon is just as imposing as the first (Supports the beast from the sea) (13:12)**
 - The two go hand in hand, as the second beast also has authority over the people
 - The idea of “cause” is to be considered. It doesn’t mean compelled.
 - It can’t, as faithful Christian’s are not compelled.
 - However, pressure and influence can lead individuals into sin! There is great pressure and influence here! (Matthew 5:32)
 - NOT appreciated by God (leads to the beast’s punishment) (Matthew 18:6-7)
- **False religion can be very deceptive, and was at this time (2 Thessalonians 2:19-12)**
 - Consider that Simon the Sorcerer was able to deceive with his signs, though they were not legitimate
 - He and those in Samaria could see the difference between what Simon did, and the miracles that came from God. (Acts 8:9-13)
- **Fear because of the ostracization of the saints, (economic privation).**
 - We will talk about the number 666 a bit later

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- **What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?**

My Thoughts:

- **The devil works through both secular and religious means to deceive the world and oppress the saints**
- **Even the performance of great signs, when not from God, are to be rejected God’s people.**
 - Consider, God’s signs are greater than any available to the devil.
 - We have already mentioned the account of Simon the Sorcerer
 - Add to this the signs given to Pharoah (Exodus 7:8-13)
 - Remember, God’s scheme and work has already been established! (John 20:30-31; Acts 2:32-33)
 - Any other signs are lesser, counterfeit, and to be rejected by God’s people
- **The devil and his minions are only able to do what God has “granted” them power to do. (Job 1:12)**

- The victory is secured. God does not allow the devil to defeat any who are His (John 10:27-29)
- **The wise man can differentiate between the perfection of the divine, and that which falls short (666)**

Slide 84

Practice – Application to them and us

Them

- **Awareness of the two-fold attack of the dragon against God's people**
 - The world power bringing the oppression is aided by false religion, deceiving those who dwell on the earth
 - Such militance for the empire brings intolerance to those whose kingdom is not of this world!
 - Shadrach, Meshach & Abed-nego (fiery furnace)
 - Daniel (Lion's den)
 - Us today (intolerance toward LBGQT agenda & those who advocate for the rule of law).
- **Awareness of the limited time of the Beasts dominance (cf. 13:9-10), & its ultimate failure (666, 13:18)**

Us

- **The effectiveness of false religion to deceive those in the world.**
 - It is easy to be credulous of false claims regarding what is divine and what is not
 - How to discern?
 - God's word! (Acts 17:11)
 - Dependence upon one another (Ephesians 4:14-16)
- **We need wisdom to know that a stand with God will ultimately gain victory!**
 - The devil can't win! (12:12)

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 11:11-18

Identify and define

- **Beast from the earth (11)**
 - As noted before, he is referred to in other places as the "false prophet" (16:13; 19:20; 20:10)
 - He has a supportive role to the beast from the sea (political or secular power) (13:12)
 - He has the backing of the beast from the sea, so exercises all the authority of the first beast (13:12)
 - **From Harkrider:** "The vision John saw had an element that Daniel's description of the beast-empires did not have. John's vision had a religious aspect inasmuch as the sea-beast received worship from men. When an empire is united with divine qualities, there emerges state religion, state worship, and at its center, the states idol. The Roman Empire, with its god-Caesar, had become precisely this kind of political entity. The two beasts are so intertwined that the false religion of the land-beast was supported by the authority of the political power of the sea-beast.
- **Two horns (11)**
 - "like a lamb". The lamb was significant in regard to religion and sacrifice. So, this would be an indication of the religious nature of the beast's authority
 - However, though the idea of a lamb is found in appearance. The words were that of a dragon! (cf. 13:11) The doctrine of this beast was from the devil, not God.
- **Deadly wound (12,14)**
 - This a reference back to 13:3, concerning the deadly wound suffered by one of the seven heads of the Sea beast.
 - Remember, the only way the Sea beast will be defeated is by the Lamb of God! (19:20)
- **Great signs (13)**
 - The devil has the power to cause "lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:19-21)
 - It is hard to know for certain the nature of these "wonders", but as we have discussed, they are lesser than the divine miracles of the Bible

- The word miracles is used in verse 14. There very well may have been some supernatural abilities that had their origin from Satan. BUT, God's power is greater.
- **Harkrider:** In the biblical sense, an authentic miracle is an observable act directly produced by God with means other than physical laws of nature. If Satan could do the same, there would not be a way to determine the true message of God from the devil's false words. Whatever signs Satan has attempted to duplicate have only been counterfeit.
- We must not be credulous, but discerning. Not taken it by false wonders!
- **Image of the beast (14)**
 - A statue or idol (most probably of the Caesars as the head of the empire).
 - Caesar worship was present late in the first century.
 - The voice of the beast. (Spokesman? Harkrider: Through the function of the priests in the pagan temples and by the requirement of offering sacrifice on the altars, the spirit of Caesar worship came to life, and the mind of the empire was spoken.)
- **Mark (16)**
 - The purpose – to distinguish between those who worship the beast, and those who do not.
 - In some way a sign of loyalty required (no telling if literal or figurative) (cf. Daniel 3:4-6)
 - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused and suffered the consequences
 - Most probably not any more visible a mark than the seal of God that Christians have (cf. 7:3-4)
 - No commerce allowed if not loyalty to the empire and emperor
 - Maybe no employment, or only menial labor. Persecution is not always to death
 - **Note:** What do people say the mark is? SS #? How about Vaccine card today? (Some are claiming that is a mark). No business or travel unless a vaccine passport?
- **Number of the Beast, 666 (17-18)**
 - Typical claim has to do with numerology (For example, NERO. When Nero Caesar is transcribed into the Hebrew letters, the numerical value is 666.
 - Silly, a Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of a Latin name?
 - Also, other names can derive from such playing around with numbers (Hitler, Napoleon, Mussolini, Saddam Hussein, John F. Kennedy).
 - What proves too much proves nothing!
 - A consistent hermeneutic will approach ALL numbers as symbolic
 - 6 is the number of a man. In contrast in this instance, the number 7 represents God
 - When man conflicts with God, man is destined to fail!
 - The beast will fail. Those who have his mark will fail as well.
 - Wisdom teaches us to note that number and know the end of the beast is inevitable.
 - Note: Compare the three sixes to Isaiah 6:3

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- **The two minions of Satan, oppressive empire, and false religion**
- **The false religion is effective in convincing the world to worship the empire**
- **Those without the beast's mark (666) would be oppressed, and persecuted.**
- **Wisdom notes the imperfect and ultimately unsuccessful beast!**

SCENE 12 – THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 REDEEMED (14:1-5)

Slide 87

Introductory thoughts:

- **Our next scene is very different in tone and subject**
- **The previous two chapters were a terrifying description of the enemies of the cross of Christ**
 - The Dragon, and the two beasts

- The very real physical and spiritual dangers that were present among the redeemed.
- **In our scene today, (14:1-5), there is a picture of optimism. Of victory.**
 - How timely this needed word of encouragement truly is.

My Thoughts

- **A reintroduction of characters in a different setting**
 - **The Lamb**
 - (5:6,8) At the right hand of the Father in heaven
 - (6:1,16) Opening the seals and bringing God's wrath upon the world
 - (7:9,10,17) In heaven with the great multitude
 - (12:11) The blood of the Lamb the means of victory for the faithful
 - (13:8) Slain from the foundation of the World
 - **The 144,000**
 - (7:4-8) The sealed of God (7:4) on earth
 - This apparently a reference to a time yet future for God's people
 - **On Mount Zion**
 - With the four living creatures and the 24 elders
 - A reference to the throne room (cf. 4:& 5)
- **A description of individuals who were righteous, then rewarded**
 - Not defiled with women (14:4)
 - Followers of the Lamb (14:4)
 - Honest, and without fault before God (14:5)
- **Encouragement (the reward for a righteous life. In the presence of the Christ)** (Philippians 1:23-24)
- **Anticipation of the joy of heaven** (Psalm 68:2-3)
- **The characteristics (righteousness & purity) of those who are the sealed of God** (1 Peter 1:15-16)

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- **What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?**
- **Basically a simple message that we have already covered fairly well**

My Thoughts:

- **This scene serves as a contrast and needed encouragement to those who were suffering the wrath of the Dragon.**
- **We learn something of the joy to be found in heaven**
- **We also learn the nature of the ones who will be in heaven with the Lamb of God**

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Practice – Application to them and us

Them:

- **They would identify themselves as the 144,000 on earth, sealed of God in chapter 7**
- **Here is a message of hope to the faithful**

Us:

- **Those of us who endure to the end will likewise be saved in the final day of God's judgment (22:14-15)**

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 14:1-5

Identify and define

- **Lamb (1)**
 - Already identified as the Lord, God the Son. (4:6-7)
 - The victor over the Dragon and the Beasts (cf. 19 & 20)
- **Mount Zion (1)**

- The literal Mount Zion is the mount upon which the city of Jerusalem was built
- The highest point in Jerusalem (first captured by David, made capitol city) (2 Samuel 5:6-7)
- NT writers often applied the prophecies of this city to heaven itself (Hebrews 13:14)
- **144,000 (1)**
 - No reason not to identify them as the same as those mentioned in 7:4
 - Those with the seal of God on their foreheads
 - Represents the elect of God under the New Covenant (The Spiritual Jew)
 - We spent a great deal of time discussing why this was not a reference to literal Jews (Romans 2:28-29)
 - Note: If the number is literal, then they must be literal Jews, and they must literally be virgins. (Even the literalists have a problem with all of that).
 - The only change is location (heaven, not earth), indicating final reward (2:10b)
- **His Father's name (1)**
 - The seal of God (7:3)
 - An identification of these 144,000 as belonging to God
 - A consistent rule of interpretation would cast doubt concerning any literal mark
 - God knows who is His
- **Voice (2)**
 - Described *"like the voice of many waters"*
 - *"like the voice of loud thunder"*
 - Perhaps a similar description to the singing of the song in the throne room scene (5:11-12)
 - The voices obviously were singing (the context through verse 3 demands it).
- **Harpists/Harps (2)**
 - **Note:** Use last week's bulletin to discuss how the idea of harpists in heaven has no impact on authorized Christian worship
 - There is a parallel reference to this in Revelation 5:8
 - Consider that the golden bowls full of incense are figurative (they are the prayers of the saints).
 - **Harkider:** "As the golden bowls are symbolical, so also are the harps which they play. They represent musical praise. Heaven is real, but it is a spiritual realm, not a material one.
 - **Note:** in 5:9, *"and they sang a new song"*
 - It seems appropriate to note the parallels between 5:8-9, and 14:1-5, and consider that the harps represent musical praise. The harps "sang" a new song
- **New Song (3)**
 - Why a new song? Because, a NEW EXPERIENCE!
 - Consider our joy and praise when we as the redeemed reach our home in heaven!
 - We will be singing of and experience that we can now barely imagine
- **Four living creatures (3)**
 - Introduced in chapter 4:6-8
 - Around God's throne, worshipping God without ceasing. (4:8)
- **Elders (3)**
 - Introduced in chapter 4:4
 - Possible representation of the Old Covenant (12 Tribes) and New Covenant (12 Apostles)
 - These would represent the leaders of the entirety of God's covenant people
- **Virgins (4)**
 - Remember, 144,000 is not a literal number (represented in chapter 7 the redeemed on earth)
 - This should be obviously "virgins" in a symbolic sense, not literal
 - Otherwise, literally 144,000, all Jews, all men, and all virgins

- So, “virgins” would be an indication of spiritual purity (no defilement). Perhaps a special reference to spiritually chaste in regard to idolatry (2 Corinthians 11:2)
- **Followers of the Lamb (4)**
 - Their allegiance is not to the king or emperor. It is only to the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 5:8-9)
- **Firstfruits to God and to the Lamb (4)**
 - This is accomplished through their redemption with the blood of Christ (5:9)
 - Not necessarily a means of distinguishing them from later redeemed people. (If so, only in the fact that these events are early in the history of the church)
 - More significantly, a separation (as the firstfruits became offerings to God. Sanctified). So, a separation from the Worldly.
 - A comparison between those who belong to God, and those who remain in the world. (Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 2:20)
- **Throne of God (5)**
 - Again, a repeat of the description of God’s throne room in heaven (Revelation 4&5)
 - They were without deceit, therefore worthy of standing before the presence of God (1 John 1:7)

SCENE 13 - THREE ANGELS AND THEIR PROCLAMATIONS (14:6-13)

Slide 91

Introductory thoughts:

- **The remainder of chapter 14 describes the prelude to, and beginning of a great world judgment**
 - The extent of this judgment will be discussed in the next scene
 - Here, we see proclamations emanating from the angels (messengers of God).

My Thoughts

- **There is significance in the fact that the gospel was for “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.” (6)** (Isaiah 2:2)
 - **Note:** The gospel includes a warning of judgment and a call to righteousness
- **Proclamation of judgment is either a concern or a reason to rejoice (7)** (6:15-17; 22:20)
- **Curiosity – To what does Babylon refer? (8)**
 - Babylon is mentioned six times in Revelation. This is the first (16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,21).
 - The original Babylon was the capital of Nebuchadnezzar’s world empire.
 - It was evil, and God brought judgment upon it.
 - Here is it used as an allusion to the evil forces present in the world at that time.
 - Evil described, “*she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*” (8).
 - Reference either to Jerusalem (early date) or Rome (late date). We will make our arguments later.
- **Reason to pause as we contemplate the nature of God’s judgment**
 - Wicked (worships the beast) Wrath of God/torment (10)
 - Righteous (who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus) Blessings and Rest (13-14)

Slide 92

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **The gospel of Christ is for all men** (Romans 1:16)
- **Judgment comes upon the wicked nations of men** (Acts 17:26-27)
- **The torment of the wicked is horrific** (14:20) (Note 1,600 furlongs = 200 miles)
- **Righteousness requires both faith in Christ, and obedience to God’s commands** (James 2:24)
- **The righteous will be rewarded** (Galatians 6:9)

Slide 93

Practice – Application to them and us

Them:

- **As the judgment of God grows near, the exhortation to “fear God and give glory to Him” becomes ever more important**
 - An example would be found in Hebrews 10:24-25
 - The “*day of the Lord*” here most probably refers to the destruction of Jerusalem
 - “*and so much the more*”
- **It is a losing proposition to give allegiance to the beast rather than God.**

Us:

- **We don’t know when Christ is coming “Fear God”** (2 Peter 3:10-11)
- **Do not love the world (place your allegiance with God instead!** (James 4:4)
- **Once saved always saved is not a true doctrine**
 - Those who die in the Lord are identified in verse 12
 - “*who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*”
- **Keep – (Thayer) 1)** to attend to carefully, take care of. 1a) to guard. 1b) metaphorically to keep, one in the state in which he is. 1c) to observe

Slide 94

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 14:6-13

Identify and define

- **Angels (6,8,9)**
 - Spiritual beings (Messengers)
 - These, speaking from heaven spread the message of defeat for the pagan powers that were oppressing God’s people, and the torment that awaits those who worship the beast
 - One: Preaching the everlasting gospel, saying to fear God and give Him glory, for judgment is coming (6)
 - Two: The fall of Babylon (8)
 - Three: God’s wrath upon those who worship the beast (9)
- **Everlasting gospel (6)** (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)
 - Not merely the death, burial and resurrection of Christ
 - Include all that impacts our redemption through Him
 - Example: Before Christ’s death, the coming kingdom and Messiah (Matthew 4:23, et al)
 - Example: Baptism (Eunuch) Acts 8
 - Example: Judgment (as seen here)
- **His judgment (7)**
 - God’s judgment falls upon nations, and individuals
 - There are judgments that are partial (a particular people at a particular time); and the Final judgment
 - Israel, Judah, Babylonians, Medes/Persians, Greeks, Romans (here), Jerusalem (AD 70)
 - Final judgment (Matthew 24:31-46; 2 Peter 3)
 - This judgment is of the Paganism that was at present oppressing Christians. Its fall was imminent.
- **Babylon (8)**
 - Literally: Great city that oppressed the nation of Judah (Nebuchadnezzar as King)
 - Pagans, with idolatry common practice
 - Opposed to the people of God
 - Figuratively: The Roman Empire (City of Rome) center of Emperor worship
 - Note: We will discuss a vivid description of this Babylon in (17:1-18)
 - Described as a woman (harlot), drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs (Revelation 17:18)
 - Consider that Isaiah used the same words to describe the fall of ancient Babylon (Isaiah 21:9)

- **“wine of the wrath of her fornication” (8)**
 - Again, a reference that mirrors ancient Babylon (Jeremiah 51:7-8)
 - Rome seduced the world through Paganism (cf. vs. 13:12)
 - The wine of wrath has reference to the pouring out of God’s wrath (Romans 1:18-19)
 - **Harkrider:** Since the “wine of her fornication” brings about the “wrath of God,” they are mentioned together in the one phrase, “the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”
- **Beast/image (9,11)**
 - The beast is identified in 13:14 as the one the False Prophet deceives men to worship (as the False prophet (Beast of the earth) makes the image.
 - This beast is the Beast of the Sea described in (13:1-10)
- **Mark of the beast (9,11)**
 - First mentioned in (13:16) buying and selling allowed only if the mark is present on the right hand or on their forehead.
 - Those who did not have the mark were oppressed on earth (13:15,17)
 - Those who did have the mark are here stated to be recipients of God’s wrath, a much worse fate.
- **“wine of the wrath of God” (10)**
 - God’s wrath is often described as a cup of wine poured out, in the O.T. (Job 21:20; Psa. 75:7-8)
 - **Note:** “poured out full strength” (NKJV); “without mixture” (KJV)
 - A reference to the practice of diluting wine with water. God’s wrath would not be weakened or diluted.
- **Fire and brimstone (10)**
 - The same judgment that God used to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:28)
 - Even if here they are symbolic, it describes a judgment that is horrific, and to be feared
 - We have the picture of eternal judgment that is very similar to this (Matthew 10:28; 25:30)
 - (Adapted from Harkrider) Can you imagine men asking, “Why would you choose a life that brings such oppression and persecution to you?”
 - A similar question to the ungodly, “Why would you choose a life that means definite torment forever and ever without the hope of relief?”
- **Voice from heaven (13)**
 - The Speaker is identified in latter part of the verse as the Spirit
 - Blessings will come to those faithful until death (Revelation 2:10)
- **Spirit (13)**
 - The Holy Spirit (From whence we get God’s revealed will and blessings)

SCENE 14 – THE EARTH’S HARVEST (14:14-20)

Slide 95

Introductory thoughts:

- **Our discussion of chapter 14 continues with another trio of angels coming in proclamation, and in carrying out God’s judgment.**
 - Just a note: The concept of judgment can reference either the final judgment of Christ at the end of time, or limited judgments upon nations, and empires.
 - Examples: (Joel 2:1-2) [Judah/With Babylon the instrument of Judgment], (Matthew 24:1-2) [Jerusalem, Rome as instrument in AD 70]
- **Our newest scene is such a picture of judgment as predicted by the 2nd and 3rd angels of verses 8-11**

My Thoughts

- **The figure on the white cloud “One like the Son of Man” is impressive. Obviously represents Christ in judgment** (Revelation 1:7)
- **The concept of a harvest. Often used with respect to God’s judgment** (Matthew 3:12)

- **Feelings of anticipation regarding the coming judgment**
 - The faithful had reason to rejoice and desired this judgment of the wicked who oppressed.
 - Do we have the same?
- **It is a sobering picture presented. Imagery of God’s wrath, seen in the sharp sickle, fire and the blood coming from the winepress.**
 - As much as judgment is a cause for rejoicing for the faithful. It is a painful and horrible picture for the unrighteous

Slide 96

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **Christ sits in judgment upon nations (and the world)**
- **Hence, God is ultimately in control**
- **Relief is coming, as the wicked will be defeated and punished.**
- **In short, a microcosm of the message of the entire book. God and His are victorious!**

Slide 97

Practice – Application to them and us

Them

- **It is best to be on God’s side, as Christ is in control**
 - The Christ is wearing the victory crown (stephanos)
 - (Remember, Satan’s crown indicates power and authority, but never victory)
 - (note: stephanos, rather than diadem) victor or conqueror vs royalty. Though both apply to Christ, stephanos ONLY applies to Him.) (Romans 8:38-39)
- **Judgment is imminent, be ready!** (*vs. 15, “for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”*)

Us

- **Judgment is harsh for the ungodly, pleasant for the righteous** (2 Thessalonians 1:4-7)
- **Judgment is imminent, be ready!** (Matthew 25:13)

Slide 98

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 14:6-13

Identify and define

- **White cloud (14)**
 - White indicates purity, and these things that descend from above are obviously emanating from heaven.
 - Though heaven is not physically above us. Spiritually it certainly is, and the concept is clear in scripture.
 - Jesus’ ascension (Acts 1:9-11)
 - Divine Wisdom (James 3:17)
 - Jesus words concerning Himself (John 3:13)
- **“One like the Son of Man” (14)**
 - A reference to Jesus Christ (1:7) (Daniel 7:13)
- **Golden crown (14)**
 - Stephanos crown – The crown of conquering and victory... As contrasted with diadem.
 - Remember, never in the New Testament is Satan referred to as having a “stephanos”
- **Sharp sickle (14,15,16,17,18,19)**
 - Thayer - a sickle, a pruning-hook, a hooked vine knife, such as reapers and vinedressers use
 - A tool of Harvest, both definitionally, and in the context (14:15)

- **Reap, Reaped, Harvest of the earth (15,16)**
 - There seems to be two separate occasions of harvesting in the context
 - If so, the first may have reference to the judgment of the righteous (verses 15-16) (Matthew 3:12)
 - The second, very obviously is a reference to the judgment of the wicked (verses 18-20) (14:19)
 - This may could indicate a chronological action: righteous first, then ungodly second
 - However, that is not necessary.
 - Note: The final judgment of God will come for both righteous and ungodly at the same time! (Matthew 25:31-33; 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10)
- **Three angels (15,17,18)**
 - Messengers from God
 - Note: Typically either to bring a divine message to man, or to execute His will on earth
 - The first angel came out of the temple and proclaimed the time of Reaping had come (15)
 - The second angel came out of the temple to execute God's judgment with the sickle of harvest (17,19)
 - The third angel to proclaim the reaping of the wicked (18)
 - Note: This third angel was given "power over fire", coming from the altar (18)
 - Barnes indicates this signaled destruction, noting the nature of God's judgment of the wicked
 - Consider fire before the altar of God is used to burn incense (the prayers of the saints)
 - But, fire also consumes, and is an appropriate symbol to use of the judgment of the wicked.
- **Ripe grapes (18)**
 - Indicates the fullness of the wickedness present in that time, bringing God's judgment against this world power.
 - When wickedness is full, it is a righteous thing for God to bring judgment!
 - (Note: God delayed Abraham's descendants conquering Canaan, because the grapes were not yet ripe!) (Genesis 15:15-16, God to Abraham)
- **Vine of the earth (19)**
 - **Harkrider:** "The vine of the earth stands in contrast to the true vine who is Christ (John 15:1-8). All those who leave God out of their lives will be cast into the winepress of His wrath."
- **Great winepress of the wrath of God (19)**
 - Consider the reference to Christ dealing out punishment to the Beast, false prophet (and eventually the Dragon himself) (19:15-16)
 - Again, a symbol of judgment. What is the end of grapes when they are ripe? They go into the press. What happens when the wickedness of men are complete? They go into the "winepress" of God's wrath.
- **Blood out of the winepress (20)**
 - Blood and grape juice are familiar to us (the Lord's Supper as symbol)
 - Blood here seems to indicate the finality of God's judgment on the wicked. Together with the amount mentioned in the text, it is breathtaking both in gore and extent.
- **1600 furlongs (20)**
 - Not sure of the significance of the number.
 - A river of blood from the ungodly, its depth to the bridle of a horse. Its length over 200 miles.
 - Obviously not literal.
 - **Homer Hailey:** "Probably the picture intends only to indicate the magnitude and completeness of judgment. Some have sought to explain the 1600 as four, the world number, multiplied by itself, then multiplied by ten times ten, giving the idea of earthly completeness. I have no better suggestion. The picture indicates the gory completeness of God's judgment upon the wicked, as the horsemen wade through a sea of blood that reaches to the bridles."

- **One final note, alluded to earlier in our study:**
 - This seems to indicate the judgment of God upon Babylon, not the final judgment
 - Having said that, it serves as a suitable foreshadowing of the final judgment, and the end of the wicked.

SCENE 15 – INTRODUCTION OF THE SEVEN FINAL PLAGUES (15:1-8)

Slide 99

Introductory thoughts:

- **Previous three chapters show the spiritual reasons behind the struggle Christians were having (persecutions)**
 - The dragon, and two allies (Beast of Sea & Earth/False Prophet) all identified.
 - We then see the attempt of the dragon, once he lost in heaven, to destroy the kingdom of God on earth
 - We see the end state of the church in heaven, in glory and victory
 - We see the followers of Satan cast into the great winepress of God’s wrath
- **In our next two scenes, we will see the details of this judgment of God upon the wicked**
 - Our discussion will start with an introduction here in chapter 15. The pouring out of the 7 bowls of God’s wrath upon the world.
 - Chapter 16 describes these plagues of God’s judgment upon the earth

My Thoughts

- **Consider John’s words – “great and marvelous”**
 - The scene is describing the wrath of God being visited upon the earth, and yet John considered it a “great and marvelous” thing. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-7)
- **Gratefulness at the vision of those who have victory standing on the sea of glass.**
 - This “sea of glass first represented in (4:6). Before the throne of God
- **Rejoicing at the song of Praise of God**
 - How many times have we seen these songs of praise?
(4:8,11; 5:9-14; 6:12; 11:7-18; 15:3-4; 16:5-6; 19:5-7)
- **Vindication as heaven is opened up, and the seven angels descend with the bowls of God’s wrath**
- **The scene of verse 8 , with the smoke of God’s glory filling the temple should cause us awe and fear as we consider the power of God.**

Slide 100

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **The scene is intended to introduce the climax of the book, what will unfold soon, and in the end**
 - Consider the synopsis of Harkrider from his commentary
 - “From this point to the end of the book all of the participants are presented step by step”
 - 1) The full wrath of God is poured out in the seven bowls (15-16)
 - 2) The destruction of the great Babylon is described (17-18)
 - 3) Praise given to Christ who led the victory (19- 20:10)
 - 4) The final judgment and the beauty of the new heaven and new earth (20:11-15; 21; 22:1-5)
- **Remember, the sounding of the 7th trumpet ushers in the 7 bowls of wrath, just like the opening of the seventh seal ushered in the 7 trumpets sounding. (11:15)**
 - Chapters 12-14 constitute an interlude, before the plot continues with the pouring out of the bowls of wrath in chapters 15 and 16.
 - The interlude explains how God is “just” (15:3)
 - The interlude shows how God’s judgments against evil are “true and righteous” (16:3)

- “The stage is now set and the time has come for the final scenes of the **Apocalypse**” (Harkrider)

Slide 101

Practice – Application to them and us

- (The chapter is short, and serves as an introduction. So, applications are limited).

Them

- **We have Victory in Jesus**
- **We must Respect for the Power and Glory of God**

Us

- **We have Victory in Jesus** (1 Corinthians 15:54-58; John 16:33)
- **We must have Respect for the Power and Glory of God** (1 Chronicles 29:10-13; 2 Peter 1:2-4)

Slide 102

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 15:1-8

Identify and define

- **Seven angels (1,6)**
 - Created, spiritual beings that are messengers of God
 - They are described in Revelation as given the responsibility of carrying out God’s will among men
- **Seven last plagues (1,6)**
 - Significance of the number 7, the number of perfection, of God (Following the pattern previously established by the seals and the trumpets.
 - These plagues come from God
 - They are the “last plagues”, as they describe the completion of this judgment of God (As contrasted with the chastisements and warnings that came before them)
 - These, accompanied by the bowls full of God’s wrath (vs. 7), constitute the retribution of God to be visited upon those who worship the beast.
 - God’s wrath will now be felt by the enemies of His people
 - Consider the plagues upon Egypt (cf. Exodus 7 – 11)
- **Sea of glass, mingled with fire (2)**
 - Verses 2-4 Describes the end from the middle, A picture of Victory for the Christ and His people
 - **Harkrider:** Only God can reveal the future before it occurs (Isa. 42:9; 46:10; Rom. 4:17b), and this scene is another of several in the Apocalypse where John is shown the future destiny of faithful saints.
 - The sea of glass is introduced in chapter 4:6, part of God’s throne room (4:6)
 - “*mingled with fire*”? Significance? (Burning bush... purification through trial?)
 - Typical explanations: God’s transcendence (bush). Trials that the saints endured? (cf. James 1:12)
- **Harps of God (2)**
 - We have already discussed the fallacy of using these harps to justify mechanical instruments of music in worship.
 - These are visions, the harps are not literal, they are symbolic, they represent...
 - The harps together with the singing represent the praise offered up to the worthy God of heaven. (cf. 5:8; 14:2; 15:2)
 - To make them literal is to require the sea to be a literal glass sea, etc., etc., etc.
 - **(Harkrider):** “Like the use of the tabernacle (vs. 5) and other imagery, the OT is used to picture the spiritual realities of the NT. These are not intended as a revival of OT institutions, but are used as mere imagery. The point is that the image becomes distorted if there is an attempt to alternate between the symbolic and the literal, or to reverse the heavenly scene to an earthly venue.”
- **Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb (3)**
 - This is probably a reference to Moses’s song of victory after crossing the Red Sea as God delivered them from the and of the Egyptians in Exodus 15:1-8

- In the same sense, in this vision the Lamb's song is also one of victory! (15:3-4, 9-10)
- Note the words, *"Just and true are Your ways"*
- The Judgment we will read about in the succeeding chapters is a just judgment. The unrighteous are worthy of the great wrath of God! The obedient are justly allowed hope due to God's wrath being satisfied by the blood of righteous. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-7; Romans 3:23-26)
- **The Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven (5,6,8)**
 - The tabernacle of the testimony is a name used for the Tabernacle, first in Numbers 1:49-50
 - The combination name in our text is understandable. Both the Temple and the tabernacle contained the Holiest Place – ostensibly the place where God dwelled
 - In this they represent the throne room in heaven.
 - Note: in verse 8, *"and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed."*
 - The purpose of entering the sanctuary was to exhibit repentance, and gain forgiveness
 - God's longsuffering had ended, the judgment had come! (Matthew 25:8-13)
- **Pure bright linen (6)**
 - The linen and its color is indicative both of righteousness and significance (royalty, high standing)
- **Golden bands (6)**
 - Again the value of these golden bands indicated a position of high standing
 - In fact, their attire resembled that of the Christ Himself in 1:13
- **Four living creatures (7)**
 - Again, already identified in (4:6-8)
 - The Seraphim of Isaiah 6:1-3, constantly worshipping the Lord God at His throne
- **Golden bowls full of the wrath of God (7)**
 - Also translated "vials"
 - phialē - Thayer Definition: a broad shallow bowl, deep saucer (Hosea 5:10)
 - **Note:** It is only in Revelation that the concept of bowls full of God's wrath is used
 - Same intent as scene 14 (14:19) *"the great winepress of the wrath of God"* (blood coming out).
- **Smoke from the glory and power of God (8)**
 - Smoke is a familiar indication of God's presence and glory (Exodus 19:18; Isaiah 6:4)

SCENE 16 – THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (16:1-21)

Slide 103

Introductory thoughts:

- **Keep in mind that the sounding of the trumpets constituted God's chastisements and warnings to the ungodly.**
 - God's plagues visited upon the ungodly affected 1/3 (8:7; 8:9; 8:10; 8:12; 9:15)
 - The bowls of wrath we will read about here constitute God's final judgment of the evil present in that time. (Empire, and those who cast their lot with the Dragon and the Beasts)
 - **Rather than 1/3, these judgments are more intense, affecting the whole.**
 - Trumpets were a call to repentance (9:20-21)
 - But, they did not repent
 - The bowls of wrath constitute God's judgment and punishment, the time for repentance has passed.
 - As we read these verses, I would like you to consider the response of the ungodly to these judgments, and compare them to the Egyptians response to the 10 plagues, (Exodus 7-12)
 - We are now beginning a discussion of the climax of the book of Revelation.

My Thoughts

- **I am reminded of the parallel between three trumpets and the bowls**
 - Trumpet 1-4 – Vegetation, Seas, Waters, Heavens (8)

- Bowls 1-4 – Sores on men, Seas, Waters, Heavens (16)
- Trumpet 5-6 – Darkness and Locusts, and Horsemen from Euphrates (9)
- Bowls 5-6 – Darkness and Pain, and Euphrates dried up (16)
- Trumpet 7 – The proclamation of Jesus’ ultimate victory (11)
- Bowl 7 – The fall of the great city, and the pain and wrath of men (16)
- **Despite the judgment, the hardened hearts of men never acknowledge their sin (9,11,21)**
 - Pharoah as example (Exodus 7:13)
 - The rebellious. They know, but they are willful, prideful (Romans 1:32)
- **The magnificence of God’s power and sovereignty gives us pause (Matthew 10:28)**
 - Note: There is no reason to fear if we belong to God in this time (Matthew 10:31)
 - But, those who are ungodly have reason to tremble (Ex: Sixth seal, earthquake, darkness) (6:15-17)
- **The finality of the judgment at the pronouncement of God. “It is done!” (vs. 17, 19). (2 Peter 3:9-10)**
 - The only way to prepare is to always stand prepared! (1 Thessalonians 5:4-8)

Slide 104

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **God’s judgment upon the unrighteous is inexorable.** (1:1-3)
- **God’s judgment upon the unrighteous is just** (5-7) (Psalm 7:8-11, 14-17)
- **God’s judgment comes as a thief** (15)
 - Proud men who have things as they wish them to be, are blinded by their arrogance
 - Especially in the final judgment, there will be no signs indicating the time has come. (2 Peter 3:10)
- **God’s judgment is irresistible** (17-19) (Matthew 24:32-34, A ref. here to the destruction of Jerusalem)

Slide 105

Practice – Application to them and us

Them

- **The need for preparation (15)**

Us

- **The need for preparation** (Matthew 25:1-13)
- **What preparation consists of is daily righteousness** (1 Thessalonians 5:4-10)

Slide 106

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 15:1-8

Identify and define

- **Seven Angels (1)**
 - Angels – God’s servants; heavenly beings; given the task of carrying out God’s judgment in our text
 - Number 7 indicates perfection or completeness (the pattern of 7 continues from seals and trumpets)
- **Bowls of Wrath (1) (notes from 15:7)**
 - Also translated “vials”
 - phialē Thayer Definition: a broad shallow bowl, deep saucer (Hosea 5:10)
 - **Note:** It is only in Revelation that the concept of bowls full of God’s wrath is used
 - Same intent as scene 14 (14:19) “*the great winepress of the wrath of God*” (blood coming out).
- **Here I think it important to emphasize the apocalyptic language used in reference God’s judgment**
 - We are familiar with it, as we have seen it both in Old Testament passages, and here in Revelation regarding the opening of the seals, and the sounding of the trumpets

- If you look at the fall of Jerusalem (AD 69 date of writing) or the fall of the Roman Empire (AD 96 date of writing), you will not see secular reports of literal plagues, darkness, earthquakes, blood, drought, and destructive hail that you can correlate with the chronological pouring out of these bowls.
 - With Rome's fall, three major causes have been identified. Natural disasters, social decay, external invasion.
 - Each of these are dealt with in the symbolic language of our text.
- **Harkrider:** "Any attempts to find in history specific applications of these signs has always met with reasonable objections. Rather than trying to identify definite historical occurrences that would fit these scenes of God's wrath being poured out, the reader should simply accept these in the apocalyptic style as symbolic. God brought to nought the false religion of paganism which was backed by corrupt rulers of a world empire. These signs are revealed in God's picture book, not as specific events of history, but as scenes in which to visualize the awesome terror of His judgments.
- **Foul and Loathsome Sore (2)**
 - Both adjectives describe something very harmful and evil. Decay, pain, grossness describes this plague upon those who are loyal to the beast.
 - The people themselves would be directly impacted by the judgment of God. Direct harm indicated here.
- **Mark of the Beast (2)**
 - Again, that which identifies them as in agreement/fellowship with the beast.
 - All were either identified with this mark, or the seal of God
- **What is the significance of the first bowl?**
 - First four bowls (like with first four trumpets) poured out upon objects of nature
 - First trumpet (scorched trees and grass, indirectly harming man)
 - First Bowl (plague upon the unrighteous, indicating direct affecting of the people)
- **Blood as of a dead man (3)**
 - Coagulated, rotting.
 - Pollution of the seas. Water is necessary to life. Such pollution would lead to the endangering of life.
- **What is the significance of the second bowl**
 - Death of all sea creatures (great impact upon the welfare of man)
 - These parts of nature are all within the power of God's hand.
- **Rivers and Springs of water (4)**
 - Distinction between fresh and salt water. Fresh water even more important to mankind
 - The third trumpet and the third bowl have similar characteristics. Only difference is the extent (1/3 VS all)
- **What is the significance of the third bowl**
 - Again, the first four bowls afflict parts of nature, having a negative impact upon the welfare of the ungodly
 - Third bowl contains the words of the third angel, proclaiming the righteous nature of the judgment (5-6)
 - *"You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due."* (6)
 - *"Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments"* (7)
 - Why just? Consider how corrupt these powers of evil truly are... (17:6)
- **What is the significance of the fourth bowl (vs. 8-9)**
 - Note: No real characters or symbols to discuss
 - Fourth seal impacts the sun (That is extreme temperatures and its effect upon climate and man)
 - It did not cause men to repent. Rather they blasphemed God.
 - As we discussed with Pharaoh (Plagues of Egypt)
- **Throne of the beast (10)**

- KJV – Seat (indicative of his dominion or place of power)
- That over which he had authority
- **Darkness (10)**
 - Darkness is often representative of evil in scripture
 - Now, the ruler of darkness will himself be in darkness (with pain for his acolytes)
 - The description of this torment reminds one of eternal condemnation in hell (Matthew 25:30)
- **What is the significance of the fifth bowl**
 - Similar to the fifth trumpet (smoke from pit, darkness, locusts with sting of scorpion tormenting men).
 - Consider the great pain (gnawing tongue). (9:5-6)
 - (vs. 11 – Again, they railed against God)
- **Great River Euphrates (12) [CLICK FOR MAP]**
 - A large and significant river that runs through western parts of Asia, almost 1800 miles long, emptying into the Persian gulf.
 - A very significant boundary and landmark to the east.
 - The “drying up” of this great boundary would prepare the way for invaders from the East to come and bring low the Empire of oppression
 - (Harkrider: After being weakened from within by natural disasters and moral decay, the Roman Empire was unable to maintain its defense against outside invaders such as the Parthians from the east.)
- **Kings from the East (12)**
 - A force used by God to defeat the evil and oppressive empire
 - While the battle of Armageddon (as we will see) is a spiritual and symbolic conflict, it is appropriate to note that the physical end of the Roman Empire came in part from invasions from the East.
- **Three unclean spirits (13)**
 - Emanate from the mouths of God’s enemies: Dragon, Beast, and false prophet
 - They represent the powers of the devil, and lead the army of Satan in the spiritual battle against the army of the Lord.
 - “Like” frogs – (B.W. Johnson, Johnson’s Notes) “Unclean, loathsome, suggesting the plagues of Egypt.”
 - They use signs and lies (vs. 14) to persuade the kings of the earth to unite with Rome
 - Propaganda – (If we are fighting for the god, the emperor, we are fighting a righteous battle). LIE!
 - Harkrider: “But Caesar worship was a vain system of religion, and it was destined to failure in its conflict with the only true God.”
- **Dragon, Beast, False prophet (13)**
 - Dragon is Satan
 - We have identified the Beast as the Roman empire fronted by the Emperor
 - The False Prophet (Beast from the earth) is false religion, emperor worship.
- **Armageddon (16)**
 - Literally – hill of Megiddo
 - Gathering place of the great battle between the forces of God and Satan
 - Where is Megiddo?
 - Located in the valley of Jezreel (SW of the Sea of Galilee. East of Mt. Carmel)
 - There were towns located there, referenced at the time the Israelites sought to conquer the land. (Judges 1:27)
 - There is a reference to the “waters of Megiddo” (Judges 5:19), and the “Valley of Megiddo” (2 Chronicles 35:22).
 - Note: There is no known geographical site known as the mount of Megiddo
 - (Harkrider: “Since there is no geographical site known as Mount Megiddo, this should give us more than a faint hint that the battle is not a literal battle.”)
 - The area held significance for the Jews

- Barak and Deborah overthrew the kings of Canaan there (Judges 5)
- Gideon defeated the Midianites there (Judges 6)
- Saul was defeated by the Philistines there (1 Samuel 31)
- Pharaoh-Necho overthrew Josiah there (2 Kings 23).
- A place of significant battles (would be an obvious symbolic place for this great battle between good and evil.
- Though the “battle of Armageddon” is spoken of often in theology, the word is found only here.
- The battle itself is described in 19:19-21
- False view of the battle (Premillennialism)
 - A literal, physical battle, yet to happen, with modern weapons of war (tanks, planes, bombs, etc.)
 - They envision it happening right before a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on the physical throne of Israel
- Truth: A spiritual battle against the forces of evil (Devil and his acolytes), and God and His saints
 - Seen in the evil spirits depicted as frogs
 - Seen in the lack of a literal geological location for the battle (All symbolic language)
 - Already fought, seen in the defeat of the Great Babylon (Jerusalem, or Roman Empire). (John 18:36-37; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6)
- Note: While already fought, that doesn’t mean the devil is dead
 - He still works today, and the conflict between good and evil continues as well.
 - We must be on guard for him just as much as the Christians of John’s day. (1 Peter 5:8-9)
- **What is the Significance of the sixth bowl**
 - Paves the way for the great battle, climaxing the victory of the Christ.

Slide 107

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 15:1-8

Identify and define

- **Temple of Heaven**
 - A description of heaven, the dwelling of God.
 - The tabernacle and temple in Jerusalem have always represented God’s dwelling among the people.
 - The great voice mentioned here would seem to indicate God Himself. Regardless, it speaks the Divine will being accomplished. “It is done.”
- **Great Earthquake**
 - Accompanied by noises and thunders and lightnings. (18)
 - Again, symbolic of God’s judgment.
 - The greatest of earthquakes is a compelling way of describing the awesome, and arresting power of God as he breaks up the city of Babylon into three parts. (Psalm 60:1-2)
- **Great city/great Babylon**
 - The center of power of the evil oppression
 - Two views: Jerusalem, or our view Rome
 - The division into three parts is indicative of her complete destruction as a part of God’s judgment. All in league with her (all the cities of the nations) fell as well.
 - Additionally, every island fled, and mountains were not found. In the face of God’s wrath, there is nowhere on earth for His enemies to hide
- **Cup of His wrath**
 - Already mentioned several times: winepress, bowls, now cup. (14:19-20)
 - A symbol of God’s judgment against evil.
- **Plague of hail**
 - As a part of God’s judgment against the Great City, hail falls from heaven

- Consider the plagues against Egypt, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
- Weight of a talent = approximately 100 lbs.
- Can you imagine men, faced with such judgment, to be so antagonistic toward God and His saints to blaspheme Him regardless of this judgment.
- **What is the significance of the 7th bowl**
 - Shows in outline form the judgment of God upon the Great City, and her ultimate fall at His hands.
 - **Note:** The next two chapters will show in great detail just how this would take place.
 - An end of the narrative of sevens (seals, trumpets and bowls) which show to the Saints Gods plan and victory over Satan’s efforts to oppress through Rome.

SCENE 17 – THE GREAT HARLOT ON A SCARLET BEAST (17:1-18)

Slide 108

Introductory thoughts:

- **We are discussing in this text the judgment of the “Great Harlot”**
 - **Note:** There are several different views of who the Great Harlot is.
 - (Verse 5 does not settle, because her identification as Babylon is likewise symbolic)
 - Consider that there are a number of passages in the Old Testament that describe important cities/capitals of kingdoms, in this very way...
(Isaiah 1:12, Jerusalem; Nahum 3:4, Ninevah; Isaiah 23:17, Tyre)
 - Contrast the city of Tyre with the Great Harlot described in our text (17:1-2)
 - Babylon
 - Described in Isaiah 47:3 as “The Lady of Kingdoms” due to the extent of her influence
 - Much like the Harlot of our Text
- **The Most important thing to keep in mind in identifying the Great Harlot is to remember:**
 - This representation indicates great influence and world domination (committing fornication with the kings of the earth)
 - And, great evil (Harlotry often used to describe idolatry, and unfaithfulness to God)
- **We will seek to identify her following the context and structure we have used through our study**

My Thoughts

- **Reminder: We are here fleshing out the events referred to in the bowls of wrath judgments**
- **I am rather amazed at the ugliness of the description of this great harlot**
 - Debauchery, fornication, blasphemy, drunkenness
 - To parallel, prostitution in our day. Garishness, hardness, vulgarity, licentiousness
 - In every way a distortion, a perversion of what we see in the marriage relationship. (Proverbs 5:3-5)
 - This evil AMAZED John (6). It should amaze and disgust us as well!
- **Perhaps some confusion regarding this list of 7 kings, and 10 kings.**
 - Which we will discuss as our examination of this vision continues.
- **Appreciation for the way God uses nations against nations to accomplish His will.**
 - The ten horns on the beast carrying the harlot are 10 kings
 - These hate the harlot (16), used by God to make desolate the harlot!

Slide 109

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **A three-fold evil influence is being dealt with in these chapters: (Following the theory that the book was written in AD96.**
 - We will give evidence in our identification of the great Harlot that she refers to the city of Rome and her influence over the nations she rules.

- The beast's description upon which she rides parallels the description of the sea-beast in Revelation 13:1.
- The false prophet (influence of Paganism), as we have seen, plays a part in the seduction of those who carry the mark of the sea-beast
- **The harlot's influence (Rome) is felt throughout the world. At the time of John's writing, they are seduced by the harlot. (However, the time comes when kings begin to hate the beast!**
 - Hendriksen uses Judas Iscariot as an object lesson
 - At first Judas is enamored with the 30 pieces of silver (mammon was his idol)
 - Eventually, revulsion overcame his and he threw the betrayal money away.
 - In his suicide, the enticement of sin led to his complete ruin (desolation, cf. 17:16)
- **So, these same "kings" are used by God to destroy the Harlot as the irony of her seduction becomes her ruin.**

Slide 110

Practice – Application to them and us

Them

- **The Harlot and The Woman with child (12:1) are the antithesis of one another**
 - The Woman of 12:1, the faithful remnant of God's people who seek God in righteousness
 - The Harlot – Babylon. Entices the world through wickedness (Proverbs 6:23-28)
- **Infatuation with the harlot is to be enticed by wickedness**

Us

- **We are to be the antithesis of world (stand in contrast) (1 Peter 4:1-3)**
- **Worldliness must be rejected. We must not allow ourselves to be enticed by worldly influences.**
 - Consider the end of those who refuse the world, in contrast to those who are enticed by it. (1 John 2:15-17; James 1:14-15)

Slide 111

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 15:1-8

Identify and define

- **One of 7 angels (1)**
 - The 7 angels carried out God's judgment in the pouring out of the bowls of wrath, (Rev. 16)
 - The heavenly beings, created by God served as messengers and agents of His will.
- **Great harlot (1,3-6,7,9,15,16,18)**
 - As noted the antithesis of the woman with child in chapter 12.
 - Description: (1), sits on many waters; (3-6), arrayed in queenly garments; precious jewelry, including a golden cup (full of abomination and filthiness), name on forehead, **Babylon the great**, drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs, (9), sitting on 7 mountains, **that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth**
 - **Note:** Bold above serves as an identification
 - There is nothing in the description that would disqualify Rome as the city to which she refers
 - Rome sat upon 7 hills (9) (CLICK TO SHOW MAP, CLICK AGAIN TO REMOVE)
 - Rome was a corrupter of Kings (Ex: The Herod's of Judah, and their clamoring for the favor of the Emperor).
 - Herod the Great was granted the title of "King of Judea" by the Roman Senate. As such, he was a **vassal** of the Roman Empire, expected to support the interests of his Roman patrons.
 - Herod Agrippa II actually was active in quelling the revolt in Judah, siding with the Romans, and contributing to Jerusalem's fall.
 - The text describes a city that actively seduced kings through worldliness and idolatry

- Rome was the most powerful city on earth (18) *“that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”*
- **Other views:**
 - Papal Rome – due to the idea of false religion. However, this church apostasy comes much later in history than the events described in Revelation.
 - Jerusalem – Not a world-wide dominion or influence (secularly), cf. (15).
 - Literal Babylon – At the time of writing, was completely destroyed.
- **Harkrider:** “During John’s day, Rome was the foremost city which debauched others in several ways – politically, socially, commercially, and even religiously. At specific times from the late first century and reaching into the second and the third, Rome and its provincial officials enforced the imperial religion. This religious system that was put before the world is described in 13:11-18. Indeed, Rome acted as a harlot. She caused the earthly inhabitants to commit spiritual fornication by worshiping the beast.”
- **Kings of the earth (2)**
 - The entire world was influenced by the great harlot
 - This included the vassal kings, as they sought her favor, and those without who were influenced by her decadence
 - (Ex: The United States has a great influence upon other nations. Hollywood, Music, Culture)
- **Scarlet beast (3,7,8,11,12,13,16,17)**
 - Rome (the harlot) sits on top of the beast (indicating guiding control)
 - Rome was the nerve center of the Empire
 - The beast is the Roman Empire (the same beast as introduced in (13:1-8)
 - Same 7 heads and 10 horns
 - Same warring against the saints, and the Lamb
 - A cause of wonder (cf. vs. 8, “those who dwell on the earth will marvel”).
 - *“The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition”* (8)
 - All of the world empires who have fought against God are embodied by such a beast
 - They rise, fall, and are replaced by another (Daniel 2:39-40)
 - In John’s day, this beast is embodied by the Roman Empire.
 - **Harkrider:** “Satan’s cause had revived once again in the power and might of the Roman Empire.”
 - Perhaps a parallel to the vision in (13:3)
 - The beast comes from the bottomless pit (where Satan’s power resides)
 - The beast will go to perdition (ruin). (19:20)

Note: Now that we have identified the harlot and the beast, we need to discuss some of the meaning behind the descriptions given to both.

- **7 heads/mountains (3,9)**
 - The seven heads on the beast represent in this vision 7 mountains upon which the harlot sits
 - These mountains may have a passing reference to the hills of Rome (previously mentioned). But remember, our interpretation respects the symbolism of the language.
 - Here, the 7 hills have a primary reference to the 7 kings of the next verse (17:10)
 - It is difficult to know who the kings represent (7 kingdoms? 7 Caesars? (Note: there were 8)
 - Remember the meaning of 7 that which is complete and whole (thus, a number of God)
 - Five is incomplete, but the majority. Most of these kings have already come and gone.
 - One refers to that which is present. (Perhaps the reigning power at the time of writing?)
 - The final one to come has reference to a secular power that had yet to reign, and would for only a brief time.

- Note: There is absolutely no agreement between commentators regarding and identification of these kings (or by representation, kingdoms). No way to correlate surely with secular history.
- Then, the next verse compounds our uncertainty (17:11)
- How can the beast be the eighth, but one of the seven?
- Harkrider's explanation:
 - Don't try to literalize the numbers 7 and 8. Only that the Roman Empire is part of this group of Kings (Kingdoms mentioned). They are embodied by the Roman Empire.
 - The beast is the king that IS (and though seemingly invincible will be destroyed)
 - Harkrider believes that the one that is to come has reference to the time following the 1,000 year period, "Satan is briefly loosed and gathers God and Magog to compass the camp of the saints one last time. At the end time God's kingdom will be oppressed by Satan's last grand attempt to destroy the cause of God on the earth" (cf. 20:7-8). (We will get to that later).
- **10 horns/Kings (3,12-14)**
 - **Note:** The 10 kings mentioned have no kingdom at the time of the vision
 - Their power comes from the beast (the empire) In other words, they are vassals to Rome
 - **Harkrider:** "Rome rules the world, and its strength is enhanced by these puppet or vassal kings who ruled various provinces."
 - Reminder (the 7 decades of rule of the Herods over Judah) ruling the Jews as vassals of the Emperor).
 - Their single purpose is to serve and strengthen the beast (13)
 - Verse 14 states their defeat at the hands of the Lamb.
 - Note: The central theme of our study, and the book of Revelation
 - Christ overcomes all these seemingly invincible enemies. He is the Lord of lords and King of kings. (Ephesians 1:20-23)
 - **Note:** These vassals would eventually turn on the harlot (cf. 16), make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.
- **Purple & Scarlet (4)**
 - Part of the Harlot's description (what she was wearing)
 - Characteristic of royalty, wealth and power.
 - **Note: (Harkrider)** "To this day the world is attracted by such things as wealth, social status, and political power. The harlot likewise appealed to all people who regarded material things as of primary importance.
 - **ISBE** - Purple dye was manufactured by the Phoenicians from a marine mollusk, *Murex trunculus*. The shell was broken in order to give access to a small gland which was removed and crushed. The crushed gland gives a milky fluid that becomes red or purple on exposure to the air. Piles of these broken shells still remain on the coast at Sidon and Tyre. (2 Chronicles 3:14)
 - **ISBE** – Scarlet and Crimson probably refer to the same dye, and applies to the brilliant dye obtained from a bug. (Daniel 5:16)
- **Gold, stones, pearls (4)**
 - Same as above. Signs of alluring wealth. Precious jewelry that appeals to the worldly and sensual.
- **Golden cup (4)**
 - A significant part of the golden cup. Beautiful on the outside, but filled with abominations and filth. (Matthew 23:25-28)
- **Babylon the Great (5)**
 - Full title on head of the harlot: Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth
 - Title indicates this woman's ungodliness. She was evil, corrupt, and seducer of kings
 - Mystery producing awe and amazement to a world which is seduced by her shallow beauty
 - Note: Spiritual fornication (whoredom) associated with idolatry. (Psalm 106:35-39)

- **Note:** We identify Babylon the Great (in her evil) being used as a reference to the city of Rome
- **Drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs (6)**
 - Here an indication of persecution even unto death. (As we have shown in other parts of the book)
 - Being drunk indicates the effort, extent and obsession with destroying God's people
 - Consider being one of the oppressed, how relevant this description would be to them.
 - **Take in the picture:** This harlot, resplendently dressed and admired, sitting upon this terrible beast, drunk with the blood of the people of God. (No greater picture of evil than this). Satan's tool!
- **Bottomless pit (8)**
 - Mentioned also in 9:1-2; 11:7; 20:1-3
 - The habitation of Satan and his agents
 - Note: This beast will go to "perdition" (utter ruin)
- **Book of Life (8) (13:8)**
 - **The roll of those redeemed by God (those who have the seal of God on their forehead) (3:5; 20:12-15)**
- **The Lamb (14)**
 - Victorious over the kings that fought against him at the beast's behest
 - Lord of Lords and King of Kings
 - Several times and clearly identified as Jesus Christ (5:6-7)
- **The waters (15)**
 - The beast (Empire) and woman (Rome) sitting upon... (dominating)
 - Peoples, multitudes, nations, tongues
 - This another strong indication (because of the breadth of the rule) that the beast and woman represent the Roman Empire, and the city itself.

Note: In response to the idea that there are two women in chapter 17. Following notes seem to indicate that all references in that chapter refer to the great harlot/Babylon the Great

- 1 - (Note: Angel promises to show her to John)
- 3 - Here the woman is shown sitting on a scarlet beast
- 4 - Arrayed in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls. Having a golden cup in her hand.
- 5 - Name on forehead - Babylon, Mother of Harlots
- 6 - Drunk with blood of saints and martyrs of Jesus
- 7 - Angel says, why marvel? I will tell you the mystery. Note: Still talking about the harlot.
- 8 - First, tells about the beast
- 9 - Next, tells about woman (sitting on seven mountains)
- 15 - Waters you saw (upon which the woman sits)
- 16 - Same woman, hated by 10 horns, identified as harlot.
- 18 - Same woman, identified as that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.
 - Woman (Harlot) described as sitting on waters, beast, seven hills.
 - Woman (Harlot) described as seducing kings (2), 7 hills as 7 kings (or kingdoms) (10-11)
 - Woman described as being harmed by the 10 kings (16-17).
 - Either 10 kings are enemies of the woman, or paramours who have turned against her.

SCENE 18 – THE FALL OF BABYLON (18:1-24)

Slide 112

Introductory thoughts:

- **The description of Babylon is given in the previous chapter. We have sought to identify her in keeping with our view that Revelation deals with the judgment of God of the Roman Empire as the enemy of God's people.**

- **In this chapter, a single intent is found. To describe the fall of the Babylon the Great. (Described as the Great Harlot in the previous chapter). This still refers to a city (cf. 17:18).**
 - *“that great city Babylon, that mighty city”* (18:10)
 - *“Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen...”* (18:16)
 - *“What is like this great city?”* (18:18)
 - *“Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth”* (18:19)
 - *“The great city Babylon shall be thrown down”* (18:22)
- **Still described using the picture of a harlot. A corrupt woman who seduces.**
 - (cf. 18:3; as compared to 17:1-2)
- **Consider the complete destruction of the city in the day of God’s judgment upon her as we read the text.**
- **First, ask for perceptions and emotions that arise with the initial reading of the text**

My thoughts

- **I was amazed at the audacity of the declaration of Babylon’s fall. (cf. 18:2)**
 - As example, note Joe Namath’s guarantee that the Jets would win. (NFL/AFL) Superbowl 3, 1/12/69.
 - He was fortunate. Victory was not guaranteed (They beat heavily favored Baltimore Colts 16-7).
 - Not so with God. His will determines with surety what will happen (Isaiah 21:9) (6:15-17)
- **We should be attentive to the warning of verse 4** (cf. 18:4) (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)
 - Note: Sharing in Sin ends with sharing in Plagues (God’s judgment, cf. 18:5).
 - Kings *“stand at a distance for fear of her torment”* (cf. 18:10)
 - Merchants *“will stand at a distance for fear of her torment”* (18:15)
 - Every shipmaster *“stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning”* (18:17-18)
- **It is always enlightening to notice the different perspective that the friends of evil, and those who are opposed have toward the judgment of God!**
 - In previous point we see the kings, merchants and shipmasters mourning the destruction
 - They were prospered by the unholy partnership with the Harlot Babylon
 - But, Heaven, the holy apostles and prophets rejoiced! (18:20) (22:20-21)

Slide 113

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **God intends here to describe the totality and inevitability of God’s destruction of Babylon the Great**
- **He relates the truth that no matter who is allied with her, she will be alone and vulnerable to God (cf. 18:7-8)**
 - Use Edom as an example (Obadiah 3-4)
 - Alliances of Kings not effective against God (Obadiah 7-8)
- **The Fall of Babylon the Great would be complete and final.**

Slide 114

Practice – Application to them and us

Them

- **“Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins”** (2:20-22)
 - Consider the sins of the pagans mentioned in Romans 1:18-32
- **Rejoice at the end of Babylon the great. (Heaven, the apostles and Prophets did, there was reason for their rejoicing as well!**
 - *“God has **avenged** you on her”* (20)
 - **Homer Hailey:** “This is not an expression of glee over the fall of a great city or people, but a rejoicing over the defeat of evil and the victory of righteousness.” (369)

Us

- **We too should refuse to have fellowship with such evil/immorality** (Ephesians 5:11; Matthew 7:14)
- **We should rejoice at God's victory over evil.** (Hebrews 10:29-31; Psalm 3:5-8)

Slide 115

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 15:1-8

Identify and define

- **Another Angel (1)**
 - We have talked at length re: important roles the angels play in John's visions
 - Messengers of God's will / Agents through which God's will is executed
 - This angel is an important one "having great authority"
 - It stands to reason, different angels, different responsibilities and positions
 - **Example:** Michael the archangel (led the army of the Lord against Satan) (Jude 3) (12:7)
 - His authority and importance seen in "the earth was illuminated with his glory."
- **Babylon the great (2,3-11,15,16,18-24)**
 - **Note:** We spent the last chapter identifying the city. Note the description given before and after the judgment of God.
 - Fornication, drunkenness (kings of the earth) luxury, sinfulness, Sorcery (deception), Murderous (blood of the prophets and saints).
 - Sits as a queen (arrogant) clothed in fine linen, purple, scarlet. Adorned with precious stones, gold & pearls.
 - Mighty City. Great city.
 - Fallen (Has become a dwelling place of demons, prison for every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hated bird.)
 - Receive plagues / torment and sorrow / death and mourning and famine / burned with fire.
 - Judgment has come.
 - No more merchandise to be sold by the merchants. Riches are gone, and you shall find them no more.
 - Thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.
 - No more music, crafts, light, marriage/feasting
- **Demons (2) "Dwelling place of demons"**
 - "the habitation of devils" (KJV)
 - The description of verse 2 includes those things that are filthy and objectionable.
 - It is a graphic and highly symbolic depiction of her fall.
 - Demon – (daimon) among the Greeks, referencing lesser gods or goddesses, in the NT having reference to an evil spirit or being opposed to God. (James 2:19, a form of the same word)
- **Every foul spirit (2)**
 - **Foul** - not cleansed, unclean... in a moral sense: unclean in thought and life
 - **Note:** Luke describes the demon that overpowered the Jewish exorcists in Ephesus to be an "evil spirit" (Acts 19:15-16)
- **Hated birds (2)**
 - The imagery of birds (used as unclean and hateful) is found in the OT, in Isaiah, speaking of the judgment of Edom. (Isaiah 34:11-15)
- **Wine/wrath/fornication (3)**
 - Babylon also seduced others to partake in her sin.
 - The idolatry of paganism was characteristic of the world under her influence
- **Kings/Merchants/Shipmasters/Sailors (3,9,11,15,17)**
 - Kings of the earth became rich by allying themselves with her (3) "*lived luxuriously*" (19)
 - Merchants (those who have the mark of the beast) grow rich by trade (11, 15)

- Sea trade was also successful, and the shipmasters and sailors grew rich in the shadow of her excess and indulgence (17)
- **Note:** They all deserted her in her judgment. Bewailing their losses, fleeing in fear of God's reprisals.
- Civil power, economic power, nothing that man authors can stand up against God's judgment
- **Plagues (4,8)**
 - Definition: plēgē - **Thayer:** a public calamity, heavy affliction
 - Consider the dire chastisements and judgments of God we have already noted in the opening of the seals, blowing of the trumpets, and pouring out of the bowls of wrath.
 - The same is described here in the judgment of Babylon the great
- **Merchandise (12-14)**
 - A large number of commodities are listed
 - Gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, citron wood (a fragrant and pretty wood), ivory, precious wood figures, bronze, iron, marble, cinnamon, incense, fragrant oil, frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots.
 - Interesting – *"and bodies and souls of men"* ends the list. Perhaps a reference to slave trading?
 - Economic alliances can be as corrupting and oppressive as any other kind of power. They were profiting off of Babylon the great's evil.
- **GREAT Millstone (21) Millstone (22)**
 - Used as an allusion to the violence of Babylon's fall in verse 21). Refers to end of normal life in 22.
 - Definition: millstone (Thayer: mulos - 1) a mill stone; 1a) a large mill consisted of two stones, an upper and an under one; 1b) the "nether" stone was stationary, but the upper one was turned by a donkey
 - **[CLICK]** I saw a millstone setup in Capernaum in my visit to Israel 20 years ago.
 - A very large and heavy stone. The destructive force as it is thrown down to the sea is an arresting picture for our minds.
- **Light of a lamp (23)**
 - Harkrider associates this with night celebrations...
 - Can you imagine such an influential, large and boisterous city suddenly dark and desolate?
 - **[CLICK]** Have you seen satellite pictures of America at night? Compare that to the New York City going completely dark.
 - Africa is referred to today as the "dark continent" because of the dearth of electricity.
- **Voice of the Bride and Bridegroom heard no more (23)**
 - No more celebrations or feasts
 - No normalcy. No happy celebrations. Only desolation

SCENE 19 - HEAVEN REJOICES OVER THE FALL OF BABYLON (19:1-10)

Slide 116

Introductory thoughts:

- **Up to this point in the book of Revelation, we have focused on the evil oppression of Satan and his servants, and the distress of the saints to which the book is written**
 - That is not to say that there is not much said about victory in Jesus, and God's judgment upon the wicked
 - But, with the fall of Babylon, we move again to a final emphasis in the book
 - We have talked much about the victory in Jesus. Now we find the words of ultimate victory, and the joy that is coming because of it.
 - This overriding theme will continue through the end of the book.
- **As we read the words of this chapter, I would encourage you to think back to the praise offered to God and His Son in the throne room scenes in chapters 4 and 5.**
 - There

- 4 living creatures (Holy God who is eternal) (4:8)
- 24 elders (God is Worthy as creator) (4:11)
- Living creatures and elders (Lamb worthy because of His blood sacrifice) (5:9-10)
- Heavenly host (Lamb worthy) (5:12)
- All of creation (Blessings both to God and the Lamb forever) (5:13)
- Here
 - Heavenly host (God is righteous in judging the great harlot) (19:1-4)
 - Great voice from the throne (Praise to God) (19:5)
 - Voice of a multitude (God reigns, the marriage of the Lamb present) (19:6-8)
- **First, ask for perceptions and emotions that arise with the initial reading of the text**

My thoughts

- **A cause for rejoicing as the scales are balanced. What was wrong is made right in the judgment of Babylon the Great.**
 - The cause of rejoicing is intensified in the realization that the judgment is complete and permanent. *"Her smoke rises up forever and ever."* (14:11; 20:10)
- **The praise of Revelation 4 & 5 is anticipatory. In Revelation it is the product of a realized hope as Babylon is fallen!**
 - (4-5), The seals would be opened. The victory would be won
 - (19), Babylon has been judged. The marriage of the Lamb has come!
- **The reference to the marriage of the Lamb (7-9) brings to mind Ephesians 5:25-27**
 - (Eph. 5) Wife – holy without blemish
 - (Rev. 19) Wife – arrayed in white linen (the righteous acts of the saints).
- **Realize the fact that who you worship is important!**
 - *"Worship God!"* (10)

Slide 117

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **Ultimately, it is the ungodly that will mourn, and it is the place of the righteous to rejoice in God's judgment.**
 - It is all a matter of perspective, as we have noted before
 - The righteous rejoice at God's judgment (22:20-21)
- **God is worthy of Praise!** (4:11) (Psalm 63:1-4)
- **The Marriage of the Lamb is come! (READ verses 7-9)**
 - To understand this section of the passage, we need to know the first century practice regarding weddings and marriages among the Jews.
 - **First, the betrothal (Engagement). Much more serious and binding than our engagements.** (Matthew 1:18-19)
 - Betrothal is binding (considered husband and wife before actual marriage and consummation).
 - A woman would have to be divorced if the betrothal was not followed by the marriage.
 - **Second, a dowry had to be paid by the bridegroom to the father of the bride**
 - Jesus paid the dowry. The price was His own blood shed on the cross. (Acts 20:28)
 - **Third, the bride had to wear suitable garments for the wedding (adorned properly)** (Ephesians 5:27) (19:8)
 - Note: Those not dressed properly will not be welcome at the wedding feast! (Matthew 22:11-13)
 - **Quote: (Harkrider),** "The analogy of the Lord with his people of the New Testament era is expressed in the same terminology. Therefore the church is the bride of Christ (John 3:29; Rev. 21:9). Christ has paid the dowry for the church; he has bought his bride with his own blood (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28).

The actual occasion of the perfect union of Christ, the complete and final blessed consummation of the church with Christ, is reserved until after the final judgment day. This great union is described in chapters 21 and 22. During the betrothal period the bride must make herself ready by arraying herself in righteous apparel.

Slide 118

Practice – Application to them and us (Identical)

Them:

- **Do not grow weary in doing good. Victory comes to the steadfast.**
- **Praise to God (Four Hallelujah's of 19:1-6)**
- **Alleluiah (Definition and Frequency) variant spelling is Hallelujah**
 - (ἀλληλουϊά) – An imperative statement, an exclamation “Praise the Lord”
 - The word is found only these four times in the New Testament
 - It, however, is found 21 times in the Septuigent (GK. Translation of the O.T.)
 - From the Hebrew, the imperative form of “Haw’lal” (to praise) and “Ja” (a shortened form of Jehovah)
 - The many times in the Psalms when the singer says to “Praise the Lord”, these Hebrew words are used. (Psalm 150:1,6) Beginning and end of final Psalm
 - Interestingly, in Judaism it was a call to Praise God (an imperative)
 - In Christianity, it seems to be more praise in and of itself! (“Praise be to God”)
 - Variant spellings come from the two origins (Hebrew and Greek) into the English
 - Hebrew: Hal ja Halleluja
 - Greek: ἀλληλουϊά (allelouia) alleluia
 - These are transliterations. (Made up, taking the place of “Praise Yahweh”)
- **Alleluias in this text**
 - “Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God” (19:1)
 - “Her [Babylon's] smoke rises up forever and ever” (19:3)
 - “Amen” (Direction to all servants and those who fear Him to praise God, small and great) (19:5)
 - “For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns” ... “For the marriage of the lamb has come” (19:6)

Us:

- **Don't grow weary in doing good. Victory comes to the steadfast.** (Galatians 6:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 3:13)
- **Praise to God**
 - It should be a facet of every prayer we offer to God
 - It should be a component of the spiritual songs we sing to Him
 - We should be quick to offer Him praise in our interactions with others.
 - “Are you feeling better?” “Yes, I am, praise God.”
 - “Did you get that new job?” “Yes, praise God, I am truly blessed.”
 - “Were you able to talk with your family about the Lord?” “Yes, and I give all the glory to God!”
 - We can become uncomfortable with the excesses of the Charismatics, who pepper their language with such praise, said as an interjection rather than true praise.
 - Sometimes their worship reaches the point of being disorderly because of their one-upping each other with these expressions. (Much like the Corinthians, as related in 1 Corinthians 14).
 - We can't let the excesses and perversions of others keep us from offering up daily our praises to the Lord (in private, and before others).
 - Paul didn't! (Romans 16:25-27)

Slide 119

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 19:1-10

Identify and define

- **Loud voice of a great multitude in heaven (1)**
 - In contrast with the great despair of the kings, merchants and sailors of chapter 18
 - Praise coming from heaven. (Heavenly host). (Luke 2:13-14)
- **The great harlot (2) (taking the late date of writing)**
 - Identified in Chapter 17, and Judged in Chapter 18
 - Controls the beast (the Empire), is a great city (Rome)
 - Judged because of her evil influence over the world. (violence, idolatry, immorality)
 - Note: In verse 2, specifically (fornication/idolatry; murder of the saints)
- **“Her smoke rises forever and ever!” (3)**
 - An indication of everlasting punishment
 - God’s judgment of evil is final. (14:9-11) (Matthew 24:46, The Judgment Scene)
- **24 elders (4)**
 - Appear numerous times throughout the book
 - Present in the throne room of God (cf. Revelation 4)
 - 12 a number associated with God’s people in each covenant
 - 12 patriarchs of the tribes of Israel
 - 12 apostles who brought the whole counsel of God to the disciples of Christ
 - 24 representative of all of God’s covenant people (Both OT and NT)
- **Four living creatures (4)**
 - Referred to as Seraphim in Isaiah 6:1-3
 - Significant angels, created to praise and serve God before His throne
- **Voice from the throne (5, for sure; is this the same voice in 9-10?)**
 - The speaker is not identified. It emanates, however, from the throne of God.
 - Note: There is a possibility that this voice and the voice of the great multitude in the next verse are the same voice (one individual). Harkrider believes this to be so.
 - Hendriksen does not think so, thinking this voice to be possibly one of the seraphim, or another angel.
 - If so, verse 6 describes the sound of the voice in verse 5
 - If not, the identification of the voice in 9 and 10 “*he*” could very well be the same as the voice in 5.
 - Whether so or not, the voice of verse 9 and 10 overcame John, as he offered to worship him.
 - Regardless, the identity not as important as the praise being offered
- **Voice of a great multitude (6)**
 - Possibly the same voice mentioned in verse 1?
 - Perhaps inclusive of both angels and men in heaven? (Hendriksen) Similar to the gradations of praise mentioned in Revelation 5:8-14
 - Regardless, the identity not as important as the praise being offered
- **Sound of many waters/the sound of mighty Thunderings (6)**
 - Characterization of the nature of the voice in verse 6
 - Waters and Thunderings – An overwhelming sound, praising the Lord
 - Consider how we react to loud waves (we even call loud sounds waves of sound, washing over us)
 - Same with Thunderclaps. They are powerful and memorable.
- **The Lamb (7,9)**
 - Identified from (5:6). A reference to Jesus Christ
 - The lamb “as though it had been slain” references His sacrifice, which makes Him worthy of our worship and adoration.
 - In this context (as the bridegroom), that sacrifice is the dowry for the bride (the church). (Eph. 5:25)
- **His wife (7,8)**
 - The church is “espoused” (betrothed) unto the Lord (2 Corinthians 11:2)
 - This is why the relationship can be described in Ephesians 5 as a wife

- Note: This context refers to a marriage supper, which is a part of the great consummation of our relationship with the Lord in eternity.
- **Fine linen (8)**
 - Appropriate dress for a wedding, indicating purity and chastity (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27) (16:15)
- **Marriage supper (9)**
 - In Jewish culture, the great feast that signifies the end of the betrothal, and ushers in the consummation of the marital relationship.
 - In this context, referencing the Lord and His church, the feast emphasizes those who are invited in (the sanctified) to be one of the party that will be in heaven eternally!
 - Similar imagery in Revelation 3:20
 - **Note:** Those who have not obeyed the gospel or have not been faithful will be excluded. (cf. Luke 14:15-24, Parable of the great supper, when those who make excuses or are unprepared to come are excluded. While the poor, maimed and the blind are invited to the feast)
 - As a feast, we must be among the sanctified to attend. As a part of the bride, our garments must be white.
- **“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (10)**
 - The angel who spoke is not deity, he is a fellow servant.
 - He is like John in the sense that he is *“of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus.”*
 - Note: as he is not Deity, he is not to be worshipped. Only God is to be worshiped.
 - Jesus is God! (cf. John 1-2, 14; Matthew 1:23)
 - He on several occasions, while on earth, accepted worship! (cf. John 9:35-38)
 - A power aspect of the testimony (gospel) of Jesus is fulfilled prophecy
 - It is what convinced the Ethiopian that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 8, cf. Isaiah 53).
 - Jesus is the TRUE Christ, identified by the prophecies of old. (Matthew 5:17-18)
 - As such, the true facts of the gospel are the spirit (the essence) of the prophecies of old.
 - This is one simple and straightforward explanation of this admittedly difficult sentence.

SCENE 20 – THE VICTORY OF THE CHRIST (19:11-21)

Slide 120

Introductory thoughts:

- **In scene 20, we have revealed what is commonly referred to as the battle of Armageddon, first revealed in Chapter 16:12-16 (READ)**
 - Here referred to as the *“battle of that great day of God Almighty”*
 - Led by 3 unclean spirits (like frogs) from the mouths of the dragon (satan), beast (Empire), and the false prophet (false religion).
 - The kings of the earth and of the whole world come against God
 - The place is called in the Hebrew Armageddon (again, Hill of Megiddo)
 - Where is Megiddo? From notes on 16:12-16
 - Located in the valley of Jezreel (SW of the Sea of Galilee. East of Mt. Carmel)
 - There were towns located there, referenced at the time the Israelites sought to conquer the land. (Judges 1:27)
 - There is a reference to the *“waters of Megiddo”* (Judges 5:19), and the *“Valley of Megiddo”* (2 Chronicles 35:22).
 - Note: There is no known geographical site known as the mount of Megiddo
 - **(Harkrider:** *“Since there is no geographical site known as Mount Megiddo, this should give us more than a faint hint that the battle is not a literal battle.”*)

My thoughts:

- **The description of Christ on the white horse is inspiring. It is beautiful, and it is fierce!**
 - Note the three names given:
 - Faithful and True (11) (1:5)
 - The Word of God (13) (John 1:1-2, 14)
 - King of Kings and Lord of Lords (17:14) (1 Timothy 6:13-16)
 - We will discuss the significance of the description when we get to the characters and symbols
- **The Phrase “King of kings and Lord of lords” especially helpful in explaining the victory of the Christ**
 - His authority and power overshadows any opposition. He is above all! (Ephesians 1:19-21)
- **The opposition to Him who sat on the white horse is mighty.**
 - We would quail at the power of the enemy if Christ were not the captain of our Salvation
 - Kings, captains, mighty men, horsemen, people both small and great
 - Beast, Kings of the earth, and their armies
 - False prophet who deceived those who received the mark of the beast (Psalm 23:4-5)
- **The defeat of the opposition is total**
 - Beast and False prophet captured, cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone
 - Their armies were killed with the sword of Christ
 - (In the next chapter we will deal with Satan and his end), he eventually joins the beast and the false prophet (20:10).

Slide 121

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **Christ is and remains preeminent in the world**
- **Because of His power and His preeminence, we who are with Him are victorious.**
- **Consider the rod of iron! (Psalm 2:7-12; 110:1-2; Isaiah 11:1-5)**
 - This indicates His absolute authority and power
 - The Christ is irresistible (in the most literal sense).

Slide 122

Practice – Application to them and us (Identical)

Them

- **Prepare for the battle.**
 - The division (Those with the mark of the beast, those with the seal of God)
 - Regarding those who received the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image (19:21; and, in contrast 19:5)
- **The Christ is your champion.**
- **The battle will be quick, and the victory will be complete.**
 - Interesting, the description given of the two armies.
 - It might be thought that a long and exhausting war would be in the picture.
 - Actually, described in brief paragraph: (19:20-21). The beast and the false prophet are captured and throne into the lake of fire. The rest were killed with Christ’s sword.

Us

- **We are to put on the whole armor of God that we “may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). (cf. Ephesians 6:12-13)**
- **Christ is our champion as well (The Preeminent One)**
- **Our battle on earth is short, and eternity in God’s presence is sure! (Hebrews 13:5-6)**

Slide 123

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 19:1-10

Identify and define

- **A White Horse (11)**
 - You may remember, the opening of the first seal, the first horse was white (6:1-2)
 - On that horse was one with a bow, and a crown (stephanos), and he went out conquering
 - The rider is not identified in 6:2, but many think it to have reference to Jesus Christ
 - It most certainly refers to him here in 19:11
 - The significance of “white” regarding the horse is purity, righteousness
 - The Christ is certainly worthy of riding upon such a majestic horse
- **Eyes like a flame of fire (12)**
 - Jesus described in 1:14, introducing the 7 letters, *“His eyes like a flame of fire.”*
 - In 2:18, in letter to the corrupt church of Thyatira, *“who has eyes like a flame of fire,”* (Hebrews 4:13)
- **Many crowns (12)**
 - Remember, the stephanos crown, given to the victor
 - Here, however, the many crowns refer to (diadem) that of royalty
 - Harkrider calls to our attention the irony: The one who once wore a crown of thorns, and suffered ridicule now appears in glory, highly exalted! (Philippians 2:8-11)
- **Unknown name (12)**
 - What is the name? No one knows!
 - Some things are simply beyond our knowledge (We are too arrogant if we think we can know God fully. All we can know and comprehend is what He reveals. And even that boggles our minds. (1 Corinthians 2:11; Matthew 11:27)
- **Robe dipped in blood (13)**
 - Two possibilities are described by commentators, either is conceivable.
 - One, a reference to the blood of His enemies. (Winepress of His wrath, vs. 15) (similar scene in Isaiah 63:1-6)
 - Two, a reference to His shed blood on the cross
- **Name: The Word of God (13)**
 - Our study of the book of John over the last months see this proclamation of Jesus (John 1:1)
- **Fine Linen/White Horses (14)**
 - God’s army is righteous. The linen and white horses show this
 - (Remember the old Westerns – White hats/Black hats)
 - Also, this helps us to understand the spiritual nature of this conflict (Not the physical battle that Premillennialists suppose). (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)
- **Sharp Sword (15)**
 - Consider that the sword comes out of the mouth
 - Consider the use of this concept in describing the nature of the work done by the word of God
 - God’s word saves the believer (Romans 1:16)
 - God’s word judges the ungodly (Isaiah 11:1-5)
- **Rod of Iron (15)**
 - See the passage from Isaiah above
 - Such a rod (rule) indicates strength, and absolute authority
 - The judgment of the wicked is stern, but appropriate. He does not allow disobedience! (2 Thessalonians 1:5-7)
- **Winepress of fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (15)**
 - The image introduced in chapter 14 (14:9-10, 19-20)
 - The imagery is also found in Isaiah 63:3-6 (God’s wrath upon Edom)
- **King of Kings and Lord of Lords (16)**
 - Though He had an unknown name, on His thigh, the Christ has a name that is well known!

- Who is Leading the fight against the dragon, beast and prophet? The Christ Himself. (1 Timothy 6:13-16)
- **Angel standing in the sun (17)**
 - The picture of the angel standing in the sun would have been awe inspiring
 - God is in control of all creation. The heavens.
 - Consider the image described in this messenger of God's words.
 - A call for the birds to come and eat the flesh of those utterly destroyed by the Christ on His horse.
 - This another clear indication that the battle belongs to the Lord (before it even happens)
- **Beast (19)**
 - We have identified (in accord with our construct in the study (the Empire of Rome)
- **False prophet (20)**
 - We have identified as well (also known as the beast from the earth).
 - It is he who causes *"the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast"* (13:12).
- **Lake of fire burning with brimstone (20)**
 - That which the beast and false prophet were cast into, as they were defeated in battle (20)
 - Just a few words describe their total defeat (and cast into eternal destruction)
 - Other references (20:14-15; 21:8)

SCENE 21 – THE 1,000 YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST (20:1-10)

Slide 124

Introductory thoughts:

- **This is one of the most famous passages of scripture in the entire Bible**
 - This passage is a linchpin of religious speculation
 - The Premillennial doctrine which uses the passage to teach a literal 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ on the literal throne of David here on earth is to the uninitiated a commonly accepted tenet of the Christian faith.
- **Principles to remember when we seek to determine the meaning of this passage**
 - The apocalyptic language of Revelation is continued in this section. Pictures and symbols. We must be careful when seeking to ascribe literal meaning to pictures and numbers
 - Nothing in this passage can contradict other passages of scripture. Remember, go to the plain to interpret the difficult, not the other way around.
 - Not understanding these principles brings error
- **Example, the Premillennialist takes this passage to mean that Jesus Christ has not yet begun His reign in His kingdom.**
 - This contradicts several clear passages of scripture (Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13-14; Philippians 2:8-9)

My Thoughts

- **First, another reason to Praise God in this clear indication of His power over the devil.**
 - In fact, the defeat of Satan and his imprisonment is the emphasis of our text
 - The binding of Satan is not absolute (He is limited in what he can do).
 - **Harkrider:** "He still seeks to devour as a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8), but he is limited. A lion, for example, that is confined within a fenced area can still maul and destroy one who enters his realm. But he has no power to hurt one who remains outside of the boundary."
- **An indication of Satan's limitations. Only can do what he is allowed to do.**
 - Here speaking of his being released for a "little while".
 - It is God who binds him, and God who will release him for that period mentioned
 - As the binding coincides with the end of the beast and the false prophet, it may be that this short period will indicate another period of great wickedness and more physical oppression of the saints?
 - Regardless, it is his final effort before his complete defeat.

- **Concern over the “little while” Satan will be released?**
 - Do present events indicate that this time has begun?
 - Only speculative. Details are too sparse to know for sure what is entailed during this time.
 - We will discuss it in as much detail as we can as this lesson continues.
- **Curious: Who are the beheaded who reign with Christ?**
 - We will again discuss this as the lesson continues
 - One thing to note here: If the 1,000 year reign is literal and on earth, consistency would require beheaded saints living for 1,000 years with him. To say literal and earthly is ridiculous!
 - These are souls, not physical beings
- **Curious: What is the first resurrection?**
 - There are several views here. For example, Harkrider holds to the view that this resurrection is not a reference to a resurrection of the dead at all.
 - James Strauss in his commentary (Bible Study Textbook) was not helpful, only stating that your view will be formed on whether you feel the resurrection to be literal or symbolic.
 - As mentioned, Premillennialists claim a literal resurrection of the beheaded saints, (though they do not require ALL of them to be beheaded). An extra resurrection that is found **nowhere else** in scripture).
 - B. W. Johnson indicates it is a reference to the revival in spiritual form of the martyrs, as they reign with Christ. Not a bodily resurrection at all.

Slide 125

What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **God has Satan under chain, lock and seal**
 - Keys in scripture are an indication of authority. To have a key to pit is to allow it to open, or command it to stay closed!
 - The chain indicates the ability to limit the devil, possessed by God as he confines him to the pit.
 - The seal (3) likewise is an indication of God’s control, as he shut him (the devil) up.
- **Christ’s reign includes the thrones of saints (martyrs) who are reigning with Him.**
 - Interesting. The word throne is used 47 times in Revelation. 3 of them refer to Satan (2:13) and the Beast (13:2; 16:10). The other 44 times the throne or thrones are located in heaven.
 - There is NO reason to attribute Christ’s throne as being earthly. (Note there is no mention of it being on earth here in this text.
 - The souls of the Martyrs are in heaven reigning with Christ in heaven! (6:9-10, 5th seal)
- **Those identified as reigning with Christ are in a position where the second death holds no sway!**
 - This is true for us as well.
 - In the end, the resurrection of the righteous is to life eternal (no second death) (1 Cor. 15:24-26)
- **Finally (at long last), Satan’s defeat will be final!**
 - A final effort on the part of Satan is defeated, and he is thrown into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet are.
 - Torment day and night forever and ever. (Note: No annihilation).
 - As they are tormented, along with wicked men (cf. Matthew 25:46), God and Christ reign (forever and ever). (11:15, 7th trumpet)

Slide 126

Practice – Application to them and us (Identical)

Them

- **In short, the key, chain and seal all indicate God’s authority and power over the devil.**
 - Today, Satan is bound, and not capable of the scope of deception he accomplished in the first century.
 - What does that mean?

- **Homer Hailey** – “The binding of Satan does not render him absolutely helpless or unable to operate; for he continues to be exceedingly active. He walks about as a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour (1 Peter 5:8); but his activity is limited, as a dog chained to a wire between two trees. He can operate only within the limited distance between the trees, and to the length of the chain from side to side. In this binding, Satan is divinely restrained from reestablishing control over the nations.”
- This contrast obviously, because when released, he goes out and deceives the nations.
- Also, it has been pointed out that Satan can no longer gain control over individuals (demonic possession). Perhaps this ability to compel is part of the binding mentioned here.
- Note: Casting the devil into the bottomless pit not punitive (that comes later). It is preventative.
- **Those on Christ’s side, mentioned in verse 4, lived and reigned with the Christ through this period.**
 - First, we are in the midst of this period right now. (We will deal with this further in the next slide).
 - Those reigning with Christ: The martyrs during that present distress. (Also, may refer to all who are righteous).
 - Note: beheading is a figurative picture of such martyrdom (No evidence that beheading was practiced as a rule in the empire).
 - Use of thrones and reigning is an indication of the exaltation of those who are Christ’s.
 - Though we (who live later) are not found in this vision, all who are faithful to the Lord are destined to reign with Him. (Romans 5:17)
- **In the future, the Devil will be released for a short while.**
 - Only here do we have details regarding the circumstances and end to this release
 - The devil desperately gathers together all the world against God and His people
 - God will again intervene (bringing fire down from heaven to destroy the enemy).
 - Satan will finally receive his eternal punishment, joining the beast and false prophet in the lake of fire.

Us

- **Satan is bound today.**
 - There has not been such a deception of nations since the end of the conflict with the beast and the false prophet.
 - This binding is for 1,000 years (running parallel to the reign of Christ). Note: not a literal number. We will address this in the next slide.
 - The power of the beast and the false prophet is broken, and Satan is bound in the pit.
- **The way we escape the second death is through faithfulness to Him.**
 - Compare 20:6, and 2:11 (Letter to persecuted church in Smyrna)
 - This first resurrection is a lifting up to reign with Christ. We can accomplish the same by being steadfast in our lives, until the end.
- **Ultimately, the devil is completely defeated! That is his end!**
 - First he was defeated and thrown out of heaven (12:9)
 - Next, his efforts (re: what Revelation is about) were thwarted and he was imprisoned (our chapter)
 - Finally, he is to be thrown into the lake of fire!
 - Note: His (and the wicked’s) punishment is for an eternity (20:10) (Matthew 25:41,46)

Slide 127

Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 20:1-10

Identify and define

- **Angel (1)**
 - One of God’s servants/messengers (To sound out or perform God’s will)
 - This angel had the authority to lay hold of the dragon and bind him
- **Bottomless Pit (1,3)**
 - First referenced in chapter 9:1

- That from when the tormenting locusts came
- The beast ascended from it (11:7; 17:8)
- A place of evil that can be closed to bind
- Note: The angel had a key to the pit (Had the authority to open and close it).
- **Great Chain (1)**
 - Like the key, a symbol (Not a literal chain)
 - What does a chain symbolize? The ability to bind or limit
 - The angel, with this great chain would bind Satan, limiting his power as he confines him to the pit.
 - Consider the binding of Satan:
 - Jesus bound the devil when he cast out demons during his ministry (Matthew 12:28-29)
 - Jesus also limited Satan through His death on the cross (Hebrews 2:14-15)
 - Here the binding of Satan follows the defeat of the Beast and the prophet. They lost, Jesus won. The devil then is limited. Things he could do he no longer can do. (11:15)
 - It might be noted that the Devil's ability to use an empire such as that of Rome, to deceive the world, and persecute Christians, has not shown itself since the casting of the beast and the prophet into the lake of fire, and the binding of Satan.
 - Plus, the release of Satan for a little season, seems to show a final effort to use the kingdoms of men to defeat Christ and His people.
- **Dragon (2,7,10)**
 - A common reference (in Revelation) to the Devil. (20:2)
 - Also referred to in chapter 12, seeking to devour the woman's child (12:3,4,7,9)
 - Lost the war in heaven against Michael and his angels, and was cast to the earth.
- **1,000 Years (2,3,4,5,6,7)**
 - Refers to a period of time where Satan would be bound, sealed in the pit. (2-3)
 - The period of time where Jesus reigned with the faithful martyrs (4-5)
 - To be followed by the release of Satan from his prison (7) NOTE: he must be released for "a little while" (3)
 - 1,000 = 10 X 10 X 10. the apocalyptic equivalent of a complete amount of time.
 - Harkrider: "The thousand years symbolizes a full, uninterrupted period of time. Neither Satan or any other force can alter God's purposes. His kingdom "cannot be moved" (Heb. 12:28).
 - Note: Premillennial doctrine is based upon assumptions, and misrepresentations of this text.
 - There is no mention here of a reign of Jesus on an earthly throne
 - Taking the 1,000 years as literal years comes with consequences
 - Beheaded saints literally living and reigning on earth for 1,000 years
 - The Messianic kingdom is on earth (when scripture states it is a spiritual kingdom) (John 18:36, Jesus to Pilate)
 - The Kingdom existing at some future date, not yet realized. (Mark 9:1)
 - The text indicates a long and uninterrupted period of time where Satan would be limited and Christ's reign would be sustained and successful. (This accurately represents the time we are in at present).
 - **Jeffery Hamilton:** "In prophesy, the number "one thousand" isn't used literally. It can represent a large value which cannot be counted. For example, God stated, "For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills" (Psalm 50:10). God is not saying that there are literally one thousand hills on which He owns the cattle. Instead, He is claiming the cattle on every hill. In the same way, Revelation 20 is not saying that Jesus would only reign a thousand years. John is stating that Jesus would reign for all the remaining years of the world." (LaVista c of C website).
- **Seal (3)**
 - In context, to seal up, to stop. Referencing a seal placed on Satan for security against Him.
 - Seals (signets) close up. Sometimes for privacy or secrecy – sometimes for security.

- **Thrones (4)**
 - Consistently in the book of Revelation, the references to thrones (re: Christ and those who are his) are found in heaven.
 - Paul clearly indicated that those who belong to the Lord will reign with Him in exaltation (2 Timothy 2:10-13)
- **Beheaded Souls (5)**
 - Use of “they” and “them” indicates the martyrs who had suffered death at that time. (Not here a reference to us, but them.... Those who had suffered at the hands of the beast and the false prophet).
 - Souls (not physical bodies) reigning with the Christ (6:9-11, Finally avenged!)
- **First Resurrection (5,6)**
 - The first resurrection is here described as the victory of the martyred souls
 - The rise to their thrones to reign with Christ for this period of time (the resurrection is a figurative one, as seen by the context).
 - **Harkrider** (Also, Hailey, Hendriksen, Foy E. Wallace and others): “The first resurrection is not a bodily resurrection of the dead, but figuratively it describes the saint’s triumph over Satan.”
 - They went from resting while the persecution continued (cf. Rev. 6:9-11); unto a rising to thrones of exaltation at the end of that period (Rev. 20).
 - Another example of resurrection symbolizing a revival. Would be the return of Judah from Babylonian captivity characterized in Ezekiel’s vision (a valley of dry bones rising again as a nation (Eze. 37:10-14).
 - **Note:** The unfaithful who died during this time would not participate in this first resurrection.
- **Second Death (6)**
 - Those who are exalted to thrones with the Christian will not be touched by the second death
 - This has reference to eternal condemnation (20:14; 21:8)
 - First death is physical death (the end of all until Christ comes, cf. Heb. 9:27). The second death is reserved only for the ungodly.
 - In the margin of Martin Luther’s Bible: “Born once, die twice; born twice, die once.”
- **Prison (7)**
 - The bottomless pit. Where Satan was held for the 1,000 years
 - For a short time (indeterminate, but an intense and short interval of upheaval).
 - Not much known. No details about how long.
 - It seems that in this short period, something similar to what they were experiencing then would come about again. All nations of the earth coming together to war against the Christ.
- **Four Corners of Earth (8)**
 - Every place in the world. Inclusive symbol. Nations from all over the earth
- **Gog and Magog (8)**
 - The other reference to God and Magog is found in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39
 - Magog is referred to in Ezekiel 38:15 as being “far north”
 - God is referred to as the prince of that land in Ezekiel 38:3. The two words are, however, used interchangeably in the text
 - A nation with a large and well armed army with horsemen and horses (38:4)
 - This pagan nation would sometime in the future come against physical Israel (38:16), but would be judged by God (38:21-23)
 - Gog’s armies would be destroyed (39:1-6) and Israel would be restored (39:25-29)
 - Here, the imagery was used to describe the heathen nations that would arise against the Christ.
 - All of Satan’s pagan forces marshalled for this final conflict in his last desperate and doomed attempt to overcome the Lord
 - Again note, NOT a physical battle. Like the one with which Revelation is concerned, a last period of conflict that will test the faith of the Saints. Victory will be won by those faithful to the Lamb of God.

- **Camp of the Saints (9)**
 - A reference to the people of God
 - The church
- **Beloved City (9)**
 - A reference to spiritual Jerusalem
 - Again, a reference to the people of God
 - **B.W. Johnson:** “Assailed the true Church and sought to destroy it. How the Church shall be assailed cannot now be told, but there will be a determined attempt to extirpate it. The beloved city, the spiritual Jerusalem, the Church, shall be surrounded, but in the day of her extremity the Lord will hear her cry for help.”
 - **Note:** The text indicates the complete victory of Christ over the devil and the pagan nations.
 - “And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them” (9)
- **Lake of Fire and Brimstone (10)**
 - The final abode of the beast, the false prophet (19:20), and now the Devil himself.
 - All who reject Jesus as Savior will end up in this place (Matthew 25:41) (20:15; 21:8)
- **Beast and the False Prophet (10)**
 - The evil forces of that day (pagan empire, false religion), that were defeated in the Great battle of the Lord, and preceded the Devil into the Lake of Fire (19:20)

SCENE 22 – THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (20:11-15)

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Introductory thoughts:

- **In our discussion (in the last scene) we have effectively described the events which will end man’s habitation of earth.**
 - The final battle against the eternal reign of Christ, with the final defeat of the devil and his eternal punishment in the lake of fire
 - This sets the stage for the judgment of mankind, discussed in our text today.
- **Other passages that describe the day of judgment...** (Matthew 25:31-33,34,41; 2 Peter 3:10-13)
- **We have been working from the belief that the book was written to benefit those alive at the time of its writing**
 - This is undoubtably so, and yet, this scene depicts events that have not yet happened.
 - It is not out of the character of the book. Depicting the victory of Christ on earth, to then speak of the eternal end of all men.

My Thoughts:

- **The scene depicts Jesus Christ as the glorious judge of mankind**
 - Great white throne
 - The dead judged according to their works (2 Corinthians 5:10; John 5:26-29)
- **Consider the depiction of Christ’s power: “from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away”**
 - Christ had the power to bring the universe into existence (John 1:1-3)
 - He also has power to bring the creation to an end, leading to something new! (2 Peter 3:13) (21:1)
- **Q: Does a depiction of judgment bring trepidation or joy?**
 - “And the dead were judged according to their works” (12), “And anyone not found in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (15)
 - Consider the proper attitude and action of the child of God (2 Peter 3:11-12)
- **The symbolism of the Book of Life is found in several places** (Philippians 4:3)
 - (Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, here, 20:15,17; 22:19)
 - Also see (Luke 10:20; Hebrews 12:22-23; Daniel 12:1; Exodus 32:31-33; Psalm 69:27-28; 56:8; 139:16; Malachi 3:16)

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- **What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?**
- **My Thoughts:**
- **The Judgment of Christ will be upon all men**
 - Note: 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 is not referring to a different day
 - Paul is merely answering the question, what will happen to the righteous dead
 - The righteous, dead and living, will be resurrected to eternal life
 - However, the unrighteous will be resurrected to eternal condemnation (Matthew 25:41)
- **That day will be the end of the heavens and the earth.**
 - Consider the parallel of the phrases found in (2 Peter 3:10-11) and (20:11)
 - Also between (2 Peter 3:13) and (21:1)
- **That day will bring the ultimate victory to God's people, as Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire.**
 - Note: Word Hades in NKJV, incorrectly translated in KJV as Hell (hades, not Gehenna)
 - Both are referred to as enemies of Christ and His church (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26)

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Practice – Application to them and us (Identical)

Them

- **Books will judge as the works of men are judged against the standards that God has set**
 - It is interesting that the books by which we will be judged are stated in the plural
 - **Q:** Is the book that judged the Patriarchs the same as that which judged the Israelites?
 - No, the law of Moses came later than the time of the Patriarchs
 - Were the Israelites and the Gentiles judged by the same book? (Romans 2:10-16)

Us

- **The same thing is true with us, though we should remember that when God sent Jesus, He was sending His Son last of all!** (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2) (Hebrews 2:1-4)
- **For us, the book that will judge us is the law of Christ** (John 12:4-50)

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 20:1-10

Identify and define

- **Throne (11)**
 - The word throne indicates authority
 - We have here stated the authority of Jesus Christ to judge all men (2 Corinthians 5:9-10)
- **Great White (11)**
 - Great (**μέγας mégas**, meg'-as) big, great, high, large, mighty
 - White – Indicates purity (absolute white, as Jesus is absolutely pure)
- **Him (11)**
 - Christ (see 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, as above; Philippians 2:9-11)
 - Absolute authority – *“from whose face the earth and heaven fled away”*
- **Dead (12,13)**
 - Every man, righteous and wicked, who has lived on the earth
 - *“small and great”* (Sea gave up the dead, 13; Hades delivered up the dead, 13)
 - **Note:** Those living at the second coming are not exempt from judgment (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)
 - **Note:** The purpose of judgment if Hades has great gulf?
 - Not to decide (as this text shows, but to mete out the sentence)
 - At judgment, the justice of God is proclaimed! (Hebrews 9:27)

- **Opened Books (12)**
 - These books indicating something different than the book of life
 - The dead are judged “by the things written in the books.”
 - The standard to which they are held by God (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- **The Book of Life (12)**
 - Harkrider: “*God’s roll of righteous people throughout all ages*”
 - (cf. Exodus 32:31-32; Luke 10:20)
- **Things written in books (12)**
 - The actual requirements God has given to any people
 - For us today... (cf. Hebrews 1:1-4), the words of Jesus (John 12:48)
- **Judged (12,13)**
 - Judgment comes as a result of God’s righteousness. Because of who He is, He is compelled to punish unrighteousness
 - He establishes the standard. We obey or do not obey. Our destiny is set.
 - “*the dead were judged according to their works*” **It is imminently FAIR!**
- **Death and Hades (13,14)**
 - The enemies of Christ (as established already, Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 15:24-26)
 - **Death** – That which Jesus ultimately defeats as those who are His are given **eternal life**
 - First death – Physical (separation of spirit from body, cf. James 2:26)
 - Second death – Separation from God (21:8)
 - **Hades** – The realm of the dead who await judgment (departed spirits)
 - Consists of ‘Paradise’ (cf. Luke 23:43, Jesus to the thief on the cross) and a place of torment (cf. Luke 16:23, the rich man) (tartarus)
- **Lake of Fire (14,15)**
 - Place of final punishment
 - Prepared for the Devil and his angels (cf. Matt. 25:42; 19:20; 20:10)
 - The end of all whose names are not written in the book of life
 - Those whose names never appeared, and those whose names were blotted out because of sin.
- **Second Death (14)**
 - Already noted – Separation of God, leading to an eternity of torment
 - **Note:** The day in heaven is never ending... The night in hell is never ending (21:8)

SCENE 23 – THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH (21:1-27)

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Introductory thoughts:

- **In our last two scenes, we have symbols of glory and reward**
- **Keep in mind that those oppressed have been shown their victory over Satan and evil**
 - The Christ has been victorious
 - The Beast, false prophet, and even the devil have been utterly defeated
 - The judgment of the Christ has taken place
- **The visions we will discuss here in chapters 21 and 22 demonstrate the nature and extent of the reward of the faithful**
 - The promise had been given (14:12-13)
 - Now listen to the wonderful description of that rest for the faithful

My thoughts:

- **Everything is new and changed! The evil and sorrow that is present will be no more!**
 - A new heaven and new earth (first having passed away) (21:1) (2 Peter 3:10-13)
 - New Jerusalem (21:2) This describing the church in its exalted state.

- A change of standing. God Himself will dwell with them (21:3)
- No more sorrow, crying, pain or death (21:4)
- *“All things new”* (21:5)
- Full access to the water of life (21:6)
- **The blessings contained here are available only to those who overcome.**
 - The ungodly will have *“their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone”* (21:8)
 - That which *“defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie”* will not enter into that exalted place (21:27)
- **The ornamentation and glory of the heavenly Jerusalem is beyond our comprehension.**
 - The description given here is one showing gold, pearls and precious stones (21:10-21)
 - Here is described a place magnificent in size and scope (gates, foundations, length, breadth, height) (21:14-17)
 - The glory of this place is the glory of God Himself (21:22-23) (Matthew 25:34; Luke 6:20-23)
- **Rejoice, we will be in the very presence of God and His Son.**
 - Under the Old Covenant, men were kept at a distance in the tabernacle and temple (Leviticus 16:2)
 - Under the New Covenant, we are brought near to God through the mediation of Christ the High Priest. (Hebrews 4:16)
 - In eternity, we will be with God! (21:3)

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What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **In eternity, the righteous will have intimate access to God and the Son.** (Colossians 3:1-4)
- **WARNING: There is no place for the ungodly in heaven.** (Romans 1:28-32)
- **“Heaven is a wonderful place, filled with glory and grace. I want to see my Savior’s face...”** (Matthew 6:19-21)

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Practice – Application to them and us (Identical)

Them:

- **A promise – Heaven is worth the effort to go there**
- **A warning – Those who are in sin will not make it to heaven**
 - BTW, we see the fallacy of “accentuating the positive and eliminating the negative”
 - Even in this passage that details the precious nature of what the church will enjoy and experience in eternity, there are two specific warnings about the lot of the evil. (21:8,27)

Us:

- **Our focus must be on the eternal. There is value found in having our names in the book of life.** (Philippians 4:8-9)
- **If we don’t live for God, our eternal destiny is to burn in the lake of fire.** (Galatians 5:19-21)

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 20:1-10

Identify and define

- **New heaven & earth (1)**
 - Our text in Revelation 21 refers to the eternal, future abode of the righteous
 - This is a view of life after death/**after judgment**
 - The New heaven and earth indicates that the present physical universe will pass away, cf. Revelation 20:11 *“there was found no place for them”*
 - With this Peter agrees (2 Peter 3:10-13)

- This phrase has reference to the new destiny of God's people, that which follows the church age, of which we are now a part.
- **Sea (1)**
 - Specifically, there will be "*no more sea*" (Harkrider posits two possibilities)
 - One, a removal of the sea of glass (4:6) in front of the throne of God. In eternity there will be nothing between God and His people. Or, two, the removal of the sea from which the beast arose (as noted in 13:1). No more conflict or war against God and His people.
 - I like the first explanation. But, if the verse is dealing specifically with the end of the physical, then the second explanation is more accurate.
- **New Jerusalem (2,10-27)**
 - The language has a special intention of declaring the people of God (in all periods of time) (22:19)
 - This city is the destiny (the eternal abode) of all who belong to Christ! (Hebrews 12:22-24)
 - In the vision, it descends from God (so, it is itself heavenly). John in the vision, is given (by the city descending to him), an opportunity to behold the splendor of the heavenly abode of God's people. (1 Peter 1:3-4)
 - **Note:** The new Jerusalem is referred to be as "a bride adorned for her husband", which is, of course an image used to represent the church in scripture. (Romans 7:4)
 - There is a beautiful description given of the New Jerusalem in verses 10-27, which we will discuss as our symbols progress.
- **Adorned bride (2)**
 - The preparation of the bride is found in **sanctification** (2 Corinthians 11:2-3)
- **Tabernacle of God (3)**
 - Tabernacle references the habitation of God (the most holy place)
 - In eternity, we will be in the very presence of God
 - **Harkrider:** "Uninterrupted fellowship and total union with God will characterize heaven and the age to come. His tabernacle or dwelling place will be with men in a more personal way than He has ever been before."
- **Alpha & Omega (6)**
 - First and the last letters of the Greek New Testament
 - "*The beginning and the end*" (Eternal in existence, preeminent in position).
 - The claim is made here, also in 1:8, 1:11, and 22:13
 - Note the context: "*It is done*" (6). The work of redemption is finished. The reward is assured.
 - (Read verses 3-7 to see the entire context of this declaration).
- **Water of life (6)**
 - Also, see (22:17)
 - Remember Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman in John 4:13-14
 - A reference to God's gift of eternal life to the faithful.
- **Lake (fire, brimstone) (8)**
 - The final destination of the devil, beast, false prophet, Death and Hades, and all the unrighteous
 - A description of hell, and reference to eternal punishment (see also 19:20; 20:10; 20:14-15).
 - Read verse 8 for a list of the types of wickedness that leads to destruction. Note that lying is placed side by side with murder, fornication, and idolatry.
- **One of 7 angels (9)**
 - God's servants and messengers
 - (This angel is first mentioned in chapter 15)
 - It is interesting here that John recognized the Angel from the previous vision!
- **Seven bowls/plagues (9)**
 - The plagues that God had visited upon the evildoers, described in 15-16

- Interestingly, the plagues end with the judgment of the great whore, Babylon the Great
- Now, the angel shows John the Bride, (in great contrast to the great whore). This leads to a description of the Holy Jerusalem, prepared as a bride for God.
- (Before looking at some of the symbols, read again the description (10-26)
- Note: Glory of God (like a jasper (clear) a diamond? (11)
- **Number 12 (12,14)**
 - 12 gates and 12 foundations
 - 12 represents the people of God (as seen in the 12 tribes written upon the gates).
 - Plenty of gates (3 on each side), so that all of God's people will gain entrance. (2 Peter 1:11)
- **Gates & description (12,21)**
 - As noted above, indicating entrance into eternal life for all of God's children.
 - A great and high wall shows the protection of God for His people (no more war or conflict)
 - The gates are on each side of the city. Each gate (21) was of one pearl.
 - Pearls were highly sought and precious in the ancient world.
- **Foundations & description (14, 19-20)**
 - The great high wall has 12 foundations (in them the names of the apostles).
 - The apostles had, of course, the foundational work of spreading the gospel in the first century.
 - The foundations adorned with precious stones. (1 - Jasper/Diamond; 2 - sapphire, clear blue; 3 - chalcedony – “green carbonite of copper”; 4 - emerald – the greenest of stones; 5 - Sardonyx – an onyx with white, red and brown; 6 - Sardius – red stone; 7 - chrysolite – a stone of golden color like our topaz or amber; 8 - beryl – a stone similar to the emerald, tinged with yellow, blue or green; 9 - Topaz – (not like ours) a stone of yellowish green color; 10 - chrysoprasus – probably a pale green stone, similar to the emerald; 11 - jacinth – a darker blue like the modern sapphire; 12 - amethyst – a stone with brilliant violet or purple color).
- **Walls & description (14-18)**
 - The wall was 144 cubits. Seems to indicate the thickness of the wall. (12 X 12) full security.
 - Was of Jasper (diamond) with the city of pure Gold, transparent like glass.
- **Dimensions of city / gold reed (15-17)**
 - 12,000 furlongs, breadth, length and height.
 - The number is figurative (immense) 12X10X10X10. the complete, full number
 - Plenty of room for all of God's children
 - The reed is intended to measure (gold = precious value)
 - Measures the perfection of the city (in its provisions), the gates (as means of entrance) and the walls (security of protection).
- **Nations (24,26)**
 - Here the nations of necessity must have a reference to the people of God, from all times and places.
 - Remember, nothing that causes an abomination can enter into the city. (27)
 - God's purpose in establishing nations was to bring people to God (Acts 17:26-27)

SCENE 24 – THE RIVER OF LIFE AND JESUS' TESTIMONY (22:1-17)

Slide 136

Introductory thoughts:

- **In chapter 21, we begin our picture of perfection, exaltation and glory. We will be in the presence of God, and there is a clear differentiation between the righteous, and the wicked, who will spend their eternity in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.**
- **Consider the perfection, where the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple.**
 - With those whose names are written in the book of life there in their presence!
 - In our final chapter, the descriptions of glory and perfection continue.

My Thoughts:

- **Images of the gifts of eternal life are beautiful and for us if we are servants of God.** (1 John 2:24-25)
- **There is a wonderful exhortation given in the interim by the angel in verse 9. Worship God!**
 - God alone is worthy of worship (not the angel, as a servant, nor men).
 - Also, our purpose in life is to give Him glory! (Psalm 95:1-7)
- **The contrasts continue here between the end of the righteous and the wicked** (2 Thessalonians 1:3-10)
- **The final caution not to add to or take away from God's word is a warning we all should heed.**
(James 1:25; Jude 3)

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What is the purpose of this scene? What does God intend for us to learn?

My Thoughts:

- **Any sacrifice necessary to gain access to the river of water of life (tree of life) is worth it in the end**
(Matthew 16:24-27)
- **The time for Christ's final advent is near!**
 - Three times the expression that He is coming quickly is given in this chapter (7,12,20)
 - His coming is certain, without forewarning (2 Peter 3:10), *"as a thief in the night..."*
 - Our lesson, then, is to be prepared! (1:3; 14:13; 16:15)
- **There is a need on our part for desire (to thirst). If we desire, we are invited to "Come!"**
 - Access to the water of life is given freely to all men
 - However, nothing is forced upon men. Our own will must lead us to the water of life. (Mk. 16:15-16)

Slide 138

Practice – Application to them and us (Note identical, because the warning of Christ's imminent coming is as relevant to us today as it was to the souls in the first century.)

Them:

- **Until Christ comes again, injustice and filthiness will continue among men. Our admonition to is remain righteous and holy. (11)**
 - Note: These words are not an encouragement for the sinner to continue to sin.
 - Instead, they reveal a practical reality. Until Christ comes, evil will continue in the world.
- **Don't alter God's Word! (18-19)**
 - These visions are from God. As such they demand respect
 - Those who hear must accept them AS IS.
 - Those who alter them do so at their own peril

Us:

- **Continue in faithfulness in the face of opposition.** (2 Timothy 3:12-15; Luke 6:22-23)
- **Don't add to or take away from the words of the prophecy of this book. (Consider the punishment for such action).**
 - As it is prophecy, it is directly from God and must be respected (2 Peter 1:20-21)
 - ALL SCRIPTURE is prophetic (forth telling), and thus inspired. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - Thus, the punishment for altering this prophecy is the same as altering any aspect of God's word.
(Deuteronomy 4:1-2)
 - Plagues added – name blotted out of the book of life.

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Characters and Symbols of the Vision found in chapter 20:1-10

Identify and define

- **First, consider the parallel to the first several verses in Revelation 22 and the text of Genesis 2 and 3 (with Adam and Eve's idyllic existence in the Garden of Eden)**

- In the garden of Eden there was a tree of life (Genesis 2:9)
- There was a river running through the garden that watered the gardens (2:10)
- There was no sin initially in the Garden (and because of sin, Adam and Eve were expelled (Gen. 3:22-ff)
- God was present in the garden (3:8)
- It is interesting how closely that first, idyllic existence God created for man, mirrors the eternal destination of the righteous!
- **River of Water of Life (1)**
 - It is described as Pure, appropriate for a river that contains the water of life!
 - The idea of “water of life” is one that echoes throughout the Bible
 - Noah and his family were saved through water (1 Peter 3:21)
 - The Red Sea parted for Moses and the people (Exodus 14)
 - Water flowed out of a rock to quench the thirst of Israel (Exodus 17; Numbers 20)
 - Of course, the spiritual application is the one that counts! (Jer. 2:11-13; Isa. 12:2-4; Jn. 4:13-14) (21:6)
- **Throne of God & the Lamb (1,3)**
 - The phrase indicates joint occupancy of the throne. It is indicated several times in the book (3:21; 12:5)
- **Tree of Life (2)**
 - Other versions, including the ESV, describe this tree a bit differently, and probably more correctly...
 - Even here, the reading is a bit difficult. The tree of life (as indicated in the text of Genesis 3, has but a single type of fruit, that which brings unending life.
 - In the twelve kinds of fruit, probably refers to the fact that a batch is borne monthly.
 - In this we see another symbol of life eternal (and healing) in the presence of God
 - **Harkrider:** “Therefore these elements essential to physical life - water, food and health, signify that God abundantly supplies every need for eternal life.”
- **His servants (3)**
 - The greatest of privileges for the child of God is to serve Him. It brings satisfaction and joy. (Rom. 12:1)
 - What begins here, as we serve God on earth, will be continued into eternity!
- **God’s name on foreheads (4)**
 - The servants are clearly identified as belonging to God! (3:12; 7:3; 14:1)
- **Alpha & Omega/Beginning & End/First & Last (13)**
 - Here are the unmistakable designations of deity
 - Found also in (1:8, 11; 21:6).
 - The eternal nature of the Lord
 - The self-existent first cause. The preeminent one. (Colossians 1:16-18)
- **Root & Offspring of David (16)**
 - Jesus is both the root (the source) of David, and His offspring.
 - This truth was confusing to the Jews (Matthew 22:41-16)
 - Jesus is both God and man. As God He is David’s Lord. As man He is David’s descendent (and the true Messiah of the World).
- **Bright & Morning Star (16)**
 - **Harkrider:** “He is the bright and morning star, signaling the beginning of a new day at dawn. By fulfilling the purpose and plan of God through his birth, life and death, Jesus shines forth a morning of victory for all who follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes.” (cf. 2:26-28)

End

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