

NOTES ON REVELATION EIGHT TO TWENTY TWO

The remaining chapters of the Book of Revelation are significantly difficult to interpret i.e. what is to be taken literally and what is presented in symbols? However, these notes give interpretations which a large number of leading theologians and other Bible scholars present in their various works. Furthermore, these notes do not as yet cover every verse, but, hopefully, will in time.

THREE REALMS OF HUMANITY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Certainly there is symbolism concerning Satan as the red dragon which leads us to a realization that other key players in these chapters are also presented symbolically:

- “**THOSE DWELLING IN HEAVEN**” — Symbolic of **Christian Holy Ones**.
(Heaven is associated physically with Mount Zion).
- “**THOSE DWELLING ON EARTH**” — Symbolic of **Followers of antichrist**.
(The earth is associated physically with Palestine).
- “**THOSE DWELLING IN THE SEA**” (the abyss) — Symbolic of **Satan’s domain**
(The sea is associated physically with the Mediterranean):
 - ❖ “But the wicked are like the **tossing sea**; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. There is no peace,” says my God, “for **the wicked**” (*Isa. 57:20, 21*).

Chapter 8

MORE WARNING JUDGMENTS

There is nothing to indicate that the first 6 trumpets are the contents of the scroll. The scroll only appears as opened at 10:2 when the angel hands it to John. As with Ezekiel’s scroll, the contents of John’s scroll cannot be revealed until they have been ingested by him.

SEAL 7

8:7: **1st Trumpet: Hail, fire + blood thrown to the Earth** = the burning up of 1/3 of agriculture, thereby wrecking the Beast’s economic plan.

8:8: **2nd Trumpet: Like a Great Mountain, burning with fire, thrown in the sea** = a literal meteorite (possibly). However, it is more likely to be symbolic of fallen angels as in 1 Enoch 18:13 where “seven stars are like great burning mountains.” Nevertheless, the serious damage done to the economy of the sea merchants is quite literal.

8:11: **3rd Trumpet: The star called Wormwood** = a literal meteorite (possibly). Yet, it is more likely symbolic of fallen angels. In scripture stars are often symbols of angels. This devastation literally affects all the sources of water.

NOTE: Wormwood is associated with sins of the flesh and idolatry.

8:12: **4th Trumpet: A third of the sun, moon and stars are struck so that a third of their light might be darkened** = a replicating of the 9th Egyptian plague. This seems to portend the coming destruction of the unrepentant. Being 1/3 may refer to the parallel of the pouring of the 5th bowl when Antichrist’s kingdom is darkened.

Chapter 9

9:1: **5th Trumpet ... Fallen star** = Satan.

9:3: **The symbolic Locusts** = Demons. Their behaviour is nothing like literal locusts but more like the demons Jesus dealt with:

“They [*the demons*] implored him [*Jesus*] not to command them to go away into the abyss”
(*Luke 8:31*).

9:5: **Stinging for 5 months** = Indicates that God has placed a strict limit on the time of torture. Literal locusts are restricted to the dry season between April and August (**5 months**) in Palestine. This allows the people an opportunity to repent (*Osborne*).

9:11: **King over the locusts** = The Beast that comes up out of the abyss.

9:14: **6th Trumpet ... 4 angels at the Euphrates** = 4 fallen angels of high rank. These are placed over the 200 million demon cavalry.

9:15: **prepared for the hour and day and month and year**
= the duration of the plague or the hour appointed for action.

9:16: **200 million horsemen** = demons or human armies – possibly the Gog army and/or the kings from the east but most likely another picture of the demon hordes.

Each trumpet continues to sound but over a short period of time: “...during the last trumpet” as in Rotherham (1 Cor. 15:52). The Greek word *en* with the dative noun with reference to time means *within, during* Liddell and Scott. Also see p. 193 of Lang. Also 10:7 says “in the **days** of the voice of the 7th angel.”

Chapter 10

THE LITTLE SCROLL IS THE SEVEN-SEALED SCROLL

10:1: **Rain-bowed angel** = Angelic special herald of Christ.

This is just as there is a strong angel in 5:2. It is not Christ as in 1:13-16. The *differences* are that Christ has:

1. A golden sash.
2. Eyes like flames of fire.
3. A voice like the sound of many waters.
4. Holds seven stars.
5. Has a sharp two-edged sword protruding from his mouth.
6. Has Feet like burnished brass.

The *similarity*: face like sun, (the Woman of chapter 12 and the angel of 19:17 are also associated with the sun). The angel’s appearance displays the glory of God and Christ.

10:2: **The little scroll** = This is about God’s secret purpose for establishing His kingdom on earth and contains the blowing of the seventh trumpet concerning the pouring out of the bowls of wrath. It is the same scroll as *the seven-sealed scroll* and is not, in fact another “little” scroll. Although the Greek word for *scroll* is in the diminutive form it no longer carried this meaning at the time of writing as also with other diminutive forms in Revelation. Evidence for the two descriptions as referring to the same scroll is as follows:

- The opening words of each passage (5:2 and 10:1) are almost identical: “And I saw a mighty angel...” This indicates that the passages may be parallel.

- Both scroll descriptions are drawn from **Ezekiel 2:9 to 3:1-3**, the first half (*written on front and back*) of which is resumed in Revelation 5:1 and the second half (*the eating of it*) is resumed and expanded in 10:2, 8-11. So Jesus receives the scroll still sealed, then opens it and delegates his angel to hand the now opened scroll to John.
- The scroll only appears opened at Rev.10:2 when the angel hands it to John. As with Ezekiel's already opened scroll, the contents could not be revealed until they had been ingested by John.
- The idea of closing and sealing a scroll containing visions occurs several times in Daniel (8:26; 12:4, 9). Revelation 5:1 and 10: 2, 8-11 resume discussion of Daniel's scroll (Dan. 12) also. This scroll was sealed to Daniel's understanding and will only be revealed to him at his resurrection at the time of the end. However, it was no longer sealed to John's understanding when the fuller version was handed to him by the angel. So when John receives the scroll it has been supplemented and clarified over and above what Daniel had.
- The formula "**nations, tribes, peoples, and languages**" is used only in reference to the diversity of the church prior to chapter 10. After this point it is used only with reference to whole nations showing that chapter 10 is an important transition point with God's focus more significantly on them.
- The 3½ year time period appears only after chapter 10 when John has ingested the scroll and then reveals its contents.

10:3: **7 peels of thunder** = Further original judgments that were cancelled. Possibly the Great Tribulation cut back to 3½ years (Matt. 24:22).

10:11: "You must prophesy *again* about many **peoples and nations and languages and kings**." The term *again* is a reference to the first of the prophesying to the churches in chapters 2 and 3. Unlike Ezekiel whose message was only for Israel John must now reveal *the message concerning the nations* that is contained in the scroll. The subject matter of the scroll also involves the prophecy of Daniel 7 which gives the first reference to the 3½ years. The theme of Daniel 7 is the **transfer of sovereignty** over "**all peoples, nations and languages**."

Chapter 11

THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE OF THE SCROLL

11:1, 2 NJB:

"Then I was given a long cane like a measuring rod, and I was told, 'Get up and **measure God's sanctuary** (*naos*), and **the altar** and **the people** [*the Holy Ones*] **who worship there**; but exclude *the outer court* and do not measure it; because it has been handed over to the gentiles...they will **trample the holy city** for forty-two months.'"

This is drawn from Zechariah 2:1, 2 concerning the measuring of Jerusalem. Here also is the first mention of the 3½ year period from Daniel 7. Here Christians are seen to be spiritually in the heavenly sanctuary. Because they worship in the heavenly sanctuary they will be separated from the world. The measuring done here is that of judging who will be sealed for **spiritual protection** (7:1-8) during the 42 months of trampling. John, here, is alluding to the trampling of "the host of heaven" in Daniel 8:11-14. NOTE: The altar is most likely to be the altar of incense.

ALTERNATIVELY: **The Temple** (*naos*) = The literal rebuilt temple sanctuary. The measuring = a survey prior to the time for YHWH to dwell there. See Zechariah 2 and Ezekiel 43:1-5.

The outer court is not the Court of the Gentiles but is the court immediately outside the temple building (Gk. *naos*) — *the court of the priests* containing the altar of burnt-offering. This court is not measured but “was given to the Gentiles” who have defiled it at the middle of the 70th week. They have removed the burnt-offering (Dan. 8:11; 11:31; 12:11) and set up “the Abomination of Desolation” (8:13; 11:31; 12:11).

They will tread underfoot the holy city for 42 months i.e. 3½ years. These are “the times of the Gentiles” spoken of in the Olivet discourse in Luke 21:24. This passage is drawn from Daniel 8:13, 14 and Zechariah 12:2, 3 where Jerusalem is besieged by “all the nations of the earth.” The LXX translation is: “I will make Jerusalem a stone trampled by all the nations; everyone who tramples it will utterly mock it.” Yet, the trampling could not have started in A.D.70 because it did not continue to be trampled. In later times the city was peaceably held through the long Turkish and later British occupations.

11:3 **Two witnesses** = The 2 individual prophets (“at the mouth of two witnesses.”), with combined Moses and Elijah-like characteristics, do not stand for the Law and the Prophets. They are most likely symbols of *the Witnessing Church that is martyred*. This has been one of the most debated identifications concerning the book of Revelation through the centuries. The various suggestions have been:

1. The resurrected: a) Enoch and Elijah; *or* b) Moses and Elijah;
or c) High Priest Joshua and Governor Zerubbabel (Zech. 4:1-3).
2. Future Individuals in the role of: a) Moses and Elijah *or* b) High Priest Joshua and Zerubbabel.
3. Future Individuals in the role of a combined Moses/Elijah *and* Joshua/Governor Zerubbabel.
4. **The church in its role of witness.** There is a combining of the character and activities of Moses and Elijah with features that are noted in Zechariah 4:1-3.

- The reason for the suggestion of Enoch and Elijah is that they supposedly were taken to heaven and are presently alive there waiting to return to engage in their activities as the two witnesses. However, this is not a scriptural position. In fact, they were simply taken away through earth’s atmosphere to a new location [*raptured*] and later died just like anybody else. So there is no reason to suppose that they could be the ‘two witnesses.’

- The suggestion that ‘the two witnesses’ will be the resurrected Moses and Elijah or Joshua and Zerubbabel would mean that they would be resurrected at the beginning of the Great Tribulation and so before the first resurrection which occurs after the Tribulation. Nowhere in the rest of the Scriptures is there a hint of anyone being resurrected before that great event. So this suggestion seems highly unlikely.

- A more likely suggestion is that of future individuals in the role of Moses and Elijah *or* High Priest Joshua/Governor Zerubbabel *or even* in the role of a combined Moses/Elijah *and* Joshua/Zerubbabel are “in the spirit and power” of Moses and Elijah (Luke 1:17).

- However, it must be remembered that there are only 2 witnesses and not 4. The **2 olive trees** and **2 lamps** may refer to the anointing and commissioning of the 2 witnesses with holy spirit, hence the metaphor of trees supplying oil to the lampstands. This alludes to Zechariah 4 concerning the work of Zerubbabel and High Priest Joshua in the restoration of Jerusalem, its temple and its worship.

Nevertheless, there are problems with all of the suggestions that they are individuals as pointed out by Beale who gives 6 reasons why the identification of the 2 witnesses should be as **a symbol of the**

church in its role of witness and that is martyred:

1. The 2 lampstands would be 2 churches (“the seven lampstands are the seven churches”).
2. The event of the beast overcoming them points to Revelation 13:7 and Daniel 7:21: “...that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them.”
3. In Revelation 11:9-13 the whole world sees the defeat and resurrection of the witnesses and in the first century setting that means they are **found throughout the world**.
4. The *1,260 days* links this prophetic witness with the church’s experience that: “...[the nations] will tread underfoot the holy city for 42 months” (Rev. 11:2).
5. This witnessing parallels the witnessing church elsewhere in the book e.g.
 - ❖ “...the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of **the testimony** which they had maintained” (Rev. 6:9).
 - ❖ “...because of the word of their testimony...and hold the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 12:11, 17: also 19:10; 20:4).
6. Both witnesses **function as both Moses and Elijah**, so the stress is not on the individual but on the group. These are compelling for a **symbolic function of** the 2 witnesses but do not obviate the possibility that they are also individuals. The two lampstands point to a **corporate aspect**, but the 2 olive trees point to an individual aspect. They have a two-fold ministry: judgment (11:5-6) and witness (11:7). In his book *Revelation* (p. 418) Grant R. Osborne comments that:

The context of this interlude (10:1-11:13) makes it probable that *the two witnesses* do stand for the witnessing church in it’s suffering and triumph (as in 10:8-10 and 11:1,2).

It is not possible to be certain about this identification. Yet because the number 2 is symbolic of witness and because of the other above factors it seems likely that the two witnesses are a symbol of **the church in Jerusalem in its role of witness** and which has martyrs.

11:5: **Fire flows out of their mouth and devours** = symbolic of their immunity to attack so that they can complete their testimony.

11:6: The miraculous abilities give warning of coming divine judgment. The sackcloth indicates their message that all should repent.

11:7: **The Beast out of the abyss** = the antichrist. The abyss is an apocalyptic metaphor for the demonic realm of evil. This event occurs when the beast makes the “*covenant with Death*” and Sheol with the apostate Jews.

11:8: **The city of Sodom/Egypt** = Jerusalem. This is because of the background of Zechariah 12; 14; Matthew 24 and Luke 21. It has become spiritually depraved like Sodom and a place of enslavement as in Egypt. Both places showed hostility to God.

11:11: “**After 3½ days breath of life from God came into them**” = after a time almost equivalent to that of Christ’s time in the tomb these ones are literally resurrected. The 1st resurrection is not shown to take place in stages, therefore, when the 2 witnesses are resurrected all must be resurrected at the same time. This resurrection takes place at the end of the 3½ year period and so is post-tribulational.

11:12: “**Come on up here**” = the rapture and highlighting the vindication of the 2 witnesses. “**Went up into heaven (sky) in the cloud**” = ascension as in Acts 1:9. Also 1 Thessalonians 4 indicates that there is only one time of ascension of Christians and which closely follows the first resurrection. If it is

the case that the two witness are symbols of the church, then Revelation 11:12 would seem to be focussing on the resurrection and rapture of those Christians who, as the two witnesses in Judea, suffered/died through the Great Tribulation. Other Christians in other areas are not necessarily martyred (Isa. 26:20).

11:13a: “...**a great earthquake**” [as when Jesus was resurrected]. “**A tenth of the city** [Jerusalem] **fell** (Amos 5:3). **Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake.**”

This is reminiscent of the remnant of seven thousand that did not bend the knee to Baal (Rom 11:4, 5) in Elijah’s time. If $1/10 = 7,000$ then the population that survives will be $70,000 - 7000 = 63,000$. However, the population of 70,000 would represent Jerusalem in the 1st century.

11:13b: “**the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God** of heaven.” This is genuine repentance and worship of God by those in the area of Judea. It seems that 9/10 of the Jerusalem population repent. Yet because it is after the first resurrection these people will be the Jewish mortals in the Millennium.

11:19: “**The temple of God which is in heaven was opened.**” This is expanded in chapters 15 and 16 - the pouring out of the bowls of wrath.

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PARENTHESIS CONCERNING THE
AGE-LONG CONFLICT (CHAPTERS 12-15)

In 12:1 there is a clean break with the earlier chapters. Chapters 12:1 to 14:20 and 15:2-4 give the story of God’s people in conflict with Satan and later with Antichrist. It expands on the details of the two intercalations of 7:1-17 and 10:1 to 11:13.

This passage is **a parenthesis** full of symbolism and mainly covering the 70th ‘seven.’ However, it begins chronologically earlier than any previous part of the vision by recalling the **Genesis 3:15** prophecy concerning the enmity between the woman and the serpent and their respective seeds. Therefore, this passage progresses to when Messiah—the primary seed—comes to birth and then on to the end-time. This complete passage rejoins the earlier story at 15:5.

Chapter 12

12:1: **The woman crowned with 12 stars** = the woman of Genesis 3:15 which developed into the tribes from the 12 sons of Jacob and based on Joseph’s dream (Gen. 37:1-9). So it is all the faithful from persecuted Abel to the **persecuted Israel through the ages** (Isa. 54:1-6; Jer. 3:20; Ezek. 16:8-14; Hos. 2:19, 20). Therefore, this finally would include the Christian “Israel of God” in Judea at the end-time.

12:2: **In pain to give birth** (Isa. 66:7, 8) = Israel through the ages is portrayed as the persecuted mother of Messiah bringing forth the seed of Genesis 3:15 in anguish.

12:3: **Red Dragon** = Satan—the Serpent of Genesis 3:15. The connection is Isaiah 27:1 concerning: “Leviathan the twisting serpent...the dragon that is in the sea.” This dragon has 7 heads, 10 horns and 7 diadems on its heads. It is red because of all the blood of the martyrs that it has caused to be shed.

12:4a: **His tail swept 1/3 of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth** = an allusion to Daniel 8:9, 10: “a little horn...And some of the host and some of the stars [*Dan. 12:3*] it threw to the ground and trampled on them.” So this refers to **the satanic attacks upon God’s people through the ages**. The various attempts to wipe out Israel by: 1) Pharaoh of Egypt, 2) splitting of Judea from Israel, 3) Haman, 4) Antiochus. Finally, in the future 5) “Little horn” persecutes the faithful “Israel of God”

12:4b: **Dragon stood before the woman to devour the newborn child** = Satan motivating Herod to murder the children in an attempt to **kill Jesus** and the later plots of the Jewish leaders to kill him.

12:5a: **She gave birth to a son, a male child** = Faithful persecuted Israel's bringing forth of the Messiah in the historical **birth of Jesus**.

12:5b: **Her child was caught up to God and to His throne** = Messiah **Jesus' ascension** to heaven in spite of Satan's attempts to gain victory over him. The gap between the birth and the ascension is filled by the attacks upon Jesus in 12:4b.

12:6: **The woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God**. The passage jumps now to a time immediately before the *parousia*. This section runs parallel to the Olivet discourse where Jesus says that "those who are in Judea must flee to the **mountains**." In all of biblical history it was the wilderness containing **Mount Sinai** (Horeb—the mountain of God) that was the place of safety to flee to: 1) for Moses, 2) for Israel's escape from Egypt 3) for Elijah. So it is the faithful persecuted part of the **New Israel—"the Israel of God"** in future Judea that will be preserved through the Great Tribulation. These Judean Christians will then be **protected** from the dragon's persecution. They will also be nourished as were the Israelites with manna.

RESUMPTION-EXPANSION OF 12:1-6

12:7: In heaven, **Michael warring with the dragon** = Michael will arise (Dan. 12:1).

12:9: **Then the great dragon was thrown down...to the earth** = So Antichrist acts as the embodiment of Satan. This occurs in the middle of the 70th week and so at the beginning of the 1,260 days. "Therefore when you see the Abomination of desolation" ... "And then there will be a time of distress" (Dan. 12:1).

12:12: "**O heavens and you who dwell** (Gk. *skynontes*) **in them!**" = Symbolic of Christian Holy Ones. (Heaven is associated physically with Mount Zion). It is sometimes assumed that the phrase "*those who dwell in heaven*" is a reference to angelic beings. However, all derivatives of the Greek verb *skynoo*, which means "to dwell" or "to tabernacle," are used in the Scriptures with reference only to humans and to God rather than to angels. This fits with the fact that in Daniel 8 "the holy ones" on earth are called "*the host of heaven*." Hence the phrase is symbolic of Christian Holy Ones who, although literally on earth, are spiritually in heaven and are actually viewed as God's dwelling.

12:15: **Water like a river** = Satan's attempt to destroy the faithful "Israel of God." Rather than a "flood" of soldiers this will be perhaps a small expeditionary force sent forth by antichrist.

12:16: **The earth helped the woman** = The pursuit by Antichrist's forces is in vain. This military expedition is swallowed by perhaps a literal earthquake as with Korah, Dathan and Abiram. There is also the parallel with Pharaoh's forces being swallowed by the Red Sea.

12:17: **The rest of her children who...hold to the testimony of Jesus** = **Unprotected individual Christians** in the rest of the world outside of Judea. Chapter 13 gives the details of Satan's waging war with them by means of the Beast.

Chapter 13

13:1: **The Beast coming out of the sea//the beast from the abyss** (11:7) = Antichrist.

This beast has:

The 7 heads simply associate Antichrist with the Empire corporate.

The 10 horns = 10 kings shown as already ruling.

There are 10 diadems on the horns because at the end of the age it is not the 7 heads but the 10 kings that will rule.

13:2: This picture of a composite beast derives from Daniel 7:2-7, where the four beasts, whose characteristics John combines, represent world empires. The total of heads on the four beasts in Daniel is also seven.

13:3: One of its heads *as if* it had been slain, and his **fatal wound was healed** = This applies to the beast itself (13:12, 14) which is now seen as an antichrist system with the slain head as antichrist himself. His wound should have been fatal but he survives it. During the early part of the second half of the 70th week the antichrist appears as slain. It is a mimicking of Christ's death and resurrection, Satan being the one to make it appear that he has brought his son from the dead.

13:6: “**his dwelling**, that is, **those who dwell (Gk. *skynontas*) in heaven.**” = a symbol of **Christian Holy Ones**.

13:7, 8: “**All who dwell on the earth** will worship him [*the beast out of the sea*]” = Symbolic of Followers of antichrist.

13:11: **The Beast coming out of the land** = A separate entity who is subservient to the first beast

Chapter 14

14:1-5:

“Then I looked, and behold, **on Mount Zion** stood the Lamb, and with him **144,000** who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song **before the throne** and *before the four living creatures* and *before the elders*. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had *been redeemed from the earth*. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow [*Lit. keep following*] the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been *redeemed from mankind* as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.”

This picture must be *not after*, but during the Great Tribulation because the mark has only just been enforced and the boycott on buying/selling has only just been inaugurated (13:16, 17). At this time the 144,000, as heaven-dwellers, will be substitutionally/spiritually/ figuratively “on Mount Zion” before the throne of God in the temple sanctuary in heaven. Because they have been sealed (7:4) they are sheltered by God at this time (Rev. 7:15, 16; Ps.27:5).

NOTE: “Redeemed from the earth” does not mean taken from the earth but as verse 4 shows they are ransomed or redeemed from among mankind.

In Jewish apocalyptic Mount Zion is the place where Messiah will defeat his enemies and will judge them. Possibly 1st fruit Christians as in Rev 7.

- 1) They were sealed immediately after the Great Tribulation by having the names of the Father and *the Lamb* on their foreheads (Rev. 7).
- 2) They are not defiled with women (false religion). They are spiritually chaste.

Because the voice that John hears is *from* heaven, John is back on earth vision-wise. In Galatians 4:27 Christians, in their totality, are shown to be finally more numerous than the ancient nation of Israel (millions) and so vastly more than a 144,000.

THE MESSAGE OF THE THREE ANGELS

These seem to be parallel to the preaching of the two witnesses (11:4-13) and Matthew 24:14 and therefore occurs during the last 3½ years.

14:6, 7: “angel...with an **eternal gospel** to proclaim” alluding to Ps. 96:2, 3.

14:8: “second angel...saying. “Fallen, fallen is **Babylon the Great...**”

14:9-11: “third angel...saying, “If anyone **worships the beast** and its image and receives a mark on his forehead ... God’s wrath poured full strength” i.e. the 7 bowls of wrath.

THE TWO HARVESTS

These are allusions to the single grape harvest in Joel 3:13. However, John saw two images here and so presents the first as a grain harvest (Mark 4:29).

14:15: **Harvest of the earth** = the gathering of the righteous and the wicked (Matthew 13:24-30). This passage has an antecedent in 14:4 where the reference is to the 144,000 as firstfruits,

A.) The wheat — the righteous — into the barn = the gathering i.e. resurrection/rapture:

❖ “The Kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed...But when the grain is ripe at once he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come” (Mark 4:26-29).

B.) Binding and burning of the Tares — the wicked = their destruction. A preview of the bowl judgements e.g. Jeremiah 51:33 Babylon being threshed and harvested

14:19: **Gathered the grape harvest of the earth** = End-time destruction of the wicked.

(Rev. 19:15 shows that Jesus treads the winepress) Joel 3:11-16: “put in your sickle for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full...For the Day of Yahweh is near in the valley of Decision.” Also see Isaiah 63:2, 3.

Chapter 15

15:2-4:

“And I saw what appeared to be *a sea of glass* mingled with fire—and also those [*the Holy Ones*] who had conquered [Lit. “**are conquering**”] the beast and its image and the number of its name, *standing beside the sea of glass* with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

The use of the present participle “**are conquering**” (*unfortunately omitted in most translations*) reveals their situation to be during the Great Tribulation and not after. So these Holy Ones are figuratively “beside the sea of glass” in the temple even as they are still conquering during the Great Tribulation.

NOTE: Revelation 4:6 states that “**before the throne** there was a *sea of glass*, like crystal” This is likely a reference to “the bronze sea” that was outside of the sanctuary (*naos*) and in the courtyard of the priests in Solomon’s temple for their ceremonial washing.

Chapter 16

16:1-4: *The first 4 Bowls are poured:*

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1) onto the Earth—malignant sore. | 2) into the sea—became blood. |
| 3) into the rivers—became blood. | 4) upon the sun—scorched men with fire. |

16:10: Fifth bowl is poured upon the throne (in Babylon) of the Beast.

16:12: **Sixth bowl shows the Kings from the East** = East of the Euphrates a literal Islamic confederacy including Iran.

16:15: **I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes** = Last warning for Christians to continue refusing the beast's mark so that they are not thrown out of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:1-4).

16:17: the 7th poured out his bowl **upon the air** = "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) "*the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*" (Eph. 6:12).

16:18: **flashes of lightning etc** = the sign for Jesus' coming on the clouds and his descent.

16:19: the **great city** split in 3 parts = The City Babylon the Great (Rev. 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21).

Chapters 17 & 18

Please see STUDY 21 "Babylon the Great"

DANIEL 11 AS A POSSIBLE UNDERSTANDING OF REVELATION 17:9-11

- "The seven heads are seven mountains...and they are 7 kings; **5 have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come**; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. The beast which was and is not, is himself also an **8th king** and is of the 7, and he goes into destruction" (Rev. 17:9-11).

ANCIENT KINGS: "**5 have fallen**"

- Daniel 11: 2: "**Three** more kings are going to arise in Persia...Then **a fourth**...will arouse the whole empire against Greece." These kings must be relevant to Israel, so they are not the kings of the historical sequence in Persia's history, but rather fell within the period of the 70 'sevens.' So Sir Robert Anderson understands these monarchs to have been:

1. Darius II Nothus (Neh. 12:2) 423-404. B.C.E
2. Artaxerxes II Mnemon 404-359.
3. Artaxerxes III Ochus 359-338
4. Darius II Codomannus 338-336

5. Alexander invades Persia in 334. Dies in 323.

These ancient kingdoms are the 5 that have already fallen.

FUTURE KINGS

Daniel 10:14: "**in the latter days** for the vision pertains to the **days yet future**."

6) "**one is**"

Dan. 11:6-19: The 1st king of the South's daughter comes to the future **1st king of the North** to carry out a peaceful arrangement. Yet they both lose power.

7) "**other has not yet come**; and when he comes, he must remain a little while."

Dan. 11:20: The 2nd “king of the North” (one appointed by the 10 kings. He sends out an *exactor*). This 2nd “king of the North” is shattered within a few days.

8) “The beast...an 8th king...goes into destruction.”

Dan. 11:21-45: “The Despicable person—will arise, on whom the honour of kingship has not been conferred (by the 10 kings) *in a time of tranquillity* seizes the kingdom by intrigue.”

Verse 28 gives the 1st time that antichrist is called the “King of the North” i.e. he becomes the 3rd “King of the North.”

Two issues are:

- Is the prophecy speaking of individual kings or of kingdoms? This is because we must note that “mountains” in the Scriptures are used figuratively of ‘kingdoms’ and not just kings.
- From a Jewish perspective prophecy is Jerusalem-centric.

WHY THE TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF
REVELATION 17:9-11 IS INCORRECT

The traditional explanation of the seven heads and 8th king posits that Rome is the 6th king and that the European Community is a revived Roman Empire.

- ❖ “The seven heads are seven mountains...and they are 7 kings; **5 have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come**; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. The beast which was and is not, is himself also an **8th king** and is of the 7, and he goes into destruction” (*Rev. 17:9-11*).

1. The Egyptian Empire
2. The Assyrian Empire
3. The Babylonian Empire
4. The Medo-Persian Empire
5. The Greek Empire of the Seleucids in the Middle-East.
6. The Roman Empire (Western half fell in AD 476; Eastern Byzantine half fell to Muslim Turks in AD 1453)
7. The revived Roman Empire based on the European Community

- Rome is not mentioned in biblical prophecy.
 - All of the lands mentioned in biblical prophecy are Middle-Eastern.
 - Although John received his vision during the time of the Roman Empire, the vision is of future things and the prophecy does not say “*one is*” as being in John’s day but the entire vision is future even with the “**5 have fallen**” as a future event.
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18:20: “Rejoice over her, **heaven, you holy ones**, apostles and prophets.”

“Heaven” is set in apposition to “holy ones.” (NAB, NRSV, REB, Amplified Bible and UVNT). This shows that the holy ones are actually called “heaven” and figuratively “dwell in heaven” although they are literally on earth.

Chapter 19

AFTER THE GREAT TRIBULATION—THE RAPTURE

The Great Crowd = likely to be **the holy Ones** (please see STUDY 19).

The great multitude of Christians is described in Revelation 19:1 as “in heaven.” Many times in the book of Revelation the word “the heaven” is a reference to the sky (earth’s atmosphere Gk. *ouranios*). So too with Revelation 19:1 as presented in the UVNT “*After that I seemed to hear the sound of a great multitude of people in **the sky** saying...*” This matches the description of the rapture into “the air” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17) and being “caught up in a cloud” (Rev. 11:12). This is further indicated because the marriage of the Lamb mentioned in verses 7, 8 takes place on earth (Luke 22:18).

Revelation 19: 1, 6-8:

“After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of *a great multitude* in **(the) heaven [i.e. the sky]**, crying out, ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God ... 6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of *a great multitude*, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his **Bride** has made herself ready; it was granted her to **clothe herself with fine linen** (Gk. *byssinos*), **bright and pure**’— for the fine linen is the *righteous deeds of the saints*.”

As with the two witnesses of 11:12 who “went up to heaven in a cloud” i.e. “*they passed up into the sky* [Gk. *ouranos*] *in a cloud while their enemies looked on*”; so too with the **great** multitude:

❖ “*I seemed to hear the sound of a great multitude of people **in the sky** saying...*”
(Rev. 19:1 UVNT).

Both the 11:12 and 19:1 passages match with the details of the rapture given by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. Furthermore, the term “multitude” is never used of large groups of angels who are generally classified as myriads.

19:6: **voice of a great multitude** = also likely to be **the holy Ones**.

“*...like the roar of waters and the sound of mighty peals of thunder*” and so parallels the 144,000 in 14:2.

19:7: **The Marriage of the Lamb has come. His Bride has made herself ready** = the bride is not the same as the guests. This cannot be just *the saved* at the end-time so that “apart from us they will not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:40), hence the conjoining of the faithful over the centuries.

19:9: **Blessed are those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb** = on earth at the opening of the Kingdom era. The parable of the marriage feast in Matthew 22 contains many details to show that it takes place on earth. Also Matthew 26:29 Jesus will drink of the vine on “*that day...with you in my father’s kingdom*.”

19:11-21:1: ‘The Little Apocalypse’ of Isaiah 24 helps us to understand this part of Revelation. See Culver’s ‘Daniel and the Latter Days’. “The host of the High Ones” = Satan/demons.

19:14: **The armies of heaven** (as in all modern versions. “**Which are in**” is in older versions) = Possibly those Christians (144,000) who are to be end-time warriors even though the plural term *armies* is never applied to Christians. Please see Rev 7:3, 4 and 14: 1-5. These ones are “arrayed in white linen” as are the holy ones/great multitude.

CHRISTIANS ARE THE ARMIES OF HEAVEN

❖ “And **the armies of heaven**, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses” (Rev. 19:14).

KJV, NKJV and Weymouth give: “*armies in heaven.*” YLT and Darby give: “*armies in the heaven*” which is according to the literal Greek. The UVNT translates *ouranos* as “sky.” This would most likely make the original meaning: “*the armies in the sky.*” These are the Christian “Holy Ones” because they are dressed in the same garment as the Bride (fine linen Gk. *byssinos*) and are the same as **the host of heaven—the saints** in Daniel 8 below. Also they are “the called and chosen and faithful” (17:14) that are associated with Christ when he battles the ten kings:

❖ “Out of one of them came a little horn ... 10 It grew great, even to **the host of heaven**. And **some of the host** and some of the stars *it threw down* to the ground and *trampled on them* ... 12 And a **host** will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper. 24 His [*little horn's*] power shall be great — but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, *and destroy* mighty men and the people who are **the saints**” (*Dan. 8:9, 10, 12, 2*).

The descriptions in both these passages show them to apply to faithful Christians during and just after the time of the Great Tribulation. They are not in heaven where God is located but either they are in “the air” just after the rapture or they are being viewed as belonging to heaven.

Chapter 20

REASONS THE 1,000 YEARS IS A LITERAL PERIOD OF TIME

The 1,000 years must be literal because:

- A time element is contained in the terms “this age” and “that age” (Luke 20:34, 35).
- Both the first resurrection of Revelation 20:4 and the “coming to life of the rest of the dead” in verse 5 are proven to be literal resurrections the 1,000 years between them must also be a literal period of time.

SITUATIONS THAT CANNOT EXIST SIMULTANEOUSLY

- ❖ “...the great dragon [Satan] was thrown down, who **deceives the whole world**” (*Rev. 12:9*).
- ❖ “an angel...threw him [Satan] into the abyss...so that he would **deceive the nations no longer**” (*Rev. 20:3*).

Both situations cannot exist simultaneously as in Amillennialism.

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- ❖ “the devil has come down to you...knowing that he has only a short time ... he persecuted the woman” (*Rev. 12:12, 13*).
- ❖ “an angel ... laid hold of the dragon [Satan], and **bound him** for a thousand years” (*Rev. 20:1-2*).
Satan cannot be simultaneously active on earth and yet be bound.

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- ❖ “the beast...and with him the false prophet...were thrown alive into the Lake of fire” (*Rev. 19:20*). This occurs at the battle for Jerusalem when Christ returns.
- ❖ “When the thousand years were completed the devil ... was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were” (*Rev. 20: 7, 10*).

Satan is cast into the lake of fire at the final battle which is after the 1,000 years. Yet the beast and the false prophet were already there, having been thrown alive into the lake a thousand years earlier. If the 1,000 years is figurative when could these events happen?

THE MILLENNIUM—A PARTIAL MANIFESTATION OF THE KINGDOM

20:2, 3: ...**Bound him (Satan) and threw him into the abyss.** The presumption is that the demons are also abyssed at the same time. They say “*have you come here to torment us before the time*” (Matt. 8:29).

20:4: ...**thrones and they sat on them** = each one who conquered, as in the 7 churches based on the law of former reference. All who come forth in the 1st Resurrection will reign (20:4, 6).

THE “LITTLE WHILE” AFTER THE MILLENNIUM

20:7: “And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison” (“**released for a little while**” vs. 3).

20:8: **Gog and Magog** = a symbol of the deceived nations in opposition to God. There is a general relationship between this and Ezekiel 36-40 perhaps indicating that one is a type of the other. However in Ezekiel Gog is an individual—most likely the antichrist; whereas at the end of the Millennium Gog and Magog represent whole nations deceived into opposition to God.

THE SECOND RESURRECTION

20:11a: **Great White Throne and him who sat on it** = likely this is God because He is “the One who sits on the throne” throughout Revelation and because the scene parallels Daniel 7: 9, 10. However, it could be God’s representative—Jesus because this throne scene does not have the many accompaniments and subordinate thrones as do the throne judgments of the “Ancient of Days.” Also “He has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:2). In all of Revelation it is the Son (the Lamb) who acts in opening seals, treading the winepress etc.

20:11b:

The earth and heaven fled = the Millennium ends. Perish in the sense: “and they shall be *changed*” (Ps.102:26; Heb.1:10). Therefore, it has vanished, faded away as the eternal kingdom arrives.

THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD

20:12:

“And I saw **the dead, great and small**, *standing before the throne*, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were **judged** by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.”

THE UNRIGHTEOUS DEAD

20:13:

“And **the sea** gave up the dead who were in it, **Death and Hades** gave up the dead who were in them, and they were **judged**, each one of them, according to what they had done.”

These scenes concern the resurrection of “the rest of the dead” (Rev. 20:5) i.e. the second resurrection. However, this may be a completing fulfilment of Daniel 12:1, 2 at the end of the Millennium. It seems that there are two groups presented here, the first of which are ‘the important and the unimportant’—the righteous converts during the Millennium and all who through the ages never had been presented

with the truth concerning the Kingdom and Messiah. The fact that only the first group are described as *standing before the throne* indicates that God looks upon them favourably. Furthermore, because “the book of life” was opened there is an indication that their names may already be written in it. If so then it will be by their response to Christ’s kingdom (Matt. 13:18, 23) that Jesus “will never blot his name out of the book of life.” (Rev. 3:5). Then the second group of the dead are given up by the sea (a personification of evil) and Death and Hades. The sea and Death and Hades are virtually synonymous terms for the unrighteous dead.

20:15: **If anyone’s name was not written in the book of life** = implies that most are found in the book. The force of this is that it is the minority who are not written in the book. Rev. 20:12 also says that they were “judged according to their deeds.”

TIME FOR REPENTANCE

In contrast to Satan being granted a specific time of release there is no time scale stated concerning how long the white throne judgment lasts. So, based on God’s love and justice one would imagine that resurrected individuals would be granted whatever amount of time God would deem as necessary for them to accept the kingdom. This may explain why Revelation 22:2 speaks of:

❖ “the river of the water of life...on either side of the river, **the tree of life** with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the **healing of the nations.**”

Chapter 21

AFTER THE MILLENIUM- A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM

The Expositor’s Bible Commentary proposes that:

It seems best, therefore, despite some problems, to regard the sequence begun at 19:11 as running chronologically through 22:6, thus placing all the material in 21:1ff after the Millennium. At this point a suggestion might be offered for further study ... may not 21:ff. be viewed as the full manifestation of the kingdom of God, a partial manifestation of which will be realized in the thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints, during which Christ will defeat all his enemies, including death (1 Cor. 15:23-28)? Some of the same conditions described in 21:1ff would then, at least in part, characterize the Millennium.

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21:1: **New Heaven and New Earth** = being purged as by fire, refashioned, renovated. Verses 1-9 show the end of the old and beginning of the new.

21:2: **The New Jerusalem** = All the glorified Christians. *City* can simply mean all its inhabitants. A 2nd figure of them is as the Lamb’s wife coming down out of heaven = symbolic of God’s provision of the eternal government having the glory of God.

21:4: no longer be any death = proof that this New Heavens and New Earth is not a reference to the Millennium. Isaiah 65 is an era that contains mortals who die after living long lives.

21:9: **The lamb’s wife** = the close relationship the body has with Christ.

A SYMBOLIC VIEW OF MANKIND’S ETERNAL GOVERNMENT IN 21:10-27

21:11: **the brilliant stones** = these reflect God’s glory.

21:12: **the wall** = indicates total security.

21:14: **the 12 foundation stones with the names of the 12 apostles** = the fact that the government is built on the foundation of the Truth taught by the apostles.

21:16: **the 12,000 stadia (1,500 miles) and 144 cubits** = symbolic measurements. These indicate the organizational completeness of Christ's government 12 gates, the 12 names of the apostles and of the 12 tribes of Israel.

21:21: **the gates of pearl** = access for the righteous mortals to God's blessings as they are healed.

Chapter 22

22:1: **Water of life** = God's cleansing spirit through Jesus and his bride to prepare the righteous mortals for immortal life.

22:2: **the tree of life's leaves** = the healing of the righteous mortals. Glorified Christians act as an immortality giving tree because they have soaked in the water of life.

22:14: **have the right to the tree of life** = the righteous mortals are granted immortality.

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