

# The Bible Explorer Series

## The Book of Revelation

(Presented by Dr. Jon Paulien)

BOOK OF REVELATION = Book of Revelation

b/g – background

judgment(s) or judg/t(s) = judgment(s)

a/ = about

a/g = among

a/st = against

DOA – Day of Atonement

w/w = world-wide

e/th = everything; s/th = something; n/th = nothing; a/th = anything

e/o = everyone; a/o = anyone; s/o = someone, n/o = no one

s/b = somebody; a/b = anybody, n/b = nobody

SCJC = Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Bcs = because

### Series I:

## How to Study the Book of Revelation without Losing Your Mind

### No. 1

#### Introduction and Overview

They say a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Does this apply to the BR?

The BR – what thoughts come to your mind? 666, Battle of Armageddon, New Jerusalem, four horsemen? Ever since it was written, it has intrigues people. It is a challenging book. If you've studied it, people have developed strong opinions about the book. Those opinions do not agree. If you find 12 people who study BR, you'll find 13 opinions on the book. Book contains troubling language and idea. Some say that if you have to study, you must be crazy; and if you are not, you'll get crazy. It's said by Luther that BR is so difficult, so puzzling, so challenging, that it's better not to study it. One contemporary scholar said that the book exhibits joy and love, combines love and justice. In studying it we get the joy of studying it.

As scholar and professor, Jon Paulien finds the BR difficult to teach. Students come to the BR with pre-conceived ideas, or with pre-loaded luggage. They have their ideas. We have to spend time to unlearn what we've studied before as to learn what the BR says.

As BR claims to speak about the future, we'll have curiosity about the book. We like to know what's in the future, but we don't know the future. Even in BR – a book that comes from God about the future, our curiosity is such that we see in the BR what we'd like to see, and people have developed all sorts of ideas about BR. To study BR w/t grasping its major content is dangerous. Many people who

have studied BR in the past have developed certain ideas about BR and have led dangerous lives. Example: the Munster Group, in Germany in 1534. They studied BR; concluded Munster was New Jerusalem, that city of the end, and God will bring the end there. They decided to live as they wanted. Terrible battles were fought at the city. We don't have to that far back to know the BR is dangerous. Think Waco, Texas – group of people who sincerely, honestly, and studiously studied the BR. They challenged the FBI and ended up in destruction. They were entirely wiped out. People were sacrificed at the altar of interpretation of the BR.

So, you may want to quit studying the book. That's not the answer either. To not study BR is to open up the way for things that happened at Waco and Munster. The people need solid and good explanation of the book. To study BR can be dangerous. To not study can be dangerous too. What to do?

The only safe course – to study BR, to learn how to read the book, to steer away from dangerous and fanatical ways it's been studied.

For Jon Paulien, he thinks we can get a lot of help in preparation for studying BR. Author – Ellen White, who did not study BR nor write commentaries, makes a comment: TM 112-114 “We don't understand the Book as we should... We don't understand fully the lessons it teaches...” These are true comments – we don't understand BR as well as we should. There have been centuries of study. BR is challenging and difficult book. We can't come with flippant attitude to it.

Another comment that EGW takes – TM 112-114. On p. 113 – When we as Christians understand what this book means to us, we'll see revival.” BR brings revivals. To understand it rightly opens opportunity for new growth. Those who study BR will have glimpses from heaven, with great rewards. This strange book gives glimpse of heaven, of universal reality, that can't be found a/w else. It gives us glimpse beyond we can see with telescope. When we see the Universe, we'll be able to learn how to live. One of the most difficult things in today's world is the sense of not knowing where we came from, where we are going, and what we are doing here. There are many people who search way for life, meaning, etc., for life. BR gives us the info we search for. Many who have studied the book of Revelation have discovered that EGW is right. When we get into BR, we see JC, we see JC, the world to come. When we see this, then we see how to live. When we see the promises for those who study BR, we see blessings.

EGW, “The Lord will bless all who seek to understand, humbly and meekly.” If we go to understand this book, it won't be by causal study or arrogant study. All who seek humbly and meekly, will be rewarded.

Truly educated person is aware how little she/he knows. He sees options in learning. He'll be humble and meek about their knowledge, bcs he understands how much more there is to learn. BR, let's face it – we have a lot to learn. There are many books that claim to give us all the detailed understanding of the future, but arrogance won't help us. BR helps us see in the Universe the deeper issues involved; it helps us to learn how to live.

Let's pray earnestly – that God won't only give us understanding, but that we'll get to know Him better to.

Pray that God will give us humble, meek heart, and open/teachable spirit. Let's see what God wants us to see, no matter what the cost. Let's be prepared in our hearts to receive what's in the book, no matter the cost.

Let's pray:

Summary so far: BR is difficult, challenging book, and one that requires our most careful attention, most careful study, application of method, and humble and teachable spirit before God. It cannot be safely ignored as a book. We need to understand the book for our times.

Some basic info that will be of interest to us – who wrote the book, when was it written, etc. When it comes to a book like this, we can be fairly certain who and when wrote it.

Author: according to BR is John. Whoever he is, he knows the churches in Asia Minor (Turkey of today). John of the book is writing to 7 churches, located in this western part of Turkey today. Then it was the Roman province of Asia. John knows the churches and is known by the churches. He is authoritative figure, respected by them; writes as leader and authority to help them understanding the times they live in.

Book in original language is written in a very bad grammar. Those who study Greek have discovered that the BR has some hard Greek grammar. One possible reason is that if the person was not Greek. There is plenty of evidence in the book that the author is not from Greek background, not Greek person – culturally speaking, but is from Jewish background, from Palestine. If Jew from Palestine moved to that part of the world, he did not know the Greek very well, and did his best to write in Greek. Externally, there were many people in the ancient world, who have told us who John is and what he's done. John was one of the 12 disciples who walked with JC, some 60 years before the book was written; a disciple who walked with JC; brother of James. Started with JC at Sea of Galilee. He was called "Son of Thunder." Stayed in Jer/m for few years and later moved to Asia Minor and wrote the book.

Some question whether John, son of Zebedee, was the author of BR. We und/d Gospel of John is from him, but BR? Gospel of John is in good grammar of Greek. The books BR and Gospel of John are very different. How could the same person write the two books, so different? Some scholars agree it was John, other s- it was not. BR – filled with number 7, but Gospel implies no. 7, not using it. In Gospel – 7 miracles of JC. In JC's life there are 7-day periods. Author is in love with 7. Both in BR and Gospel we see the words "Testimony" and "Witness." JC is in both places referred to as "logos," the "Word." There is contrast b/n light and darkness; many contrasts, themes, etc. are in common and in contrast.

Why different if same person wrote the books? One explanation: if John was from Palestine and Greek was not his language, maybe he thought in Hebrew and wrote in Greek. Scholars Steven Thompson has written a book showing in favour of this case – Semitic background with Greek language.

Another explanation – BR is written not from Ephesus or Smyrna, but from island of Patmos, which is off coast of Turkey. It is assumed John was a prisoner, on exile, bcs of being X/an (an ancient Alcatraz). If John was on this island, he had to write on his own; if John was on the land, he would have used help of secretaries. Paul for one used secretarial help, and his letters are in good Greek polished language and grammar.

Reason for differences b/n Gospel of John and BR – John did not have editorial help when he was writing BR.

John was disciple of JC.

When was it written? Early in his career, or end of his life? At what point of time was it written? One opinion – at time of Nero (Emperor of 65AD); the other - Emperor Domitian (90-95AD). Which date is correct? Reason for selection – both emperors persecuted X/ans. And as people studied the BR they noticed theme s of martyrdom, persecution, that X/ans will be persecuted for their faith. And it was easily to be assumed that BR was written in time of persecution or in face of impending persecution. Irenaeus, a X/an author from about 175-200 AD suggested that Domitian was the Emperor who was there when John wrote BR. Before Domitian's time, Rome as Empire was not a/st X/ans. In Book of Acts, Roman authorities saved Paul from mobs and riots. Empire was not hostile a/st X/ans and Jews, at least at time of book of Acts. Nero persecuted X/ans, but they were more personal acts. Some people think Nero was insane, suffering from clinical depression. At Domitian's time, the emperor fostered worship to himself. One way to keep the people in the Empire submissive to have the

worship to the emperor-god, plus temple worship for the emperor-god. Not many emperors wanted worship to themselves. The first to do so was Domitian. It was emperor-worship that brought X/ans in difficulty with the Empire. Emperor-worship is political and religious acts. It's fast and easy to come to place where X/ans could be asked to show loyalty to the state by worship to the Emperor. X/ans came in conflict with the Empire bcs they were not willing to come to the worship of the Emperor. Irenaeus – BR is attributed to John, bcs of time of persecution. Irenaeus, friend of Polycarp, was old enough, and he was most likely teenager when BR was written. Polycarp, most likely would have known John in Ephesus, if John wrote at 90-95AD.

Biblical reason why BR was written late: Mark 13, JC's Sermon on the Mount.

Mark 13:28-29

JC is describing the future, telling the disciples the things that will happen b/n the giving of the Sermon and the SCJC. The disciples did not want JC to delay long. JC describes series of signs – false Messiahs, natural phenomenon, troubles, trials, persecution, false prophets, Great Tribulation, etc. Then JC says, "When you see all of these things happening, then you will know it is near...." What is JC saying here – that His coming was not near when he was saying these things. When you see these things, then you'll know the coming is near. When those things happen, then will His coming be near.

Mark 13:33 – What time? Time of JC's coming. You don't know this time. But you can know it's near – Mark 13:29. When you see all these things, know that it – that time – is near.

Rev. 22:10 – in light of Mark 13:33, this is the most interesting text. Notice the difference. JC said in Mark 13:33 that the time is not near, but in Rev. 22:10 – the time is near. In AD 31 the time was not near, certain things had to happen, but in Rev. 22:10 – time is near. Don't seal up the book, for the time is near. This is exact verbal parallel in NT. The two places in NT to find this phrases. It's not near till certain things happen. What's the difference b/n the two? The difference is "all these things"? The disciples had seen all these things from AD 31 till John wrote. The signs from the time JC spoke till John wrote BR, the events had taken place.

How can all these things be fulfilled in 1<sup>st</sup> c.? What brought these events?

Were there false Messiahs, false Christs? Acts 8 – Simon the Sorcerer, who wanted to be the Messiah. Acts 5 – Several "would-be" Messiahs. Josephus tells us that there were many, many people, who claimed to be Messiahs, particularly in the 60's of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. There was great turmoil in Palestine and around Jerusalem in the 60's (66 AD, fought war for 4 years; the Jewish war of 66-73 AD). There was no war in AD 31. Famine – Acts 11:28 – famine in Palestine, in 46AD. Disease/Pestilence – in time of Nero 30 000 people died in Rome from bubonic plague, just in one season. Earthquake – 60AD Laodicea was levelled to ground by earthquake. In 63AD – in Pompeii, 68AD – Rome. Heavenly signs – Josephus: when Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem, there were tremendous heavenly signs in the sky that were showing that the revolution was ending and city of Jer/m was doomed. Persecution in 1<sup>st</sup> c? Book of Acts demonstrates so, even though Roman Empire was peaceful toward the X/ans. False prophets? Plenty of witness in NT for false prophets in the church – letter to 1 and 2 John, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude. Many people were lead astray by false prophets. Gospel going to the whole world – Col. 1:23 – Paul writes about the hope in the Gospel, "proclaimed to every creature..." Paul was under the impression that the Gospel was preached to all. See Rom 1:8; 16:26 for further indications for Paul's beliefs. Great tribulation – See EGW, Great Controversy on the destruction of Jer/m. The tribulations suffered by the Jews in AD 70 was greater than any other suffering.

John, as he describes the 1<sup>st</sup> c., see that JC has given plenty of evidence that the time is near, bcs the sings of JC are coming to pass.

BR was not written in time of Nero, as the signs were being fulfilled. BR – written after AD 70, when all that JC has said was being fulfilled, and that the prediction of JC were about to be fulfilled.

How could John write and speak about these events? It may not have been near in most human sense of the term – 2000 yrs have gone by. In God's term – near, for Him to come, for His people to be ready.

We don't know when JC will come, but we can be prepared. Every person who comes to believe in JC, JC is near to this person. As we study BR, we'll see this world's history coming to fulfilment. As we study BR, we'll see that JC is near to us too.

## **No. 2**

### **The Patterns of Bible Prophecy, part 1**

Is God consistent? Is God creative? You probably find it easy to say "yes" to answer to both questions. But wait a minute – does not creation change e/th? How do you put together God who does not change with God who does change?

When you come to BR you discover that the author's name is John, and that John is called a prophet (22:8,9) and the BR is called prophecy (1:3; 22:10). So, the BR comes to us as a prophecy from a prophet. This reminds us of the OT where there are many prophets who left books behind – Daniel, Zechariah, Malachi, etc., as models of what prophet and prophecy is like.

Prophecy has to do with actions of God – present, past, and future. Often God reacts to people and s/t God acts totally on His own, that is – some of His prophecies are conditional. S/t God acts w/t relation to people – He's going to do it no matter what humans think/say/do.

How can we und/d prophecy that's not fulfilled, of future? The only safe course is to und/d how prophecy was fulfilled in the past. In Bible – many cases of prophecies given in one time and fulfilled at another. If we study these prophecies, we'll get information that will help us rightly to handle John and his prophecies.

#### Patterns of Biblical prophecies

BR has often been studied in ways that is dangerous and destructive. God wants us to approach this Book the way He wants us to do. We have to understand how prophecies and prophets work, and how God worked with John in BR.

In OT e/th centres in 4 major acts of God. Most prophecies that were given in OT related in some way to these 4 great acts of God – 1) Creation, 2) Flood, 3) Exodus, 4) Exile to and Return from Babylon. Prophecies were written in relation to Creation. Is prophecy prediction of the future? Yes, but it is also God's interpretation of current or in-near-future events. Prophecy is God's explanation fo His actions, of what's taking place in history.

Let's begin to examine these events in history and how prophecy is related to them.

#### Creation

The Flood story is described as undoing of creation –t hat's what the scholars of Genesis have found. That's to say that the Flood story is not told in its own terms, but in the language of the original creation. Flood story is in Gen. 6-9; Creation story – Gen. 1-2. If we compare these two stories, we'll discover that the Flood is described as undoing of Creation and putting the world together after the Flood.

Few helpful details: in both Creation and Flood the waters cover the earth; in both stories – living things, 7 days, breath of life. There are many terms that are parallel in the creation story. And in

Creation you have God following a process of separation and distinction: God separates water and air, land from seas, light from darkness. God creates separations and distinctions.

Gen. 1 – the way Creation is described.

Gen. 1:4 – separation of light from darkness; this is how the creation process took place.

Separation of waters

Gen. 1:9, 14 – separation and distinction.

Notice the Flood story – Gen. 7:11. What happened in the Flood? Waters from below came up and the waters from above came down. What was distinct at Creation came together at the Flood! The Flood was reversal of the Creation.

Gen. 7:20 – in Creation waters receded, were separated from the dry land; at Flood – reversal, waters come up to dry land.

Flood – destruction of what was created at the Creation; undoing God's works from Creation.

There are also unities at the Original Creation. The unities b/n Adam and God, Adam and Eve, Adam and Environment. At Flood story – destruction of these unities. The relations b/n people, b/n God, and b/n humans and environment – all these are destroyed at Flood. Human ability to control environment was separated; what was united was torn apart.

Most important – the language at Flood story is language of Creation, describing the Flood with terms of Creation. Then we have re-creation – in Gen 8-9, restoration of earth as before Creation. Gen. 1:1,2. Earth in Gen. 1:2 was covered with water, chaos. Notice Gen. 8:1. Wind – waters recede. Earth was returned at Flood to exact condition as before Creation; after Flood – restoration of the land, from chaos to order. Dry land is restored – 8:13; return to seasons – 8:22; human beings in God's image – 9:26. Distinctions God made at creation are guaranteed – 9:11.

Gen. 9:11.

Never again Flood to destroy; God guarantees those distinctions, God will keep day and night at their place. God will keep the earth as it is.

Gen. 10 – human race multiplying and filling the earth.

The point here is that the language of God's second mighty act is parallel to the language of God's first mighty act. Flood is deconstruction of God's first mighty act, Creation, and then – after the Flood there is re-Creation. There is more to it – at Creation there was Adam. Noah is described as second Adam. Animals are brought to Adam for naming and inspection; they are also brought to Noah. Very language in Hebrew is parallel, using parallel terms.

Gen. 1:28-30 – the Covenant with Adam, Adam's diet, relationship to the environment and other humans.

Gen. 9:1-3 – similarity of language, of description of “be fruitful and multiply,” of diet, relationship to rest of environment. Noah is described as 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam. Just as 1<sup>st</sup> Adam had a fall into sin, so Noah fell into sin. In the original case, it was over a fruit, and so it is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> case. The two are parallel. The very language of the Hebrew is parallel. “Adam” means “earth, ground.” Gen. 9:20 – same word – “Noah was a man of the soil.” Noah was man of the ground, “adamah” (Hebrew). Both Adam and Noah were “man of the earth.” Adam was from the ground, and so was Noah. Bible is clear that these two are parallel. Just as Adam fell from the fruit of the tree, so did Noah from the fruit of the vine. It says of Adam that when he ate of the fruit, his eyes were opened; Noah, after getting drunk and waking up from the drunkenness, woke up and saw what had happened.

Point – the language of Flood is language of creation; language of Creation provides the language of the Flood story. Both are in the image of God, both put to sleep in the course of the story, both experience fall.

There are differences b/n the Creation and Flood stories. No serpent, no test, no tree of life, no woman with special role in Flood story. In principle, the language of Creation is the language in which the Flood story is described. This principle follows its way through the OT scriptures.

## Exodus story

Once again – chaotic situation; instead of waters cover the earth, they cover the ground b/n God's people and the place where they want to go. This is the story of the Red Sea. This water prevents God's people from going where they want to go. It would be a formidable barrier for the Israelites to cross. The waters of the Exodus story are not the waters of the Creation story. The original Hebrew for the exodus story is the language of the original creation and the story of the Flood. The waters of the Red Sea are compared with the waters of the Creation and Flood.

Exodus 14:21, 22

Does this remind of the original story of Creation? Water going back? Gen. 1:2 – water covering the earth; wind over the water. Perhaps your translation says, “spirit of God”; in original the word is “wind” – the wind of God moving. The waters in Gen. 1 are divided, in Exodus 14 – same, waters divided and people went on dry ground. The word chosen here is the same as used in Gen. 1 – dry land of original creation. Israelite exodus through Red Sea follows the pattern of language of the original Creation.

Exodus 4:22

Who was God's firstborn son? Adam. In Exodus – Israel becomes God's firstborn son. Just as original Adam had dominion over the earth, so Israel is given dominion over Land of Canaan – Deut. 11:22-25. Just as God created Eve in original creation, so does God create people here, Israel. Just as in the original creation there was tree of life that was a gift from God for Adam and Eve to eat. In Exodus story there is tree of life – the manna; God feed them with miraculous bread through the wilderness. Adam was tested with fruit, Israel was tested too – Deut. 8:1-3 – God's test on His people. Serpent in original story in Gen. 3, so in Numbers 21 we have story of serpents. As God made covenant with original Adam, so in Exodus 19 we see a covenant being made with Israel.

In Exodus story we see parallel after parallel in the work of God in the Original Creation and Flood story. Exodus account is spiritualisation of many features of the Creation and the Flood accounts. For example, the chaos of the waters of the Creation are parallels to the slavery of Israel; Israel needed God to get them out of Egypt. Waters of creation – chaos; slavery in Egypt – chaos. God puts order to both. Adam = Israel; Adam and Eve = symbols of Israel. Canaan, Palestine – land of milk and honey, well-watered, that will be like the Garden of Eden. In Exodus story we have many parallels to the God's original mighty acts.

New details, though. Moses is a child, escapes from Pharaoh. Saved with the Israelites through the blood of Passover. Forty years of testing – Israel passes through the waters that were dividing, Adam and Eve don't pass waters. In Exodus story – 2 dividing of water – at crossing of Red Sea and Jordan River. So, similarities and differences with original Creation and Exodus.

What do we learn from this recurring pattern? There is no point of collecting Bible info just for info's sake. What do we learn that helps us learn on how God uses prophets to give his message to the world. What can we learn about God's giving prophecies, about our understanding? What will help for the understanding of Book of Revelation.

Five important points to remember:

First – God is consistent: His past actions set the pattern for his current and future actions. Creation and Exodus – very different, but God is same, and is consistent; what He does not He did before, and sets tone for the future. Encouraging message – God's consistency, you can count on God. The way God acts today is the way He has always acted, and He will act so in the future. If you find God faithful in your life, and if you are coming through in time in your life that it seems that God is not there, remember – God is consistent. God's approaches are the same; God's past actions set the patterns for his later actions.

Second – while God is consistent, He is not predictable. He is consistent, but not predictable. Let God be God. He is consistent in the way He approaches people and circumstances, He is not

predictable. His action may carry the pattern, but may not as well. God does not feel bound to bring about and bear every details of the pattern. Important for us to understand. Some people come to the Bible with hyper-literalism: whatever God did in the past, He must exactly do in the future, in minute details. No so. God is not entirely predictable. God has freedom to do whatever he wants, to transcend previous actions. His previous activities will carry much of the pattern, but not all of it. God is consistent, but not predictable.

Three – God is creative. There is development in His actions. His later actions develop and improve on what He’s done earlier, as if God will grow and develop with His people. The antitype does not just carry the type. The consistent pattern of prophecy may make us think that there is 1:1 match of history past and future, but that’s not the case; God does not operate that way. It’s encouraging – the Bible says that the redeemed in future will live with God forever. It’s frightening too. Do you want to live forever with all the troubles, pain, suffering, uncertainties, turmoil, difficulties, problems, rejection – do you want to live forever? Will you get bored later? Would you have seen all the movies and they all look the same; would you have traveled and done all that can be done? God is creative. In eternity he’ll have new plans and strategies. He’ll involve us. There will always be growing, changing, etc. There is creative God who comes to help us with understanding the prophecies. God gives us the privilege to see Him act creatively.

As times passes, prophecies that may have been fulfilled in one way may be fulfilled in different way at different time. Circumstances alter cases. As time moves on and we study the Bible, we’ll find God acting in creative ways to fulfill His Word.

Fourth – God meets people where they are. The Bible describes God’s activities in the writer’s experiences in the means of the language associated with His activities in the past. God speaks to the prophet in the prophet’s own language, the language of the prophet’s past. Could God do it any other way? What if God spoke in language the prophet did not understand? Language is sum-total of our past experiences. The only language we learn is the one we learn from childhood, the meaning and ideas of the words. Our language is the language of the past, we learn the language of the past. God speaks to the prophet in the terms and language of his past, of what’s gone before and what the prophet understands.

The safest way to understand the Bible is to understand the message as it would be understood by the original author. The safest way to understand and apply unfulfilled prophecy is to understand the meaning of the unfulfilled prophecy of the time and setting in which it was given, and in the language of it. Same applies for Book of Revelation – understand the book of Revelation was written in AD 95. God meets writers where they are. If you want to understand the meaning and concepts of the Bible, remember – God meets the people where they are.

Fifth – from Exodus story onwards, we see spiritualisation of some of the types, there is movement from literal to figurative/spiritual. God can use the language of the past as literal language (Creation, Flood), but in Exodus he can use the same language as describing something different. God uses now the language in spiritualised form – using Adam and Israel; the land/Eden – to Land of Canaan. It may be using the same language, but expanding the ideas.

Keep these points in mind as you study Book of Revelation. As we understand the consistency with which God works with prophets and prophecy, we’ll be able to understand how BR works.

### **No. 3** **Patterns of Bible Prophecy, part 2**

Have you ever wondered why there are so much different of opinion over the BR? IS there any possibility that we may be reading the book in the wrong language?

In this session we'll review the basic pattern, and see how it operates from Isaiah to Malachi, and then examining how these apply to BR.

First, God is consistent – He operates in the future as He has done in the past. Second, God is not predictable – he is free to do new things. Third – God is creative. Same principle, different application. Four – God meets people where the people are. When He speaks to s/o, He speaks to their time, culture, language, etc. Five - From time of Exodus, there is spiritualisation of events; events will be used to correspond to other events (waters from Flood || to slavery in Egypt).

Let's take us to the prophets and see how these principles work in the Prophets. From Isaiah to Malachi, major theme – Exile and Return. Since the pattern of God's activities is played from God's three mighty acts, when the Prophets talk about Exile, they use the language of the Exodus – from captivity to liberty. Same God uses same language to express Himself re: Exile. When prophets write about Exile, they use language of Exodus, they see Exile as new Exodus.

Hosea – prophecies around 760BC; during this time Israel and Judah are at the height of their prosperity. Another prophet who writes at this time is prophet Amos.

Hosea 2:8-15. Northern Kingdom – Israel – was at its greatest time, prosperity, economy, etc. Time of Jeroboam II – all was going on well, but got the tendency to forget God. Basic thrust of this passage is a description of the future Exile that Israel was to experience. Exile is described in terms of God taking away grain and new wine, clothing, oil, products, the technology – e/thing that they lived for, even the Feasts and Temple, and worship sites. Because they had forsaken God, God was responding in kind, by sending them to Exile. God sends them to Exile not to reject/forsake them that they are not His people, but in order to win them back. V. 14 – God speaks here in terms of relationship with Israel, like lovers. What desert? – v. 15. Family counsellors that when marriage is in trouble is to remember the early attentions, to go back to the activities and relationships that put you in love at the beginning. When you renew the early attentions, the love returns. God describes here in terms of love b/n husband and love. God talks about the Exodus as time when God and Israel are falling in love with each other. When Israel is falling away from marriage, God is allowing the divorce, but then God will start to date her again, and win her back.

Exile is pictured in terms of the Exodus. Israel – unfaithful; divorce is necessary but not forever., but God will take her and win her back. This will be a new Exodus and new wilderness experience. When prophets speak in the terms of the Exile to Babylon and Return, he uses the language of the Exodus, just as Exodus described in terms of Creation.

Contemporary to Hosea was Micah, who spoke to the Southern Kingdom Judah.

Micah 7:15 and onwards – pattern: Exile – Exodus. Notice word “again” – means 2<sup>nd</sup> time, like the first time (Exodus of Egypt). Notice spiritualisation here – another Exodus, similar to the first, but also with s/thing new. Purpose of new Exodus: to forgive them, to pardon sin, to forgive iniquities, to turn hearts to God, to pardon sin, to show compassion and mercy, to put sin under foot, to throw sins in depths of the sea. God is interested in spiritual relationships with His people. God is not interested only in political power, but God is interested in this return from Exile in heart relationship.

Instead of Red Sea, we have “depths of the sea.” There won't be another new red Sea experience here; there won't be new passing through sea. They will leave their sins in the depths of the sea.

Isaiah – prophesied few years earlier to Micah and Hosea. Reason for looking this way – to show that Exodus is basis for speaking regarding to the Exile in the future. The only way to read the prophets is to see them referring to the Exile in the language of the Exodus.

Isaiah 11:15, 16

Here Euphrates river will serve as parallel to the Gulf of Egypt, a parallel to the Red Sea experience they had earlier. There will be highway for God's people; they will cross over the Euphrates River; they will return to Israel from Mesopotamia (called Assyria or Babylon at times). This is the same basic event; Israel will go to captivity and come back.

Remember: God is consistent – there is pattern b/n Exodus and Exile.

Did Israel cross Babylon on dry land? No. There were bridges to walk over and head back to Palestine. Did Euphrates River dry up as the Red Sea? Yes, see Daniel 5 – Cyrus dried up the Euphrates River to get into Babylon. In principle the Exodus happens again in the Fall of Babylon, but many details are different. God is consistent by also creative.

Isaiah 4:2-6 (again speaking of this time)

Does this text remind of anything? Where do we have this images – cloud and fire pillar? Exodus experience, the experience of Israel coming from Egypt. Is there a testimony in the Bible that the pillar of cloud/fire was over Jerusalem at time of return? No. Here we have description of language, the living presence of God. When God welcomes Israel home, He'll be present there, in tangible presence as at the Exodus. Language of Exodus provides the language for the Exile and Return to come.

Isaiah 43:16-19 (language of Exodus and Exile mixed together).

Language of Exodus again. Now notice – new language. V. 18 – now springs a new thing. Here we see a fascinating thing – Exodus provides the model, but the return is a new thing, which will transcend the Exodus God is creative, is not bound to cover in every detail the pattern, but the language of the past provides the language of the future. God is describing the Exodus in language of Creation. The Exodus was already past experience when the Book of Exodus was written. The prophets were talking about an event that was still going to take place.

Principle no. 6 – the past provides the language for the future as well. When God reveals Himself in the past and in the future, He uses the language of the past. When God speaks of the future, He still uses the language of the past. It's very important! It's the main reason why we've studied this topic in detail. Many people read prophecy as if it was written for their time, but it was written to the original people. When speaking of the future, God uses the language of the prophet's past. Very important principle! Could it be any other way? Could a prophet understand prophecy unless the language was comprehensible language?

The language of the prophet's past, the content – the prophet's future, the prophecy.

Isaiah 65:17-19

Most people are used to see in this text a description of our future, the New Earth as in described in book of Revelation. BR uses this text for description of New Jer/m. But here in Isaiah it's talking about the Exile and the Return. The language will become again useful for BR. When Isaiah is writing, he is writing about the Exile and Return. It does not talk about heaven and eternal life (longer life). When prophet thinks about God's mighty acts in the future and what God will do, prophet gets excited and uses Creation Language. This is spiritualisation of the idea. Same thing/text here – language of Creation. God's mighty act will be so great that even the language of Creation won't be enough to describe it.

But is not BR an apocalyptic book, more like Daniel, where the prophet is writing for the future? Should we not read this book in view of the future only?

Look at Dan. 7

Daniel 7 – even the language of the past is the language into which to describe the future.

Dan. 7: 2 – 4 winds, great sea; winds blowing over the sea – in Gen. 1:2. Dan. 7:3-12 – animals. Dan. 7:13-14 – Son of Man, authority, glory, power; all worshiped Him. Reminds of Adam – to have dominion over the creatures and the earth. In Dan. 7 – language of creation applied to the future: winds over sea, animals, Son of Man (2<sup>nd</sup> Adam); Son of Man is given dominion over these animals. Picture here is the picture of the future history of the world, as new creation act of God. The Son of Man is 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam. When God gives Daniel an apocalyptic series of nations going from prophet's time to end of the world, he uses the language of the past to provide the language of the future.

This prophecy made perfect sense when Daniel was writing. Situation of God's people – in middle of Exile, Daniel was in Exile. Animals – the nations oppressing God's people. What as the message to Daniel and His people – just as Adam had dominion over the animals at Creation, so Son of Man will have dominion over the animals oppressing His people. Evil nations were in charge, but God's people were not to be discouraged, as God was still in control.

Dan. 7 – God is still in control; future of the world; God in control of future and present circumstances.

Dan. 2 – Nebuchadnezzar has a dream/vision, similar to Daniel's in Dan. 7. There is major difference. In Neb/r's dream, nations of the world are in symbol of an idol as he was pagan king. He saw glorious empires who were shining examples of the gods they worshiped. To Daniel these nations were ravenous beasts. God gave same message to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel, but in language that they would make sense of in their own terms. God used the language of the person's past to give the prophecy of the future.

God gives his messages in the language of the times, language, culture, and place of the one who receives it. In other terms, as the incarnation of JC – became human, Jew, man. God meets people where they are. Language of the past provides language to describe the future.

What happened when Israel came back for Babylon? Rather disappointing. Many people were comparing Return from Exodus. But remember – God is not predictable. Many people may have read Isaiah, Micah, Hosea – and maybe people had charts to explain how God was going to work. God did work, but not as the people expected God to work. Keep this in mind – many predictors today, who try to gain knowledge of the future that God has not designed to be gained. Let's keep in mind – God is control.

God's mighty act at Return was not the final one. The final one was the brining of the Messiah. Many people look here and say – "See, God here uses the language of the future!" Is that so? Are these prophecies more specific?

We saw this in Daniel already, so let's turn now to Jer. 23:5-6.

Jer. 23:5-6

Prophecy: Messiah will come, from the line of David. He will be king like David. In his time Judah will live in safety. His name will be "the Lord our Righteousness." There was a king living in Jeremiah's time in Jer/m. His name was Zedekiah, name meaning "the Lord is my Righteousness." The Messiah, when He comes, will be a king as Zedekiah. He won't show Zedekiah's flaws and do his mistakes. Zedekiah was an image people used to describe the Messiah when Messiah comes.

Isaiah 7:10-16

This is famous Messianic prophecy. What's the prophecy talking about? About a king named Ahaz and prophet called Isaiah. Isaiah is offering to the king a sign from God. The king is worried about 2 nations that are about to damage the kingdom, and king does not know what to do. God sends a sign – a young woman/virgin will conceive, will give birth to a boy; before the child knows right from wrong, the nations will be destroyed. It is messianic prophecy, but has immediate application. Young woman/virgin (same meaning in Hebrew) is Isaiah's wife, the child – Isaiah's child. In very specific situation, God describes the situation that by extension it becomes a prophecy for His deliverance by Messiah. Just as Ahaz was delivered in Isaiah's time, so Messiah will deliver God's people.

Zech. 9:9, 10

Here we see the language of Ephraim, of Jer/m, of the River Euphrates. IN this language of the people's time and place is description of the Messiah to come.

Who could have predicted the exact course of JC's life in advance? Could you have taken the prophecies like this, and predict the exact course of JC's life? Many people did not expect JC to come

and rule the political and economic powers of the time. Many people looked and wondered if He is the one. JC's disciples failed to understand JC's discipleship till the Pentecost.

Could anyone have predicted in advance JC's course of life? No. But having known and walked with JC, having received God's interpretation through the Spirit, could the people see JC as fulfilment of these prophecies? Yes.

John 14:29 – important principles of prophetic interpretation. Did JC say I'll tell you ahead of time, so you can create a chart, to know your spot in time? No. JC said – when it happens, then the fulfilment will be clear. JC was the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies, when His life was lifted up, **but you could not predict the exact course based on these prophecies**. We can draw from this that when it comes to the unfulfilled prophecies, a little tentativeness is advisable. The lack of such tentativeness led David Koresh to destruction. He thought he knew all details, but he was wrong.

With unfulfilled prophecies, let's study them, let's study the Bible, let's try to understand, but let's be tentative – let God be God and allow for surprises.

When John wrote the book, it was in view of the future, but the basic language was the language of John's past, the OT. BR is full of OT. Example, Rev. 13:13-18. Notice some of the OT basis for the language here.

Rev. 13:13 – (direct translation from Greek): He will do great signs, in order that he would cause fire to come down out of heaven to earth, in the sight of men.

Here we have a beast doing great signs. What's the purpose? V. 14 – to deceive those who live on earth by means of the signs he did. OT reference? Pharaoh's magicians, who tried to deceive Pharaoh by magic. Fire from heaven – Elijah on Mt. Carmel, the Day of Pentecost. Here – author uses language of the past to describe future event.

Rev. 13:15 – A spirit/breath was given to the image of the beast, in order that the image of the beat might speak, to cause e/o who does not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Reminds of Dan. 3 – worship to the image.

Rev. 13:16 – He will cause all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, that they should be given a mark upon their hand and upon their forehead, in order that not one will be able to buy or sell, unless he has the mark of the beast.

Mark of the Beast – received on hand and forehead. Deut. 6- the 10 Com/ts are to be worn on foreheads and hand of God's people. The Mark of the Beast is counterfeit of God's Commandments. So, use the language of the past to understand the situation.

Rev. 13:18 – 666 has a past. Daniel's image – 6 cubits high/wide/deep, 6-6-6. God meets people where they are, gives them lessons in language of the past.

Book of Rev comes in historical setting of the inspired writer.

## Few Cautions

1) We tend to be too certain of what God will do exactly before even God does it. That's human nature. But BR warns us – time and again fulfilments are best recognized when they occur, not before.

2) BR – we tend to read it as if written at our times and our language, but it's not the case. BR's language is language of John's past, not ours.

3) Primary purpose of prophecy – not so much description of the future, but instruction on how God's people are to live.

**No. 4**  
**Living Lessons, Dead Prophets**

Has anyone ever brought to you a Bible, saying “Look what I found?” Does it seem the same to you as to them, or did it look weird/strange?

In this presentation we ask the question: How can we make the biblical text relevant for today, when it was written to another time/person/language/ideas?

Basic Principles for Studying the Bible for this person

There are three ways to study the text: Biblical Exegesis, Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology.

	Exegesis	Biblical Theology	Systematic Theology
Category of Terminology	Biblical	Biblical	Philosophical
Time of Reference	1 <sup>st</sup> c.	1 <sup>st</sup> c.	Our time
Status of Result	Unchanging	Unchanging	Changing
Unit of Study	Passage	Theme	Theme
Field of study	Comprehensive	Selective	Selective
Level of significance	Descriptive	Both	Normative
Agency being examined	Human	Both	Divine

**Exegesis**

Word means “trying to find out what the author is trying to say,” “coming out of the text.” Exegesis looks at a writing and tries to determine the meaning of the text.

**Biblical Theology**

Tries to understand what did the writer believe, what was going on in John’s head that was causing him to believe and write what he wrote? What did John believe about God, end-of-world, salvation, etc. What was John’s theological view that causes him to write what he wrote?

**Systematic Theology**

Asks the question – what should I believe, how should I live, what is truth?

**Exegesis (EX)**

There is time of reference. When you do exegesis, you ask first-century questions, what was John trying to say. You ask Biblical questions – what language/terminology he tried to use. In order to understand John, you try to understand John as much as possible. Exegesis is unchanging – the text we

have received does not change. We have unchanging basis to try to understand what John was saying. Exegesis is text-oriented, text-by-text process. It is passage-oriented, trying to understand line by line.

Then it is also a comprehensive process/method. You can do exegesis on any text. Exegesis is the process to try to understand the intention of s/o who wrote – what he meant when he wrote it. In this we have difficulties at times. Comprehensive means that a/th that was written is subject to exegesis.

This is also descriptive process – it describe as best as you can what the writer was trying to say.

It is also a human process – biblical writers were human, receiving messages/visions from God. They lived as any other human being in their time, lived real lives in real world. We ask real, human questions. The question of “What was that person intending to say?” What was John trying to say to the 7 churches, what he intended, what was the purpose of the book as he understood it.

### Biblical Theology

Asks questions in different way – it is still 1<sup>st</sup> –century questions, but it’s still unchanging. Why unchanging? Bcs the message of BR has not changed, even if John is dead. He is dead, but what he believed is still on the pages of the book, and still valid. His written words are not changing.

Difference b/n biblical theology and exegesis. Biblical theology studies themes. The minute you deal with themes, you become selective. If you ask questions, such as “What was John’s view on salvation?”, you’ll be only looking at texts on salvation. If you ask questions “What was Jeremiah’s view on health?” you may find very little on the theme. In BT you have to find only the applicable texts.

Is this descriptive process? Yes, but it is also human text too.

### Systematic Theology (ST)

ST question – what should I believe/ What’s God’s will for me? What’s truth? You move from 1<sup>st</sup> c. to 21<sup>st</sup> c. You ask your questions, your language. Instead of biblical, the category of questions are philosophical. Every person has philosophy, a view about the world, what you think about the origins of life, the reason for our existence and death, etc. When we ask philosophical questions, questions that burn in your heart. These may not be John’s questions, not even questions that the Bible addresses.

Example: Should a Christian smoke? Does the Bible talk about this question? Certainly not! Not ever a place in the Bible addresses tobacco. The tobacco was not discovered until the 16<sup>th</sup> c.; it was known only to the people in the New World. So, Bible does not address issues of smoking. What is there in the Bible and in John’s or Paul’s belief system that helps us address the questions of smoking. Can you address this questions based on Bible alone? No. Ultimately why many X/ans refuse to smoke is scientific reason, not biblical. There is biblical principle – our body is Temple of the Holy Spirit; God wants us to keep our bodies pure, healthy, so we can make best use for ourselves and others. There is ultimately overwhelming scientific evidence that tobacco damages our health. That’s the reason why X/ans don’t smoke. Or, perhaps it is experiential reason/evidence – they suffer from the smoke and others do too.

ST is not dependent on the Bible always for its answers. When you ask questions – what should I believe, what’s God’s will for me, you are not so closely asking Bible as with EX and BT.

What about psychology? Can you find God’s will there? Yes, bcs we are in God’s image and we can learn about the minds that God created. Sociology – how humans related to one another. History – how God has carried on his plans with people.

Psychology, sociology, history, etc. – can show and teach God’s dealings with people. Spiritual gifts – of teaching, leadership, prophecy, of preaching. ST asks open-ended questions: what’s truth, what’s God’s will for me.

In study of BR – we’ll follow the method of EX, what John was trying to say and what’s their meaning then and for now; trying to understand God who meets people where they are. We’ll also asks some questions about John’s theology, what was going on with John when he wrote these things. We’ll ask also questions of today – what does BR say to us today. The primary purpose of our study is to go verse-by-verse, step-by-step, stage-by-stage, section-by-section thru BR and find its original intention. So, when you find what BR teaches, you’ll make intelligent conclusion.

BR asks questions of 1<sup>st</sup> c., but also addresses some issues we face 21<sup>st</sup> c. that we find info how to approach in BR.

If you ask Syst. Theol. Questions, you better be careful. Let the Biblical authors define the terms they use. Luther used word “sanctification” in a way that Paul did not use it. When we use Luther’s definition to study Paul, we distort Paul. BR was written in AD 95, not 1995 or 2005.

Let’s talk about ST a bit more. Time of reference – ST is for 21<sup>st</sup> c., It is changing, bcs our questions are constantly changing. ST –asks questions that change, and answers change too.

We ask the question that the Bible authors never addressed, or never were asked to address, or they never asked themselves these questions.

	Exegesis	Biblical Theology	Systematic Theology
Category of Terminology	Biblical	Biblical	Philosophical
Time of Reference	1 <sup>st</sup> c.	1 <sup>st</sup> c.	Our time
Status of Result	Unchanging	Unchanging	Changing
Unit of Study	Passage	Theme	Theme
Field of study	Comprehensive	Selective	Selective
Level of significance	Descriptive	Both	Normative
Agency being examined	Human	Both	Divine

In the process we can say that circumstances alter cases. As circumstances change, so the will of God changes - to help us adjust to function in changing circumstances and cases. God meets people where they are. As circumstances and questions change, God accommodates himself to address the people’s needs, in accordance to His will.

ST – thematic, selective. As we ask the question, we set the theme, and we select the sources. Smoking – look for principle in Bible, extra sources – in science. If there is healthy cigarette, maybe then we can smoke it (not that it will happen, but just to make a case).

At the bottom of the chart you’ll notice normative and divine. ST – has to do with norms and rules for life, how to live. When you ask a normative question, such as “Should a X/an smoke, what’s God’s will for me?”, when hyou find the answer, it’s your norm, it becomes normative for you, and you’ll live by it. It is also divine –you are asking God what to do in this circumstances; how God wants you to live. What is exactly His plan for your life. It becomes divine and also normative.

Under Biblical Theology is says “both” – bcs BT is both descriptive and normative. Descriptive – describes what the author believed. Normative – what they bible authors believed is a rule for them and for you, if circumstances aer similar. Where there are similar circumstances, what’s true for one time is also true for your time. Circumstances alter cases, but as far as the circumstances remain the same then and now, then it’s norm for them then and us now. If there is a principle true for health then and there, then it’s applicable for us here and now.

BT is both human and divine. It’s human in the sense that he biblical author is a human being, but it is also divine bcs the messages are divine.

We have it – three ways to approach Scripture.

Problem of the X/ans – to mix and match these. We say that our church follows the Bible. That may be true. But if a church teaches not to smoke, what is the ground for that claim? Is this ground 100% biblical? Can we say that we follow the Bible? Is it also true that we are also following the science, at least in part, in attempting to follow God's Bible.

When we ask "Should we ordain women?" are we not using psychology, sociology, history, as well as the Bible in trying to determine the answer to the question? When we say that our churches teaches Biblical theology, we say s/t things that are not 100% accurate, according to the definitions here.

It's true that church's statements are belief are ST, what God wants this people to believe for this time and place. Often the EX and author's place and time are not taken into consideration.

So, in studying BR we have to take the author's time and place. It does not address our questions here and now.

BR – studying based on exegesis.

## Practical Implications

This chart helps us look at the whole questions of how to approach study of BR. All these three approaches have implication for us today.

Prophets don't need to do exegesis. Many people say "Paul did not do exegesis of Isaiah and Micah, so why do we have to do? It is a question of authority. We'll discuss it later. The question is-how to human beings know what's right and wrong, what's the authority. We think of authority in terms of governments, police, etc. Where does X/an authority comes from? By definition, authority comes from God and God alone. A/o carries spiritual authority as long as they speak for God.

If I tell you I had a dream, and God said to me "You ought to sell e/th and move to Africa!" If you believe that I was a prophet, and that dream came from God, if it did come from God, how would you respond to that? If you believed it was from God, it will have powerful authority for you. If you don't believe in God, it would not matter.

Spiritually speaking, a person has authority as long as they speak from God. So, the quality of prophet's exegesis is not the ground for prophet's authority. Prophet's authority resides in the fact that the has direct line from God – visions and dreams, messages from God – they come from God himself.

We are different. We do need to do exegesis. We need it bcs the only window we have on God as non-prophets is to rightly understand His word. This is the only safe ground – psychology, sociology, spiritual gifts – they won't help us. But ultimately the only absolute certain window we have in the mind of God is sound and careful exegesis of the words of inspiration. Paul did not have to do exegesis of the OT prophets, and he did not do. He uses the OT prophets as a way of illustration, maybe at times even putting their writings in the text to say things that the prophet would not have intended and implied. However, this is acceptable as long as God directed him to do that, for that time and place. As God helps Paul to put the message for this time and place, it's all right. In this case the authority comes from God. We don't have the authority that Paul had, but Paul had. My and your reflections will have authority as long as we are faithful to the meaning and intention of the Bible text.

This is not an easy assignment. We've tried to understand various prophets and Bible books, and we've understood some points. We have no authority to teach from God unless we rightly handle the text that God has given us, unless we rightly reflect what's in the Biblical text.

Reason for that – the problem most generations have faced – that most prophets are dead. We need living lessons, but where do we go? To the dead prophets. God's revelations were given in other times, places, circumstances, times, etc. Yet, we disparately need to hear God's word for us today. How do we do that, w/t reading into the Bible our own prejudices and ideas. We've sometimes have had the

experience of people coming to say that they've found s/th in the Bible – they read in the Bible s/th that they believe, but is not Biblical.

So, how do we find the living lessons from the dead prophets? EX, BT, and ST – all are valid ways for approaching God's word. If you want to get living lesson for today that has God's authority for today, do EX! What was the intention of the author, what was the author's basic philosophy of life and his theology! And wrestle with the prophecies that don't change, the questions with today. How does this apply for us today.

ST – necessary bcs circumstances change. God's intention is not limited to one author. ST –c compares Scripture with Scripture, to find the answer. Later revelation and later history may expose extended meanings that expose that such were in God's intention, but not in the author's intention. Isn't this what e/o is doing? For they approach the Bible, and say "I know John did not know this, but I'm drawing the extended meaning of the text?" But how do you know the extended meaning is the natural extension of the original. You can only do such claim – that you know the extended meaning of the text when you know the original meaning of the text. When we rightly understand the original meaning of the text, then we can have more and better understanding of the extended meaning of the text. So, ST is very, very important, but it is only safe when we have done our homework, our Exegesis.

Let's step aside! Do I always have to do exegesis? Not always. There are times when in devotional reading, God will touch your heart to tell you what's right for you. What we are talking here is when X/ans try to study Bible and instruct others. All who study must be on same page. If e/o is bringing their own ideas into the text and insists that's God's word, then there will be no unity, nor God's intention for the text. As individuals, for our own personal life, God can often bypass the exegetical study to teach us something. You just read the Bible, and you find it there, and you find God has taught you how to live. It may not need exegesis. But if I go out and say "This is what God says e/o should do!" then it's wrong, bcs I'm making this authority. To find the true meaning, we have to find the original text.

Historically, there have been two great ways to study the Biblical text and make it relevant for today. These two methods are associated with two cities – Alexandria and Antioch. Method of Alexandria – allegorical study; associated with Plato (pagan philosopher), Philo (Jewish philosopher), Origen (X/an philosopher of 3<sup>rd</sup> c.). All started with Plato, who lived in ancient Greece, with stories about gods, who were like humans but with greater power than humans. Plato looked at that and thought, "God is not like this; He is greater than that." But there was a problem – Plato saw clearly a better picture of God, for which Socrates, his teacher, had died. So, Plato did not want to die for his beliefs. He allegorized, fantasized, of the ancient writings of the Greeks, until Homer taught Plato. Homer wrote 500 years earlier; he was the Bible for the ancient Greeks. Plato re-shaped Homer through the use of allegory so that now Homer would teach what Plato wanted to teach. That saved Plato's life. S/th similar happened throughout the centuries – people allegorized the writings. Even through centuries, people have done allegorizing – people see the needs of their churches, and allegorize the story, to fit their specific case/circumstance/need. Some people think that allegory is the "natural way" to read the Bible.

Origen – his famous reading of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Victim – Adam, Jer/m – heaven, Jericho – world. So, Adam is going from heaven to the world. Robbers = Satan, and his angels; priests = Law; Levites = prophets; Samaritan = JC; donkey = JC's body which carried the fallen Adam; Inn = Church; 2 coins = Father and Son; His promise to come back and pay in the future is SCJC.

That's an interesting story and Origen drew interesting conclusion from it. Does it have any meaning as JC's intended? – Not at all. Origen brought ideas from his time and place to use the story say s/th not intended. In this sense to read the Bible as allegory is "natural" – it comes naturally to us to place our own reading, our own thoughts, our own time, place, and circumstances into the Bible.

On the other hand Antioch used the exegetical approach to the Bible – that the Biblical text must govern the text. The original setting must be taken into account, and once this meaning is understood, then can we make proper use and the meaning of the text. Martin Luther and John Calvin, and the Reformation brought this method to light. Till this time the Bible was used only as the institutions of the church wanted. The Bible was not its own independent witness to the authority of God. The authority of God was ministered directly from the church. This was not God's intention. Unfortunately, though, this kept people away from God for quite some time.

Many pastors and preachers use the Alexandrian method today – for illustration purposes. As long as the interpretative theology is ok, there is nothing wrong with this method. But many listeners and preachers place legitimacy on this approach – allegorical – to the study of the Bible, and think that this the proper way to study it, when they are reading into the Bible their own time/place/circumstances.

If we want to understand the Bible, and BR, we have to know how to study it - exegetically, theologically, or allegorically.

## No. 5 Safeguards for Scholars of Scripture

Don't you just hate it when preachers quote from the Greek? How can we understand the Bible, whether we have knowledge of the original languages or not? There is a major problem we all face – trained or untrained person – the problem of self-deception. Jer. 17:9 deals with this problem.

Jer. 17:9

Our own heart deceives us. Not only that, but we don't even know how much we are deceived. Remember the previous presentation – Alexandrian allegory is the natural way to read the Bible. It is very easy for us to read our own ideas into the Scripture, to make the Bible look like us, to impose our own presuppositions on the Biblical material.

Best remedy for this is exegesis, as it bypasses some of the defence mechanisms that cause us to misread the Bible.

As we spoke about the 3 approaches to study, Exegesis takes the descriptive approach. When I approach with the Syst. Theology questions, I impose my own presuppositions and ideas, my own self-defence mechanisms. They rise up naturally and even unconsciously, to protect us, and they get in the way of studying the Bible. If we see something in the Bible that will call us sinners, we tend to avoid it. We tend to read the Bible in a way that tends us to prevent us from getting hurt.

Jon Paulien's personal definition of Exegesis: the art of learning how to read the Bible in a way that opens the possibility that you might learn something. The reason why we don't learn anything is bcs by nature we don't want to learn anything new, to change. It is natural for us – as in Jer. 17:9 – to avoid the truth of the Bible.

So, how can we learn to do Exegesis that helps us bypass the defence mechanisms? And as far as possible to face the reality of God's Word. Exegesis takes the pressure off, as it is descriptive – if John wrote to the churches in the 1<sup>st</sup> c., the writing applies to them/is for them, but not for me, as I'm not member of these churches. Descriptive method takes the pressure off us. Once you have exegeted a particular Bible text, you will never read it again in the same way. This text cannot be avoided as it has been subconsciously in the past. Exegesis opens the way for letting the Bible touch our hearts.

Best safe-guard a/st self-deception is exegesis based on original languages. To avoid to the best possible is to study the Bible in original languages and time, circumstances and settings, in which the Book of Revelation was given. Reason is this: How did we learn language? As children, we heard

the language at home, we heard words repeated, we grasped the meaning of these words in different circumstances. Our language got to us in our particular time, circumstances, settings, context, in our past. We read the Bible in the same way – in our context, time, circumstance. Every words of the Bible triggers associations with our personal past. It triggers past experiences, events, contexts, people, in which we first learned/contacted the words, expressions, and the ideas the Bible is expressing. it is almost impossible when reading the Bible in our own natural language not to import our own ideas to it, unless we are conscious to find the meaning from the original language.

Reading the Bible in the original language helps us break the self-defence mechanisms of our past. So, don't the Greeks have advantage then we do? No, today's Greek is different than the Greek the Bible was written in. They may have just about the same difficulty than we do, even more.

Knowing and using the original language is very helpful. So, what if you don't have the opportunity to become specialist in the ancient times, languages, and settings? What do you do? This is doable.

Let's get five safeguards to study the Bible. If David Koresh had followed these 5 safeguards, he would have been alive today. These safeguards can help protect us a/st misuse.

### **Safeguard no. 1**

When you open the Bible, you need to open it with much prayer and self-distrust. If our hearts are wicked and deceive us, then it is imperative that each time we open the Bible, we open it with self-distrust. We are the greatest reason for Bible misunderstanding; lack of teachable spirit is the master-reason for Bible misunderstanding. No matter how much Greek or Ph.D. degrees one has. If one does not have teachable spirit, to not allow God to touch one's life, to open the Bible to you, the study is in vain. True knowledge of God does not come from merely intellectual pursuit, from academic study, but from willingness to receive the truth, no matter the cost.

1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Thess. 2:10; James 1:5 – texts that underline this principle. Knowledge of God comes from willingness to receive the truth no matter the cost. Gifts of God are free, but they can cost you. Knowledge of God can cost your life, friends, reputation, etc. If you are willing to find the truth no matter what the cost, you will receive it, but you may pay a cost. But God will help you find the truth if you are willing to be taught.

Begin your study of BR with authentic prayer – prayer for teachable spirit, that the deceptions of my own heart will be reversed by God, that His Spirit will guide and illumine.

Suggested wording: Lord, I want the truth about the BR, no matter what the cost to me personally.

It's a hard prayer to pray. If you pray it, you'll begin to receive God's truth. And you may pay a price for that truth.

### **Safeguard no. 2**

If you don't have access to original languages, use variety of translations. each Bible translation has biases, faults, etc. Safest course of actions is to use variety of translations, comparing with each other – for those who don't use original language. Where there is agreement b/n translators, then the original language is fairly plain and can be safely followed. If there is disagreement, then the text is ambiguous or the translators did not understand it well. The authority that you as interpreter give to a particular reading of the text will depend on how certain this text is found in the original.

When comparing translations, find where the translators agree.

Using variety of translations helps avoid pet-readings. We all like to read certain texts – our favourite texts – in any new Bible we pick. Then, if we like it, we keep on reading. But if we don't like the way it is translated – we put the Bible aside, we don't like that Bible. We may miss important Bible truth if we do this practice. Many times we may be only twisting our favourite texts bcs of our pet-translations. And many times we may miss the important translations of the Bible.

Variety of translations allows us to be honest with meaning of text. Compare your favourite translations with others, and see whether you won't need to open your mind to more info.

### **Safeguard no. 3**

This is extremely important principle - If you want to be fair with Scripture, if you want to let Scripture speak for themselves, you need to spend majority of your time with sections of Scripture that are clear.

There are many parts of the Bible that are clear, others – difficult. For easy texts – agreement, for the difficult – disagreement. Great safeguard is to spend majority of your time in sections that are clear. The clear sections ground the reader in the solid truths of the Bible; they safeguard the interpreter a/st the ridiculous interpretations of the text, that are ambiguous. Many people tend to gravitate to read the ambiguous texts, and set it as basis for their theology. One tactic for leading people to misunderstanding of the Bible is for some people to go to the difficult/ambiguous texts, to set them as basis for their theology, and from there move to the easier to understand texts. In this way they distort both easy and difficult texts. People who spend more times in the difficult texts of the Bible build wrong theology; they will end up distorting the clearer texts of the Scripture – bcs the theology they've developed does not fit with rest of the Bible; , bcs they don't have the solid reading and understanding of the Bible.

One reason for prevalence of bizarre readings of BR is bcs BR attracts people who love to play at the edges of Scripture; there are people who love to make contribution but it can be distorted. There are people who like to find something new, fresh, etc., so that other people can say “ You've made it easier for us to understand the Scripture!” That's sensationalism.

If you spend more of your time studying Daniel 11, seals and trumpets of Revelation – you'll go spiritually crazy if not psychologically. In case of David Koresh – maybe both. Bcs the above mentioned texts are difficult; people who take them and distort them make them carry a weight that the texts were never intended to. But if you spend majority of time in clear texts of the Bible, they'll prevent you from making this mistake.

Spend majority of your time in clear texts of the Bible, and you'll not make major use (misuse) of unclear, difficult texts of the Bible.

### **Safeguard no. 4**

Compare the results of Bible study with much general reading of Scripture, lest the obsession of the detail leads you away from the general thrust of the Bible.

Many times some people read a verse at a time, and then compare one text with other texts that they pick from the Concordance; for them Concordance becomes the Bible, and they go through series of texts, picking the ones that say what they would like them to say.

Sometimes preachers come to the night before sermon is due and realise with horror that they have a sermon to bring, but don't have a message. They'll think of the congregation, of the need, they'll formulate an outline. Then they'll reach for Concordance, to find texts that they want to say what they want to say. The sermon comes as result of the preacher cloaking his ideas with Bible texts.

That sermon does not come from the Bible nor from honest exegesis from the Bible, but as result from sprinkling the sermon with texts from the Bible.

Best way to safeguard yourself – if you don't know Greek or Hebrew – is much general reading of the Bible. If you spend the majority of your time reading the Bible than studying it, you'll be on safer ground. It does not mean not to study nor compare texts with texts, or use Concordance – it has to be done, and will be done if the coming series. We'll go back and forth b/n NT and OT, and other extra-biblical info. But it's not safe to spend all your time in comparing texts with texts, bcs when you do that you may lose the forest for the trees. General reading of the Bible helps find the general meaning. Find an easy to understand Bible. When you read KJV it's great for study, but it may be difficult to find the general flow of the story. More modern version will make it easy to understand.

With Concordance you'll find many texts taken from context, tossed together. If we are not careful to take them in their context, it becomes even more dangerous. It's more dangerous to do it even on computer – you can get there all Bible texts where particular word is used. This is also extremely dangerous, bcs you may spend so much time playing at the edges of the Bible, rather than reading the text. And the meanings you'll draw from the computer text will have nothing to do with the original intention.

The general reading of the Bible will help you get the big picture view of Scripture. It is this reading that protects you from the bizarre readings of BR. General reading puts you under control of author of the book. The author gives you the flow and intention of the text. Through general reading you allow the author to control the text and your understanding. Author put the book in this way, in this order. The author controls the process in this way. In compilation it is the reader who puts the passage together for their own purpose. General reading helps to bring you to a teachable spirit of the text. To see text as intended to be read. Bible is not suppose to learn from us – we are supposed to learn from the Bible.

Spend majority of your time reading the Bible than studying it in detail.

## **Safeguard no. 5**

Give particular attention to criticisms of peers, especially those with whom you disagree or those who have better knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and know exegesis better. One of the greatest problems of Biblical understanding is our self-deception. It is so great, that even if you pray, have teachable spirit, use variety of translations, do a lot of general reading of Bible or spend time in clear Bible texts, still our own self-deception is so great, that the results will be bizarre. The best antidote to self-deception is to subject our understandings constantly to those who have done equally rigorous study of the text.

Reminds us of the Alcoholics Anonymous there is element called *intervention*. With alcohol or drugs our self-deception is very much at play. The last person to know he/she has a problem is me. Bcs these substances exacerbate the problem of self-deception. A process of intervention is suggested, where a whole lot of people (family, friends, respected authorities, colleagues, etc.) – everyone tells the person he has a problem and needs a help. Intervention is also necessary when coming to exegesis of the Bible. We need other people to come and point to use some truths from the Bible. It may be a painful experience to us, but it is mostly valuable when it comes from people who we disagree with. If I listen to people who disagree with me, there is possibility that God will help me see things in the Bible that nobody has seen. We may listen to all criticism and still not agree with the person. But if we listen, there is much chance to listen and understand. If we listen to their way of seeing/reading the text, we may see something we have not seen.

That is not to say that we should agree with everyone who has ever written anything on the text – not at all. That person may have his/her blind spots and self-deceptions. Sometimes we'll listen to all

the criticisms and conclude that this is the only way to read. But if you are willing to listen to other people's understandings, you'll still see something you have not seen before. The other person may be just as crazy as I am, have other blind spots and misunderstandings, self-deceptions, etc, but it will help us to see what we have not seen.

All safeguards are important, but no. 5 is most important; from 1 to 5 in order of increasing importance – to see what has to be seen.

We have five points:

- authentic prayer
- use variety of translations
- spend much time in clear texts of the Bible
- spend time in general reading of the Bible
- listen to criticism of peers

You don't special training/education on how to use these texts – if you do the 5 above, you won't make the mistakes of the Munsterites and David Koresh. There are even Bible scholars who don't pray, who don't listen to others, etc. They may be ignoring these principles.

Before we take the further task, in the next presentation – what life was like in the time of the Book of Revelation: what was it like to be a X/an in Asia Minor.

### **Authentic prayer to conclude this presentation:**

Dear Lord, I thank you for the process thus far. I thank you that you have not left us without principles to understand your Word. But principles are not enough – they need to be applied. Techniques are not enough – they need to be learned and practiced. As we begin to turn to the BR, as we begin to practice these principles and seek deep understanding of these principles, we need special help.

Dear Lord, I want to know the truth about the Book of Revelation. Help me to be so willing to know the truth that I'd be willing to accept any price that would come with it. I know you give the truth freely, but the truth will exact its own price. Help us to want the truth no matter the cost. Give us love for the truth, desire to serve you in whatever way you'll direct. We ask supernatural gift as this is not natural for us. Deep down in us we compromise the truth. Give us desire for truth, and help us to be willing to pay the price for knowing the truth, no matter the cost.

## **No. 6**

### **The World of the Book of Revelation**

The BR had powerful impact on the churches that first received it. The question is: How do you apply this message today.

In this presentation we'll talk about the world of the BR. The churches in this time will come under the category/qualifications of "associations" or "clubs." Most needs in the ancient world were met by the home/family or the government on the other hand. These associations met needs that were not met by either family or other associations. These were very acceptable in the ancient world. Jews, for example, were one such association.

When government is strong it does not worry about these associations, but when it is weak it may fear that disorder and danger may arise from these associations. When the church would face the government, it would see danger from government and persecution.

## Conflict with Jews

The church was suffering at the time BR was written. It suffered from conflicts with Jews. This was really threatening to the church, as the Jews were recognized associations. They were “*religio licita*,” legal religion. Romans realised that the Jews had certain privileges, so Romans did not have problems with the Jews worshipping on Sabbath, they were given these privileges. Jews had problems worshipping the Roman Emperor. It was also recognized, especially after the battle of AD 70, that the Roman Empire had to be considered of such powers as the Jews, if it was to avoid problems/difficulties in society.

When X/ty began it was generally recognized as a sub-set of Judaism, and the government would treat them as sub-section of Judaism; in fact such they were. The government did not see any strong distinction b/n Judaism and X/ty; they saw them both as sub-sets of the same overall group. From Rev. 2:9,10; 3:7-9 it is very clear that the church was coming in to conflict with Jews. Sometime after AD70 Jews made note of the fact that X/ans were the only part of Judaism who did not fight a/st Roman oppression at AD70, and the X/ans were increasingly seen as foreign element even in the synagogue. After AD 70 Jews developed the 18<sup>th</sup> prayer (there were 17 benedictions at the end of the synagogue service); it developed b/n AD70 and AD90. It was known as “*shemonai ezrai*,” which is Hebrew for the number 18. It was basically a/st JC and X/ans; the assumption was that if there was a X/an at the synagogue, when the 18<sup>th</sup> benediction was pronounced, he would be silent and hence identified, and consequently excluded.

Around the time when BR is written, the X/ans were facing problems with their legal standing. They were losing their legal standing in society; they had no standing on their own. They would wonder what did future hold for them in future.

## Gentile Hostility

1) Second problem – Gentile hostility. Then Gentiles began to examine X/ty with hostility; since 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD we have more and increasing hostility a/st X/ans. They were called “haters of the human race.” Why? The X/ans were seen as exclusive; they did not participate in society the way most people did; they would hold themselves away from celebrations bcs they did not participate in festivities. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD were syncretistic age; the age in which people were free to pick and choose b/n various ideas that came. People did not appreciate when s/o said “I have all the truth; e/o else is wrong.” At that time – 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD that was problem.

2) The accusation of atheism was also strong – the people then did not believe that there was only one God to worship; there were many gods. The problem with X/ans was that they only worshiped their God, and did not worship the Roman Emperor or any other gods.

3) Accusation of cannibalism; why? Had to do with Lord’s Supper – X/ans were eating the flesh and drinking the blood of their Lord. The pagan neighbours did not know what was going on as well as X/ans did. The stories went around that X/ans were sacrificing children and people to eat them and drink their blood at the Lord’s Supper.

## Traumatic News

X/ans were aware of the world around them. Number of events were taking a place that caused the X/ans to be concerned.

1) For example, Destruction of Jer/m. It was a/st Jewish nation, but it still affected X/ans: if legal religion can be handled in such brutal way, what about if Rome came a/st X/ans?

2) Also, the news of Nero's persecutions – they were for short time, but also demonstrative of how fragile the peace could be a/st X/ans, and how quickly the tide can turn. Today we've seen that some minorities have protections, even though not always carried away, so that the majority does not abuse them. But in ancient time it was not so – the whim of the Emperor can change e/th for a minority.

3) The development of the Imperial Cult, the worship of the Emperor as mentioned earlier. In this the church saw real threat. It was beginning increasingly difficult for people to remain good citizens and good X/ans. As long as church and state are separate, the person is safe to practice his faith/religion w/t conflict with the state; and citizenship is not held hostage to their religious views. But when/where state and church become one, and your religion is not the religion of the state it's hard to remain good citizen and good X/ans. The rise of the Imperial cult was creating problem for X/ans.

4) Death of Antipas – Rev. 2 – he was a martyr for his faith. In Smyrna Antipas was found worthy of death by the local authorities. We don't know why – whether the Jews accused him, or else. If one person could be found worthy of death in a society of Asia Minor, the possibility is real that others could really follow.

5) John the Revelator – exiled to Patmos, bcs of his faith and testimony for JC.

These above were the reason for worry and concern a/g X/ans. These problems above are external, brought from outside people. The 4<sup>th</sup> major problem – from inside; the churches were divided inside.

## Internal Problems

Divisions in the churches. Rev. 2:14. Here in Pergamum – few people who are, some people in the church who have gone in other direction – to the teachings of Balaam. What's true of Pergamum is true for the first two churches. The majority of the churches are faithful – Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum – are faithful, on God's side, on John's side. The churches have problems – majority is on God's / John's side, minority is wrong. At Thyatira – about 50-50 – where even some of the leaders are on the wrong side. John is recognizing that at Thyatira church is divided – 50% faithful, 50% unfaithful. At Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea – the majority is not on John's side.

Rev. 3:4

In Sardis – the faithful ones are the few. In Philadelphia the church has little strength. By Laodicea the church is locking JC out – there is nothing good in Laodicea, none who is faithful to God.

Here we have the situation – 7 churches described: in first three churches the majority agree with John but the minority disagrees; in Thyatira – about 50-50; in last three churches – the faithful are in the minority.

There is divided house in Asia Minor, who don't agree as to how to relate to society and the problems around them at the time of stress in Asia Minor. Purpose of the BR – to help them how to relate to stress and opposition from outside. John is writing to comfort and also to confront. And not e/o appreciates John's writings. If this is the same John who wrote the Gospel, and the 3 Letters, then we see – especially in the 3 letters – that there are problems.

We have to ask the questions: Why are X/ans divided? What is the basis for that division? What is keeping the X/ans separate from one another? What are the opponents of John and what do they believe? We can gain a lot of insight if we read Rev. 2:14-15.

Rev. 2:14-15, 20

The opponents of John are described in three different terms – Nicolaitans, Balaam, Jezebel. And the people who were opposing John could name themselves with these three names. But these people had the same problem – food offered to idols and sexual immorality. The unity b/n these can be seen if you know something about the original language.

“Nicolaus” – “one who conquers the people.” Hebrew “Balaam” = one who swallows up the people, one who destroys the people. So, basically the same thing in two different terms. Both groups – Nicolaitans and Balaamites were teaching the same story; and so with Jezebel.

IN the writings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. you’ll find the same things taking place –t here are elements in X/aty that are wrestling with food offered to idols and immorality. Why are X/ans divided over these two issues? Bcs these two issues had to do with how X/ans related to the state. All non-Jews and non-X/ans participated in Roman religion. It did not matter where you came from or what your religion that was. There were ceremonies, public events, into which every citizen was expected to participate. It did not matter what their religion was, they were supposed to be part of the civic religion as part of their citizen responsibilities. Those who did not participate were risking to loose social opportunities, economic opportunities – not have the best jobs available to them, political opportunities – not having the voice to make the place they live better. In other words, the X/ans would be social outcasts, and powerless.

X/ty had problems with civil religion, bcs there were 2 elements of it that could compromise the X/an faith. One was the pagan feasts and the food offered to idols – people were required to join at the feast and eat the food offered to idols. Apostle Paul writes about this in Corinthians – idol is nothing – it cannot speak, eat, feel, hear, etc. So, if s/th is offered to idol, nothing has happened. But when honouring the idol was seen as honouring the state, then it was a problem. And many times, if you were going to be a member of a trade guild, if you were going to associate with other people who worked at the same business with you, if you were going to be part of the business, then you were supposed to be part of these festivities.

Another problem – cultic/religious prostitution, which was part of many pagan religions. The idea – if priests/priestesses and citizens had sex with each other, the fertilisation would result in good crops/harvest; sexual part of the pagan religion. It was believed that a good citizen, every now and then would frequent the temple to have intercourse with priestess, to secure good harvest.

Obviously, X/ans had a problem with this. If they wanted to be part of society, if they wanted to have social opportunities, to accumulate wealth, to have influence on society and be part of the society, then they had to participate in the cultic prostitution and eat food sacrificed to idols. Some X/ans made the compromise, and John contends with these people.

You may wonder how did X/ans do that – to violate God’s command (You shall not commit adultery). Well, these X/ans found justification for their actions in the writings of Paul. You wonder how? Here is why:

Rom 13:1-7

Do you see the point? Some argue that the state has some authority to require and request things from X/ans. So, X/ans thought they can submit to the authority of the state. Could not a Nicolaitan say “Are we not honouring the state when we follow these prescriptions?”

See also 1 Tim. 2: 2, 3

So we are to pray for the authorities, to obey and respect and honour the authorities. 1 Cor. 8-10 Paul makes it clear that attending idol feasts was not issue for him. But the case of Paul and John was different. As we mentioned before, circumstances alter cases. This does not mean that Paul would have approved of cultic prostitution. Certainly he would not have. But the text, as Paul wrote them, 40 years before, seemed to make sense to some people before. Some X/ans would say, “What’s the problem of loosing all our social/political opportunities for the sake of some occasional actions?” And they had quite a following. The church in Asia Minor was split 50-50 at that time.

Book of Revelation was response to this situation. John was saying “No folks, no compromise. The idols may be dumb, but Satan is behind them. If you honour the idol, you can loose place in heaven. So choose – do you want to loose your place in society now or in heaven later?”

John was suggesting in BR was political, and economic withdrawal in order to be true X/an. John takes hard line, one that was not necessary at time of Paul. What was not issue at time of Paul have become issues to John now. Circumstances have changed.

What does John do to persuade them? First, BR creates what we call “Symbolic Universe.” In BR John talks about Empire that transcends the Empire of Rome. This Empire is not all there is - the money, power, etc. are not all that there is. John suggests that X/ans in Asia Minor have to gain better and bigger perspective. There are kings and priests in their own rights. They have bigger dignity, bigger power and responsibilities that transcend the world today. Not only that – JC is coming soon, and you want to be on the right side when JC comes. John further is saying that the situations X/ans face are part of JC’s plan – their powerlessness, poverty are not to last forever. God’s side is greater than the present power. They won’t always be powerless, or w/t access to the gold – one they will walk on gold. The X/ans are to have an inside info from BR. They need not compromise with society, bcs BR makes clear that the side they are on is greater than the Roman Empire. To say “no” to God is to say “yes” to Rome and earn God’s wrath and jud/t; to say “yes” to God and no to Rome is earn Rome’s displeasure, persecution, losses. Rome could threaten persecution, your life, status, and earthly possessions. God is more powerful than Rome. What would you rather face – the wrath of Rome or of God? The BR offers no-nonsense, clear message, hard line too.

It is clear that the BR had a powerful message for its original time and place. It would have had a deep impact, and was much talked to a/g churches at its time. The question is: What about today – what about applying its message today? Is BR related to the ancient time only, or will it talk to us today too?

Traditionally, there have been 4 schools of interpretation: preterist, futurist, historicist, and idealist.

#### Preterist

Suggests that BR was primarily written for John’s day. It is not description of future, does not have prophetic insight. It is message of John to the churches in Asia Minor, and that’s that. But from this presentation, you see that there is a lot of material in that. The book certainly had a powerful impact. But does this really answer the question? Does the BR come as a book that has no prophetic insight to it?

#### Futurist

BR – focus only on final crisis in history; its relevance is only for the final generation. Problem: who is the final generation; how do you know who is final generation?

#### Historicist

BR portrays the X/an age from time of John to SCJC; bases itself on book of Daniel where you find such references; suggests that the purpose of BR lies here. Problem with this school – what does relevance does BR have for our time? If most of BR touches base with one or more points in history, what doest his have to tell us today except to tell us where we are in history. Historical interpretation has often left people hungry to know the meaning for today.

#### Idealist

BR is not futurist or historicist, let alone preterist. BR is timeless truth in symbolic form; that in the BR there are principles presented that are universally applicable. There is truth to that. Problem with idealist is that it ignores the indications in BR that show the BR is more than that.

What to do? First of all, it is clear that interpretations 2 and 3 – futurist and historicist - are possible only if BR is truly inspired. Unless John is taking his messages directly from God, he would not be able to describe the future in detail as historicist position suggests or describe future events, as the futurist position suggests.

Unless we believe that the Bible is inspired book, we cannot take these positions.

If you accept Bible as inspired book, all four positions have some validity. First, BR spoke powerfully to its original audience. Second, the Bible describes important events that are still future in our day – SCJC, and even beyond, and certainly the final events preceding the SCJC. Third, BR describes the future from John’s position – the entire X/an era. Finally, BR contains truths that are valid across time and space.

In this presentations, we’ll be sensitive not to a particular type of school. Some people have picked the school they want to adhere, and then have read BR, trying to fit in it what they believe should be in it. It is far better to go from text to text, seeking to find the approach the text is calling for. What type of interpretation is this text calling for?

As mentioned before, using the Antioch approach, using the Biblical text, we’ll let BR to allow for interpretation.

Finally, is John’s struggle/battle with the Nicolaitans teaching us some lessons? We’ve already noticed that our society is very similar to John’s society. It is society where exclusivism is not appreciated. It is a society where if you say that you have the truth or you belong to the true church, it won’t be appreciated. There’s a philosophy today that e/o has some handle on truth and that not e/o has all the truth. We can accept that – is it not true that we all have a grasp on the truth and have a lot to learn. We live in time when it is natural that we want to be inclusive, when standards are breaking in most churches, when the sense of certainty is breaking down. Many X/ans realise that they have to be more involved in society, since they have not always been. There is need to be more inclusive and accepting of other X/ans.

As we look in the Bible we see Jesus and Paul as examples of inclusive approach. They reached to segments of society that no other respectable persons would reach. They reached to Gentiles and prostitutes, and baptised people nobody wanted to have baptised. Certainly the Nicolaitans may have had a point – that if we want to reach Rome and Roman society, we had to take certain steps. But John would warn us that there are limits to inclusion.

1 Cor. 9:19, 23

We must not say and do things that will compromise our loyalty to God. We must be open to the truth, but there are times in X/an life when the only answer is “no.” Absolutely “not!” John wants us to know that compromise must be shunned at such times, even at the price of life.

Ecclesiastes teaches that there is time to be inclusive and time to say no. John’s message in BR is that the time of the 7 churches it time to say “no.”

Let’s pray!

## **No. 7**

### **Basic Exegesis of Revelation**

It’s not hard to figure out what’s going on in the Book of Revelation. The big question is: “What does it mean?”

We can learn a great deal about BR right from the first four verses.

Rev. 1:1-4

These four verses tell us a great deal about BR and how the author would like us to exegete the book. The exegesis – what the author is trying to tell us, and also that we might learn something from the text as we study it. What do these verses tell us about exegesis.

First, from v.1 we learn that this is a X/an book – it is revelation about JC, so in BR we won't find material that's foreign to X/ty. When we approach a Bible text, we have to approach it from the broad perspective of X/ty. BR is in harmony with NT theology, even if the language is radically different. In BR there are no bizarre language and ideas that are not in harmony with the rest of the NT. BR's theology is in harmony with NT's theology, even if the language is radically different. Rev. 9:2-6 - locusts and torment, but when we compare with Luke 10 we see message is the same, that God is taking care of His people in face of demonic plague. The language may be different, but the theology is the same. It is Revelation of JC, not of bizarre things and plagues.

Second, from v. 1 – this is a divine revelation. The BR as much as we may exegete it as intention of human author is also revelation of divine author. God gives the visions and symbols. BR is more than just human authors' intent, but is also God's intent, these are words of God.

Third point – the BR is set in Asia Minor. V. 3 – the book is intended to be understood by the original authors. “Blessed are those who hear and take to heart” – this is an attempt to translate a very special aspect of BR, that it was intended to be understood. In Daniel author does not understand it all, and there are things that are hard to understand, even sealed.

Daniel 8:27. There are aspects of the Book of Daniel that were not understood by the original author.

Daniel 12:4. There are things in Daniel that were sealed up for another time, but that's not the case of BR. In BR – different story – it's intended to be understood.

In Greek “hearing” has 2 implications – to hear with understanding, to hear without understanding; both words have same meaning but it depends on context. In this case the Greek word for hearing comes in Accusative case, and that means beyond doubt that BR was intended to be heard and understood. It was not intended to be mystical, intended to be heard and understood.

God met John where John was, intended to be understood, setting – in Asia Minor. God gave to John live symbols. What do these mean? Example: the glorious picture of JC, who is First and Last, Beginning and End; has the key to life and death/hell, he sends his angels to guide John. Interesting thing, there is goddess in ancient world, with same characteristics. Her name was Hekata (Hecate), and she was very popular in south-western Asia Minor at time when BR was written. She was known as mistress of the Cosmos, she was portrayed as one who had the keys of heaven and hell. The ancient worldview was of 3-layered world: heaven was above, the hell – below, and in the middle was the earth. Hekata had the keys to heaven and hell, and she was travelling between all these places, bearing/carrying messages and reporting events from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven; she had angels as her servants. She was called the Beginning and the End. Can you see the parallels b/n Hecate and Jesus. When John wrote the BR he wrote in terms that would be understood in that time and age.

In Ancient world there was much familiarity with prophecy. It was not only Jews and Greeks that has prophets. There was the Oracle of Delphi, whom the people would consult about their future and their lives. In Rev. 1:17, when JC commissions John to be a prophet, JC says “Don't be afraid, all will be alright.” This was known in ancient world as the oracle of assurance, which was very common in the pagan and the X/an world, used at/of commissioning of a prophet. There was a pattern – the commissioning god would give a reason why the person was not to be afraid. Here in BR God says, “Fear not, John! I am alive...”

Here we see patterns that reflect what was happening in the real world of Asia Minor. BR is not isolated from life, but uses symbols to explain its meaning. You may wonder, "Why would Bible author use pagan symbols?" Two reasons: Pagan symbols were used to communicate. If author wants to communicate to people, he'll use symbols people understood. Second reason – to do battle with pagan theology. If you are going to oppose certain wrong ideas around, use their language. John is using the language to critique the pagan religions as well as to communicate God's message.

Fourth point we can draw from these initial verses is that BR has poor Greek grammar. Where it says here in v. 4 that the greetings are coming from One who Was, and Is, and Is to Come. It is nice translation, but does not reflect the grammar of the original. The original, exactly translated is: "Greetings from the One Being, and the he was, and the one coming." That's not English good grammar, and is terrible Greek grammar. Anyone who knew Greek, reading the original text would wonder what's going on – is the author translating from another language, as Hebrew for example, or is he having poor knowledge and use of the Greek? IS this protest against the Greek language, or some heavenly language?

John was not Greek, and did not have editorial help at Patmos. The Revelation has bad Greek. God uses a person who is not expert of the Greek of his day, and still uses him, with that crude language, to communicate truth.

As we continue to examine BR beyond Rev. 1:1-4, we'll see some other characteristics. Author uses apocalyptic language – language of symbolism: animals are unusual, all sorts of concepts and symbols foreign to normal life. Example, beast with 7 heads and 10 horns, with all sorts of names and feet like bear, body like lion, etc. In real world such animals do not exist, but they do in BR. If you study the ancient world, you'll discover that such language was not strange to the 1<sup>st</sup> c. readers. There was a book, called "First Enoch," which has 7 archangels, incl. Gabriel and Michael, just as you have them in BR. There were 12 gates of Heaven in 1<sup>st</sup> Enoch.

In Apocalypse of Zephaniah, Jewish book from most likely in 1<sup>st</sup> c., we read – and note the similarities, "Then I awoke and stood, and I saw a great angel standing before me, with his face shining like the rays of the sun in its glory, since its face is like that which is perfected in its glory. And he was girded as if a golden girdle were upon his breast. His feet were like bronze which is melted in a fire. And when I saw him I rejoiced. For I thought that the Lord Almighty had come to visit me. I fell upon my face, and I worshipped him. He said to me, 'Take heed, don't worship me. I am not the Lord Almighty but I am the great angel Aremiel, who is over the Abyss and Hades, the one in which all of the souls from the end of the Flood are, which came upon the earth until this day.'" Does this sound familiar? There are number of elements found in BR that are found here as well. Apocalyptic was a genre that people wrote in that time. While BR has bizarre language, the 1<sup>st</sup> c. reader had context to work with.

Another things to notice as you work your way through Revelation is that it has a very repetitive structure – 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls. As you compare bowls and trumpets, you'll find very many similarities. IF you look at the beginning of BR. You'll find deliberate.

I-7-8.

## Series II: Revelation 1-5

### Seven Churches and a Heavenly Vision The Lamb and His Wayward Saints

What makes a prophet? How does a person become a prophet? The Author of Revelation is called a prophet.

#### **No. 1 The Prologue to the Book of Revelation Revelation 1:1-8**

Typical language, found in every NT book; in the prose of this prologues tone of themes set for the rest of Book of Revelation (BOOK OF REVELATION). Here we find our way for the most difficult parts of BOOK OF REVELATION.

### Revelation 1:1-3

Introduction to BOOK OF REVELATION – begins with “Revelation of JC.” In original – “Apocalupsis” = to take cover off. From “apocalupto;” unveiling JC. Why, does JC need it? Yes, JC was human, in human flesh while on earth. He lived in particular time, place, and manner. We can say he is prophet, kind person, preacher, teacher.

In BOOK OF REVELATION – JC is not longer from Nazareth, but is Ruler of Universe. W/t BOOK OF REVELATION, we won’t be able to appreciate JC as He is. It is important to mark that this is uncovering of JC in fresh aspects that we would not otherwise see.

#### 1:1

“What must soon take place.” Why? Why do they have to happen? Because that’s part of God’s plan. IN the Gospels it says that JC had to suffer – it was a must, a requirement. God’s plan would not have been completed – without the cross, without the BOOK OF REVELATION.

God has plan to raw the entire Universe together – Eph. 4:3-14. God’s universal plan, that must be fulfilled on earth.

1:1 – says “soon.” What is soon? 2000 years is not soon. “Soon” from God’s perspective. 2 Peter 3 – 1 day with God = 1000 years. JC’s coming has been soon from one perspective. From our perspective can be soon too – we don’t know when JC will come, but when we die, next – JC is here. We prepare now, not in the future. JC’s coming – always portrayed as soon; potentially near coming.

1:1 – message is signified. NIV – “Made it known” = “He signified it.” It’s in symbol. This is not John choosing the symbols in BOOK OF REVELATION, but JC. John receives the vision, writes it in his own words. The symbols are from God, not from John.

#### 1:2

John testifies to e/th he saw, the “word of God and the testimony of JC.” We begin with Revelation of JC; s/th that God gave Him. The Revelation is signified and it becomes the “testimony of JC.”

John is the one who testifies about the Word of God and the testimony of JC. Testimony of JC = the things that JC saw, e/th that John saw, that is the Word of God and the Testimony of JC, i.e. the BOOK OF REVELATION, visions in BOOK OF REVELATION. John does not claim that the BOOK OF REVELATION is his own book, but that it came from God. He received this things from JC. His authority is like the authority of the OT prophets. BOOK OF REVELATION is like OT prophecy in its authority.

#### 1:3 – blessed are ....

For John BOOK OF REVELATION is not ordinary book, not primarily his book, but book written as result of the visions he saw from God.

Phrase “Blessed is the one who reads and those who hear” – why so? BOOK OF REVELATION was intended in its original context to be read in church, not studied by individuals. Early X/an church – one stands up and reads, the rest listen. Dramatic reading. BOOK OF REVELATION read in dramatic reading has special impact on listener.

Those who hear the words of the BOOK OF REVELATION implies that they will hear with understanding, not just not sinking in them. BOOK OF REVELATION was written to be understood, not a sealed book like Daniel; written to be followed by original readers.

1:3 – “for the time is near.” IN the time of JC His coming was not near, but by the time BOOK OF REVELATION was written His coming was near. All signs that JC gave to His disciples were fulfilled. JC’s coming was potentially near for every generation from John onwards.

Summary: 1:1-3 – main theological point – the chain in Revelation. Revelation begins with God, moves to JC, passed on through the angel to John, and from John to the servants.

Three-part process of Revelation – JC is the one to whom God commu8nciates the revelations; Testimony of JC – JC sends angel to John; 3) John writes to the churches “These words of the prophecy.”

1) Revelation of JC. - Revelation of JC? What God gave. Revelation is gathered in heavenly places, put in custody of JC.

2) Testimony of JC. - Testimony of JC? What John saw. Revelation is ministered to John in vision

3) Words of this prophecy - What are the words of the prophecy – what John wrote. Revelation is written out and given to people.

“Testimony of JC.” Some suggested = BOOK OF REVELATION, but in reality it is not. Following the above chain, the Testimony of JC is not what John wrote, but what John saw. The concept of testimony of JC gives us understanding of NT prophet.

Eph. 3:2-6

OT time – prophets, who took God’s words and ministered them to the people f God. NT prophets are agents of God’s revelation. What’s that revelation? The work of JC. Eph. 3:2-6 – “mystery of Christ.” In NT God has His prophets, who unpack the mystery about JC, who interpret the significance of JC – His works, His return, etc. NT prophet’s work – to bring this testimony about JC. John is like OT & NT prophets - John has received this special testimony about/from JC.

Rev. 19:10 Testimony of JC is not BOOK OF REVELATION, but prophetic spirit. The NT prophets were bearers of God’s revelation. John, Paul – bearer of Revelation of God.

Reason for sharing this – exciting message in BOOK OF REVELATION. The messages is found in BOOK OF REVELATION – Rev. 12:17. Rest of offspring – remnant of God’s people, who will hold to the testimony of JC and keep the commandments of God. These people will have the prophetic gift – original language “have the prophetic gift.” The testimony of JC is not BOOK OF REVELATION, but the spirit from God. The text says that the remnant people will have the testimony of JC, that in their midst they will have prophetic gift. Prophetic gift – will continue, the church will have the prophetic gift as John’s time churches.

That’s exciting. God will not leave His people w/ prophetic witness. Final events of earth’s history are scary. God will provide prophets in these scary times; God won’t leave His people w/ witness.

Author of BOOK OF REVELATION does not understand himself to be the last prophet. There will be prophets until the end of time.

Revelation 1:4-6

Introduction to BOOK OF REVELATION. “John to the 7 churches in Asia.” Reminds us of Paul’s letters’ introductions. BOOK OF REVELATION is not introduced as apocalypse, but as letter. What is BOOK OF REVELATION really? Some people says it is apocalypse, others – prophecy, others still – special form of rhetoric; others – letter form. BOOK OF REVELATION does not conform to any particular style – it is a mix of all of these.

Revelation – is also a letter, prophecy, etc. To real people and real places. Not abstract, but subject to time, place, etc.

“Grace and peace” – like Paul’s greetings. “Grace” = charis, greeting given from Greek to Greek person. In Israel today – “shalom,” = peace. Paul and John – they have combined the familiar greetings in both Greek and the Book of Revelation new worlds. “Grace and Peace” summarise JC’s ministry.

Grace and Peace come from one who was and is to come = God the Father, from 7 spirits around God’s throne = Holy Spirit, and from JC. Trinity of persons.

IN BOOK OF REVELATION – fondness of number 3; there are three persons in the Trinity. Word “Trinity” never appears in BOOK OF REVELATION nor in NT. Clear from passages like these, that God is spoken of as Trinity. In BOOK OF REVELATION we have trinity of persons. Trinity of qualities – JC = 1) who is faithful witness, 2) firstborn of dead, 3) ruler of kings of the earth. Three qualities of JC, who make Him who he is. In Greek – ‘martur’ – reference to His death; JC is also firstborn of dead – ref. His resurrection; Ruler of Kings of Earth – Ruler after His ascension.

Why BOOK OF REVELATION describes JC this way? Because of His death, resurrection, ascension, being in Heaven. Because of Who He is, He can be for us all that we need Him to be. These qualities are hidden from the world, but in the BOOK OF REVELATION it is openly and publicly revealed.

When John piles trinities, he does not quit. Trinity of persons; trinity of qualities; trinity of actions. These actions are directed twd His people. These things JC can do for you because of the qualities seen in the previous text. JC loves us; He goes on loving us. Continuous action, on and on and on. He loves us, freed us from our sins. Change of tense – from continuous to past (freed us from His blood.) In Greek this is Aorist = point in time. Love of JC = continuous. Freeing = a point in past time. He who loves us has freed us. When? At the cross; there God’s people are freed from sin by JC’s blood.

“He made us kingdom of priests” – our status before God, because of JC’s love, because of JC’s freeing us – we have new status in JC. We are kings and priests before God. Remember who you are because of this. What JC does for His people, for those who are in Him, He elevates them to a new status. Kings – all power, highest status; the people to whom all looked up to. Priests – highest position in religious world. JC gives us the highest position in this world. IN the world we may not always feel like this, but in JC we have new identity. We have place in heavenly places.

Because of these facts – freed by JC, new status in JC – we can praise Him. “To Him be glory and power forever...” This is what praise is all about. That is to see the tremendous actions of JC, and sing appropriate praises. This is what remnant is to do. Rev. 14:6-7 – give glory and praise to God; to praise God is the reason for existing.

Interruption by 3-fold doxology – To Him who loves us.... – be glory and power... This is style of song of praise in ancient times.

“To Him be the glory” =- loves us, freed from sin, given us new status. Glorious and exciting beginning. BOOK OF REVELATION is not a revelation of who JC is, but of what we become when we unite with Him. As glorious as JC is, we can share in the glory if we unite with Him.

BOOK OF REVELATION is great appeal to God’s people – not to be stuck in the world’s things, but to look that we are elevated in heavenly places with JC. We have new status, we can praise Him because of what He has done for us.

Revelation 1:7-8

In the first eight verses is clear statement of the sum and substance of BOOK OF REVELATION. BOOK OF REVELATION – revolves around two great themes – 1) JC – who He is

and what He has done; 2) Eschatology – what is coming soon, the Alpha and the Omega (Final events of world’s history and SCJC). BOOK OF REVELATION revolves around two poles – 1) JC and 2) Eschatology.

Prologue introduces us to the basic themes of BOOK OF REVELATION.

Never forget that this is Revelation of JC, not just of End-time. It is eschatology combined with the cross. BOOK OF REVELATION is books about JC, salvation, and bout the end.

Why is BOOK OF REVELATION given? So that we can respond.

Rev. 1:3 – BOOK OF REVELATION and prophecy – given for us, to stimulate us to the study of the book.

## **No. 2 Jesus among the Candlesticks Revelation 1:9-20**

In the BOOK OF REVELATION we see JC addressing Christians, Jews, Muslims. Evidently BOOK OF REVELATION is like JC – there is diversity. Are there any limits to diversity?

Rev. 1:9-20

Right as v. 9 you see interesting opening – “I, John.” This is unique form of expression in NT, but not in OT. in OT this type of expressions in found in Daniel, in the prophetic portions, Dan. 7-12. “I, Daniel...” This suggests that there may be special connection b/n BOOK OF REVELATION and Daniel. Rev. 1:9-20 – similar/ parallel to vision in Daniel 10. Last of Daniel’s vision – figure, similar to the one in BOOK OF REVELATION. Vision of JC in BOOK OF REVELATION builds on Vision in Dan. 10, and to lesser degree of Dan. 7. Last narrative of Daniel – ties with first vision of BOOK OF REVELATION. Daniel and Revelation – two-volume edition of same book. Figure of JC in BOOK OF REVELATION’s beginning reminds of images in book of Daniel.

Keep in mind the special relation ship b/n BOOK OF REVELATION and Daniel.

Rev. 1:9 – brothers, companion in suffering, kingdom of JC; on Isle of Patmos because of Word of God and testimony of JC. The Experience of john is similar of the experience of JC. John shares with the churches – the companionship in suffering, in kingdom, in patient endurance. That’s what JC’s ministry was all about – proclaiming the kingdom, patient endurance till the end. Church’s experience is similar JC’s experience on earth.

Implication for us: ever wondered how to live, what’s the right thing to do; what would JC do if in our place? Safest course – to model JC in our life. Life of JC is like law for the X/an – what He was is what we are to become. Church’s experience is to be an extension of JC’s own experience.

The church’s only experience is modeled after the experience of JC.

Rev. 1:10

“On the Lord’s Day.” What is it, when did John receive the vision? Scholars don’t find it easy to answer. Four basic possibilities:

1) It was Saturday, the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week in Hebrew calendar. ten called “the Lord’s Day” – Isaiah 58; Mark 2:27, 28 – JC says calls the Sabbath “Lord of the Sabbath.”

2) Sunday – books written by X/ans in 2<sup>nd</sup> c., about 30-40 yrs after BOOK OF REVELATION was closed, where Sunday was called “The Lord’s Day,” because of JC’s resurrection; celebrated because of the resurrection.

3) Easter – JC rose on Sunday, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, but also rose on the day of Passover, the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of Passover. Easter falls on Passover – celebrating the Resurrection once a year. X/ans in Middle East have celebrated Easter on the exact day of the Passover. There was even a controversy a/g X/ans at that time – when to celebrate Easter – on the exact day or when the Jews celebrate Passover. X/ans tended to celebrate it on Passover. John may have been conscious of the time that this was the time of the Resurrection – the Passover, the Easter, the day JC resurrected.

4) The Day of the Lord – as in OT terms; the final days of the Earth, when God comes to earth to change e/th. Maybe eschatological focus of BOOK OF REVELATION.

Which of these is most likely? Sunday – least likely, not used in NT. Quite evidence for Sabbath – Mark 2:27, 28; Isaiah 58: 13, 14. Reference to the Eschatological Day of the Lord, option no. 4. Most likely it was either the Sabbath or the Eschatological Day of the Lord.

Some people think that the Emperor’s Day of Worship was called the same. John here only contrasts that JC is the Lord, not the Emperor. It is clear that the “Lord’s Day” for John was very special. That is JC walking a/g candlesticks.

Rev. 1:12, 13

JC is walking a/g the candlesticks, ministering to the churches. OT background - Lev. 26:12. Here we see JC fulfilling the promise of the covenant. In the OT God made a covenant with Israel – He will be their God, they will be His people.

Covenant – a technical term for a contract b/n God and Israel. God made this contract that God will behave in certain ways and Israel was expected to react in the same way. That is very important Biblical concept, and we can draw very important lessons from this.

Covenant: 1) We know what God expects from us. We don’t have to guess God’s will and plans. This gives us security to know where we stand with God. 2) God subjects Himself to the Covenant Himself. Reason for God doing this – God makes clear that He is not like the pagan gods, who were very capricious; you never know what these pagan gods would do. The ancient gods were scary, could not be trusted. At that background, the Hebrew God comes, and tells them how He behaves and responds to different situations. God limited Himself for people’s sake. God subjected Himself to the Law for people’s sake. He made it clear who He is, what He does. God of Israel was God who was very willing to limit himself for people’s sake. He did not have to do it, but condescended to be subject to the Law, to certain courses of action, so Israel would know how to behave. The result – Israel had the security in His relationship with God. Israel had a dependent God, not capricious God, time and space were related to God’s law. This is drawn to our attention by JC walking a/g candlesticks – He is their God, He is with them. The same JC who walked a/g OT Israel walks among us. That is encouraging – the God of yesterday we can count today and tomorrow. We find in the covenant God a sense of security.

Modern people are not excited about this concept. We are afraid of the legal side. The purpose of this language – to give people security that they are on safe ground. Many X/ans are insecure – are they right with God, are they saved; do they have the Holy Spirit. JC says – I stand among the candlesticks, the imperfect churches. These churches are fallible, but JC continues to walk among the candlesticks. God is dependable and can be counted on.

This is God of the Covenant.

Rev. 1:9-20

JC is portrayed here as the God of the OT – v. 17. “I am first and last” – Isaiah 44:6; BOOK OF REVELATION draws on an OT picture. Isaiah 48:12, 13 – God is the Creator, the dependable God. This is the God of the OT. In OT YHWH says “I’m the first and the last, no other God beside me.” Rev. 1:17 – JC says the same thing. JC is the God of the OT. This is the unveiling of the Revelation of JC. Yes, JC was a human being when on earth; he ate, got tired, died, but He resurrected and is at the right hand of the Heavenly Majesty. This is the God of the OT.

This is not unique to BOOK OF REVELATION. Time and time again JC is seen in the light of things that belong to the YHWH in the OT. In the OT you’ll see pictures of JC – in NT JC is seen as the God of the OT.

This helps to deal with people who think that JC is not equal to God the Father. You can often quibble with texts that call JC “God” – John 20:28. It becomes clearer to see that the NT writers were not afraid to call JC “God” like “I am the first and the last.”

JC is more than just great human being; He is prophet Himself; God himself came in the form and shape of JC.

Rev. 1:17, 18

In this passages – a prophetic assurance of deity. In OT when God appeared and prophet fainted, God would touch and wake up the prophet and say “It’s going to be ok.” God applies Himself to the needs of John. John is the leader of the 7 churches of Asia Minor, the churches to who He is writing to. Here the leader falls down, needs JC’s help. JC touches John and gives him the assurance that his needs will be met; all that He needs to be a leader to His people, God will give Him.

God meets John where John is. JC meets each of the churches where they are. Rev. 1:12-18 – whole series of characteristics of JC: a/g candlesticks, head and hair like wool; feet burning like bronze in furnace; was dead but is now alive. All these characteristics of JC are listed in Rev. 1:9-20. Each of these churches gets couple of these characteristics of JC, but not one church gets all the characteristics.

JC meets John where John is; JC meets each church where the church is. Each church receive a different facet of JC. To the churches JC presents himself in different characteristics. Tot eh Jews – as YHWH of the OT. How about to the Gentiles? Greek goddess Hekkata – similarities b/n JC and Hekkata. JC appeals to the pagans of Asia Minor. He says, “E/th that you looked for in Hekkata you’ll find and have found in me.” If you search for life, don’t look to Hekkata, but to JC. To the Jews: E/th that you’ve looked forward to in Messiah, in the temple and the sacrificial system, you’ll find in JC. To the X/ans churches – e/th you need, you’ll find in JC.

Lesson for us: How can se follow JC? How can we reach people where they are? Do just like JC – seek to understand them, their background, their needs, etc. 1 Cor. 9 – Paul talks about being all things to all people. This is the model of JC. This is how JC has come to us. Do you remember the day when you first met JC, how He first reached on you? Can you reflect on it? JC is able to reach people anywhere. He meets people where they are. Understand their world, their context.

Are there limits to this kind of diversity? Yes. John recognizes that there are limits, times when the X/an cannot compromise. JC refused to compromise in times like that. The same JC was wiling to reach to people with variety of backgrounds. Limits to diversity, to become all things to all people? – do nothing that contradicts Scripture. There are so many things that are not forbidden in Scripture. Observe other people to understand them to reach them. Understand JC who offers different strokes to different folks.

Church is presented as candlesticks. Image is drawn from the OT sanctuary imagery. Candlestick – in Holy Place of OT Sanctuary, the only light in the Sanctuary. Church is light of the world. Church is light through which people can see JC. Secular people don’t tend to respond to argument, to strings of Bible texts being thrown in them. Secular people come to God when they see

God in other people, when they sense God's presence in the lives of other people. Secular people are not interested in God until they see Him a/g a group of people, including church. Church, going through motions of life, reaches nobody. Secular people are not interested in going through the motions. When they find people who are interested in God, then they follow JC. In the secular world the church is the only God and JC that the people will see.

### **No. 3 Seven Letters to Seven Churches Revelation 2:1 – 3:22**

To all churches JC says, "I know you..." If JC knows us so well, why is it hard to confess our sins?

General terms about the Letters to the seven churches. Characteristics of the letters.

First, chiastic structure: ABA structure. The logical way of the time to approach things. The first and last of the series would be parallel; then the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> from last would be the same.

Smyrna and Philadelphia – nothing bad said about them, only commendation. Pergamum and Sardis – almost nothing good said about them. Ephesus and Laodicea – same problems. Thyatira – has two phases; what's written about it is twice as long. Similar to the 7-brach candlestick. Seven-branch candlestick – churches 1 and 7, 2 and 6, 3 and 5, and 4 in the middle. Ephesus and Laodicea – parallel in legalism and lifelessness; Pergamum and Sardis – parallel in decline; Smyrna and Philadelphia – parallel in faithfulness; both are apposed to/by "Jews." The seven churches are like chiastic structure. What you discover on one side of parallel helps understand the other side of the parallel. Laodicea – importance of parallel to Ephesus.

Second, these churches are listed in certain geographical order – a semi-circle, starting from Ephesus to Laodicea. If you superimpose a super large candlestick over these area, these churches are like the points on top of the candlestick. These churches are located in area, and it looks like candlestick. It's similar to postal rounds. Churches are in geographical relation to each other. It takes about 3 days by bus to visit all 7 churches.

Third, each letter has 7-fold format/pattern: 1) Address to church by angel; 2) Description of JC; 3) Praise and Encouragement – "I know..."; 4) Censure – areas for improvement; 5) Statement for exhortation for change; 6) Promise to the overcomer; 7) Appeal to hear the Spirit.

All seven of these are found in each letter, with exception of 3 and 4 – Smyrna and Philadelphia receive no censure; there is no tone of threat. There is no repentance called from these churches. These churches suffer great, and JC is tolerant to those who suffer. Laodicea – receives no praise; this church does nothing right. Greatest sin of Laodicea – no authenticity, faking it; trying to be what you are not. Number 6 and 7 – reversed in order; letter 1 – 6 and 7; in letter 7 – 7 and 6 in order.

Fourth point – JC knows the churches. "I know" are found in each letter. JC knows all about the churches. This is a very important concept in the Gospel of John, except that there JC knows about individuals – JC knows about Thomas and Nicodemus all. Nobody can hide from JC. Here in BOOK OF REVELATION – JC knows all about the churches. If churches want to improve, they have to listen to the messages from JC. He is the one who knows.

Lessons for you and me. Frightened? Should not be. The fact that JC knows all about us means there is nothing to hide, that JC will help. No need to hide behind a façade. Why we hide? Because we are afraid that they will find who we really are, that they will not like us and stop being close to us. There is no reason to hide from JC. There is no reason not to tell Him the truth about ourselves. Confession is to tell ourselves the sin of our selves. JC knows all about us. Confession is not about JC,

but about us. Confession is opening us to ourselves and God; honest before JC, and honest before other people.

The fact that JC knows all about us is encouragement to be open with JC – we cannot disgust Him, can't chase Him away, can't threaten Him. He knows us who we are and we are like. Nothing we confess to Him will scare Him.

Fifth point – the various characteristics of JC in Rev. 1 are distributed among the churches. Each church gets something, but none gets it all.

Rev. 2:1 – JC is the one who holds the seven stars, who is a/g the 7 golden lamp stands; Rev. 1:16, 20. Rev. 1:13 – a/g the lamp stands. Rev. 2:1 – JC's characteristics here drawn on introductory vision from Rev. 1:16, 17. Ephesus – ministered to by JC a/g stars and golden lamp stands.

Smyrna – Rev. 2:8 – JC is the first and the last, the one who died and resurrected. These characteristics are found in Rev. 1:17, 18

Pergamum – 2:12 –sharp, double-edged sword – Rev. 1:16

Thyatira – 2:18 – JC, Son of God, eyes, feet – Son of God is mentioned in Rev. 1:6, 14, 15

Sardis – 3:1 – Holds 7 spirits of God, holds 7 stars. 7 Spirits – 1:4; 7 stars – 1:16, 20

Philadelphia – 3:7 – JC is portrayed as holy and true One, holder of keys – Rev. 1:18. “Holy and True One” – not found in Rev. 1. Perhaps reference to Rev. 6:10, in advance.

Laodicea – 3:14 – Faithful and True Witness, Ruler of God's Creation. Rev. 1:5 – Ruler, first-born of dead; faithful witness.

Vision from Rev. 1 – applied to churches. Not all churches get all of JC, but each gets unique characteristics of JC. Not two churches find the same JC, just like the four Gospels. Why four Gospels, when there is in fact one Gospel? Because there are many people, and God meets us where we are. God portrays Himself just as people need to hear and see JC. JC adapts Himself to the churches.

That is to show that there is not just one way of doing things and being a church. Each church can capture unique facet of who JC is, each church is witness to unique facet of JC; to portray to the world a characteristic that nobody else can do. What about your local church – is it good witness, is it demonstration of love, etc.?

No two churches have to be exactly alike. Each church needs to understand what each church is like.

JC comes to each church in special way. These various characteristics of JC correspond to the needs of the church.

Ephesus – faced with false doctrines – JC comes as one holding the 7 stars, the one a/g the lampstands. Theme: light. JC is THE light to the church threatened by false light.

Smyrna – faces persecution and death; JC comes with promise for resurrection.

Pergamum – false teachings; JC: two-edged sword to divide b/n falsehood and truth.

Thyatira – false queen; JC: true Ruler

Sardis – asleep; JC – comes with awakening spirit of God

Philadelphia – very little strength; JC – open door

Laodicea – lukewarm; JC – offers discerning witness and the power. Laodicea – the “nothing” church, church that has nothing to say; JC has to create something out of nothing.

Each church receives characteristic of JC that are designed to meet their unique needs.

The basic movement in this churches is the movement of decline and degeneration. In the first 3 letters – the remnant are the bad people; basic sign – faithfulness, but there are some people who don't behave properly. Letters 4-6 – remnant is God's portion of the church; the majority is with God. Letter 7 – nothing good to say. Pattern of decline and degeneration, from Ephesus to Laodicea. Ephesus – has left first love; Laodicea – totally apathetic.

Their evil seems to be grown up; good has left them. Laodicea does not care, totally apathetic. Increase severity because of the increasing evil. JC comes to check, warnings are more severe from letter 1 to 7. To Laodicea – there will be rejection. There is continual degeneration.

There is also beautiful thing here – progressive promises. As churches decline, there is increasing promise to the churches.

1<sup>st</sup> church – promise tree of life to winner

2<sup>nd</sup> church – crown of life, 2<sup>nd</sup> death overcome

3<sup>rd</sup> church – hidden manna, white stone, new name

4<sup>th</sup> church – authority over nations, to rule with iron sceptre, to dash them to pieces, morning star

5<sup>th</sup> church – walk with JC, dressed in white, no name blotted from Book of life, acknowledge name before Father, acknowledge names before angels

6<sup>th</sup> church – kept from hour of trial, pillar in the Temple, will never leave it, name of God written on them, name of city of God, name of God's new name.

7<sup>th</sup> church – Laodicea gets one promise only – the promise to Laodicea includes all the other 21 promises from the other 6 churches – to sit with JC on His throne, that is – you have e/th with JC if you sit on His throne.

Progressive decline, progressive promises – Rev. 2 and 3.

How should the 7 churches be understood? Preterist, or futurist, or historicist, or idealist book? Should the 7 churches be read in preterist way – are they messages to particular time/place? Yes, Revelation is message to particular places and time. These letters were messages to the original churches, and try to understand what God is saying to them.

Idealist form – are these timeless truths? Yes, they are. “Let everyone who hears, listen what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Written for then and there, and for timeless truth – therefore, there is s/th for us today.

Historicist way – as historical series from John's day until SCJC. That's not the primary intention of the seven letters. Rev. 1:19 – historicist approach, things that are and that will happen later. Rev. 4:1 – door open in heaven, “what must take place after this.” Rev. 4:1 looks back to Rev. 1:19. What we find in BOOK OF REVELATION after Rev. 4 is focus primarily on things that are future to the time of John. Rev. 1-3 – focus on things that are. This is clear indication on things that are and also on things that will come. The major emphasis from John's perspective – messages to 7 churches in John's time with implication to everyone.

Can't rule out the historical application at all. There were more than seven churches in the time of John in Asia Minor. Number 7 – very important, symbolic; represent all churches in Asia Minor and all churches in history. Number 7 – hint; churches will serve as representatives of the other churches in history.

Historian Phillip Schaff outlines the history in seven historical periods: 1) Apostolic period; 2) Persecution and trouble for church; 3) Union with state; compromise of church's principles; 4) Medieval Period, Dark Ages; 5) Reformation; 6) Protestant Orthodoxy; 7) Period of infidelity and World Wide Mission.

As we study the churches one by one, we will look at this letter and ask the questions: If this were to be applied to a particular part of history, how will it look?

It is possible that in the seven letters God had a deeper purpose, maybe God was representing the history of the church.

A hint that we are perhaps really dealing with historicist reading: Rev. 3:17-18; Laodicea is the last period of the church history. This is a fearful message to Laodicea. This message is parallel to Rev.

16:15 – a call to God’s people, like in the middle of the battle of Armageddon. God addresses the church in the latter part of earth’s history in the manner He addresses Laodicea.

Rev. 16:15 – blessed who does not walk naked. Warning to God’s last people uses the same combination of words – clothing, nakedness, shame. The author of Revelation uses the language of Laodicea to give warning to the people in the last times of the church history. Maybe there is really a historical reading to the line of the churches – Ephesus and Laodicea.

#### **No. 4 Ephesus and Smyrna Revelation 2:1-11**

What are you afraid of? S/times what we fear the most is what we don’t know about? How do we overcome fear?

#### **Ephesus Revelation 2:1-7**

Characteristics of JC: one who holds the 7 stars. In the original Greek – seized control of the 7 stars. These 7 stars = 7 churches. JC, when it comes to the church of Ephesus, makes the point that he is in control of the situation. The churches don’t need to fear that JC is not in control. Whatever the churches are going through, JC knows about it.

JC’s analysis of church in Ephesus. First, energetic church. Rev. 2:2 – hard work, deeds. Church knows how to work. Second, patient church. “Know your deeds, hard work, perseverance...endured hardship...does not grow weary. Third, discerning and doctrinally sound church – Rev. 2:2, 6. Hates Nicolaetans. Church interested in truth, does not want to see falsehood in church, to teach right thing. Positive church, e/o would like to be part of.

Problem – this is a church which backslides in love. “You have forsaken your first love.” Paradox hard to maintain. Many paradoxes in X/an life. on one side – to be faithful t be energetic, discerning, doctrinally sound, but also to love. Love and truth, to be strong in doctrines and also to love. Ephesus – emphasis on faithful to commandments, to be faithful to teachings, but backslidden in love. Doctrine and decisive actions often leads to lowering standards of love.

Church – strong on doctrine and decisive action, but weak in area of mutual love.

If you have to choose, which one would you choose? Scripture does not encourages us to choose, but if caught on side, we have to choose love. 1 Cor. 13. Love is superior; none of the rest is of value if not love present. If don’t know how to approach s a situation, better make a mistake on side of love than on side of justice. We are severe to others and merciful to ourselves. If have to err, err on side of mercy.

In Ephesus – reply of Israel’s history. Jer. 2 – time before exile. Jer. 2:2. Hosea 2: - similar to Jer. 2:2. God looks back on the wilderness experience of Israel –time of devotion in the nation’s youth.

Jer. 2:13, 21

In many ways, the church in Ephesus is re-enacting the experience of Israel – initial faithfulness, but loss of love for God and people.

Appropriate focus on works – found in Ephesus. Focus on works but out of balance, because of lack of love.

Off balance – like a drunken peasant on a horse: you put him on horse and you know he’ll fall, but you don’t know which side will he fall on. Balance b/n love, acceptance by/of Gospel and

faithfulness on one side - obedience, keeping commandments. In many ways today we are like this – to be off balance. S/t it seems we see one as less or more important than the other. Having gone too much on one side we try to balance with it on the other side.

Ephesian church – same problem, similar problems to fight as we do today. Ephesians made a decision on side of sound doctrine and sound involvement.

Church of Ephesus – busy church, strong standards, but labour is not substitute for love. To onlooker – a successful church, but to JC – a fallen church. What do you think JC would counsel the church.

Rev. 2:5 – remember the heights from which you have fallen. Counsel: First – remember, in Greek – present imperative. That is to say, they have not forgotten, they are aware of the problem, they are not slipping on purpose, but He says, “Keep the Goal before you, Renew what you know; Do what you know you have to do.” Second counsel – Repent! (aorist imperative!). This is a point in past time. Present tense – continuous and ongoing tense. Here – Repent! – a command to start doing. Get starting on repentance! Bring your actions in line with your intentions. Bring your actions in unison with your beliefs. Repent, turn around, get fresh start. Third – Do things you did at first (Aorist Imperative). Start renewing, start reviving, start your first intentions, etc. Another counsel – listen to the Spirit. Let everyone who has ear, listen to the Holy Spirit. If you have invited the Holy Spirit to your life, turn your heart, tune your heart, let Spirit talk to you, and Spirit will bring love. Rom. 5:5. Finally, keep your eyes on Paradise. Remember Paradise and live life in accordance to it. Saved/Redeemed will be in Paradise.

JC – analyses, counsels the church.

What can we learn for today from this message to Church in Ephesus?

First, JC says, “Look to the place where you last saw the light.” If you are slipping from God, if you sense you are not where you ought to be, go back to where you started. Like marriage counsellor, telling a couple that is falling out of love, go back to past, when you bonded. There are stages in bonding. Same is applicable to spiritual life: go back to where you started with God. Renew the love experience with God.

Second, it is not what we do, but the motive behind it, that counts it. Ephesus did a lot of things, but not motivated by love; but did not have God’s approval. Motive is more important than final result. Mistaken results done out of love are better than good deeds made of no love.

Third, if you have err, do so on side of people. Best err on side of people, on side of mercy.

Fourth, the primacy of the Gospel: only through the Gospel can we love. Nobody has the capacity to love unless loved first; God loves us first. Any church that loses touch with centrality of Gospel will wound people.

Historicist reading of the churches (historical flow of history from time of first church to SCJC) – early church, apostolic church, from time of apostles until time of John the Revelator. Church with great reputation, but now in trouble, because it was beginning to lose touch with its first love. Ephesus - 31AD – 100AD, roughly about.

## **Smyrna** **Rev. 2:8-11**

Ephesus – back-sliding church. Smyrna - suffering church. As such, JC begins by reminding of His own suffering and resurrection – v. 8. Reminder. First, a church under stress/pressure. v. 9 – affliction; Greek “phylipsis” = pressure. Affliction – distress brought about by outward circumstances. Church is under stress not because of mis-function, but distress from outside. This stress can be also psychological – stress from outside, church on inside is fretful. At this point JC offers His counsel. This

church is in deep poverty, not lower middle class. This is a destitute church, possessing nothing. A destitute person does not have the means for next meal.

2 Cor. 8:9

Church experiencing what JC experienced while on earth. v. 9 – yet, rich. Not in material things, but in things pertaining to God. In the very things that JC became poor, to offer. They are in contrast with church of Laodicea – rich in own eyes, but poor before God. Smyrna – opposite in this case to Laodicea.

v. 9 – subject to oppressive speech. This is church which is slandered, “to injure the reputation of.” This church does not deserve the accusations. This church is like JC – not deserving abusive speech, but continually abused verbally.

v. 10 – facing impending punishment on top of all sufferings; more suffering in days to come compared to what they are suffering so far. Not “if” but “when” – when this church is going to suffer.

10 days – Dan. 1; 10 days of test/trial. This church is going to experience 10 days of trial, short but sharp.

This is church – very little negative written about. The closest to negative – just worried about the situation it finds itself in. We would most likely do the same if under the same pressure from outside and inside.

JC’s counsel:

First: Do not be afraid! In Greek - present imperative = stop being afraid. JC knows the church is on pressure from outside, but He says “Don’t put pressure from the inside. I am the one in control of the churches. I’ve suffered and died; I’ve been thru this experience. We’ll make it.”

Second, continue to be faithful until death. Continue doing what you are already doing.

Third, listen to the Spirit. Let the Spirit calm your heart, let the Spirit take away the fear.

Fourth, keep your eye on the reward. Reward is what? First – crown of life; nothing on earth can take away the heavenly reward. Second, the privilege of avoiding the second death. This church feared death; death is fearful thing a/ which we all worry. HSp can cast away fear. We can avoid the 2<sup>nd</sup> death, the one we ought to fear. Smyrna is not going to experience this death; this death does not count.

Applications from church of Smyrna:

First, we are like this church. We can’t control e/th and e/o in life and we don’t know many things in life. We are fearful of what other people may think, say, who may oppose us. The message about fear from Scripture – “Stop being afraid.” Answer: 1 John 4:18, 19. Fear has to do with punishment. The one who fear is not made perfect in love. Perfect love casts out all fear. Those who fear God are not impressed by anyone else; they’ve place themselves in God’s control; they trust God in all circumstances, and He allows only what’s for our good. Rom 8:28. God permits nothing that we cannot ultimately handle if we are in relationship with Him. If we are out of God’s reach, God can’t help us, but if we trust Him, He’ll permit nothing that we can’t handle in God’s strength. God permits only what’s for our best. He does not intervene in all cases. We should not go outside of His will.

JC has been there – He wrestled with the whole issue on control in Gethsemane. Total trust in God is the only way to live in our lives.

Major message from Smyrna – perfect love casts out fear.

Historicist sense – 100AD – 313AD. Diocletian – 303-313AD, persecution, in arenas. Message from God: stop being afraid, be faithful unto death, and you’ll get crown of life.

## **No. 5 Pergamum and Thyatira Rev. 2:12-29**

## Pergamum

Why do intelligent people s/t do stupid things? How can you know you are not stupid?

JC approaches the churches in Pergamum, with sharp double-edged sword. This church could be called “The Compromising Church,” and it needs the sharp double-edged sword of God’s discernment. Hebrews 4:12.

Sharp double-edged sword – God’s Word; it stands against compromise. Ephesus – sound in doctrine, lacks love; Pergamum – more love, less sound in doctrine.

How JC analyses the church? Three main things. First, they live in dangerous place – the throne of Satan is there, exposed to Satanic power and influence. Pergamum – major city of pagan worship, demonic worship and temples. Religion of Pergamum – attractive in its own way. For X/ans to live there – dangerous things. Second, JC recognizes that they have stoned power and courage. They “live” in dangerous place, and the word live in Greek, means “Settled down” in Pergamum, they reside permanently. Oppressive evil around, but they are courageous to stay there. They remain faithful to God, even in face of martyrdom of Antipas. This church lives in dangerous place, but live there. They do not escape the difficulty. They have stoned power and courage, living in dangerous place.

Analysis is not pleasant. They are tolerant of false teachings and behaviour. Balaam – prophet of God, who lived in Mesopotamia (Iraq). King of Moab saw the Israelites, and used Balaam to go against them. His brilliant idea – to find prophet of their God to come and curse them, and perhaps their God would forsake them, and Moab would conquer. Moab’s king used money to settle the matter. Balaam led the Israelites to sexual immorality, pagan feasts, food sacrificed to idols. Through these the Israelites were led away and great plague came and destroyed them.

In Pergamum – similar teaching to Balaam, enticing people to go astray.

Nicolaitans in the church – from Greek, “one who conquers the people.” These people - Balaam (Hebrew = swallow people) and Nicolaitans (Greek = conquer people) – swallow and conquer the people, two terms in 2 different languages, mean the same.. Pergamum – tolerant to both, because believed in Paul – 1 Cor, “Idols I nothing” and “all things to all people.” They believed in being involved in the civil religion of the town. To participate in temple worship – socially acceptable. The Pergamum people – went into compromise, a little of it.

JC says – don’t compromise! Three points of counsel:

Rev. 2:16 – Repent! Aorist Imperative – to start to do. They don’t think they need to repent, but JC insists that they do repent. Repent of their counterproductive tolerance. IF they would not deal with people who destroy the church, JC will come and work and fight against them with the sword of His mouth.

Second, listen to the Spirit. Third, keep your eyes on the reward.

To the over-comer – First, will receive divine food. Manna – symbol of X/ans in restored relationships with JC. Jews believed in 1c.AD– when manna falls from heaven, the Messiah will come; if manna comes from heaven, Messiah has come. John 6 – people saw in JC the possibility that He was Messiah. “If you are the Messiah, give us manna from heaven.” Rev. 2:17 – Manna. Promise – spiritual food, in contrast to the idol food. Spiritual food – comes from heaven.

Second reward – white stone. In ancient times in the court – a judge would not read sentence of acquittal – the judge would give a white stone = acquittal, black stone – condemnation. Pergamum – you have assurance now that you will be acquitted.

Third reward - New name. In OT – name represents person’s character and life. Changed names in OT - Jacob-Israel, Abram-Abraham. New character and new name went together in OT. Pergamum

– new name. New name – no sense of control by other people, no threats – delivered from them, power in life.

### Application

First: compromise never occurs quickly. The compromise takes time slowly, they are not aware even of it. “Secular drift” – when X/an become secular, it is because they drift into it. Begins with prayer life – not as it should be, slowly drifting away from reading the Bible, stops going to church.

Second: there is always a tendency to lower original standards. Churches don’t drift upstream, but downstream, to lower standard, to lesser firmness in area of doctrine. Swimming against the tide moves churches up; letting stream lead us – lowers our standards.

Third: compromise is rarely offensive; it makes e/o happy; it is often popular, it does not offend people, but offends God. Conciliation and compromise – two different things.

Remedy for secular drift and compromise: 1) Firm decision – turn, repent, U-turn; renew prayer and Bible study, action and witness. To do the right thing even if you don’t feel like doing it. Be very intentional in what you are doing, have time for prayer and study; put time to do things God wants to you do, to share your faith.

Is there historicist base, historical period? Two or three centuries after Constantine fits well. AD 321 – Constantine becomes X/an, empire is X/an, X/ans don’t fear Emperor. After persecution in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> c, comes time for compromise. No external pressure, but internal compromise. Church of Pergamum – represents 3<sup>rd</sup> period of X/an history – 313 AD– 538 AD; church wrestles with temptation of compromise, as no external pressure.

## **Thyatira** **Rev. 2:18-29**

Lengthy message, very long.

Thyatira – divided church, but improving – latter works are better than former ones. JC comes to them with judgment. Church comes under intense scrutiny, but has positive influence.

Thyatira – smallest, least important of the seven cities, and still exists today. It is a place where the ancient and modern city are the same (also true for Philadelphia).

JC’s analysis of Thyatira? Much to praise, much to blame.

V. 19 – I know your love, service, perseverance, etc. Active church, full of works of love and faith, and service. Patient church (Rev. 14:12 – patience of the saints). Patience is characteristic for the people of God in the last days. It is patience, improving church.

Problem – in Pergamum they were in the beginning of the compromise, there is conscious toleration of wicked leadership. There is sense in the church – the faithful people were giving approval to inappropriate behaviour. The side of the church that was contrary to God and John is mentioned in terms of Jezebel. Jezebel – pagan queen; promoted pagan worship even though not completely forbidding worship of YHWH. She leads a syncretism, tolerates both worships.

Prophetess – claims direct authority from God. The churches not only have the witness of Paul, but they have a living prophet in their midst, who openly teaches the wrong things, open licence to sin (in Pergamum – more secret practice of these things).

V. 22 – God gave her time, but she did not repent; now – punishment.

God offers a bed of affliction, and puts her followers in great distress. Repentance is still a possibility – not for her followers, but for her. Judgment – heavier on prophetess than on the followers,

even though they are reprimanded too. Opportunity for repentance – not for prophetess but for followers. Final threat – to kill her children in plague; taken in spiritual sense. JC is not pleased with this compromising stance of Jezebel. JC gives disapproval for her behaviour; his judgment is sound, and his warning for others.

Thyatira – interesting situation; divided church: faithful people and unfaithful people. There are good and bad things.

#### JC's counsel

First, v. 24 : Remnant – v. 24 (in original). Remnant – special term, reserved for God's special people. In Thyatira – God's special people are called "remnant."

"Deep things of Satan" – not clear, but possible exorcism exercised by Jezebel. S/t people become so confident in JC that they think they can toy with evil, sin and Satan, and get away from it. Maybe Jezebel taught that she can control Satan. Certainly X/ans will have victory over Satan in JC, but one should not get too involved in it, in Satan.

V. 25 - Second counsel – JC lays no other burden on them, He will accept them as they are, no other burden. V. 25 – JC does not ask them to do anything spectacular, He does not ask them to do a/thing more than what they have.

Rev. 2:26-28 Third counsel – Keep your eye on the reward. Rev. 2:26-28. Keep your eyes on the reward. Rev. 20-22 – the fulfillment of victory over the nations; authority as in JC. Morning star – Rev. 22:16 JC is the morning star. Faithful ones in Thyatira – will have personal, close relationship with JC.

Fourth, listen to the Spirit.

#### Application

First – big problems occur in big cities/churches. Thyatira – small city, big problems in church.

Second – gifted individuals in the church can be wrong. She was prophetess, spoke with great authority and had many followers. Gifted individuals can be wrong. How do you know you use God's given gifts in the wrong direction? Best answer is to the effect – what's the results; watch your results and your disciples.

Many people follow God as faithfully as they know, but their teachings lead other people in to difficulty. You can't always put your finger on it.

Watch the results/the disciples. The flaws in your teachings are only clear until seen later in the lives of the followers of the teacher. In Thyatira – gifted teacher, but led to darkness with Satan. She did not realize it at the beginning, but JC warns that her ways will lead to death.

#### Historical application

Time when teachers of the church promoted false teachings? Time after such time when there was period of improvement? One possibility – Middle Ages (Dark Ages). Church was not teaching what was true; church promoted greed and sinful actions. The saints pointed to the organized church/institutional church as the one in fault, calling for repentance. Many of the leading lights of the church were leading others in the wrong direction.

Renaissance and Reformation – actions of improvement.

Thyatira – 6<sup>th</sup> c-16<sup>th</sup> c.; church in darkness; leaders teaching people the wrong doctrines. God's witnesses during this time – people who were not led astray, many voices for improvement went up, though church was divided.

## No. 6 Sardis and Philadelphia

A church can have a great name and still be dead. Good pastors can burn out? How do you rekindle faith when it is gone?

### **Sardis** **Rev. 3:1-6**

Sardis – difficult church; dead church. Tone of this letter – different, no praise, harsh evaluations from the start; Strong emphasis on the spirit. For a church that is asleep unto death, spiritually lifeless.

Rev. 3:9 – reputation of being alive, but being dead

#### JC's analysis

Unwarranted reputation of being alive, but in fact – dead. Church is highly thought of, but not worthy of such reputation.

Rev. 3:2-3 – Church started on many things, but did not finish them. Church is in serious trouble – there is serious remnant.

Rev. 3:4 – Remnant is serious. There is small faithful group, who have maintained walk with God, who are considered worthy to be children of God.

#### JC's counsel

First – wake up. If you are spiritually asleep, wake up. Strengthen what remains. IN Thyatira – He says, “I won't put any more burdens on you.” Here – wake up; as you are, you are not worthy, so wake up, improve.

Second – remember what you have received and heard – Rev. 3:3. Ephesus – look back to where you saw the light first. Way to improve condition – to remember what they received and heard, to remember the times when they were more focused on the message; to remember what they received and heard; to use it, to put in practice what they know; to increase their knowledge.

Third - repent (Aorist Imperative, start action now). Church needs to repent – and begin on it now. Church needs total turn-around; repent from their lack of stained power. This churches does not complete the job – it starts abut does not finish. It needs decisive action.

Do they have incentive? Offer – of His sudden appearance. Reminded here – of the wake-sleep motive here in the Synoptic Apocalypse (Matt 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). One of the dangers of the people who are looking forward tot eh SCJC – to fall asleep (Matt. 25 – 10 virgins). Reference to 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of JC. Don't ignore this truth. JC gives a second chance here – to keep their eye on the reward. This is what He did with other churches. Focus on future reward – this will help you.

Reward – walk in white; walk in righteousness; keep it pure.

Not be soiled = justification; like garment a person puts on. When person receives JC, he puts JC's character. Not soiled garments – people who have accepted JC and have remained truthful to JC. Those who have not soiled the dress of righteousness with which JC has girded them.

Rev. 7:9; 19:7,8 – God's end-time people dressed. Reward – walking pure today will be justified at the end; will have God's approval.

Second reward – won't blow their names from the Book of Life; to acknowledge name before God the Father. Those in Sardis will have personal lawyer before God. JC's promise – when they enter into the judgment, they will have a good lawyer. JC will acknowledge their names before the Father; they will have personal legal assistant in the Judgment.

Matt. 10:32. Same letter as to Sardis – whoever has not soiled garments will have JC acknowledge name before Father.

First phase of Judgment – this life, when we are confronted with claims of JC. This is the time for us. It is sobering time. Each time a pastor preaches the sermon, judgment is taking place: some accept the Gospel and some are moving away from God, rejecting the Gospel. How we respond to the Word of God today will determine how we respond in Judgment.

Final word to Sardis – listen to the Spirit. Listen to the Spirit – and you won't stay asleep, and resurrection will take place.

### Application

A church can have a great name, and yet die. God can approve of religious movement, and yet it can lose its way. Simply because a church has been faithful in the past does not mean it will be faithful now.

Example in Bible times – John the Baptist movement. We know who JB was and what's about him in the Gospels. There we see faithful prophet, who did God's work. He prepared the way for JC and pointed to JC. We think of John in his faithfulness.

JB movement: JB approved by God, carried God's mission, but years later many people who never followed JC, but followed JB as they believed that he was the Messiah. Mandaeans – trace their faith back to JB as founder of their religious movement.

In times of Revelation – when Gospel of John were written, there are quite few things in the Gospel that put JB down. While in Matt, Luke, and Mark we have JB high, in John we see JB as lowering himself below JC: "He must increase, I must decrease;" "I am not worthy to untie the tongs of his sandals," etc. Why the statements? Reason – many people followed JB, not JC. Gospel of John challenges the people of JB to give up that element of faith and to follow JC. That movement was approved by God, but there came time when it outlived its usefulness. To continue to follow JB is not to follow JC. This movement was outmoded. Similar situation in Sardis – great name, but dead. Started approved by God, but lost its way.

What happens to Sardis happens to churches and individuals. Called – burnout. People who desire to do the right thing, but they find it difficult to serve God anymore. As if something deep inside has gone out, as if the light has gone out.

What do you do if you sense burnout? What can you do to bring back life, to reclaim what you have to do?

First, there must be willingness to change. YOU have to be made willing to be willing to change. If there is the least spark in you that wants to be changed, that's enough. God loves the little % that you have to change, He can take it increase it, and make you change. First step to waking up spiritually is willingness to change. Offer that little % in you that wants to be changed, and give to God.

Second – radical firm decision; you have to take decisive action. You have to make radical steps. Be in the place God wants you to be.

Third – review the past successes, where you last saw light. Keep spiritual journal – when you were close to God. There you can find encouragement. Review these movements when God acted for you.

Fourth – reclaiming life requires sense of the imminence of God's return; to be accountable for every act/thought/word in view of eternity.

To individuals suffering burnout – this is message for them.

### Historical

The Era of Protestant Scholasticism; during the time of Reformation was desire to bring church to life, to resurrect, correct, to improve, to strengthen, to reform and clean up, and to awaken, and to resurrect e/th that God would like to have the church to be. After the first generation of Reformers died

the sense of the living presence of God was lost, and people were more interested clear doctrine and speculations over the Bible; time when right thinking was more important than relationships with God; time when splitting theological hairs became more important than witness. This is the reason why secularism took place.

16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> c. – Sardis period; Reputation was great but not power. John Wesley, William Miller, etc. – and many others – rose up to call for new Reformation.

### **Philadelphia Rev. 3:7-13**

To church in Phil JC comes as Holy One. OT term for YHWH – Isa. 40:25. Common Jewish expression for God – referred as the Holy One. “Key of David” – Isaiah 22:20-22 – complete control, kingly power. Key of David = key to storehouse of the King, key to all that is available to people. One who has the key of David has full control to storehouse of the Kingdom of the time. JC is the one who has the key and has full control in the Universe. Heavenly storehouse is all these things that God promises to His people.

Church in Philadelphia is “Church of Brotherly Love.” In nowadays time the city of Philadelphia (has new name in Turkish) – has brotherly love, where strangers are warmly received.

What kind of church was it? JC’s analysis – Church of great opportunities – open, unshuttable door. Church of little strength – not dynamic force for God, does not make the impact it could. Faithful to God’s word, not given to compromise or apostasy. Church of patient endurance.

Main weakness – does not have a lot of strength, not dynamic force for the Gospel.

JC’s counsel:

First – v. 11 – hold to what you have. What you have is valuable, keep it

Second – let no one take your crown. Residents of this church were sure of eschatological acceptance; they knew where they stood with God in the ultimate scheme of things. They had assurance of salvation, but they did not have “once saved, always saved.”

Third – keep eyes on reward; they are to become pillar in God’s Temple. The weak ones become strong and secure. They will never leave God’s temple. Rev. 7:15 – Redeemed from Great Tribulation are saved from danger.

Fourth – promise to be recipients of God’s grace,

Fifth - they receive JC’s new name, new identity.

Sixth – receive a crown.

Unique aspect – material in other churches falls in two parts: JC’s analysis and JC’s counsel. In Church of Philadelphia, we have JC’s present actions on their behalf. Not only JC promises great things for their future, but He does great things for their present.

Rev. 3:8 – JC permits none to shut the door of opportunity. What is this door? Many suggestions by commentators in the years.

- JC is the door. John 10:7,9. Door open at the cross, therefore – nobody can shut it, it is available to all people
- Door of missionary opportunities – 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3, same concept used
- Door of access to eternal salvation – Matt 23:13; Luke 11:52. Rev. 3:9 – people trying to close the door; JC holds it open

- Door to heavenly knowledge – Rev. 4:1. Open door in heavenly places where John sees vision. Could this be the door of Philadelphia.

Four options, text is ambiguous, you choose.

Second part of the bonus – not only JC holds the door open but makes the synagogue of Satan bow down. Rev. 3:9. The people who proclaim to be Jews are exposed. JC tells Philadelphia that even their enemies will acknowledge that God is among them; even the enemies of Philadelphia will be annihilated, from whatever source delivery comes.

Third bonus – JC keeps them from hour of eschatological trial. Rev. 3:10. They will be protected from the very worst that could possible happen in the future. Is this deliverance from or safekeeping through? Not very clear. John 17:15 – same Greek term used. If this text has John 17:15 in mind, then it is clear that they are delivered not from the world, but they are delivered from the evil one in the world. God is faithful to the faithful. Like Israel in Egypt, they will be kept safe during the plagues. God's people are not affected by the plagues; they fall only on those who have refused to accept the Seal of God. God will not remove the Philadelphians during the time of the eschatological trial, but God will watch over them during this time.

Fourth bonus – JC is coming soon. TO the Philadelphians, this is a blessing, a time of reward.

### Application

First – providential opportunities are available to faithful ones, even if they are weak. The church in Philadelphia had very little strength, but they persevered. JC only asks them to put one foot before the other, and JC will be with them.

Second – providential opportunities takes away the problem of mockery. X/an life is not bed of roses, but in the midst of all troubles X/ans sees the hand of God taking care and knowing that God is with them.

Third – JC is in control of heaven's storehouse; no need of fear of shortage; JC is in control of the whole situation. In JC all is yes – 2 Cor. 1:20.

### Historical period

Most appropriate – 19<sup>th</sup> c. Door of opportunity – if door of access to eternal salvation. to mission and outreach. Church in Philadelphia is unique, missionary church. 19<sup>th</sup> c. – time of greatest advancement of the Gospel in X/an history.

Letter to Philadelphia – church of Brotherly Love.

### **No. 7 Laodicea Rev. 3: 14-22**

JC stands at Laodicea's door and knocks. What will happen if Laodicea never opened the door?

Rev. 3:14-22

The word Laodicea = judgment of people, in Greek. Jesus comes as one who is faithful to the Covenant, as 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam, to admonish a church that claims to be faithful but is not. Laodicea's message,

similar to Sardis – no Jezebel, no heresy, no apostasy, but JC can't find anything good to say about it. Spiritual lukewarmness makes you interested in false teachings.

### JC's analysis:

First, lukewarm – Rev. 3:15, 16. Church is like lukewarm water. Both hot and cold drinks are refreshing, but lukewarm water is nauseating, upsetting.

About 6 miles from ancient Laodicea is city of Hierapolis, babbling springs, mineral water, geysers, etc. The water was about 135F hot as it came from the ground. By the time it came to Laodicea it was lukewarm water, and by the time it came to the city of Colossae, it was already cold water. JC is taking the cue from the geographical location of Laodicea to teach a lesson.

Water was coming from spring, into terraces, and finally into the river, to the city of Laodicea, and finally – Colossae. The problem with the church of L/a is that it does not attract anyone. The church in L/a was absorbed in mediocrity, no commitment, satisfied with what is.

JC: when I look at you, L/a, I want to throw up, I want to spit you out of my mouth. There is deterioration and decline. The last church is in deep trouble.

Second, L/a is un-authentic. Rev. 3:17. The problem with L/a is un-authenticity – what she says and does are two different things. What she thinks and what she is are different; not living in reality. She is blind to her true condition. Opposite of Smyrna – spiritually rich, materially poor; L/a – spiritually poor, materially rich.

Around 60AD earthquake levelled the whole city of L/a; Emperor offered help, but city declined and rebuilt themselves.

Worse off than Sardis – nobody walks in white; Rev. 3:18. In Sardis few who were wearing the garment. It is easier to deal with hostility and spiritual death than indifference and spiritual mediocrity.

Problem with L/a – spiritual one; She thinks she is spiritually sound, but she is not.

JC – first warning – I'll spit you out. Do s/th about this unauthenticity. Second – buy things you need; gold, white clothes, salve. Does L/a need gold? She does not think so, but JC offers gold refined in fire, spiritual wealth. Elsewhere in Revelation gold is taken literal – decorations of prostitute Babylon (rev. 17); products of Babylon (Rev. 18); material in Rev. 21 of New Jer/m. These texts don't help us understand gold in this place. The only place where gold in NT is used symbolically – 1 Peter 1:7. Refined gold = faith that is trustworthy, because it has been tested. There are many kinds of faith in the world, but faith that is tested can last until the end – until end of one's life and end of world. JC offers faith.

White clothes – Rev. 3:4, 5. White garments – present and future realities. Rev. 16:15 – garments are offered to last day people of earth's history. These garments are garments of salvation, eschatological righteousness. To be dressed in white is to be right before God in Judgment. Matt. 22:11-14 – you can get in if you wear special garment. L/a is rich, but not have the one garment that will enable her to enter in the Kingdom of God (KOG)

Salve – to see, to understand their true condition, to become authentic. Greatest problem of L/a – unauthenticity, and JC's solution – to anoint their eyes to see their condition. L/a needs faith, righteousness, and clear discernment to und/d her condition.

### JC's counsels

Rev. 3:19 – Be earnest and repent. Of all 7 churches love is offered only to Phil/a and L/a. God addressed with love the most and the least faithful church. In L/a the message of love comes in form of rebuke, chastening, and discipline. God speak to L/a.

Rev. 3:20- comes to L/a. If door in Phil/a is door of salvation, the opposite in L/a – shut by L/a, not by JC. Fascinating – allusion to Song of Solomon. The knocking on the door has sexual overtones. JC is asking to be invited in for meal of mutual love and fellowship.

Song of Solomon 5:2-6. Story of Solomon's love. In OT – king has many wives, a harem, and king is looking for a woman for the night. One wife was expecting the king to come, but the King was not coming. She gave up and went to bed, but suddenly he comes. She is no longer in the mood, says “not now, later.” She remembers what she wanted earlier, opens the door, but the King is gone, not longer there. He is somewhere else.

This allusion to S of Songs does not fare well with L/a. JC does not force His way in. By the time she makes her mind to come to the door, He is gone. He tells us that there is no time to lose. IF L/a does not act, it will be too late, her condition is desperate.

Counsel: Keep eyes on reward, there will be fellowship meal, sitting down at KOG, a place on JC's throne. The most disastrous, faithless and indifferent church is offered the greatest reward. Is that not encouraging for us? Do you think that you are not worthy of what God has to offer. The one that seems most further from God is offered an opportunity to rejoin Him.

Counsel: Listen to the Spirit. If L/a listens to Spirit, she will be disabused of her strange ideas; will come to realize her true condition; she will become authentic and real.

#### Application:

First: Go back to Basics. When things go wrong, like we are like L/a, feeling lukewarm and away from God, the basic solution is to go back to basics. To take the advice of JC in Rev. 3:18 – Faith is needed. Talk faith. Faith is something that can be encouraged. If you find yourself sleepy, get into the faith mode. Spend time with people who are full of faith. Be with people who are in the faith and who talk faith, and have faith. Spend time encouraging your own faith.

Second – justification; accept the garment of JC, the fact that because of what has happened on the Cross, He accepts you as you are, and He can make of you something beautiful.

Open your eyes to see who you are: clear insight into your own condition. Jer. 17:9. Heart is deceitful, desperately wicked. We need more than anything else – eye medicine for our true spiritual condition.

How do you get clear insight into your spiritual condition? First – authentic prayer: lay yourself before God, saying “I want to know the truth no matter the cost. Lord, I want to know the truth about myself, no matter what the cost.” We can read the Bible, which is full of authentic Bible characters, described not in ideal conditions, but as they are (Moses, David, Abraham, etc.). The people for God are described with all their faults. Real people have real problems, they make mistakes. When you see that, you have courage to face your own issues.

Journaling: review your walk with JC, how you treated your wife and children – and ask God to reveal to you what you need to know about yourself. You'll get insight into your true condition.

Accountability: friends, with serious relationship, who can tell you seriously things about you. Are there things to know, mistakes to correct, etc.? What will you tell me if you know that I will listen and not get angry at you, no matter what you say?

This last process can be painful and you won't be able to handle it all truth about you, unless you know the Gospel, that JC accepts you as you are.

The most basic application – JC accepts us as we are, go back to basics, true repentance, confession, etc.

Second application: Knowledge and true doctrine cannot substitute for relationship with God. The sexual overtone s of the JC's approach to L/a speaks of His desires to be close with her. The church needs to see JC as the only focus; that JC is all and all for the church. It cannot be forced. Love for JC is one that is made by awareness of JC for us, of the difference He makes for us in our lives. We will love JC more and more if we get to know Him.

If we take this matter seriously, it is urgent. JC can come soon. Life is short, and more serious – every time we neglect an opportunity to open the door, to let JC in, we perhaps come to place like L/a, where we don't realize our lack of focus, how much we have fallen from Him. Saying no to JC continually, makes us think we are better than we are; blinds us to our true condition.

Historical Application:

Rev. 16:15 – suggestion that John himself saw model of the way the church will be before JC comes. If we are correct about the significance of the other churches, the suggestion is that the L/a period is the one we live in now; church that struggles with issues of authenticity. It goes through motions, but no great relationship with JC is present, it is absent. The most sobering thought – that last church is the most troublesome one.

## **No. 8 An Overview of the Seven Seals – part 1** **Rev. 4:1 - 8:1**

BOOK OF REVELATION (Book of Revelation) tells us that a Lamb is worthy to open the Book. So what? What difference does it make to you and me today?

Process, explanation of:

More difficulties to interpret than other parts, namely the seals. Rev. 4-11. Follows an overview of seals. Process will be long, but excitement will be enough to persuade us of the truth.

To understand the meaning of the text, we will have to look in details and in the larger picture of the text.

Next presentation – Rev. 4-7. OT Background, Setting of chapters in whole; Gospel; bring together the method in the 1<sup>st</sup> series of lectures, will bring sound foundation for interpretation and understanding. Conclusion – based on author's actual intention for the passage; will draw applications for the church and us today, as well as historical application.

Rev. 4

Rev. 4 – read the whole chapter, 3-4 times.

Crucial word, that stands out in the whole chapter? Which is this word? Suggestion – “throne.” Appears 14 times in Rev. 4. Not only this word appears, but it is central to e/th that takes in the chapter. Things happen on the throne, surrounding the throne, out of the throne, before, around the throne. Throne is constantly associated with propositions of direction. E/th in the chapter centres on the throne. Throne is crucial word in the chapter. Throne represents the right to rule, the person sitting in the throne has the right to rule over territory or/and people. The central issue of Rev. 4 is the right to rule and how it functions in heavenly places.

What do you think is the key background text to Rev. 4? The throne vision of Ezekiel 1. Ez. 1:4-10. Compare Rev. 4 with Ez. 1.

Ez. 1:13-, 18-, 26-

Similarities b/n Ez. 1 and Rev. 4. Ez. 1 compared with Rev. 4 – compared in Greek; some 33% of Rev. 4 are found in Ez. 1. There seems little question that Ez. 1 is structural parallel to Rev. 4.

Four other OT texts – Dan. 7; Isaiah 6 – heavenly sanctuary; “Holy, Holy, Holy;” Ez. 19 – priests and kings; 1 Kings 22 – view of heavenly court.

Common in all these five passages – centred on throne of God. Four – on God’s heavenly throne, Exodus – focus on earthly throne. Mt. Sinai – earthly throne. OT passages on throne.

Rev. 4 – centering on throne; it seems to be a focus on all that the OT has to say on the throne of God. OT draws all texts to one point – throne of God.

What kind of scene do we have here in Rev. 4? Point in time or general description of throne room in heaven? Not point in time, but simply a general description. E.g. Rev. 4:2 – throne not set up as in Dan. 7:9; throne is not constructed, no beginning or ending of throne. John sees the throne.

Rev. 4:9 – even clearer text. “Whenever living creatures do this, the elders do that” – in Greek grammar: a description of repetitive action. Rev. 4- not point in time, not specific event in history of heaven or earth. General description of what heavenly throne room is like; no specific time in view.

This is process of observation. Train to be more observant of Scriptures.

## Rev. 5

Rev. 5 – read and observe what is going on in this chapter.

Is this point in time or general description as in Rev. 4? This is point in time. Specific scene, crisis scene. Crisis in throne room of Universes; Praises and music stops; e/o is looking to see what’s going on. Different from scene in Rev. 4.

Problem? Book that nobody can open. Not clear yet why books is important, but S/o has to be found to open it. Solution to problem – find worthy person to open the book.

Key words in Rev. 5? “Throne,” “worthy” (search for worthy person, and acclamation when the person is found); “the book,” the Lamb, etc. “Worthy, Lamb, Book” – key words in Rev. 5. “Worthy” picks on Rev. 4:11. Description of point in time, not a general description.

When did this event take place? In some point in history this event took place. This is the decisive event in history.

## OT background

Dan. 7 - Rev. 5. Ezekiel 1 is more assumed, it remains in background.

Dan 7:9-14

Parallels – b/n Dan 7:9-14 and Rev. 5? Each case: God on throne, reference to books; second divine figure appears when the first one is introduced; dominion is bestowed on second divine figure; saints are present at each case; myriads of angels.

Dan 7:9-14 is the crucial structural parallel to Rev. 5.

What makes the Lamb worthy? How does it become/prove it’s worthy?

Rev. 5:5 - Lion of Judah has triumphed to open the book; the triumph makes the Lamb worthy.

Rev. 5:6 – more qualifications. Lamb has become a Lion. JC became human = Lamb; died and resurrected. Rev. 5:9, 12 – Death and resurrection makes JC worthy. Lamb is worthy – because it was slain. Humanness and death of Lamb make it worthy.

Rev. 5:13 – Lamb is divine. It is human and divine. In order to find a worthy person to open this book, this person had to be divine, human, and had to die. Only one individual in all history has met these qualifications. This makes the Lamb so special.

How is the Lamb special, significant? Rev. 4 and 5 – series of hymns in there, constantly refereeing songs to JC. There are 5 songs.

Rev. 4:8 – Holy, Holy, Holy – sung by 4 living creatures

Rev. 4:11 – Song praising God the Creator – sung by 24 elders

Rev. 5:9, 10 – Lamb praised for its death – sung by 4 living creature and the 24 elders

Rev. 5:12 – Lamb praised, various terms of acclamation – 4 living creatures, 24 elders, 10 000 x 10 000 angels.

Rev. 5:13 – one sitting on throne and Lamb praised together – every creature in heaven and on/in/under earth.

Five hymns: first two sung to one sitting on throne; second two – sung to Lamb; fifth – sung to both. Hymns to Father, then – to JC; climax – to both of them on the throne.

Movement to climax with Lamb joins the Father on the throne.

Rev. 5:13 – crescendo in these hymns. Who sings the hymns? One of major points of Rev. 4 and 5 – exaltation of Lamb to equal status with Father, status it had beforehand (Rev. 1 – JC=YHWH of OT). After JC's death – new acclamation of the glory of the Lamb.

Worthiness of the Lamb – crucial point of Rev. 5. E/th centres on what Lamb does, why is it worthy.

Rev. 6

Rev. 6 – built on Rev. 5. Rev. 6 – consequences of Lamb beginning to open the book. E/th in Rev. 6- Result of opening the seals. Are seals revealing the content of the book or not? Or is the content of the book beginning to be revealed only when the seals in Book of Revelation are getting opened?

Two types of books in OT. Scroll – rolled long sheet of paper, unfolding/unrolling sheet, reading it. Codex (pl. codices) – sheets are bound together on one side (sown, glued), like today's books. Codex form of book was fairly new invention in John's time, we are not clear when and where they were used, but they were beginning to be common.

Let's assume that each of the possibilities is there.

Is John talking about a scroll, with a roll and seals on it? If you unroll it, then you see what's inside it. Rev. 6 – we don't see contents of scroll, but events associated with Book of Revelation breaking the seals.

If book is codex – then it would be possible to seal portions together, and you can seal portions. You break few seals and you open the content, and the more you open, the more you read, gradually.

Rev. 6:14 – what was it: scroll or codex? NIV – “scroll.” Original Greek, not that specific, uses “biblon, biblos.” NIV – “scroll,” that's what the author thinks of.

Rev. 6:14 – sky, rolling up – book you can't roll up, but scroll. Rev. 6 – roll, scroll, not book (you can't unroll book).

Rev. 6 – are the events in Rev. 6 taking place on earth or heaven? Lamb in Book of Revelation breaking/opening seals – in heaven. Results of opening – Rev 6:7,8 – white horse, pale horse: the earth is in view in Rev. 6. Read Rev. 6:14-17 – events taking place on earth.

Rev. 6 – events taking place on earth; Rev. 4&5 – events in heaven.

Rev. 6 – where do these events lead to? Breaking of seals end at SCJC and events surrounding it. This is the great day of the Lord.

Structure of Rev. 6: Four horsemen (6:1-8); Altar scene of 5<sup>th</sup> seal (6:9-11); Day of the Lord (6:12-17).

OT background of Rev. 6

Rev. 4 and 5 – focus on throne. Rev. 6 – not heavenly throne scenes. In Rev. 6 – “throne” x1. Rev. 6 – curses of the Covenant. Structural parallel – OT text, regarding curses of Covenant. Covenant for partnership with God, or if reject/rebel against God – consequences will take place, and curses will come. Blessings and curses are not that difficult to understand.

Rev. 6 – points to the curses of the Covenant.

Parallels with OT: could a/o understand the 4 horsemen w/t the OT texts?

## **No. 8 An Overview of the Seven Seals – part 2** **Rev. 4:1-8:1**

What does the Bible mean when it says that JC sat at the right hand of God? What does it mean for us today?

Continue with Rev. 6 and 7, before we examine the date when the Lamb took the book. What time in history did that event took place.

Rev. 6

Only when we have basic overview of Rev. 4-8 we will understand the meaning of Rev. 5 and 6. Behind the 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse are the curses of the Covenant from the OT.

Covenant – curses

Lev. 26:21-26 – Rev. 6:4-8.

Are there any seven-fold afflictions in Revelation? You know the answer.

Lev. 26 and the 4 horsemen have common interest: concern with 7-fold plaques, wild beasts, sword, famine, pestilence. Doling out bread because it is scarce.

Lev. 26 – root text of the curses of the Covenant, outlining the consequences of the disobedience. Ultimate consequence of disobedience – Exile.

Deut. 32:23-25

Material - similar to Lev. 26. Wild beasts, vipers, sword, terror, death, famine, pestilence – as consequences of the Covenant. Lev. 26 and Deut. 32 – reapers of the consequences are the Israelite people, the people of God. These are the one who received the Covenant of God, and their obeyed or disobeyed the Lord’s Law. The 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse are not concerned with non-X/ans, but with X/ans.

Deut. 32:41- onward. The focus is not on the people of God who have disobeyed the Lord, but on the enemies of God. God attacks them on behalf of His people. God takes vengeance on behalf of His people

Consequences of Covenant – occur twice in two different situations.

God makes Covenant with His people – offers certain stipulations, with rewards and blessings; disobedience – curses. When God's people disobeyed, God used other nations to punish the Israelites. They would come, afflict God's people, bring the sword, there would be siege. As God's people continued to disobey, they would be taken into exile. These non-Jewish forces, these enemy nations, were used as instruments to carry out the Covenant of God. The executors of God's Covenant would be enemies of God, who would come and provide the curses that God has promised to His people. When God's people disobeyed Him, they lost God's protection, and enemy came over to take. What happened often – the enemies persecuted God's people too much, and laid it on them, and finally time came when God said, "You've gone too far. I allowed you for a time, but you overdid the curses against My people."

Deut. 32 – first of all – God is in judgment on His own people because of their disobedience, but then He turns the arrows of His judgment against the enemies who caused the punishment.

Lev. 26 and Deut. 32 – the war/famine/pestilence – stereotype images; used to illustrate problems ahead, used in almost any setting. Ezekiel and Jeremiah use same images; time of exile; repeated the same concepts. Ezek. 14:12-21 – sword, famine, wild beasts, pestilence, etc. Stereotyped images, used in almost any order, to describe the terrible consequences of disobedience.

Zechariah 1:8-17 – another text, describes the experience of God's people toward the end of the exile; describes the punishment of God to the enemy nations.

This fascinating scene of 4 horses, similar to Rev. 6:1-8, illustrates a point: God has come to a point where God sees that His people have been punished enough, and it is time to have His people restored. Babylon has overdone it against God's people.

Imagery of 4 horses in Rev. – disobedience and consequences; curses of Covenant in OT are the basic foreground.

There are 2 phases of these curses: the first phase – on the people of God; phase two – on the enemies of God. Rev. 6:1-8 – series of curses, and they fall on the people of God. Rev. 7 – renewal of curses, fall on enemies of God.

Rev. 6 and X/an era? Compare Rev. 6 with Synoptic Apocalypse – Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21. There JC gives a message at end of world and events that lead to it. No section in Revelation draws more on preaching the Gospel, sword, famine, pestilence, persecution, earthquakes, famines, signs in heaven. Major NT background text is Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21.

Careful attention to all NT background texts for Rev. 6. Rev. 6 – clear view of events in X/an history. In Revelation – these events are seen as results of Lamb opening the Book. The events in X/an history are under control of the one who opens the book.

Rev. 7

Rev. 7 – answers the question of Rev. 6:17. Who can stand? Who will be able to stand? The Great Day of the Lord/Day of Wrath/SCJC, who will be able to stand? Rev. 6 concludes with this question, but the answers – Rev. 7. First, the 144,000 who are sealed, and second – great multitude – Rev. 7:9-17. Purpose of Rev. 7 – to answer the Q: When JC comes, who will be found faithful, who will be able to stand?

Key OT background text to Rev. 7? Suggestion – Ezek. 9:1-7. One of the most frightening, most sobering texts in the Bible.

Marking the people, putting seal of God on God's people. Frightening passage. Imagine you are in the setting, awaiting the seal of God. Setting – 586BC, destruction of Jer/m by Babylon; many people are going to be killed. God is drawing a distinction b/n those who are on God's side and those opposed. Those on God's side – lament the destruction. Starts from Temple and then outside. Rev. 7 – we see glimpse from the final events in history, when the exile from Jer/m will be replayed. Marks on forehead, world is called to Judgment, Gospel proclaimed, God rescues His people.

Rev. 4 – general description of throne room.

Rev. 5 – beginning point of decisive event, the taking of scroll. Followed by 7 further of events: Book of Revelation breaking of 7 seals. Closes with climax of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> seal, and the Rev. 7

Rev. 4-7 – Decisive event in heaven, followed by events on earth, climax – SCJC.

Further information needed – when is the starting point of these events. When do these events begin? Rev. 5 – speaks about a specific time in earth's history, requiring special person. Lamb opens the book, and unleashes the events.

When did the Lamb took and book and began opening the seals?

Rev. 3:21. Principle of duo-directionality. This suggests that at decisive points in Revelation there is material that looks both forth and back. Embedded in the climax of the end is the core of what's to follow. Rev. 3:21 – relates to Rev. 4-7. We will now begin to have a picture of when the Lamb took the book at His hands.

Rev. 3:21 – 4 events take place here. Comparison b/n the first two and the last two, parallel first and last two.

Overcome – overcome; sit with JC – sit with JC. Overcoming has to do with experience with JC.

Tenses of these crucial events – “one who overcomes” – Gr. Present Cont, therefore, it is continual event; always happening. Every X/an at all time/place, is to be over comer. How X/ans overcome – Rev. 12:11. Overcame – by Word of Testimony and Faith. Whenever and wherever X/ans are, their primary task – to overcome. Present Cont. Tense – appropriate. When do these people receive portion of God's throne? To the one who overcomes... Present reality leading to future reality. Because God's people overcome in the present, they will receive reward in the future.

In relation to JC, the tense is Aorist –points in past time, from John's perspective. When did JC overcome, when did He sit down? A X/an of 1<sup>st</sup> c. would have only 1 possible answer. JC overcame at the Cross, sat with Father after resurrection. Time and again in NT these two events become decisive. The cross is focal point of all events. JC sits at right hand of God. Because JC sits at right hand of God, God's people can function in the world today.

When did JC overcome? Rev. 5:5, 6. Because of victory – triumph, overcoming, able to open seals. Rev. 3:21 – triumph, overcome – Rev. 5:5,6, similar words.

Rev. 5:5 – Lion of Judah – Aorist Indicative, exact same word and tense as in Rev. 3:21. How did JC overcome, when? Rev. 5:6 – Lamb, looking as if slain, standing in the centre of the Throne.

Here we see that JC overcame at the Cross, it was the Lamb slain that has overcome, and it is now in the center of the throne, ready to take hold fo the book.

Rev. 3:21 – climax of the 7 churches, of the over-comer promises. It contains not only the climax promise, but also in nutshell and in advance Rev. 4-7. The Father's throne is what happens in

Rev. 4; overcoming of JC – Rev. 5; joining of Father on the Throne – Rev. 5:13. JC's two parts of the analogy in Rev. 3:21 are fulfilled in Rev. 4 and 5: JC overcomes and sits on Throne with His Father.

God's people side: when did they join him on the Throne? Rev. 7:9-17, particularly the last three verses. They are day and night before the Throne, in the heavenly temple; they follow JC wherever He goes. The people of God are seen joining JC on His throne in Rev. 7.

When does the overcoming take place? Has to do with Rev. 6. Principle of duo-directionality helps understand the more difficult parts of Revelation.

What is Rev. 4-7 about? Overcoming of Lamb, joining father at throne, people of God struggling to overcome in this world, and the final reward when God's people join JC on the Throne. Rev. 3:21 – in nutshell what the 7 seals are all about. Rev 6 – one of the most difficult passages of Rev. This talks about the experiences of God in this world, and their wrestle to overcome. Having established this, we are on the way to understand this passage.

Rev. 5 – is all about AD31, when JC died on Cross, ascended to heaven, joined Father on Throne. Rev. 5 – enthronement of JC in heavenly Sanctuary, AD31.

Rev. 5:9-13 will make this clear. Death of JC – cause and reason why JC can open the book. He died, therefore He is worthy, overcame, and because He overcame He can open the book.

Rev. 3:21 – JC does not join the throne at some future time. JC does not overcome at some future time, but the events take place later. Most natural reading of Rev. 5 – the events in AD 31.

BOOK OF REVELATION - Revelation of JC, a NT book, talking about JC. Its theology – same as other NT, i.e. all about JC.

Hebrews 8: 1, 2 – High priest JC, who sat at right hand on Throne of Majesty in Heaven. Same word and tense as Rev. 3:21, referring to exact same event. JC in heaven assumed the authority of King on the Throne. Now that He has assumed that authority He serves in Heavenly Sanctuary. Rev. 5 – enthronement of JC in Heavenly Sanctuary. This enthronement makes JC's ministry, the judgment scenes, JC's ministry in heaven – all these are possible because of JC's enthronement. This is an event repeatedly witnessed to. At day of Pentecost – JC began to reign on His people throughout the entire X/an era.

## **No. 10 When the Lamb took the Book**

How do we know when Rev. is talking about John's day? How do we know it's talking about our day?

Last part of the previous presentation we looked at the time in the history when the Lamb took the book. BOOK OF REVELATION opens the door for clearer presentation and understanding this issue. Cross –decisive event to make JC able to take and open the Book.

Date when JC takes the book, this decisive crisis moment – day JC died, resurrected, ascended; more specifically – Day of Pentecost. But we need more than one line of evidence – that this assumption of the throne room event is when JC inaugurated the Heavenly Sanctuary. But we need also other evidence.

BOOK OF REVELATION –structured as chiasm; movement toward centre of book. Kenneth Strand – developed the chiasmic structure of Revelation; the first and 2<sup>nd</sup> half are parallels. First part – focus on X/an history; second part – events surrounding the end itself.

Seals – fall in first half of the book, focus should be on the history of X/ty; seals end with SCJC, Rev. 6 - the Day of the Lord.

Beginning point is the issue. If Lamb takes the book in AD31 with ascension to heaven, then the seals cover the entire X/an age, as expected from Chiasm.

If you compare worship scene of Rev. 4 and 5 with Rev. 19 (chiastic counterpart); both passages are very similar. Praise, throne, elders, 4 living creatures, worship, etc. Rev. 19 – clearly an end-time passage. God is praised for destroying Babylon. Rev. 4 and 5 – God is praised for Creation (4:11), redemption (5:9, 10, 12, 13). Rev. 4 and 5 – reflect events that are at the beginning of the X/an era. Rev. 19 – close of the X/an era.

Rev. 7 – ends with picture of God's people having come out of the Great Tribulation, praising God for their deliverance. End time? Yes. Moving from Rev. 4 and 5, moving to 6 and 7 – we have come to the end time, to the same point in history as in Rev. 19. Difference b/n 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Rev, is that the 2<sup>nd</sup> half focuses specifically and nearly entirely on the final events of the earth's history. We have contrast – 1<sup>st</sup> half – begins 1<sup>st</sup> c. and moves to the end.

Chiasm of BOOK OF REVELATION - event of beginning of X/an age, not end. White horse of Rev. 6 is parallel to white horse of Rev. 19. Riders wore crowns. Rider in Rev. 6 – victory crown rather than royal crown of rulership. JC spoken as one who overcomes, one who receives crown in victory. Rev. 19 – JC comes and puts end to all opposition on earth, and puts crown of royalty.

Rev. 6 || Rev. 19. (|| is for parallel).

Rev. 6:10. God judging inhabitants on earth, avenging for the blood of the saints? JC not doing it now. How long “will you be not judging and not avenging?” At time of 5<sup>th</sup> seal – end-time avenging for saints, nor judging. Compare with Rev. 19:1, 2. At what point of history are we now? At point when judgment is passed and vengeance are done. Rev. 6 – not judgment, no avenging. Rev. 19 – judgments are past. In Rev. 6 – 5<sup>th</sup> seal is toward the end. By the time we have reached the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, we have moved a long way in history. Rev. 19 – we see God's judgements. By the 5<sup>th</sup> seal – the Lamb has taken the book, but more events are still to take place.

Rev. 6:15-17 – brings us to end-time with the seals. Climax of X/an era in this text. Notice || Rev. 19:17, 18. Many parallels b/n these two texts, both referring to the same event.

Rev. 19 – always in context of end-time; Rev. 6 – moving through X/an era, toward the end-time. With 6<sup>th</sup> seal we come to context of end-time. Context - Lamb taking the Book, toward the end of X/an era. Beginning point of the seals – Lamb taking the book at beginning of X/an era.

From evidence of chiastic structure – seals cover the entire X/an era. Early part of Revelation and Seals – covers early part of X/an era. Later part of book – final days of X/an history. Events of Rev. 5 – early part of X/an era.

Second line of history – Rev. 5 and 6.

Sanctuary background of Rev. 5, as third line of evidence. First ½ of BOOK OF REVELATION – built on tamid, or the daily service in Israelite service. Lambs, doors, slaying of Lamb, pouring of blood, silence, pouring of blood, sounding of trumpets. Tamid – associated with intercession, when God intercedes for His people. God was implementing imputed righteousness to His people – symbolized by Tamid. Tamid – symbol of all of X/an era, daily = continual. Based on tamid, the events show that this is stretching for entire X/an era; JC's sacrifice is for all the X/ans.

Structure of BOOK OF REVELATION - based on feasts of Jewish liturgical year. Spring feasts – associated with 1<sup>st</sup> ½ of Revelation. The Spring feasts – fulfilled in 1<sup>st</sup> c – Passover = Cross of JC; Pentecost = Enthronement in Heavenly of Sanctuary. The Annual feast that most accurately fits the 1<sup>st</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION is Feast of Pentecost. The very day JC was enthroned in Heavenly sanctuary, was the Day of Pentecost.

Rev. 5:6 – supportive of this text. JC sends the HSp to all earth = Day of Pentecost. Rev. 4 and 5 – Spring feasts of Jews; JC taking the book on Day of Pentecost/ AD31.

Rev. 5 – we see the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary. When would that have taken place? In Book of Hebrews the Sanctuary and daily service is in operation. When did it begin? For author of Hebrews and Revelation it's not very clear. As result of JC's sacrifice and resurrection, JC ascends to heaven, gets within the veil, sits on the right of God, and becomes minister at His inauguration. Hebrews dates ascension on AD 31.

Event in Rev. 4 and 5? Item from nearly every aspect of Sanctuary is mentioned in almost every time. This item? Sanctuary lamps, laver, lamb, incense, horns, cherubim, calf, breastplate, high-priest, etc. Every aspect is almost mentioned, almost every part mentioned in Rev. 4 and 5. Two events with all parts mentioned – Inauguration of Sanctuary and Day of Atonement. Clear – we don't deal with Day of A/t. No ark. John knows about ark – Rev. 11:19, but not here. Ark is central piece of furniture on Day of A/t. Day of A/t – associated with Judgment. John knows about Judg/t – mentioned a lot in BOOK OF REVELATION; (Gr. krisis, krina, krino.) John does not use these words here, in Rev. 4 and 5. No Judg/l language in Rev. 4 and 5. John uses this language for clear end-time settings. In 1<sup>st</sup> half of BOOK OF REVELATION – Rev. 6:10, the only time judg/t referred in 1<sup>st</sup> half of BOOK OF REVELATION, only indicates that Judg/t has not taken place. No judgment language in Rev. 4 and 5.

At time of 5<sup>th</sup> seal – after Rev. 5 in point of time – judg/t has not yet begun. Day of A/t setting does not fit. Judg/t is not going on in Rev. 5; not end-time judg/t, but intercession.

Rev. 4 and 5 – if these were Atonement day scenes, we would expect Most Holy Place used (Gr. naos). Does John use this term? Yes. Often? About dozen times, with reference to heavenly temple, with focus on inner sanctuary (Rev.11:19). That language is totally absent from Rev. 4 and 5, primarily found in 2<sup>nd</sup> part of book.

if that were Day of A/t The animal should not be lamb but male goat –. Appropriate for Inauguration, for daily service, but not appropriate for Day of A/t. Goat was primary animal in view there.

No question – the scene of the Sanctuary background is the scene of inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary. Event took place in the beginning of the X/an era.

Contemporary setting of Rev. 5 – how would s/o living in 1<sup>st</sup> c. would understand this chapter? As reality, already present in 1<sup>st</sup> c. We don't look at some end-time event, but at event readily recognizable by 1<sup>st</sup> c. X/ans. In BOOK OF REVELATION – end-time is clearly in view. God meets people where they are. God gave this to John in a way that he would understand. 1<sup>st</sup> c. X/ans talked about end-time, thought about it. The key theological concept in Rev. 5 is not end-time, but concepts elsewhere found in NT applying to the 1<sup>st</sup> c., and not to a later time. For example, the cross of JC – towering reality in 1<sup>st</sup> c, and in Rev. 5, pointing to 1<sup>st</sup> c. setting. JC's exaltation to throne – in 1<sup>st</sup> c – and in Rev. 5. Inauguration for us as kings and priests, when John wrote this book, and the reality of all X/ans as priests and kings can be described in this terms. 1 Peter 2:9, 10. BOOK OF REVELATION – priesthood and kingship of the believer, 1<sup>st</sup> c. reality. Incense – represents prayers of saints, appropriate for 1<sup>st</sup> c. X/ans. It is entirely appropriate for 1<sup>st</sup> c. X/ans to see the incense ascending. There is nothing in BOOK OF REVELATION is inappropriate to 1<sup>st</sup> c. There is nothing in Rev. 5 that requires the Lamb taking the book long after the 1<sup>st</sup> c. If nothing in Rev. 5 is inappropriate for 1<sup>st</sup> c., then we should not place the text elsewhere, sometime long after in 1<sup>st</sup> century.

Where the author is unquestionably discussing end-time events, he is clear on that. E.g. Rev. 6:12-17, day of the Lord language. Rev. 7 – God's people, having come thru Great Tribulation. Rev. 11:15-18; 21; 22 – plenty of times when John is explicit that he is writing about end-time. Rev. 5 fits naturally and appropriately in 1<sup>st</sup> c.

Parallel with Synoptic Apocalypse – Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21. Multitude of || b/n Rev and these Gospels. You'll find in these passages that JC divides history in 3 great eras. First, there is the general reality of the whole X/an age: preaching Gospel, wars and rumours of wars, insurrections, famine, pestilences, earthquakes – typical events of whole X/an age. Matt 24:6-8. These things are not signs of the end, they will continue until the end. Special time of tribulation – when God's people suffer great deal, described in Luke as Gentiles treading Jer/m under food. Then JC moves to the end-time – heavenly signs, and events associated with the final events of the SCJC. JC divides the X/an era in three parts. First he discusses era as a whole, then the Great Persecution, and finally – the final

events before SCJC. That same pattern is seen in Rev. 6. In Rev. 6 if you divide it in terms with its parallels with the Synoptic Apocalypse. 1<sup>st</sup> part of Rev. 6 – wars, famine, pestilence, etc. 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Rev. 6 – the 5<sup>th</sup> seal – souls under the altar, crying out “How Long?” Then the 6<sup>th</sup> seal – the heavenly signs and events associated with the end.

Parallels with Synoptic Apocalypse and Rev. 6, the parallels indicate that event of Rev. 5, that precedes the generalities of X/an age must have been at the beginning of the X/an age.

Lines of evidence that demonstrate that JC’s taking the book – that foundational event on which all the interpretation of the seals, took place in the same year when JC died and rose again. It is in context of His dying and rising again, establishing his ministry there on behalf of His people on earth.

These lines of evidence, beginning with the last presentation, were the relationship of the immediate context. Rev. 3:21 makes this clear. Chiastic structure – helps for the interpretation. The Sanctuary background, the inauguration of the heavenly Sanctuary. The contemporary setting – all appropriate to the contemporary 1<sup>st</sup> c. setting.

Here we have more than 2 or 3 witnesses. We have 5 major lines of witness, of evidence, that point that the date when the Lamb took the book was when He was enthroned on the heavenly Sanctuary, AD 31. Rev. 6 and breaking of seals are events that deal with overcoming of God’s people from time JC died and rose, ministering in heaven, until SCJC.

Seals – some of the most difficult passages in the Bible. When we examine the text carefully, we can find out what it means. IT is amazing, that as difficult as the passage is, we begin to see light in it.

Rev. 4 and 5 – in the light of the basic material so far.

## **No. 11 The Lion, The Lamb, and the Book**

Why does John weep when nobody is found to open the scroll? Why is this so important?

Our basic overview of Rev. 4-7 has prepared us for the opening of the seals in Rev. 6. Few issues in Rev. 4 and 5 to be addressed; issues have attracted speculations: 1) The 24 elders – origin, role; 2) Identity of Scroll – content, role it plays of events in Rev. John never spells out the content of scroll.

### **The 24 Elders**

Who are they? On thrones, around The Throne.

Root number – 12. Revelation’s numbers: 3, 4, 7, 12 – of major interest in the book. Number 12 is of crucial role.  $24 = 12 + 12$ ; two groups of 12. Related to  $144\ 000 = 12 \times 12 \times 1000$ ? Related to New Jerusalem – 12 gates, 12 precious stones? Related to n OT – 24 teams of priests, taking care of OT Sanctuary?

Sitting on thrones next to God’s throne – Rev. 4:4. Reminds of Rev. 3:21. Seems like the elders are somehow related to the promise of Rev. 3:21.

In Rev. 5:9, 10 – some manuscripts suggest that these are the priests and kings of Rev. 5. Here we see the people being described as kings and priests. The 24 elders are singing this song. In many manuscripts it says, “You have made us...and WE will reign...” The 24 elders identify themselves with the redeemed from the earth.

But there is problem with this manuscript – the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures also sing this song? Are the 4 living creatures redeemed from earth, kings and priests who will reign on earth, or

heavenly archangels who play different role? Maybe the altar is the case. Rev. 5:9,10 – can't be reference to 24 elders.

White robes – to Sardis and Laodicea, given to souls under altar; given to great multitude.

White robes – relate to people of God in X/an era or to its close.

Crowns – “stephanos” –victory crowns, not kingly crowns. They have gained the victory in some sense. These victory crowns are offered to Smyrna and Philadelphia's people, reward for overcoming. Rev. 12:1 – stephanos. Crown of thorns – Matt 27:29; John 19:2, 5; Mark 15:17. In NT – stephanos crown, reward to righteous. Most helpful text – 2 Tim. 4:8 – stephanos crown that Paul will receive when JC comes. Stephanos crown – reward for Righteous, for eternal life.

24 Elders – redeemed humanity; symbolism is consistent: sit on thrones, wear crowns and white robes.

Problem: If redeemed humanity, what do they do in heavenly throne room, why are they in heaven and not on earth until the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. Some scholars say – these are angels. This view has problems – nowhere in Bible or in Judaism are angels depicted as sitting on thrones; nor are they called ‘elders’; nor are they depicted wearing stephanos crowns. These descriptions are limited to the people of God.

24 elders – best explanation: humanity redeemed; maybe heads of OT and NT churches; maybe represent 12 tribes/apostles. New Jer/m – 12 foundations of 12 tribes.

Rev. 15:3 – redeemed sing Song of Moses and Redeemed – redeemed from OT and NT; maybe a symbolic group.

“Elders” = symbol of ministry/service.

These 12 elders are not the 12 sons of Jacob and 12 disciples. These figures are symbolic. Humanity as race is well represented. God is using these elders in the process of caring for God's people on earth and maybe judging God's people.

When do these people come up to heavenly places? Best suggestion – around time of JC's crucifixion. Matt 27:51-53. Detail, interesting: here we have people who were raised from the dead at time of JC's death; they walked in Jer/m, people became aware of their presence. What happened to them – died again, resurrected? Most likely ascended to heaven at some point. A hint of this at Eph. 4:8. JC lead captives in his train; at some way these people who were raised from the dead to represent humanity went with JC, joined him on His journey to heaven. Were not these people in heavenly sanctuary before JC ascended? Maybe, went there to prepare to welcome for JC's ascending. Maybe they were ushered in to represent humanity when JC comes.

No absolute certainty about who the 24 elders. Seeing them as redeemed humanity, to represent humanity before God, makes most sense.

## **Identity, Content, and Significance of Sealed Scroll**

Rev. 5:1-5

Whether or not Revelation tells us of the content of the scroll, it is of decisive importance, isn't it? There is weeping going on, confusion; nobody is able to look inside, or to gather what's inside the scroll.

It is clearly a scroll, not codex. The seals of Rev. 6 do not reveal the content of the scroll. The book is not open until the consummation, and then it is read as a whole. Only when the 7 seals are open can the content be revealed.

Scroll is sealed with 7 seals. What is the sealing all about? The NT people can be sealed. Rev. 7:2; 9:4 – people being sealed. There is seems to involve protection. Seal can be a sign of ownership -

Rev. 14:1; Eph. 1:13, other places. Sealing of people = sign of ownership, they belong to God when become X/ans. Seal = circumcision in OT; baptism in NT. Sealing – sign of ownership.

Here we have a book, not a person, to seal. Sealing of Book – sealing of contents, nobody can see what's inside it. Book can be sealed to validate its content, it's some kind of authoritative book and totally valid; its' contents represent what certain authorities behind it represent/stand for. In Ancient World seals were generally possessed by kings and officials, used to validate certain documents.

What's going on in Revelation? No person sealed in Rev. 5, but a book. Issue in Rev. is not so much a revelation as sealing and revealing. The problem of sealing and contents of book – hidden, until seals are broken.

Book – written on both sides. Usually this is appropriate for the scroll, writing on both sides, but not appropriate for codex type of book. It could be – what scholars call – “double document.” In ancient world, there was a time when there was an open scroll, where people could read it, and there was a sealed portion of the scroll (identical of the visible part). The visible part – could be consulted, at any time. The time when it might come when there would be a dispute over the content of the open document; they sealed part would be opened, people could verify that opened and sealed part are identical. Sealed part of document – could validate the opened part is true, no alterations have taken place. This could be a legal document.

Scroll is in the right hand. Greek term, “epi tendexion.” The phrase does not mean so much “in the right hand” as “at the side.” The more accurate translation – “at the side,” – ie. the scroll is lying on the side of the throne. In Near East, thrones are large, can sit few people on it.

It was generally felt in the old world that the right side of king is the best place of honour, the highest place of honour. Psalm 80:17; 110:1 – king of Israel, described as sitting at God's right hand; he is God's co-ruler of Israel.

Epi tendexion – at the right side of one sitting on the throne. To take the book – to sit on the throne. He is taking the Levitic kingship. JC is modeled on the ancient Davidic kingship, to rule the nation of Israel. Two hints of Levitic kingship – Rev. 5:5 – lion of Judah. In NT – JC depicted as sitting on right hand of Father in heavenly throne – Mat 26:64; Hebr. 8:1.

In right hand of God – not best translation, but scroll is laying on floor. When JC comes to the throne room, he takes it and opens it.

Content of scroll? Scholars have offered several opinions of identity of Scroll. Popular one – represents Roman will, idea of inheritance; when a person makes a will, he determines what inheritance will go to whom. Then several people would seal the document, that all is done properly. In OT – the Law of Goel – if a person dies and does not leave anyone to get the inheritance, or if the person would lose the inheritance, the law states that another family member should buy the property and give/restore to the person. Jer. 32. If this is what's happening in BOOK OF REVELATION, that the Lamb is taking the title deed to the world, perhaps we can say that Adam was the one who inherited the world, and JC redeemed the world as 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam (since 1<sup>st</sup> Adam lost it).

Problem with this background. The standard type of legal document in the ancient world is not exactly what happened in the OT. It is not only a will that looks like this, kind of like certified letter. The scroll – legal document, but not clear what its contents are.

Idea of inheritance is not worked thru in BOOK OF REVELATION as one would expect if scroll is inheritance.

2<sup>nd</sup> possibility – Scroll in BOOK OF REVELATION same as in Ezekiel 2:9 – 3:3. The scroll that Ezekiel ate. IS the scroll in Ezekiel, the scroll behind Rev 5? Rev. 10 is built on this part of Ezek. Rev. 5 has Ezek. 1 in mind; parallel.

Rev. 5 – scroll sealed; Ez. 1- opened, lamentations and woes. If that's the content of BOOK OF REVELATION, why would John weep? Does not makes sense to weep to expect woes and lamentations.

Third suggestion – if the scroll represents a concealed prophecy – Is. 29:11, 18. For Isaiah, message of God is like a sealed message, but at end of time it will be opened. Isaiah 30:8. Concealed prophecy, that will be opened up. Isaiah 30:8 – ref. to Isaiah’s own book. By extension – could the Book of Revelation be the content of the scroll in Rev. 5? But no strong structural parallels by/n Rev. 5 and Isaiah 30.

Fourth option – Lamb’s Book of Life. Only book in BOOK OF REVELATION defined as belonging to the Lamb. But it seems a bit narrower in focus to what’s happening in Rev. 5. Concern of Rev. 5- not necessarily the redemption, but crisis that affects whole universe.

Fifth – scroll of coronation. Deut. 17: 18-20. When in ancient time, a king received a scroll – copy of scroll of the law; the king had to write it down for himself. 2 Kings 11 – King Joash; 2 Kings 23 – Josiah. In this background of Deut. 17 we find the combination of the scroll and the throne, and also Davidic Kingship. This could be the best background for Rev. 5.

Ability to open the scroll – right to rule. The only problem with this idea – not explicit allusion to Deut. 17. Deuteronomy is not strong structural background to Rev. 5.

All above texts have something to contribute toward the understanding of Rev. 5:

- concept of inheritance and world destiny
- concept of judgment
- concealment of God’s plan
- concealment and redemption of God’s people.
- enthronement of Israelite king

All of these have some connection with Rev. 5? Can we go closer, make a decision here?

Suggestion: Scroll is related to the concept of the mystery of God. Rev. 10:7; scroll is open in the hands of mighty angel. In this case – scroll is the mystery of God. Mystery of God: God’s eschatological plan to redeem whole universe by JC’s blood and salvation. Mystery of God in NT – open to JC’s followers, but closed to those who did not know Him. Mystery of God – now and not yet situation. God’s people know the mystery of God, but those who are outside His people don’t. Opening the scroll would come at the consummation of the mystery of God. The scroll represents something that x/ans attempt to understand, but will be opened only at the very end.

Suggestion – Rev. 1:1 – the scroll of Rev. 5 is the Revelation of JC. Rev. 1 – process of giving the Revelation of Jesus: from God to JC to John to People. Only in Rev. 5 we see the fulfillment of God handing s/th to JC. Rev. 10 – JC thru angel gives the book to John. In Rev. 5 and 10 we see the 2-phases of the chain of events. The scroll is not the Book of Revelation, but the whole of God’s plan for the whole universe. This explains the crises in Rev. 5- -such big problem that God can’t resolve it. God can’t activate the plan until scroll is opened. It would mean – the Universe will be lost if scroll cannot be opened. The scroll can be opened by the Cross. The Cross makes the Lamb worthy, brings the whole universe to Judgment.

That seems to be powerful message. Is this what Rev. 5 is all about – how the cross is decisive event that allows God to carry His plan for the Universe. Opening of scroll requires the Cross and the Enthronement of JC. Now that the latter is at place, God’s plan will be carried out. Though hidden from public view, it will be carried out at the end. Saints catch glimpse of it in Book of Revelation.

Content of Scroll – Book of Revelation, the plan of JC, but much more as time comes. Scroll’s content – sum of God’s plan for the entire universe. As through the Cross and the Enthronement, of JC, this plan is set in motion, that the final events in world’s history that God’s plan will be revealed, the the whole universe will be saved, e/o will worship God.

Enthronement of JC – the key time when the events are activated. Rev. 3:21 – Davidic kingship; concept of worthy, able to open the throne as expression of royalty. Crucial and decisive background of

Rev. 5 – Deut. 17. Fits in major NT themes – JC on throne, ‘now and not yet,’ Cross, Gospel – concealment; Revelation.

Ellen G. White, “Christ’s Object Lessons,” 294.

Rev. 5 – destiny of all people are assured in JC and at the Cross. Many more events have to take place. From assurance of plan of God to its full fulfillment.

## No. 12 Seven Seals and the Experience of the Church

BOOK OF REVELATION is a powerful call for authentic and serious X/an living? In what areas of your life do you need to hear this call?

Begin a look at Rev. 6, but not verse by verse, just in general, to the chapter as a whole. A number of issues to discuss before getting in the content of the chapter.

Scene in Rev. 5 is foundation of what’s happening in Rev.6. Rev. 5 is enthronement of JC in heavenly sanctuary, where he takes the ministry in Heavenly Sanctuary What happens in Rev. 6 is because of what’s happening in Rev. 5; as consequence of opening the seals. The opening of the seals is not the opening of the parts of the scroll. All 7 seals must be broken in order to reveal content of scroll.

While events in Rev. 6 are triggered by what’s happening in heaven, the events of Rev. 6 take place on earth. Heaven and earth are intimately linked. Nothing happens on earth by that which is ordained in heaven.

Conclusion of Rev. 6 brings us to final events of Earth’s history, before SCJC. Where Rev. 6 begins? Where Rev. 5 left off, what the inauguration of JC and His enthronement.

How we came to that conclusion? Rev. 3:21 sets the tone for Rev. 5. It indicates that Rev. 5 is all about JC joining Father on His throne. He was able to do that because of His death on Cross. Another reason that event in Rev. 5 took place in AD 31 – imagery pointing to inauguration of Heav. Sanct., and that’s appropriate start for X/an era.

Daily Service in Sanctuary and Feast of Pentecost – tied up with Rev. 5, pointing to the events in the beginning of the X/an era. Davidic kingship and Deut. 17 point to events of X/an era. the JC’s enthronement and X/an era.

Chiastic structure of BOOK OF REVELATION points that 1<sup>st</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION covers whole of X/an era. Seals take place when JC ascends heaven on Day of Pentecost. Events in Rev. 6 lead from Cross and Enthronement of JC at one end to SCJC of other. However we interpret Rev. 6, it should cover in some way the entire X/an era. It is not focused on beginning or ending of this era, but the era as a whole.

OT Background – curses of Covenant. Lev. 26 and Deut. 32 – provide language for this theme. Curses of Covenant work both ways – can be carried against people of God if they forsake God; The same language can be used against the enemies of God, if they overdo their part.

Rev. 6 – parallels the Eschatological Apocalypse.

Three phases of X/an era: 1) General realities of X/an age, witnessed by 4 horsemen. 2) Fifth seal brings us to awareness of the Great Tribulation that was predicted by JC. 3) Era of heavenly signs and end of all events.

Few fresh Q’s on Rev. 6: What is the nature of the seals – judgments on the wicked or on JC and His people?

The emphasis on Leviticus and Deut. suggest that God's people are in view, at least in the 4 horsemen passages. War, pestilence, famine – judgment on God's people but also maybe the enemies of God. The emphasis of the seals is the experience of God's church/people in the world.

Persecution – another important theme, in 2<sup>nd</sup> seal. Seal no. 5 – souls under altar understood to represent the people of God, and not merely the wicked.

These concepts point to the experience of the church, not to the world.

Rev. 19 – horsemen on white horse. Ongoing battle b/n JC and his people and JC's enemies – focus on Rev. 6 as in Rev. 19. All events in Rev. 6 cover the entire X/an era, and Rev. 19 – events come in close of X/an era, and in general character are the same. Rev. 19 and Rev. 6 – focus on God and God's people.

Rev. 3:21 – indicates that Rev. 6 is focused on God's people overcoming. Rev. 6 – to do with overcoming promise in the churches' letters. Rev. 3:21 – covers Rev. 4-7; Rev. 6 – zeros in on God's people trying to overcome in the world.

Prayers of saints – Rev. 6:9-11 – focus in Rev. 6; Rev. 5:8 – prayers of God's people/saints.

Evidence – seals have God's people especially in view.

More evidence – seals fall on 4<sup>th</sup> (1/4<sup>th</sup>) on 4 parts. Rev. 6:8 – has to do with the pale horsemen. Riders on this horse and his companions are give power over 4<sup>th</sup> of the earth. Perhaps each of these riders has control over 4ths of the earth. It is not explicitly stated in BOOK OF REVELATION, but consider Rev. 7:1. WE don't have time to explain the connection b/n Rev. 7:1 and the 4 horsemen, but in Rev. 6:1-8 each of the horses is being held or presented by one of the 4 living creatures. First living creature is coming with the 1<sup>st</sup> horsemen, 2<sup>nd</sup> liv. cr. with 2<sup>nd</sup> horsemen, etc. Each horsemen is under control of one of the living creatures.

Rev. 7:1 – four angels, parallel to 4 living creatures. Each angel holds one of the winds, and if winds are parallel to horses (as in OT), then each angel has control over ¼ of earth, and utilizes a horsemen to control the world. Each of these horsemen fall on ¼ of the earth. Trumpets fall on 1/3 of the earth. Bowls in Rev. 16 – fall on all the earth. Movement in BOOK OF REVELATION – from ¼ to 1/3, to all.

How many parts does Satan's kingdom have? Rev. 16:19 – 3 parts. Suggestion: trumpets fall on portions of Satan's kingdom, on 1/3 of the earth. Seals – focus on 4 parts. Focus on seals – has to do with God's people and various portions of Satan's kingdom.

Concept of ¼ of the earth is evidence that seals have to do with God's people and their interrelation in/of the earth.

Synoptic Apocalypse – Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 – both God's people and enemies of God are in view, especially with God's people in the world. It is a general description of God's people in the world. Experience of God's people b/n Cross and SCJC.

Rev. 6 portrays the progressive conquest of JC's kingdom throughout the X/an era. JC conquers his kingdom thru HSp and thru His church. Emphasis in Rev. 6 – on church of JC and its experience in the world and how it interacts with and reaches the world. Preaching of Gospel is sealing work. Put in another way – Rev. 5: JC is enthroned in heavenly places and acknowledged as ruler of entire universe. But this Earth does not acknowledge Him as King, and many people don't acknowledge JC as ruler because have no idea what Bible teaches on JC. JC's kingship in present time is limited by the citizenry of the Kingdom. Seals depict process of earth by JC gradually conquering this church and adding to the citizens of the Kingdom. Becoming a X/an is a process of naturalisation, when you accept JC.

One day when we approach the end, e/o will be confronted with the decision on which side of the Kingdom they will be. Seals – about decision: accept JC and sealed; reject JC – marked for eternal death. Final result – two harvests: Rev. 14 – harvest and grain and grapes.

What's the answer to the Q: nature of the seals? Seals have to do with fate of the Gospel and the fate of the Church in the world. It is concerned with those who reject the gospel and the consequences in their lives. Focus on seals is the focus on all people in the time X/an era.

Are seals to be taken literal or symbolic? Jon Paulien – prefers the symbolic, even though others have gone both/either ways. Why this preference? Rev. 1:1 – in the original, “the vision was signified by JC.” Revelation is based on signified vision, s/th encrypted for the future. BOOK OF REVELATION is symbolic book. If s/th in Bible literal, take it such; if symbolic – treat as symbol. In BOOK OF REVELATION – you take things symbolic, unless demanded by text to take it literal. Generally speaking – BOOK OF REVELATION is figurative book. Rev. 1:1.

Second reason for symbolic taking – no commentators take the horsemen as literal. These horsemen represent s/th else – churches, conditions, etc. If these horsemen are to be taken symbolic, then take other parts of the vision symbolic.

Third reason – Rev. 4 and 5 – much symbolic. This suggests that Lion and Lamb are not the way JC looks, but figures of speech, helping understand how JC operates.

Fourth reason – Rev. 6 makes sense when you take it symbolic. 4 horsemen depict X/an era correctly.

Fifth reason – Rev. 6:9-11 – souls under the altar. These are not disembodied souls of people under God's altar. This picture does not seem quite right. Did Abel cry out from the ground? Was his blood alive to cry out? God is simply saying that God is interested in Abel's death intensely, and he takes it seriously. The death of Able leaves blood on earth, it is a cry for justice, and God does not ignore injustice and cry for justice. So, seals are to be taken symbolic and so are the horsemen.

Rev. 6 – take seals symbolic, unless needed otherwise. One place of literal interpretation, but we'll come to it in later series.

One final Q: Are the seals historically consecutive – one seal running one after the other (as the 7 churches), or are they generalized of the X/an age, without any particular order in mind. Reasons to go both ways.

First, general pattern, that began with Cross, and focus on Gospel conquest and people's reaction to the Gospel. 5th seal – call for judgment; 6<sup>th</sup> seal – execution of judgment. Movement from beginning to end in X/an age. From general realities to time of persecution in time of end. Is it rigid historical sequence or progression of thought? War, famine, pestilence – are not rigidly sequential in OT. John may have chosen different background if he was looking for sequential. In OT war, famine, pestilence are so stereotyped, that they can be used in any which order.

We should not get the impression from the “war, famine, pestilence” that these is the necessary progression.

Time-sequence of the seals. Trumpets have time-sequence. They are concerned with 5 times, 42 months, 3 ½ days, woes come to end before another one begins. Trumpets concerned with time, but not so with seals, no time references with the seals.

Another reason for seals to be taken in general way – Rev. 6:2. In the Greek – conqueror bent on conquest, one of the most ongoing expression in Greek grammar. This passage means – HE goes on conquering and does not stop conquering until there is nothing more to conquer. The white horse covers the entire period. He rides throughout the X/an era, conquers until there is nothing more to conquer. Perhaps the other horsemen are generalized in same way and their activities are ongoing. So, perhaps the horsemen's activities are not limited to time, but more generalized in X/an era.

Horsemen fit fairly well in the earthly periods of the X/an history.

1<sup>st</sup> horse – rapid expansion of X/ty and Gospel

2<sup>nd</sup> horse – time of compromise, loss of vision, persecution, division

3<sup>rd</sup> horse – loss of clear understanding of Gospel

4<sup>th</sup> horse – spiritual declension of Dark Ages

Horsemen – seems to fit pattern of X/an history, in general way. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> seal – focus on end of X/an history. After time of long persecution – a call of justice. 7<sup>th</sup> seal – consummation of all things.

Safest to conclude – seals are not rigid historical sequence, but general progression of events in X/an age.

In closing, let's review few important elements. BOOK OF REVELATION – is of great interest to the Church as a whole. It has a lot to say about the experience of the Church in history, through the eras of time. It is extremely personal as well – e/o who has ears is expected to hear what the Spirit has to say. It is a call for authentic relations with God, for no compromise with Sin, straight and honest with God and each other, a call to turn around – call sin “sin” in your life and do s/th important. Are there areas in your life that you feel BOOK OF REVELATION has to apply to your life? Anything important in your life that needs to change? Are you like Laodicea – JC knocks, but you don't know how to let Him in?

Call of BOOK OF REVELATION – a call for real faith, real life in JC. What do you say? What better time than now to act.

## Series III: Revelation 6-9

### No. 1 Revelation 6 – The Old and New Testament Background

When you get to Rev. 6, things get really strange. How can you navigate things without getting lost?

Rev. 6. Focus on OT/NT background. Need to look at the surrounding materials that were in the author's mind when these things were written. They help understand the material better, avoiding mistakes.

Rev. 4 & 5. Throne vision, serious issue – a book that needs to be opened and nobody on heaven or on earth is able to open the Book. The Lamb comes, is pronounced worthy to break the seals, and it takes the book. Events in Rev. 6 are events that take place when the Lamb is preparing to open the seals of the scrolls.

Rev. 4 and 5 – looks at the OT throne scenes. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel – had throne visions; Rev. 4 and 5 – built on these visions. In Rev. 6 – different type of background.

Lev. 26:21-26.

Lev. 26:21 – now read thru Rev. 6 in one sitting, familiarize yourself with the material there, and check again Lev. 26:21-26, continuing from Lev. 26:22.

Lev. 26 comp. Rev. 6? 7 times, wild animals, sword, plague, famine, people weighing out bread. What's going on in Lev. 26 that might help us the same concepts as used in Rev. 6? Lev. 26 is part of the Holiness Code: God explains to the people the commands and the rules by which they are to live. Then He gives blessing and curses at end of the Covenant. Contract – Covenant, similar terms. There, you have to specify the terms and conditions of the contract. There are rewards and penalties, in Bible time – blessings and curses. Obedience – blessings, disobedience – curses. Lev. 26 is all about this. God warns the people – if they disobey God, there will be curses, Covenant woes described, and

bad things happen: wild animals, sword, plague, pestilence, famine. Lev. 26 – these different types of curses are preliminary judgments of God, they are designed to wake up God's people and to move them to obedience to more positive relationship with God. If they do not repent, even worse things will take place.

Lev. 26:27 – continuing in hostility, punishment, etc.

Lev. 26:31 + – cities into ruins, sanctuaries in desolation; lands laying barren.

Lev 26 – serious background, serious consequences for disobedience. These are progressive – if they do not obey and listen, the day will come, the day will come when God will send the punishments. Final consequence of disobedience – exile from God, from Israel's land.

Rev. 6 – no language of throne vision from OT, but of Covenant curses. Rev. 6 – NT book, it has slightly different relationship to these ideas than was true in the OT. JC is the center of Covenant. Scroll that Lamb takes in Rev. 5 – Covenant scroll; represents relationship b/n JC and His people. Rev. 6 – has to do with consequences of what happens to people who allow declining in their relationship with JC. Seals are picking on the OT Covenant language and describe the consequences of what's happening when people disobey God.

Isaiah 24:5, 6. Here – ecological disasters are laid in the feet of those who have rejected the Covenant with God. Sword, wild beasts, pestilence, etc. – built on OT concept of God's Covenant with His people on earth; when despised, consequences take place.

Deut. 32: 23-25 - with OT language/allusions: calamities, arrows, famine, pestilence, plague, wild beasts, vipers, terror, childlessness, death.

Deut 32:41 – same language: vengeance, repayment on God's part. Rejoicing with God for vengeance from God for His people.

Rev. 5 – you'll notice not only the language of sword, famine, pestilence, but also for avenging the blood of God's people. 5<sup>th</sup> seal – the idea of avenging the blood of God's people. Deut. 32 takes us a step beyond Lev. 26. Deut 32 – part of Holiness Code, where God gives to Israel laws and statutes, shares blessings and curses. Deut. 32 – if no obedience, if not living up to God, then consequences will take place, and ultimately – exile. God will use enemy nations to carry out the consequences – Babylon, Assyria; the executioners of God's judgments. But interesting thing happens. These enemy nations relish their role as judges of God, and get carried too far. Then God punishes them. Deut. 32:41-43 – God reverse the judgments on the enemies of God, to deliver His people, to avenge the blood of His people.

As background of 7 seals – Consequences for God's people and the wider world (they too are in covenant with God, even if they don't know it). Obedience of God's Covenant has consequences – blessing - even if one does not know God. In the same way, disobedience brings consequences - curses, whether one knows or does not know God.

In OT Deut. 32 and Lev. 26 – become so stereotyped and commonly understood, that to talk about consequences of disobedience, you had to mention 'war, famine, pestilence' and people knew you are talking about Deut. 32 and Lev. 26; people knew you are talking about consequences of disobedience, and how God's people stand in relation to God. In Jeremiah and Ezekiel, many years after this Covenant is spoken, we find these terms are widely recognized. These terms are the way in which God's people are experiencing the consequences of disobedience to the Covenant.

Ez. 14:12-21. Notice the use of 'war, famine, pestilence.' Parallel language to Lev. 26 and Deut. 32. In Jer. and Ezek – many terms like these; the curses for disobedience from the Covenant. Major background for Rev. 6 – consequences of the Covenant.

Zechariah 1:8-17 – another background to Rev. 6. Concept of Covenant woes – has 2 aspects: 1) Directed to God's people who have fallen away from faithfulness to God and God calls them back to Him. 2) Enemies of God, who uses it to discipline God's people (Zech. 1:15).

Four horses – background of Rev. 6, different colors, carrying punishments.

Term – “how long, o, Lord.” Purpose of woes – to restore God’s people and punish their oppressors. God is about to act – significance of the 4 horses. God is about to execute the Covenant, the promises, that when people disobey, God will act.

Four horses – God’s actions. Conscience actions on God’s part, acts of judgment, according to His Covenant.

Zechariah 6:1-8 – Similar in Symbolic/Apocalyptic imagery as Revelation. Land of North – Babylon, oppressor of God’s people when Zechariah wrote. Babylon – conquered by Persians around time when book of Zechariah written. Seen as consequences of breaking Covenant. Bible suggests – God is in control of events in this world, particularly when concerning His people. Events in nations guided by God.

Zech. 1:5 – horses are 4 spirits, or in original language – 4 winds of heaven. Four horses = 4 winds, same thing in different terms.

Rev. 6:1-8 – four horses. Rev. 7:1 – notice: four winds. What are the 4 winds? Four winds of Rev. 7 are different symbols, but same thing pointed by them as the 4 horses. Four living creatures, 4 winds – controlled by one of the 4 wind angels. Keep in mind – whatever is going on with 4 horsemen of Rev. 6:1-8, the events of Rev. 7:1 follow up. The horses are the winds.

Summary:

4 horsemen in Rev. are all about disobedience and its consequences. In this case – to the Gospel of JC. When Gospel is preached and rejected, there are consequences, maybe not immediately visible. These are visible, spiritual, and God is in control of what’s taking place.

These consequences tend to fall on God’s people first when they are unfaithful to God. But time is coming with these consequences fall on God’s enemies too.

What we talk about in Rev. 6 is concept of judgment. God’s judgment has 2 parts: ongoing progressive part and final part. Initial part – indictment, investigation. Example: showing of 4 horses in Rev. 6, they don’t all go out and cause damage. The Black and Pale horses don’t go out, only are shown. In Rev. 7 we see the consequences, after God’s people are sealed. First showing of horses is investigation, how God is seeing the picture, where people are in relation to the Gospel. Eventually – there is execution of judgment, totally and finally, and that execution is seen in 7 trumpets. 4 horsemen are preliminary judgments, indictment, they have identified the problem and the steps to take to avoid further consequences. Throughout history God has been judging people and has been calling. Time is coming when God’s full and final judgment will be poured out.

Rev. 6 – principle that judgment begins with people of God. 1 Peter. 4:17. That God first of all comes to judge His people and in the final dates of history there will be pre-advent judgment. In the pre-advent judgment there is first focus on His people and then focus on entire world. Result of this dual focus - 2 groups: Remnant (144 000) and those who at end of Rev. 6 call for mountains and hills to fall on them. God is always calling, no limit to people. He wants all to be saved. Some are perverse, persistently disobedient, and that cuts them off God’s blessings.

One more text: Ezek. 9 – Judgment begins with God’s people and extends. Ezek. 9:1-7. These figures are entering the North Gate of the City, they head toward the Sanctuary/Temple, and stop before the altar. God’s glory moves toward the door of the Temple as these characters are moving in. God is leaving since the people have rejected Him. The Executors are coming in as God leaves.

Ezek. 9:1-7

Began with Temple; chilling passage - X-rated (or R-rated). Execution on all who don’t have the mark of God. People being marked/sealed. Not until sealing work is done are the judging angels being released (Ez 9; Rev. 7).

Curses of Covenant – to fall on those who reject the Covenant. JC – Lamb and Lion, Redeemer and Avenger. This way of understanding Revelation is confirmed by Mark 13, Matt 24, Luke 21. These chapters talk about Gospel, war, famine, persecution, pestilence, heavenly signs, Son of Man comes, angels come and collect people; tribulation; vengeance. Language of Matt 24/Mk 13;Luk 21 – parallel, message from JC; what life will be like on earth b/n the 2 comings of JC. Consequences of rejection of Gospel by the whole world. The OT language s is used in NT to describe the experience of God’s NT people. The 4 horsemen in Rev 6 describe the general state of the age, that’s how it’s going to be like. 5<sup>th</sup> seal - time of heightened troubles and persecution b/n time JC spoke and the end. 6<sup>th</sup> seal – deception, heavenly signs. Rev. 6 and 7 – deceptions are not mentioned, but taken in great detail in Rev. 13-17.

Rev. 6 & 7 are || to preaching Gospel in Matt 24/Mk 13/Lk 21. Seals – experience fo God’s people b/n Cross and SCJC. Seals in Rev. 6 – from inauguration of JC in heavenly sanctuary in Rev. 5 up till SCJC (end of Rev. 6).

Rev. 6 – concerns the events on earth b/n Cross and SCJC.

Rev. 3:21, where you see the promise. Father’s throne and JC joining him – Rev. 4 and 5. Saints joining JC – end of Rev. 7. Rev. 6 – God’s people and their challenge to overcome obstacles b/n Cross and SCJC. Rev. 6 – our experience with trouble, experiences, war, famine, pestilence, etc. Our struggles to overcome and win, and join JC.

Spiritual lesson from Rev. 6 and its b/g (background):

1. Bible gives us God’s manual for life, it teaches us how to live. We were designed by God, and by following the manual we know how to live, how to best live. Manual written best by God who made us. He knows how we best function. Sin is like glitch in software. When this happens, we call for help. Next time you have problem with Sin, call God. It’s like if you have problem with Microsoft software, you called Bill Gates, and he gave you the answer. God is like this – he helps you and me, through prayer.

Seals – warning about consequences of ignoring the Manual. God is not vindictive, but the purpose of troubles is to give more attention to the Manual, to realign to God.

2. Decision on how we relate to JC and how we relate to the Manual. If we are designed to live and work/live with JC, the worst will be to turn away from God. Rev. 6 reveals the consequences of having it our way.

## **No. 2 The First and the Second Seals**

### **Rev. 6:1-4**

How do you reconcile the peace of the Gospel with the BOOK OF REVELATION’s portrayal of the violence of the Gospel?

Let’s take up the 4 horsemen from BOOK OF REVELATION. Read all four of them and focus on the 1<sup>st</sup> and then on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Rev. 6:1-8

Here we are reminded of the images of the last presentation – Covenant consequences, but also of Rev. 5, where the Lamb has book in hands with 7 seals, breaks the 7 seals and prospect of open book brings joy in Universe. As opens seals, events take place on earth.

First Seal

Living creature who has control over this horse has voice like thunder. 4 liv. cr. have different faces – lion, ox, man, eagle. Which has voice like thunder? Most likely the lion – lion has a voice like thunder. First liv. cr. sends out the white horse. Rider carries bow (and maybe arrows); has crown on his head, rides out to be a conqueror.

What's purpose of this imagery? How do you handle this first seal seems to be decisive for the rest of the interpretation of the other horses.

First of all, there is Preterist view. This view: BOOK OF REVELATION is not authoritative, comes from s/o close to God who has wanted to tell us what's in future. They take this part of BOOK OF REVELATION as literal, and think of it as military conquest in 1<sup>st</sup> AD. Some suggest that this predicts that there will be a threat to Roman Empire, coming from East. Ancient Persians rode on white horses, so maybe these are the rider of white horse.

Seals are symbolic – as seen before. They portray time b/n Cross and SCJC. Preterist view with its literal approach and its lack of understanding of the prophetic understand is not appropriate.

Second view – Christ = rider, representing preaching of Gospel.

Third view – rider is antichrist. These view suggests that all other plagues bringing plagues, this rider also brings plagues, and troubles. In OT bow can be used as symbol of Gog and Babylon. Rev. 13 and 14 – there are beasts who conquer God's people (use of same language as in Rev. 6). Counterfeit – regular feature in BOOK OF REVELATION. Rider in Rev. 19 – which definitely is JC – has quite few differences with rider in Rev. 6. So, most likely Rev. 6 rider is Antichrist, Rev. 19 rider – JC.

Jon Paulien does not accept this view; here is why. Color white: In BOOK OF REVELATION w/t exception refers to things in Heaven, to JC, or JC's people. IN entire BOOK OF REVELATION you won't find white applied to a/th evil. If this applies to anti-Christ, then it's a unique application, where white is used to apply to a/th than JC, His people, or heavenly things. This suggests strongly that the symbolism of 1<sup>st</sup> horse is positive force, pointing to things of JC.

Bow – can be used as symbol of Babylon or God, but is ambivalent in OT. Bow does not point to evil in OT, but it can also be weapon of enemies of God – when held by them, it is usually smashed by the power of God in defence of His people. Concept of bow being held by rider in Rev. 6 is not conclusive definitely that this is Anti-Christ.

Crown – “stephanos.” This crown is not royal crown as in Rev. 19 – rider there wears a “diadema,” diadem. In Rev. 6 – “stephanos” is word used for medals in Olympics, similar to gold Olympic medal; it is a victory crown. Stephanos crown in BOOK OF REVELATION is found frequently, and with one exception (Rev. 9), has to do with JC. True also for NT. Wearing stephanos crown shows that we deal with God's people.

Conquering – military battle; so far this word has referred to JC and His people. Reference - to Lamb in Rev. 5- Lamb is the one who conquers and wins. NIV makes it difficult to grasp in this point. Rev. 3:21 – JC overcame; 5:5 – he triumphed; 6:2 – conquest. But reality is all passages have same original word in Greek. When you see these parallels you see the overwhelming importance of JC's victory on the Cross and the victory of JC's people. Rev. 12:11 – by blood and testimony.

Conquering - Spiritual term – overcoming in spiritual matters/

Matt. 24 – series of events – from Cross to SCJC: Gospel, war, famine, pestilence. The Gospel would be absent from seals unless found here, in 1<sup>st</sup> seal. If rider on white horse is negative, if conquest is to bear military bloodshed, then the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> horse are redundant, as they'll be talking the same. Rider on 1<sup>st</sup> horse refers to JC and Him conquering the world after His ascension.

Rider on white horse produces no affliction. 2<sup>nd</sup> horse – takes peace away; 3<sup>rd</sup> horse – famine; 4<sup>th</sup> horse – disease and death. First horse produces not affliction.

Counterfeit is major theme in BOOK OF REVELATION, but when such counterfeits occur in the book, they are always clearly exposed to the read. That's the point of BOOK OF REVELATION – it is to make clear the kinds of counterfeits that God's people will face as they approach the end. Here – no indication that the rider on white horse is evil in anyway.

Rider in Rev. 6 and 19 – difference: different stages of conflict. Rev. 6 – JC has conquered, wears crown of conquer, but he is not yet the undisputed ruler of the world; many people don't accept Him yet. Only at SCJC the diadem crown will be given to him. Rev. 6 – JC has conquered, but is yet to conquer.

Seems clear that the focus of 1<sup>st</sup> seal is on conquest of Gospel, on the victory of JC on Cross and the Gospel.

OT background – Habakkuk 3:8, 9. The || is clearly visible. Strong verbal parallels –horse, victory, bow. Who rides the horse? YHWH of OT. Rider on white horse - rider from God, not human or anti-Christ, but JC Himself.

Psalms 45:3-5 – royal wedding, new king is crowned and he is getting married on same occasion. King of Israel – rides forth, with bow and arrows, and sword on his side, and commanded to ride forth victoriously. This is victory of humility – truth, righteousness, as well as military. Victory on Cross – in realm of humility and truth.

If this is wedding victory – the rider going to conquer His Bride – who is the Bride in NT? The Church. Suggestion – in white horse: JC conquering His kingdom, gathering His Bride. Rev. 19 – imagery of great wedding, wedding of the Lamb. BOOK OF REVELATION moves to the wedding feast when JC will be married to His people. Rev. 6 – JC gathers believers to get them home. Here the conquest is just beginning.

How long does the conquest go on? “Conqueror bent on conquest.” Language in Greek – “he went out conquering and in order that he might conquer.” Here we have extremely progressive or continuous type of construction.

In Greek, if you want to express s/th that is ongoing, you can use Present Tense. That's a mild, ongoing tense. Using Present Participle is much stronger in its continuousness. Here – Pres. Participle, followed by “in order that he might conquer,” with Subjunctive. In Rev. 6 – as continuous expression as the Greek is capable of. He goes onto conquering and keeps on conquering until there is nothing else to conquer. It is ongoing process until it is totally complete.

Rider goes on riding and conquering, and that will continue progressively until all is achieved. White horse rider continues to ride in all of X/an era (not only in 1<sup>st</sup> c.) until at the end the work of conquest is complete.

Rider on white horse represents Gospel going forth, the experience of God's people on earth, so that Kingdom of JC may increase and the Bride of JC be ready. This begins with JC's enthronement until SCJC. Portrays one of major aspects of the Gospel going forth.

## Second Seal

Rev.6: 3, 4.

Number of points in the passage. 2<sup>nd</sup> living creature – calf/ox, symbols of sacrifice. It is interesting that this horse came out, going forward. Affects the whole world, as the white horse. Crimson red, color of fire. “Peace” used in BOOK OF REVELATION – Rev. 1:4; spiritual peace, peace in JC (Paul uses “peace” in his letters). This rider take away the peace of the Gospel. Describes the experience of those who have lost the peace of the Gospel. Result – slay one another. Greek word behind “slay” does not mean murder, but means “sacrificial slaying.” Used about death of JC or His saints, in BOOK OF REVELATION. Instrument for slaying – “sword.” In Greek, for “sword” many words used; here – tool with which animals were sacrificed in OT sanctuary.

We have here two images blended together. Language of war and language of conquest. Second – language of sacrifice. How to understand 2<sup>nd</sup> seal?

Two ways to read the symbolism of these verses. First, as describing the vision – people are divided by these horsemen, they become enemies, peace is taking away, they slay each other. Rider

describes division as Gospel is preached – some accept and join in the Kingdom of God, other – reject, and division comes as result.

Second way to read the language of the 2<sup>nd</sup> seal – language of persecution. Martyrs of 5<sup>th</sup> seal – persecution is major theme/language of seals. For “slay” used in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> seal – same word. Rev. 6:9, 10 – “slay.” Slaying of others may not be so much division a/g people in direct sense, as symbol of persecution of saints by those who reject Gospel.

John 16:2 – concept of persecution and rejection. Greek language ‘offering service to God’ = language of priestly sacrifice. The day will come people who kill you will think they are pleasing God. Martyrdom is consequence of division a/g people on earth because of Gospel.

Symbol of war comes as result of resisting the Prince of Peace in 1<sup>st</sup> rider. Gospel – causes division b/n those who accept and reject. Psalm 25 - Same king who goes out to conquer his Bride conquers His enemies; wears great sword. Rider on white horse – symbol of JC and the Gospel, and Brings blessings to those who accept JC & Gospel. To those who reject – persecution, opposition, division.

OT b/g texts for 2<sup>nd</sup> seal. Isaiah 26:3. If we take seals symbolically, then the peace that is taken from earth is peace of God. Peace that comes from trusting God and JC, the slain Lamb.

Isaiah 57: 20, 21 – Contract b/n these two passages in Isaiah. Perfect peace for those who trust God, no peace for those who don’t. Peace, in OT and NT, is achieved only in relationship with JC.

First horse – Gospel going forth; second horse – results of resistance to Gospel and peace.

“Slaying one another” – Judges 7:21; Exod. 32:27 – faithful to God are rooting out of camp the unfaithful. Isaiah 19:2 – Egyptians fight against each other; Zech 14:13 – God’s enemies attach each other.

Second seal, second horse – portrays strife and confusion a/g those who reject the gospel. It may portray the judgment of God - Ex, 32:27, but most likely – the natural result of resisting and rejecting the Gospel.

NT b/g: In NT – Gospel is great the divider of people. 2 Cor. 2:14-16. Gospel – to those who believe, savour of life to life, for those who do not believe – savour of death unto death. John 3:18-21. Matt 10:34-36.

JC Brings division – not that it is desirable, but it is result of people’s choices. When people present the Gospel, there comes a certain temptation: If I accept JC, what will people think (family, neighbours, etc.) of me? When Gospel is taken seriously, it can bring division a/g people.

Luke 12:51-53. Not pleasant texts, but part of the Bible. It tells us that when we take the Gospel seriously, there will be people who don’t understand. There will be people who’ll think: we thought you are our friend.

One of the consequences of accepting Gospel is division.

#### Spiritual Lessons:

- 1) Violence is result of rejecting Gospel. Gospel = Good News, unconditional acceptance of people by God because of JC. Violence takes place when we don’t accept other people, when we don’t allow them to be who they are. When people reject the Gospel, they hold conditions to other people, they expect people to behave in certain way, and then violence is the result as they seek to control what other people try to do (result of rejecting the Gospel.) People seek to control what other people say. BOOK OF REVELATION points that violence at the end may be the only way to protect the weak and rescue the oppressed. If we don’t accept JC, we’ll be judged by God for not accepting him. Violence – result of rejecting JC and Gospel, or violence to rescue the oppressed and to protect the weak

- 2) The Decisive Victory has been won by JC on Cross. The events on earth since then are the results of that victory. That means, no. 3 –
- 3) Crucial Q of life today: Will we be on the winning side? If victory is already sure, has been won up to a point, then how we respond to that victory is the most crucial Q in our lives? BOOK OF REVELATION offers advance info to help us to know which and where is the winning side and to see with fresh perspective, to make right decision.
- 4) Red horse mean – victors at final race will rarely look like winners today. These people will be object of scorn, division. If we judge by what we think is right, we may find ourselves on the wrong side. Winners today are not ultimate winners.
- 5) We need to be prepared for the tragic consequence that we may loose friends if we accept the Gospel and JC. You are not alone in this. This is the way it goes. As wonderful as the Gospel is, it does not prevent the division that comes when the Gospel is preached. There will be some who will be rejected, ties with be severed. We have to make sure to keep the ties in order, but when the Gospel comes in opposition to people, and we choose Gospel, we have to be ready to see such results.
- 6) When we suffer losses, it encourages to be more serious about our walk with God, and to be sure about our inheritance in the future. Ultimate life – found in the world to come. Our actions have to be in the light of the ultimate inheritance.

### **No. 3 The Third and the Fourth Seals** **Rev. 6:5-8**

How bad can things get in BOOK OF REVELATION – from pale to black horse?

#### Third Seal

Rev. 6:5, 6

Rider comes out – black horse. Is this the opposite of white as image? We would expect so, as we would normally read the Bible. Reality is that this is not how it words in NT. Originally, Gr. “black” here is “ink” and not black. May refer to color of hair, skin, or ink, but not opposite of white. Light – darkness contrast is strong in the Bible. If intended to be understood as opposite (black-white), black horse would be absence of Gospel. This horse does not go out as first two do.

Scales. Purpose of scales – of judgment (as in Dan. 5:27). NT passages – scales may mean ‘yoke’ of animals or the ‘burden’ a person carries. Here the word refers to ‘cross-bar’ of scales. Reference to the central fulcrum piece of the scales, with chains hanging on both sides with dish at the end.

Context here – weighing scales, not judgment scales. It demonstrates famine conditions.

Depiction of black horse – depiction of famine. Covenant curses – war, famine, pestilence.

Voice in midst of living creatures: ref. to Lamb sitting on throne.

Days’ wages – in Greek ‘denarius,’ a common coin; denarius = day’s wage.

Wheat and Barley: Quart of wheat – the average amount of food an average person in Palestine would eat. If a person would spend all money on a quart of wheat, then it is a serious famine. Then such person would only survive, won’t feed a family. If barley used, could feed only 3 people (barley was considered as less desirable grain.)

This reference of wheat and barley – image of shortage and famine.

In Middle East – grain, oil, wine – the 3 main crops. OT texts refer to it often; one example - Deut. 7:13. There are three main crops in Palestine. Oil – from olives, wine – from grapes.

Other OT texts: Deut. 11:14; 28:51; Hosea 2:8, 22 – same references of 3 crops.

Farming in Palestine – the phrase ‘grain, new wine, and oil’ would be a good summary of the main crops. Wheat and other grains are annuals – planted and harvested each year. The olive trees and the vines are perennial and are harvested every year, no need to replant each year.

In OT, when Bread is weighed out, is a sign of serious famine. Lev. 26:26; 2 Kings 7:1; Ezek. 4:16, 17. Concept of weighing out Bread – symbol of serious famine.

Voice of God – mitigates the judgments. Though there is shortage of grain, don’t hurt oil and wine. Staples are in short supply, such as Bread. Oil and wine, the luxuries, are in plenty.

Interesting famine – the staples are in short supply, but luxuries are in rich supply. Grain is shallow-rooted, annual, more readily threatened to draught. In initial states of draught grain will be destroyed, but other – vines and olive trees, deep-rooted, will last.

How are we to understand? Spiritual/symbolic interpretation make more sense. “Don’t hurt oil and wine” used for judgments on evil-dowers in BOOK OF REVELATION. Rev. 7:2, 3; 9:4, 10, 19. Also - judgments on evil-doers and persecution on God’s people – Rev. 11:5; 22:11. The word ‘hurt’ used in ref. to persecution and suffering. Spiritual tone to this hurting.

If black is opposite to white, then that’s famine for God’s word. God’s word – is Bread of life. What we have here, is shortage for God’s word. On the other side, wine and oil are symbols of God’s grace. Wine – symbol of JC’s death, of Lord’s Supper, of JC’s blood. Oil – symbol of HSP; of flaming fire of spiritual life.

Famine, in relation to spiritual life - serious, but not fatal. Amos 8:11, 12 – famine for Word of God.

Imagery of Bible suggests that language of famine can be applied to God’s Word. Can that be true of our word today? In literal sense – there are many Bibles available to e/o. But people have access to the Bible, but less knowledge of the Bible. We live in time when there is ignorance to Bible. Life is getting complex, busy, and people spend little time with the Bible. If you read the Bible you are blessed. Wrestle with the Bible yourself, and you’ll be blessed.

Third seal, whenever takes place, reveals that even though the Word of God may be hard to reach, the grace and mercy of God are still available, and so is the Gospel. God’s restraining influence is present. Gospel is obscured from people’s view, but probation is still not closed.

#### Fourth Seal

Rev. 6: 7, 8

Fourth living creature – face of eagle (vulture). Vultures are symbols of death and decay, they feed on carcasses of other animals that have died, especially in draught-smitten conditions.

Pale horse – root word is “chloros.” Our word – chlorine, gas/liquid with sickly yellow-green color. This horse depicts plague and pestilence, contagious inflammatory disease that destroys people in large quantities. In ancient times that word was used for the appearance of a person who was very sick.

This rider does not go out. He is not roaming around the world and going everywhere. This is an indictment of God, initial judgment of God. The 4th horse is not judgment, many events are to take place.

Hades and Death are following – in English. In Greek – mean to accompany, does not imply that they are moving. With Pale horse come Death and Hades. These 2 terms are used in another place in BOOK OF REVELATION.

Rev. 9:18. Death is familiar to us; Hades – the place of habitation of the death; These 2 terms describe the opposite of life. JC holds the keys to Death and Hades. Same message in Rev. 6. Who opens the seal to reveal Death and Hades? JC. As terrible as these 2 symbols are, they are under the control of JC.

Rev. 20:14. There will be death for Death. The time will come when Death will die. And both Death and Hades will be thrown in the lake of fire.

So, Death and Hades are horrible images. The rider on the pale horse is horrible image as well. In the midst of this, remember: 1) Death and Hades are under JC' control, as fearful as they are. 2) One day Death and Hades will be abolished, so they are not the final word. These are fearful only when they are the final word. BOOK OF REVELATION tells us that one day the Death will die. Truth: death is not the ultimate reality.

We must never forget that all these images are portrayed as temporary and under God's control – struggle, persecution, famine, etc. – are real. BOOK OF REVELATION describes life as it is, but gives hope that one day death, violence, etc. will end, and the faithful to God will find a world much better than today's world.

Notice that Rider on Pale Horse has authority over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of earth. Possible each horse has authority over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of earth. Rev. 7:1 – 4 winds of earth, parallel to 4 horses, different image for same thing. There each winds is over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of earth. Suggestion – each horse has authority over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of earth. This is significant to find that trumpets have authority over  $\frac{1}{3}$  of earth.

Sword, famine, plague, beasts – intensification of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> horse. In 4<sup>th</sup> horse all that went wrong before in the other horses, is not intensified. In OT times the judgments of God were progressive, they were wake-up calls, getting more severe as disobedience continued. The sword, famine, pestilence in the other horses intensified here. Are these wild beasts an echo of Rev. 13, where we have dragon, beast and false prophet to come? Perhaps. In 4<sup>th</sup> horse we have intensification of threats.

4<sup>th</sup> seal – most serious threat of all, the threat of permanent exclusion of mercy. This is the most serious spiritual condition up until Rev. 18. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> horse portray serious conditions, but 4<sup>th</sup> - threat of spiritual pestilence, disease of soul.

There is progression in these horses: first, division in relation to Gospel; then - loss of attention to Biblical text; and finally – decline, disease, and death. Spiritual consequences are getting worse and worse.

If Lev. 24:16 and Deut. 32 are still in mind here and more is yet to come, then this plague is intended to invoke repentance. It is not the ultimate end, even if it is fearful, but it is a warning, a foretaste.

Third and fourth horse portray frightful time of consequence for people on earth.

First 2 horses go out, but the other don't. Ultimate threat – still future. Rev. 7:1 – the final outworking of all horses is seen. There will be a great, final proclamation of the Gospel. We will see this later in BOOK OF REVELATION, when Gospel will go loud and clear in world. Rev. 7:1-3. Once God's people are sealed there will be final

Progression of the horses: First, division in relation to the Gospel; then loss of attention at all to Biblical text; finally – decline, disease, and death.

This plague intends to invoke repentance. It is not the final judgment, but foretaste. Rider on 4<sup>th</sup> horse portrays that end is in view.

#### Four Horses

Look at them as a whole. How are we to read them? What is the pattern, what's the way to interpret them?

Rider on white horse portrays the glorious Gospel, the faithful church – by extension. Red horse – portrays opposition to JC and Gospel; result – dissension, division, strife, persecution. Third horse – famine for Word of God. 4<sup>th</sup> – spiritual pestilence.

These images, which are largely drawn from OT, are not necessarily chronological. War, famine, and pestilence, are not always in this order. The OT can talk about them in different order. The concepts are seen as a unit, but don't come in chronological order. Matt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21 – JC uses them interchangeably or leaves some aside. Gospel (white horse) is ongoing. One way to read these 4 horsemen is in individual and spiritual sense. Whenever the Gospel is preached, some will be reached and other will reject. There is division that takes place. Those who reject, there is famine for Word of God, finally disease and death.

Rev. 6 – describes experiences of each one toward the Gospel, either victory or loss. One application – seals portray the general reality of the X/an age, the personal experience of e/o who accept Gospel. There is increasing blessings, knowledge and salvation, or progressive decline when Gospel rejected.

We can read the 4 horsemen in chronological way. The seals are opened one after the other. The four living creatures are never separated anywhere else in BOOK OF REVELATION. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> seal lean toward the end of history. When we see that the 7 seals move from Cross to SCJC, we can see the horsemen as portraying the history, the trend of history. They fit very well in X/an history. Early in X/an history, of the X/an era, there was surge of the Gospel, through the work of Paul, when the Gospel went on in the world. Then, as time went on, there was progressive decline. In Middle Ages – few people knew Scriptures and JC. The X/an faith became political and military, seeking worldly conquest.

Trend of history fits trend of the 4 horses. Initially – the Gospel, and then – resistance of the Gospel, forgetting Gospel, losing vision, sight of Word of God, and finally – disease and death. Fourth horse threatens exclusion from God's presence and mercy. Threatens spiritual pestilence. A disease of the soul.

Third and fourth horse portray frightful time of consequence for people on earth.

Judgment of horses – partial and preliminary. First 2 horses go out, but the other don't. Ultimate threat is yet still future. In Rev. 7:1 – we see the final outworking of all horses is seen. There will be a great, final proclamation of the Gospel. We will see this later in BOOK OF REVELATION – Rev. 11, 14, 18, when Gospel will go loud and clear in world in full power. This lies implicitly behind images in Rev. 7:1-3. When all God's people are sealed, there will be final unleashing of all horses, to do final and complete work.

Striking and unique images in Rev. 6.

Spiritual lessons from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> horses:

- 1) Our spiritual health depends on feeding on Word of God. If we feed healthy, that's fine; if JC is focus on our lives, then we'll be strong. Spiritual health – not only knowing Gospel, but accepting its implications for our lives. One problem today – low self-esteem, when people think they are not worthy much. Gospel tells us that we are worth great deal. JC – loved us, died for us. Means – we are accepted in the work JC has done for us. Unconditional acceptance by JC for us. When we realize we are unconditionally accepted by God, and that He offers us JC, this can provide tremendous sense of worth.
- 2) The consequences of ignoring God's Word are overwhelming. There is decline, pestilence, famine. These are graphic images from every day life, but they have spiritual implications as well. When we starve for truth, when we eat unhealthy spiritual food – for every area of life. 4<sup>th</sup> horse – opportunity to accept JC will not be there forever, Death and Hades are coming. Day will come when grace and mercy won't last for long. If we still hear the message, if the oil and wine are still available, now is the day of salvation. Nobody knows how long the opportunity will last. Today, accept JC.

## No. 4 The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Seal

Who are the souls under the altar? Where are they? Is that where you go when you die?

### Fifth Seal

Rev. 6:9-11

Interesting text, clearly symbolic imagery in many ways. First, it talks that there are souls under the altar. What altar? In the sanctuary there were 2 altars – in the outer court was the altar of burnt offering, and the animals were being sacrificed and some of their parts were burnt there. Second altar – altar of incense – inside Temple/ Sanctuary, no animal offered, but priests would take incense from the outside altar and bring it in there.

Which altar is in mind? Altar of incense, being in the Temple itself, symbolizes the heavenly portion of the Sanctuary. The tabernacle buildings were models of that which was in heaven, but outer court represents things on Earth. So, it would be important whether the souls under the altar are souls in heaven or on earth. These souls are under the altar. Only the burnt offering altar has a significant taking place at its base.

The animals slaughtered for sacrifice at the outer court altar would have their blood collected in a basin, and then poured out at the base of altar. Rev. 16:6 – makes interesting comment, using the same Greek word used for ‘pouring out’ the blood at the altar. NIV translates faithfully the concept, but not the word. The original word, “pouring out blood at base of altar of burnt offering.”

Concept of pouring out blood – refers to martyrdom of God’s people. Blood of animal/person, is source of life. When blood is poured, person died. Genesis 4 – Abel’s blood is poured on ground. Here souls are images of martyrdom. Why martyrdom connected with Sanctuary Services. John 16:2.

Sanctuary language – language of persecution, of martyrdom. Does not say a/ty about the state of those who have died. These martyred souls are not in heaven, as some believed, but it is an assumed and yet wrong teaching that some people believe. In reality, the altar is of the burnt offering and the events are on earth. The souls are symbolically described as on earth, as the blood of Abel is crying out to God.

Rev. 20:4 – *when* the martyrs do come to life.

Here we have description of martyrs because of testimony of JC and Word of God. Same words used in Rev. 6:9, 10. They come to live at beginning of 1000 years. This is future event. Those who have been martyred, those who died for their faith, reside in their graves until SCJC, then they rise to live, judge, and dwell with JC in heavenly places. The faithful dead stay in God’s care, unconscious of the events. Symbolic description – their martyrdom cries out to God, because it is unfair to persecute faithful people and have them killed/martyred. God notes their death and notes that these injustices cry out for judgment and for avenging of the judgment.

Term ‘word of God’ and ‘testimony of JC’ indicate that these souls died because they were faithful to Gospel proclamation. The message that God picks up because of their death – Rev. 6:10. You see, martyrdom cries out to God, “How long?” How long will it be that fairness is trampled in dust, until you avenge our blood?

Phrase “How Long?” has long history in OT; used around destruction of Jerusalem. Psalm 79:5, 6. Relevant to 5<sup>th</sup> seal – cry for re-doing of unjust situation, of martyrdom. Similar in Habakkuk 1:2. Apocalyptic prophecies – Dan 8:13; 12:6,7. Cry ‘how long’ will be appropriate toward the end. Cry in protest of persecution. Saints are crying to God to stop the injustices. Saints all God to pass the verdict in their favour, for acquittal. The innocent martyrs cry for help from God, for clearing their cases.

This is later point in time than that of the 4 horsemen. These assumes long history of suffering of persecution, suffering, un justices, etc. There are many martyrs crying out to God.

This is time before the end of history, time when God is not yet avenging. God has not yet begun the pre-advent judgment. Time before the final time of earth's history. Time of this cry is later on in history and before the end.

Rev. 6:10 – “How long...”. “The inhabitants on the earth” – common phrase in BOOK OF REVELATION, technical term for “the wicked” - the people who reject the Gospel, who persecute God's people. Rev. 8:13. Connection b/n Rev. 6:10 and 8:13 is very important for understanding the trumpets.

Call for judg/t on those who have persecuted God's people.

Rev. 6:11 – Each of these souls was given a white robe. Symbolic language. What's the white robe all about? Rev. 3:4,5. Dressed in white robes – garment of saved. Rev. 7:9, 13 – the Great Multitude that comes from terrible tribulation. Parallel to 5<sup>th</sup> seal. Reward for those who have been martyred.

What could possible be going on in this text, when you have dead people receiving the garment of the saved? What seems to be going on is that there is assurance that these dead are saved. The giving to them of white robes is assurance that they have eternal life. If the dead know nothing, as Bible teaches, then what's the point of this imagery, of giving the dead these robes. It is not another than the pre-advent judgment. Before SCJC God will judge all people – dead and alive. You can't receive reward of heaven before passing thru judgment. The final judgment, that comes before the end, every case of those who have died will be examined, and it will be determined which reward is appropriate. The giving of f white robes in Rev. 6:11 portrays the verdict of the pre-advent judgment of these particular dead.

Will there be a final judgment of alive? Yes. Emphasis of 2<sup>nd</sup> half of BOOK OF REVELATION – a ll people are called to make a decision, for or against the Gospel. This final decision will make each person counted for or against God.

Here we have the case of dead martyrs – they come before judgment; they are to be saved eternally.

After given white robes, they are told to “rest a small time longer” (original Gr.). Is. 57:1,2 – similar idea. The rest here is rest of death, to wait and rest a little longer in death. To what? Here is one of the most difficult exegetical problems in BOOK OF REVELATION. Rev.6:11. Given white robe, told to wait a little longer – “till the number of their Brothers is to be completed.”

The martyrs are to wait until their resurrection. And it seems as if there is a number of martyrs to be made, and that the end won't come until this number is completed. Interesting as it sounds, but the word “number” is not in the text. It is in the NIV and other versions, but not in the original Greek. The reason why translations add “Number” held to the idea that the author of BOOK OF REVELATION thought that there was a number of martyrs to be completed. The idea comes from Jewish Apocalyptic – a series of writings that portray apocalyptic events; in Jewish idea – there will be certain number of martyrs, and at the end, this number will be completed. Some commentators think that's what's the case in Rev. 6:1. In favour of this view is || Rev. 7, where white robed saints are coming from Tribulation, and they are innumerable.

Literal translation from Greek: “Until their fellow servants and their brethren, who are about to be killed, as also they were, might be made complete.”

In Greek this phrase is the answer to the Q “Until when?” Until their fellow-servants are made complete. This concept of completion – based on Gr. “to make full, to complete.” In NT –people can be filled with Holy Spirit, filled with certain qualities (by the HSp), time can be filled (when time is filled), finishing tasks (2 Tim 4:6-8); or reference to character – these saints being completed may have s/th to do with their character.

Rev. 19:7, 8 God's people are in view, dressed in white robes, righteous acts. Could it be that in Rev. 6:11 the martyrs have to wait until their fellow-servants have reached character perfection, completeness of character?

Very difficult to know what exactly this text is saying. In context it seems that the experience of the fellow-servants is paralleled by the experience of the souls under the altar. What has to be completed, it not a certain number, but their death. This difficult text may at the end portray the idea that when certain number of martyrs is reached, the end will come. Not that the martyrs themselves precipitate the end, but that God has certain control on how the end will come and what will take place by the end.

Cry goes out, "How long, o, Lord..." Cry comes up to heaven, in Rev. 8:3,4. Smoke of incense and cries of saints come before God. Trumpets are very much affected by the 5<sup>th</sup> seal. Trumpets have to do with prayer of saints, their ascension to God, and God's response to their prayers.

Two groups – persecuted and persecutors. They are 2 parallel harvests taking place. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> horse – gathering of more and more people who reject the Gospel. In 5<sup>th</sup> seal – gathering of fellow-servants and friends of martyrs, who, when their full number is complete, the end will come.

Historically – 2 stages. First, early part of seal, s after the time of 4 horses, but before final judgment. It will be b/n the pestilence of the 4<sup>th</sup> horse and the time when the judgment begins. Giving of white robes within the seal shows the beginning of the pre-advent judgment, but before the judgment of the living (Rev. 18 and passages around).

Christian history- 5<sup>th</sup> seal: time b/n Middle Ages and time of Pre-Advent Judgment, the Great Tribulation at end of world's history. With 5<sup>th</sup> seal we are moving toward end of world's history.

## Sixth Seal

Rev. 6:12-17

This begins with series of images, based on OT. In OT – number of passage associated with the concept of the "Day of the Lord." The great final judgment of world – associated with reward for saints and punishment for wicked. Imagery in OT very often – Ezek. 32, in relation to exodus. Day of Lord imagery – Amos 8:8, 10 –fall of Israel. Jer. 4:23-27 – fall of Judah. Destruction of God's enemies – Isaiah 34:4; 13:10-13; Nahum 3:12; Ezek. 38:18-20. These passages contain images that are used in Rev. 6 as part of 6<sup>th</sup> seal.

Images related to concept of curses, the ultimate consequences of rejecting God; as result – face God's judgment. "Day of Lord" passages – used in NT, in relation to Cross of JC, in relation to Pentecost (Acts 2 – Peter preaches from Joel 2, Day of Lord passage). In NT – described in relation to SCJC, as Rev. 6; Matt 24:29 || Rev. 6. Language of Is. 13, 34; Ez. 32; Joel 2. When in NT "Day of Lord" applied to Pentecost, SCJC. Rev. 6 – language re: end of world.

Passage easily divided in 2 parts: Rev. 6:12-14 and 15-17 – two parts of this passage. First, great earthquake, v. 12. Series of 6 items: 2 earthquakes, a great one, and then every mount and island moves from their place. The two earthquakes are separated by heavenly signs. Four heavenly signs – sun darkened, moon in to blood, sun darkened, heaven splits up like scroll. How are we to take these images – literal or spiritual? In OT – these images were used to describe how events would take place, as God's judgments were coming.

This heavenly signs are literal, even though they don't sound like this. In Gr. word "hos" and in English "like." Sun is black "as" sackcloth, stars fall "as" fig tree, etc. In Greek this term 'as' introduces simile, or metaphor, where something literal is compared to something spiritual. Suggestions that sun, moon, stars, sky are intended to be taken literally. But certain things happen to them that are described figuratively. Language does not suffice to describe what's taking place.

Sun – darkened as sackcloth. Moon becomes red ‘like’ Blood. Stars – fall ‘as’ figs from the tree. Heaven – splits ‘like’ scroll. Intention here is to describe literal movement within the sky.

What is this describing? There seems to be a slight division b/n v. 13 and v. 14. Events like these - darkened Sun, falling stars, etc, - have happened, especially in 1780 (Dark Day in US), in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c. events like these took place. 1833 – meteor shower in US, great and spectacular. God used these events to stimulate intense interest in the study of prophecy.

Rev. 6:14 – more startling event. The whole sky rolling like scroll. Event like this has not happened so far. What happened in 1780 and 1833 stimulated the study of prophecy and people’s interest in the time of the end, and in the Bible. The 6<sup>th</sup> seal points further, to events that will take place before JC comes.

Spiritual lessons here?

Is. 54:10. These images are given to us so that when such day comes upon us, we may remember that God’s compassion will take care of God’s people.

Nahum 1:5-8. OT description of events in OT. Assurance – God will not forsake his people.

Rev. 6:15-17 – Events of SCJC itself; language of SCJC. Points to very significant Q in this passage. “Who can stand?” This introduces Rev. 7. Will we be able to stand in this great day? Will we be ready.

## Seventh Seal

Rev. 7:1

Sketchy – very scarce info, just ½ hr silence. Not much to say. It comes like a calm after the storm. Destruction is over, turmoil is over, frightening riders, no winds blow, description is over, and there is peace. There are perhaps 4 options for interpretation.

One – could be God’s silence, as justice is finally and fully done. Isaiah 62:1,2

Two – silence of the beginning of Creation. Gen 1:1 – earth was dark, there was silence. This is silence of new creation. Jewish Apocalyptic – God will restore earth to new creation, and that’s the silence of new creation.

Three - Perhaps it’s the silence of stult Universe, watching the destruction of the wicked. That’s in contrast with the noise in Rev. 5 – praises to Lamb.

Four – when book is opened in Heavenly Court/Sanctuary.

The 7<sup>th</sup> seal is after SCJC. Could be silence during the Millennium, or after it.

## Spiritual lessons from 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> seals

Martyrs – just as JC are martyred on Cross, so martyrs have their own cross. IF the very worst will happen to you, we have model to follow. Our death will be like that of JC. JC was raised from dead and vindicated at His death. If life comes to place where we maybe e martyred, we can know that just as JC was martyred and raised, we too will be vindicated and raised, and the message of the seals is to hang in there. End, vindication, good times are coming. JC is coming.

## **No. 5 The 144 000 and the Great Multitude Rev. 7:1-17**

Who are the 144000? Are you one of them?

Biblical prayer – Psalm 46.

Rev. 6: -last part. Great day of God's wrath? Who can stand, who can pass thru the last days, in the spirit of Ps. 46. Answer – found in Rev. 7. Who can stand – the 144 000 and the Great Multitude (GM). Rev. 7 – answers who can stand – the 144000 and the other – the GM.

Rev. 7: 1-8 – the 140 000, and 9-17 – the GM.

Let's look at 144 000. Rev. 7:1 sets stage for the whole chapter.

Rev. 7:1 – carrying thru of the 4 horses of Rev. Here the 4 angels of 4 corners of earth; angels remind of the 4 living creatures; 4 winds – of the four quarters of the earth that they controlled. The command is – not to loose the winds until certain things have happened, in this case – does not say with will happen, but it says that the winds will not blow on earth and/or sea. Sea and Land – sources of the beasts in Rev. 13. Here – land and sea – negative symbolism. Tree – represents God's people (Rev. 9:4). All humanity seems to be in view here – both wicked and righteous. God is not going to permit the final disasters – as we read in Psalm 46 – to happen in fullest sense, until s/th else has happened.

Rev. 7:2 – seal of living God. Final disasters, final events – not to begin until all of God's people are properly sealed. Who is angel from east? The commander of the other 4 angels, the one in ultimate control. If the 4 angels are the commanders of the 4 living creatures, then this is JC. Concept of rising of Sun – associated with JC. Matt 2:2, 9; Matt 24:27; Luke 1:78; Rev.16:12. We see that what we have here is symbol of JC in full control and charge of the timing of the vents of the end. No events take place until other things have happened, and taken place.

This concept of sealing is real play on words. Seals – on book, that are being broken in Rev. 6, 7, 8; seal – placed on people. Rev. 7:2 – angels have power to harm land and the sea. What was it that they were to refrain from haring in Rev. 7:1 – the land, sea, or any tree. Here – power to harm land, sea, but not to harm land, sea, or trees until people of God to put seal on foreheads. Wicked are under the protection of the righteous. It is never God's intention that God's people be harmed. These angels are not given commission to harm trees, but apparently land and sea are protected along with others until time when God's servants are sealed on foreheads. The wicked are under protection of righteous, even though they persecute and hate the righteous. It is the people of God who are being protected, and wicked get protection with people of God. When God's people are fully sealed and fully identified, then the time comes when all restraint is taken away from and God's judgments are poured.

Holding final disasters – because sealing has not taken place.

Sealing on forehead – mark of protection. Winds – for the wicked, not for the righteous. Ezek. 9 – important background. When everyone is being marked, then comes time to destroy those who are not sealed.

What's the sealing business all about, to seal people? In NT – related to baptism, to reception of HSp.

Eph. 1:13 – marked in Him with seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

HSp here is the seal with which JC marks those who believe in Him; it is the guarantee for heaven. This is a past event in Pau's time. The Sealing was not something limited to end-time.

Eph. 4:30 – says the same.

2 Tim. 2:19 – seal of God – God knows those who are His. This is the mark of genuine X/an – God knows that person, it is not based on the person's good deeds. Genuine X/an is the one that God knows to belong to Him. That is present reality in Timothy's time. Whatever we make of the sealing in Rev. 7, that's a process that has gone throughout in X/an era, and reaches final climax at end of time.

Extended meaning of sealing in Rev. 7, more than just baptism, receiving HSp, or being known by God? Greek text in Rev. 7 does not help – it does not make clear that there would be another remaining. It could mean that it is placing God's seal of approval on a person's decision for Him (Eph.

1:13; 4:30). In Rev. 7 – final proclamation of Gospel, and people receive JC, they are being sealed as X/ans were sealed in NT Times.

Extended meaning, meaning in addition to original meaning? To seal someone who is already sealed. Sealing servants of God – before or after sealing (added blessing). Not clear from Greek text. Ellen White wrestle with this question, and uses both meanings. Sort of double play – use of terminology to be understood in two ways (even if s/t opposite), as in Gospel of John.

Sealing here functions as protection, as much as a/th else. Background – Ezek. 9, rather than the NT texts. These people will pass thru the Great Tribulation will proclaim God’s last message, and will need the Holy Spirit for the last events of earth’s history.

let’s not forget the original meaning o the term “sealing” as one what distinguishes X/ans from the rest of the world. At end of time – this seal will be protection sign on God’s people.

144 000

Rev. 7:4

From all tribes, etc. 12 tribes of Israel, 12 000 from each tribe.

“Then I heard the number.” Rev. 9:16 – “I heard their number.” Only twice is this phrase used – Rev. 7:4 and 9:16. I heard the number. IF you carefully compare these passages, two groups are in view. People of God, and the opponents in last crisis of earth’ history. The 144000 and 2mln are parallel groups, the people of God and the people who belong to the evil one. These numbers are not literal, as if God’s final people are 144 000 or Satan’s people are 2mln.

These are parallel groups. Parallel to 144 000 is another group representing Satan’s multitude.

Significance of number.

$12 \times 12000 = 144000$ . 12 tribes of Israel.

“Thousand” in OT may mean a lot. 1000 = literal number, as in Hebrew, but also may mean ‘military unit’ (battalion). In Roman times – cohort was 960, plus officers – about 1000.

Could also represent district. Ancient Israel – divided in 12 tribes. Each tribe – divided in smaller groupings. Rulers of 1000, of 100, of 10; that’s like a county. That means – it could be head of household. Israel entirely descended from single family, and we see family tree here. Each tribe had sub-tribes, each sub-tribe had several grouping, each grouping – clans, each clan – several families.

144000 – literal number, or 144000 military unites, counties, heads of households. Each of these households are large, extended families with 100s and 1000s people in actuality.

144000 – natural symbol of the totality of Israel. Whichever way we read it, we have totality of Israel.

In NT sense,  $12 \times 12$  reminds us of New Jer/m. Rev. 21 – 12 gates, each represents one of the 12 tries of Israel. 12 foundations = 12 apostles.

$12 \times 12$  – totality of Israel, both OT and NT, both tribes and apostles. In NT – church has become in a sense the New Israel. See texts below:

James 1:1 – Brother of JC writes to churches as 12 tribes scattered a/g nations.

Matt 19:28 – 12 apostles have replaced the 12 tribal heads of ancient Israel. Church has become New Israel.

144 000 – symbol of totality of Israel in OT and NT. Represent God’s people in every age of history.

Why not literal Jews, literal number? Will not from the 12 tribes be there descendents who will accept JC, and become missionaries for Him to the rest of the world?

Problem: the 12 tribes don't exist in any literal sense. There are Jews, who can trace origins back to tribe of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, but that's about it, with very few little exceptions. Generally, these are the 3 tribes for which we have solid and verifiable descend. The 10 tribes, captured by the Assyrians, have assimilated in the nations in the Middle East, and no longer exist; they have dissimilated. Under this conditions, literal fulfilment of this text is impossible.

This list of 12 tribes is different from any other known list. There are tribes missing from this list and there are tribes added to this list.

Rev. 7:6 – Tribe of Manasseh and v. 12 – Tribe of Joseph. There was no tribe of Joseph. Joseph became head of household; he received double blessing, and his sons became heads of tribes. Jacob had 12 sons, but 13 tribes. Reason for continuation of 12 is that Levi never got inheritance – they were looking after God's things, while other tribes worked the land around. From list in Rev. 7 – Dan and Ephraim are missing. No such list exists a/w else in Bible. To have 12 literal Jewish tribes does not make sense, even back then. So, first of all, the 12 tribes as we have in Bible, don't have them.

Where did today's Jews came from today? Maybe from European converts to Judaism in Middle Ages, most of them coming from Empire in former USSR, which may have had Judaism as state religion.

Second reason for symbolic reading of 144 000. In NT Israel is understood as the church. John's intention is to recognize that the 144 000 represent the church and various grouping of the church, who have inherited from JC descent from JC.

Finally, BOOK OF REVELATION is symbolic group, even not all the time. IF nor sure, in BOOK OF REVELATION take it symbolic, unless literal meaning is to be understood.

No evidence in text to see 144000 as literal. Jews are not excluded from salvation, but here we don't have literal Jews.

Second part of Rev. 7. Question: Who will be able to stand when JC comes? First answer – 144000. Second group – Rev. 7:9. Great Multitude (GM), nobody can count, from every nation from around the world. They are in front of the throne. (Rev. 4 and 5). Dressed in white robes, have palm Branches. This group, on the surface, is the exact opposite of the 144 000: exactly numbered, they are from 12 tribes of Israel, no robes, no location, apparently on earth, while the other group is in heaven.

Are the 144 000 and GM totally distinct, or the same? John of BOOK OF REVELATION has special literary technique that comes into play here.

Rev. 5:5, 6. Does John ever see the Lion of Judah? No. He is only told that the lion has triumphed. He sees a Lamb. He hears about a Lion, but sees a Lamb. Are the Lion and Lamb two different things or the same? Same person, representations of JC. Here we see a literary technique – he hears one thing, but sees other, and then the descriptions will be different, opposite, but about the same thing.

Rev. 17:1 – another example. Hears: Great Prostitute sitting on water; sees woman sitting on Scarlet Beast. The same thing. Both water and beast are symbols of one and the same thing.

Rev. 1 – John hears trumpet, but he sees JC.

BOOK OF REVELATION – consistent literary technique: John uses opposite symbols to portray the same thing. The signal he is doing this – he hears one, but sees other. Does John ever see the 144 000? No. He only hears the number.

Rev. 7:9 – GM nobody could number. What John hears and sees – different. They are the same, but in different roles. Together these groups – the 144 000 and GM – answer to Rev. 6:17. The 144 000 represents God's people at end, before SCJC. Perhaps GM represents same group before God's throne after SCJC.

“Palm Branches” – triumphal entry of JC in Jer/m (Matt 21). Here – JC acclaimed as GM cheers JC before the throne. Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:14,15 – palm Branches associated with Feast of Tabernacles. JC now is acclaimed for his final victory as King of Universe.

Rev. 7:9, 10 – replay of Hymns of Rev. 5. Purpose of this section – to show that we now see the fulfilment of promise of Rev. 3:21 – to join JC at the throne.

Rev. 7:13, 14. Who are these dressed in white robes? GM. The 144 000 are never described in white robes. The concept of the great tribulation must refer to the 5<sup>th</sup> seal. The 144 000 reminds us of the number of the martyrs that has to be made up. These 2 groups represent the same people of God. Their experience has been one of the martyrs who went before them.

Rev. 7 – climax of events begun in Rev. 6.

Rev. 7:15-17 – serving in God’s temple. At this early stage in BOOK OF REVELATION we have foretaste of the blessedness of the eternal life, of the glory of the redeemed. We’ll see that in Rev. 21 and 22.

“They will serve him in the Temple” – language of priesthood. God’s people will serve as priests in the heavenly kingdom. Who needs priests in eternity? We’ll discuss that later. We will serve in the Temple. That’s the natural counterpart of Rev. 3:21. The Heavenly Temple – governing center of the Universe. Serving can be very strong connotation of ruling.

Redeemed – members of God’s cabinet or Congress. “You have made them Kings and priests before our God.”

Chapter ends with excellent description of the quality of life in New Jer/m. God spread His tent over people – like Bedouins in Middle East – to give us protection from the scorching Sun, from the difficult times. God will shelter His people, there will be no more death and pain.

Spiritual lessons from Rev. 7

One: As bad as things are in this world, they’ll be much worse if was not for God’s restraining Spirit. Rev. 7:1-3. Even those who don’t know God find protection from those who know Him.

Second – God provides protection for those who love him. God has not made provision for His people to be hurt. Satan does it. God at times, for reasons known only to Him, chooses not to intervene.

Three – what incredible future God has in store for us.

Serving God will be well worth it.

## **No. 6 The Role of Trumpets in Scripture**

Interpreting BOOK OF REVELATION does not get more difficult when we get to the Trumpets. Any key for better understanding of these trumpets?

One of the most difficult themes/images in NT, and in the Bible. Role of trumpets in Bible is most clearly defined than most people think.

Rev. 6:9, 10 – the fifth seal. Cry ‘how long’ to avenge. Rev. 18:13 (or 8:13? – not clear on recording). Rev. 18 - summary of what’s happening in the 7 trumpets. What’s the object of the trumpets – judgments on those who inhabit the earth. Rev. 6:10 – call for avenging for blood; trumpets are reply/answer/response to cry from souls under the altar for justice.

Rev. 8: 3, 4 – clearly seen the connection b/n these passages. Rev. 8:5. This is intro vision to 7 trumpets. These are response to persecution of God’s people. As martyred saints cry for justice, these cries come to heaven, are mingled with incense from heavenly altar, and are hurled to earth.

Theological message here: BOOK OF REVELATION seems to be saying, “If you persecuted, you martyred saints, God is already dealing with those who persecuted you.” God is dealing with the enemies who have persecuted God’s people, on earth.

Trumpets cover the entire course of history. The 7 bowls that come later in Rev. 16 come right at end of history, and provide 2<sup>nd</sup> answer to saint’s cry.

Rev. 10:7 – time when trumpets end. When 7<sup>th</sup> angel is about to sound, the mystery of God will be accomplished. Mystery of God is NT way of speaking of Gospel – Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 3:3-7. This tells us that just before the sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, the proclamation of the Gospel will be finished. Final proclamation of Gospel takes place in context of 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet. 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet brings us to very end, to end of time, to SCJC, to end of history. Rev. 11:18 – part of 7<sup>th</sup> and last trumpet.

Rev. 11:18. Now see Rev. 11:17.

Remember earlier in the book – God is described as one who was, is, and is to come. Here – only is. Trumpets, like the seals, move all way to end of time.

### OT Background to Trumpets

OT – six Hebrew words and 2 Greek words translated in English as “trumpet” and “blow trumpets.” What is in view in BOOK OF REVELATION as far as trumpets are concerned?

More frequently than any other use, trumpets are used in worship. There are 53 out of 134 appearances of Greek words for trumpeting, 53 are associated with worship. In another 22 instances, trumpets are used in battle, but blown by priests. Priests only blowing of the trumpet, they will signify worship importance. Not just battle warning, but religious significance in battle.

33 uses – battle, marching orders.

10 times – used in warning – Ezek. 33.

9 times – in context of coronations.

4 times – in relation to theophanies, to appearances of God, when God shows in person.

In OT trumpets are used in context of worship blown by priests, more than any other context.

Numbers 10:8-10. This passage is very central to the meaning of the trumpets in the Bible. Priests are to blow the trumpets. Trumpet is sacred instrument to the Hebrew – whether used in worship or in battle. It carries theological significance, in relation to God’s will.

Numbers 10:9 – in battle, priests are blowing trumpets; they are the custodians of the instrument. The whole concept of trumpeting in this way – when you go into a battle against enemies in your own land, sound the blast of trumpets, and then you will be remembered. Trumpets bring God to remembrance. God promised that if Israelites were faithful to God, He would deliver them when they were in trouble.

What does the blowing of trumpets symbolize? Number 10:10. Whether in sanctuary or battle, priests are to blow the trumpets, and they are to be a memorial to God. God remembers Israel – in battle, in worship, seeking forgiveness.

What are trumpets all about? What’s the meaning of blowing trumpet? Trumpets are symbols of prayer. Not just prayer, but covenant prayer. Prayer of God’s people – that God will respond to His covenant, that God will deliver them from their enemies.

That fits with BOOK OF REVELATION – OT b/g is the prayers of the saints, where in Rev. 6:9, 10 they cry to God for vengeance. As the sounds come to God, God responds to them.

When you read the surface language of the 7 trumpets, you may think they are trumpets of war/warnings. They portray prayer, spiritual concept. God’s people calling to God to make right what’s gone wrong in this world. Whenever the trumpet is blown, God delivers His people.

We see that trumpets are used in variety of ways in OT.

What about the NT use of trumpets? Can we learn s/th from that? NT trumpeting appear 23 times, 3 of these are ordinary uses that are not relevant to our study. 13 uses – Rev. 8-11. Let's look at other 7 uses in NT.

Trumpets – used with theophanies. Mentioned in NT in relation to theophanies, as 4 times in OT (for theophanies). Rev. 1:10. Who is this loud voice? That of JC. John sees JC on isle of Patmos. Trumpet – signal of appearance of God. Rev. 4:1.

Theophany passage – Hebrews 12:18-21. Allusion to Exodus 19, the first mention of the instrument in the OT. Description of Exodus theophany. Strong emphasis on theophany, of appearance of God.

Matthew 24:31 – trumpet associated with SCJC; SCJC – another theophany, appearance of God.

1 Cor. 15:51, 52 – last trumpet at SCJC is voice of JC, raising the dead

1 Thess. 4:16, 17

The trumpet is mentioned some 7 times, outside of the 7 trumpets of BOOK OF REVELATION. Each case – associated with appearance of God – either at the SCJC, or with giving of BOOK OF REVELATION.

One more use of trumpets in NT that is not mentioned in NT. It is surprising – trumpets are associated with the end of world, but not mentioned at Cross. All cosmic signs happened at Cross – veil rent, earthquake, rocks on ground split, resurrection of people, darkness on all earth, Sun was darkened, people were terrorized. Except blowing trumpet, all other signs too place. Numbers 10:10 – trumpets to be blown at feasts. One of primary feasts of Judaism – daily sacrifice – 9am and 3pm. Climax of daily sacrifice: the blowing of the trumpet. When JC died on the Cross, he died at 3pm, when he said “It is finished.” Then the sound of the trumpet comes blasting, from inside the Temple. Though not mentioned in NT, blowing trumpet is associated with JC's death.

Trumpets – associated with major events in human history, when God comes to meet with His people: at the Cross, SCJC, JC coming to visit John, at the Exodus, on Mt. Sinai, Day of Lord, Battle of Jericho, etc.

Trumpets are used all over in Bible.

In OT – significance: symbol of Covenant prayer, where people are looking to God for help, deliverance either from sin or enemies. In NT – focus on theophany, on presence of God.

Related to BOOK OF REVELATION – main themes of 7 trumpets: Covenant prayer, trumpets are response to cries and prayers for deliverance from oppressors. In Trumpets there is strong sense of God's personal strong presence, God's hand seen in history.

Seven trumpets in BOOK OF REVELATION – not so much as war, signalling, or coronations, but in terms of theophany and Covenant prayer. That's the case with the 7 trumpets.

Final issues – whole issue is where is the Gospel in the trumpets. Looking at BOOK OF REVELATION from the beginning, you notice that in Rev. 1 where the prose material in BOOK OF REVELATION, Revelation states what it is all about. It is Rev. of JC, of One who loves us and frees us from our sins, who made us priests and kings. BOOK OF REVELATION is about the Gospel, what JC did, and how the Gospel works in real people's lives today. Throughout all the symbols and noise of BOOK OF REVELATION, there is the Gospel. Rev. seems to be one of the places most difficult to find the Gospels, especially in the trumpets.

Example: 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet – Rev. 8:7 – hail, fire, blood, thrown on earth, etc. – Luke 23:28-31. Judgment of God on the trees and vegetation of this world; in Luke 23 – same symbol. Green tree – JC,

persecuted by Romans. What will they do dry tree – referring to destruction of Jer/m – to those who rejected JC? As wild and bizarre as these image are, knowing the Gospel will shed light on the trumpets.

Example: Rev. 9:2-6. Incredible, frightening, bewildering passage – Lk 10:17-20. Notice parallels – locusts, attacking people, but not able to harm those who are sealed; same happens in Lk 10 – because of what JC did on Cross, they are sheltered from wrath of Satan. Demons will be free on earth – such time will come – but God’s people will not be harmed. Gospel protects God’s people even amidst of trumpets.

Rev. 9 - theme of darkness; compare with John 3:18-21. Here – light is symbol of Gospel, of JC; darkness –absence of good, presence of evil. Darkness is absence of good, reflects people who have rejected Gospel and are tormented by evil.

Amidst of the trumpets we see Gospel, even if it does not seem like this from beginning. JC is the center of the trumpets. As bizarre as they are, they can be understood only by s/o who has seen JC in them.

### Spiritual lessons

Theology of the trumpets – God is already dealing with the oppressors, even in the history, even if we don’t see God. Trumpets suggest – even in midst of confusion, terror and confusion, JC still sits on the throne. Trumpets portray God who acts with power in history to deliver His people. Trumpets offer comfort to people of God, God deals with those who oppress s them. They can wait for God’s justice to come.

Decision for or against the Gospel is the most decisive action one can take in life. Trumpets portray in most fearful terms the consequences of what will happen to those who reject JC.

Walk with God in future, w/t fear.

## **No. 7 The Time When the Trumpets Begin Rev. 8:2-6**

How long will the Gospel continue to be preached? Does BOOK OF REVELATION say anything about how long till this preaching of the Gospel will continue?

What the introductory vision mean?

Introductory scene to trumpets, to understand when trumpets begin. They end at SCJC, as the 7 seals. When they begin – controversial. At Cross, another time, just before end/SCJC? Let’s begin.

Rev. 8:2-4 What’s going on here? 7 angels before God, 7 trumpets, and another angel with golden sensor.

If you are familiar with the services in the Hebrew sanctuary in the OT times, this refers to tamid = daily/continual sacrifice. JC died at time of the tamid was offered. Number of things happen at times of tamid. Daily service: priest designated for occasion, would open the doors of the Temple, would trip the lamps and refill/re-light them, leaving door open he would offer sacrifice at altar of burnt offering, the blood poured at base of altar of burn offerings; then incense would be brought in by another priest. After coming out of temple, 7 priests would blow trumpets (before blowing trumpets – silence, as in Rev. 8). In one form or another, all these services from the OT sanctuary are mentioned in the 1<sup>st</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION.

With definite article, like this, here – Rev. 6:9, 10 – reference is to this altar, the altar of burnt offering, which is outside Temple in OT Sanctuary. Replay of daily/tamid service. Angel comes to the

altar – presumably the altar of burnt offering, receives incense, serves/ministers before the golden altar of incense. There are 2 altars in this text. You have altar of burnt offering, and golden altar of incense, where angel ministers this incense. There is depiction of the daily service in the sanctuary. What's the significance of the tamid? Intercession. Incense came from same altar where the sacrifice has been made. Incense arises directly from sacrifice., and is taken directly before golden altar of incense, before God's throne.

It seems that here in BOOK OF REVELATION with strong allusion to tamid – allusion to Cross of JC, and incense arises from Cross. Cross – central theme in Rev. 5: lamb that was slain, worthy to take book; worthy to Break seals. Cross – foundational act.

Next phase of JC's ministry – from the Cross comes the intercession. Because of what happened on Cross, JC can provide forgiveness, covering for sin and for life of those who are in Him. This is foundational for X/an. We don't live because we do well. X/ty is not spelled D-O, but D-O-N-E, what JC did for us. Thus we are acceptable by God, even if we fall short of God's glory. This incense covers the camp of the saints. Tamid was constantly burning, always over the camp. The people were sheltered under righteousness of JC. This is basic idea.

What does intercession have to do with this? We'll see later. Fact is that the foundation rock of trumpets is intercession. JC – at center of Trumpets, with Cross affecting all.

Rev. 8:5 Change in imagery, big action. What's the meaning of this? At least 2 possibilities for und/ing this throwing down the censer. The last act of tamid – priest throws down the censer on the floor, after the priest is out of Temple and trumpets are blown. They say the noise of the throwing the censer was so loud, could be heard very far. That was last act of tamid service. If this is what John understood, that means that the intercession of JC is put into play. E/th that goes into the trumpets has reference back to the intercession in the beginning. If the throwing down of the censer is integral part of the tamid/intercession, then intercession is the essence of what this intro vision is all about.

Another possibility for interpretation – Ezek. 10:2. In Ez. 10 is follow-up on frightful event in Ez. 9 (destroying angel kills the unmark); also – the city's probation is over. Then God – moves out of city. In Ezekiel's theme – God is leaving Jer/m, abandoning it. Temple is holy no more; Israel is going to exile in Babylon to captivity. In Ezekiel's theme, God is abandoning the Holy City Jer/m, it is holy no more, God is forsaking the Israelites. The act of demonstration of this is the act of scattering the coals all over the city, intercession is over.

Throwing of censer is || of Ez. 10:2, where throwing censer = end of intercession. IF this is the case (more likely than anything else, though not 100%), if this is the case – Rev. 8:5, we see imagery of close of intercession. Trumpets then will be about intercession and its close. Intro vision will set stage for the whole.

Further Q: When do trumpets begin and what is the significance of the intro vision? Rev. 8:5, 6. Scholars look at this and say – interesting, trumpets are not blown until censor is thrown down. There is intercession, but also close of intercession. Trumpets – blown after censor is thrown. This will place all trumpets in future of X/an history, because at that time intercession is still available to people, Gospel is preached, people come to JC. Probation is open, people come to JC. Overall trend is not looking good, but people are begin saved. If trumpets are all after the close of the Gospel work on earth, the entire trumpet series will be in future, after close of probation.

Another option: This entire intro scene functions as stage backdrop. Backdrop changes to change what's happening. Backdrop is there for entire duration of play. All that happens at play is affected by backdrop. Intro vision of BOOK OF REVELATION are like stage backdrops, at which case throwing down of censer will not govern e/th that happens, but also the intercession. Both intercession and judgment, both intercession and close of it, lie behind all that's happening at trumpets.

Which option is correct? Are trumpets in future (1<sup>st</sup> option), or in past to the Cross of JC (2<sup>nd</sup> option)? Author of BOOK OF REVELATION never addresses this option, he never tells us how we should understand these, we have to study the rest of BOOK OF REVELATION to find out. When we studied the 144 000 and the Great Multitude, we found literary strategy and pattern throughout the book. The pattern hear-see were helpful in Rev. 7.

Pattern in intro visions. Rev. 1:9-20 – to the 7 churches the intro vision. Scene precedes churches in literary sense – first ch. 1, then 2, etc. Is Rev. 1 preceding the churches in actuality, or is it in a sense of stage backdrop? It is clearly a stage backdrop. Every letter in each church refers to this backdrop. JC is a/g candle-sticks. Each letter is JC's ministry to the 7 churches. All of Rev. 2 and 3 are governed by scenes in Rev. 1. JC is ministering to the churches, and letters are written for our benefit. Intro vision continues throughout the material that follows – sets the stage, but remains in view later.

Seven seals – lamb, that comes to God's throne, acclaimed by people in throne room, gets the scroll, begins to open seals. Rev.6-8 – scene in Rev. 5 never goes away, remains there. Lamb is constantly before throne, opening seals, and event are set in motion on earth as Lamb opens seals. Rev. 5 scene affects all that takes place for Rev. 6-8. Book taking & opening book is foundation for all that follows.

Coming to the trumpets – opening scene to trumpets is not s/th that happens and end. In literary sense – it precedes trumpets. In sense the intro scene is of great importance - it is backdrop of trumpets. Intercession of JC and Judgment of throwing down the censer are the backdrop of the 7 trumpets. Intro sets the stage and remain in view in vision that follows.

In each of these cases, the intro vision precedes, but that vision continues to dominate all that follows. JC communicates one by one with the churches. Cross sets the tone for X/an history. Here, intercession of JC, responds both with blessings and judgments in X/an ear.

In 7 trumpets – intro scene is very typical for biblical judgment. In Bible judgment is not negative, but positive scene. In court you can be freed from jail or sent to jail, acquitted or found guilty. Through intercession people can be blessed, Brought to close communion with God, eternal life, or cast aside for Breaking the Covenant.

How does Rev. 8:2-6 relate to vision that follows? How are we to understand that this intercession and close of probation material affects the trumpets? Do we have 7 consecutive views on intercession and trumpets? Do all judgments take place here? Do we have intercession in all trumpets and at the close – judgment? One place that helps is in the Greek of Rev. 8:5.

Rev. 8:5 Hurlled what on earth? In English – angel fills censer and hurled it – which is the 'it' – the censor or the fire? Ez. 10:2 suggests the fire was thrown on Jer/m (using censor as slingshot). Interesting thing about it – if fire, fire appears repeatedly in trumpets. In first trumpet, fire is mixed with hail and blood; 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet – burning mountain; 3<sup>rd</sup> – burning star; 5<sup>th</sup> – smoke from the pit; 6<sup>th</sup> – fiery horsemen. Some form of fiery allusion. (4<sup>th</sup> – stars are balls of fiery gas.) Each of this trumpets is experiencing the result of throwing the fire on earth. Intercession and judgment – the themes of these trumpets. Each one partakes of the intro scene.

Is there a great and final close of probation? Is this throwing of fire/censer lead to complete close of probation, where there is no more Gospel going forth? Rev. 10:6-7. Blowing of 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet tells that mystery of God is finished. That is to say – Gospel is no longer announced to the earth. Close of Gospel work is signalled bat the time when 7<sup>th</sup> angel blows his trumpet. Close of God's work on earth closes at time of 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet.

Is there evidence that during 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet intercession is still open.

Rev. 9:13 Horns of golden altar. When six angel blows his trumpet, intercession is still in view, preaching is still going on; preaching still goes on. Rev. 10:11 – part of 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet. Preaching is still necessary. Rev. 10, 11 – preaching takes place; part of 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet. Repentance is still possible. Rev. 11:13 – view of repentance. Language here on surface may lead you off track, but in Rev. 14:7 – great

final proclamation of Gospel is to fear God and give him glory. Remnant fears God and give Him glory. Rev. 11:13 – just before the 7<sup>th</sup> angel sounds his trumpet, intercession is still going on, people still repent and accept JC.

Trumpets start at Cross until SCJC. They begin with JC's enthronement and finish with the SCJC.

Not e/o is happy with this conclusion – that trumpets are from Cross to SCJC. Some think that the trumpets are future.

Few problems/objections.

Rev. 9:4. In Rev. 7 angels are told not to harm earth/grass/trees until God's servants are sealed. Here – wicked are harmed, God's people are sealed. Progression b/n 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> – appears as if you are moving along in history. This is serious – to take that there is moving in time of the blowing of the seals. It is not decisive though if you approach the text within the original setting. What is sealing all about? In NT 'sealing' is multiple in meaning – you can seal a document, a message, a tomb, or other place. If you do that, you conceal s/th, to confine s/th or s/o. Matt 27:66; Rev. 5; 20:3 – dragon is sealed. You have repeatedly the language of sealing in NT.

Second use of this language – to seal that s/th or s/o is certified, worthy, guaranteed. To make sure a message is not tampered with – John 3:33; 6:27; Rom 15:28; 1 Cor. 9:2 – this sense of sealing. Predominant meaning in NT of sealing – in relation to God's people, that a person has been accepted by God. God knows those who are His, He gives us His Holy Spirit. 2 Tim. 2:19; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30. As result, idea of sealing is associated in Judaism is associated with circumcision – Rom. 4:11. Circumcision of Abraham – seal by which God affirmed that God belonged to Him. In 2<sup>nd</sup> c. church fathers associated sealing with baptism –when one became a X/an. Here – the NT context that when people are sealed, it has to do with their relationship with God. It means these people are baptized and acceptable to God.

If the context in which we find this text indicates that we are close to close of probation, then the concept of sealed people must be understood in general NT text. Language of text must be compatible in concept of John, not our view. For John – the predominant perspective it to be accepted by God. Those accepted by God have His special protection.

Rev. 7 – does not limit sealing to end-time. It merely focuses on sealing work in end-time setting. There is no indication in NT that the sealing in Rev. 7 or 9 is somehow limited only to end-time. Sealing as concept runs all thought X/an age. Special for Rev. 7 – it is final closing up on sealing work on earth. At that point it becomes specially significant in Rev. 7.

Second objection: the natural flow b/n Rev. 7 and Rev. 8. Rev. 7 – don't hurt earth, sea, trees; Rev. 8:7-9 – earth, sea, trees are being hurt. Rev. 8:7-9 is brand-new visionary context. As you move from Rev. 7-9, don't assume that these visions are sequential. BOOK OF REVELATION does use recapitulation, recapturing previous themes.

Intro vision in Rev. 8:2-6 is package that separates the 7 trumpets from the material that came before. The first trumpet should not be seen as sequence following the 7 seals, but s/th entirely new, and we judge by the intro vision that precedes it.

Vegetation is hurt in 1<sup>st</sup> tr., by 2<sup>nd</sup> tr. vegetation is protected. Clearly s/th is going on, moving back and forth b/n various realms. Closest parallel of sealing in Rev. 7 is not 5<sup>th</sup>, but 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet. Rev. 7 with Rev. 9:14 (compare), you'll notice 4 angels, restraint, "I heard the number," and a large host. 6<sup>th</sup> seal and 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet look at same point in history. 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet comes before them/then. It is in time when probation is still open.

These objections are serious, and have to be taken seriously, coming naturally from seeing the text. In Trumpets, the probation is open until 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet, and then it is closed. That does not mean that as time goes on we won't see God closing the curtain on certain events.

Complexity of discussion, even though we've treated them only at surface level.

Spiritual lesson

S/t X/an need to do heaven, detailed investigation of Scripture. S/t there is no immediate pay-off. Need of patience, even if no immediate pay-off. If X/an want to understand the deep things of God, there are times when they have to do detailed investigation, w/t immediate pay off. This time – joy is in investigation itself. Enjoy the deep investigation of Bible and the issues of Seals, Trumpets, etc. Eventually, there is pay off. As you dig deep, you get better and broader understanding of the big picture. Then, e/th in Scripture becomes enhance and strengthened. This is one of the most detailed and vexing studies of the Bible.

Hang with this study, and much of this info will pay off in future.

Final point – probation remains open in world today, until all world has made decision for or against God and Gospel. Time will come when the whole world will be Brought to decision for God. God will not end history until every person has been confronted with the Gospel and make decision. Don't wait, be ready now. Accept JC today/now.

**No. 8 The Nature of the Trumpets**

Have you ever prayed to God and the prayer seemed only to get to heaven? Have you ever felt like God does not care? The trumpets may have an answer for you.

Nature of the trumpets.

First question: Do trumpets affect righteous/believers or the wicked/those who rejected Gospel/ or are not aware of Gospel? This is Q in NT sense. Seals – affect those who believe, the people of God, and those who reject; those who accept and those who reject. Are trumpets a replay of seals or they move indifferent direction?

In NT trumpets affect the wicked, whose actions are not in favour of JC.

Rev. 6:9-10. Souls cry to God – ‘how long until you judge?’ Phrase “Inhabitants of world” = wicked. Rev. 8:13 – the answer. Clearly – the focus on trumpets, especially the last 3, is on inhabitants on earth, about them the souls cry for judgment. Answer of trumpets – not long. Trumpets portray judgments of God on those who persecuted God's people through the X/an era. Trumpets affect the wicked.

Rev. 9:4 – plague of 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet harms only people who have not seal of God. Sealed by God are not affected by these plagues. Rev. 9:20, 21. Clear from these texts – trumpets affect the opposition to God/Gospel/God's church

Trumpets || bowls in Rev. 16; bowls affect those who reject God. Trumpets would be in similar nation.

Trumpets	bowls
1 <sup>st</sup> – Earth	1 <sup>st</sup> - Earth

2 <sup>nd</sup> – Sea	2 <sup>nd</sup> - Sea
3 <sup>rd</sup> - Rivers and springs of water	3 <sup>rd</sup> - Rivers and springs of water
6 <sup>th</sup> – Euphrates river	6 <sup>th</sup> – Euphrates river

Bowls affect wicked only, so also the trumpets.

Another point – trumpets fall on 1/3 of Earth. Rev. 8:7. Second trumpet – 1/3 of sea, living creatures; v. 10 – 3<sup>rd</sup> angel – on 1/3 of rivers and springs of water. Everyone of trumpets affects 3rds of the Earth. Four horsemen affected quarters of the Earth (fourths of the Earth). In BOOK OF REVELATION Satan’s kingdom is divided in 3 parts (Rev. 16:13, 19). As result, trumpets affect portions of Satan’s kingdom – 1/3 after another. Seals affect ¼ of Earth – horsemen no. 1 belongs to God, the others – belong to Satan. Seals affect all people, trumpets – affect those opposing God.

Background of seals – Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Lev. 26, Deut. 32 – consequences when people Break the Covenant laws, no matter whether Israelites or not. Point of Seals – the consequences of the covenant, particularly with Israel. Seals affect the entire world, both righteous and wicked.

Trumpets – b/g is different, incl. plagues that fall on Egyptian, fall of Babylon and Jericho. What do Egypt/Babylon/Jericho have in common? Evil powers, pagan nations, enemies of God, met God’s judgment in sight of His people.

Trumpets fall on wicked, not on righteous people. They are specifically aimed, those who have martyred saints. Saints cry – how long will you not judge.

Trumpets – ‘woe, woe, woe.’ As you progress through trumpets, see judgment on Satan’s kingdom.

Are judgments symbolic or specific, general or coming in successive events? Trumpets, unlike seals, cover successive chronological times. Seals – general preaching and resistance to Gospel. Trumpets – series of decisive vents, that come one after another in history.

Reasons: First, there is much more passing of time in Trumpets. Succession of events, 7 angels, each consecutively blowing trumpets, but that’s not that decisive. In Rev. 9:5, 10 – period of 5 months, Rev. 11:3 – 42 months; Rev. 11:7-12 – 3 ½ days; 3 woes in Rev. 8:13. Woe no. 1 = parallel to 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet, woe no. 2 – to 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet, and woe no. 3 – to 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet. Each woe is successive. Rev. 8:12; 11:14. One trumpet is blown, events take place, they come to conclusion, new phase comes in, etc. Such sequence does not come in the seals, it is not there. Author signals to us that trumpets are of a different nature than the seals.

Combined that with OT b/g of the seals and trumpets. While seals draw on Covenant woes and can be applied any time the Gospel is preached, woes and blessings take place. B/g of trumpets focus on periods of time in successive events. Jericho, for example. In fall of Jericho, people marched around the city for 7 days, in silence. At end – blowing of 7 trumpets. They marched around the city once, then on last day – 7<sup>th</sup> day, they marched 7 times. 7 bowls have in common with 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet. 7th bowl is as if 7-fold intensification of blowing of the trumpets. Story of Jericho is || of seven trumpets. Story of Jericho – series of 7 days, with climax on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

Another b/g – Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), on 1<sup>st</sup> day of 7<sup>th</sup> month. In the Jewish liturgy there is blowing of Trumpets of every month. The liturgical year is 7 months long – begins at feast of Passover in 1<sup>st</sup> month, and ends with Feast of Tabernacles. Feast of Trumpets is the 7<sup>th</sup> of the series of New Moon Feasts, and series of trumpet-blowing that take place during this time. Feast of Trumpets in real sense points us to a series of events covering seven months.

Another b/g – Jubilee. Once every 50 years – slaves freed, land restored. Jubilee comes to climax 7x7yr. Jewish agricultural cycle – 6 years of work, 1 year of agricultural rest. Trumpet blown at beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> year.

Another b/g – plagues in Exodus; they are 10 in number, appear one after the other.

Another b/g – Creation. We'll talk later about it. It's series of 7 days, with climax on 7<sup>th</sup> day, Sabbath.

Repeatedly the b/g of Trumpets point to OT b/g to series of chronological events. It is far too systematic for this to be an accident. Author gives us clue – in Trumpets we see series of events taking place, from the Cross to SCJC.

God's great acts of Judgment have always been historical in nature, always have affected the world in which people live. God's judgments are not visible to secular eye. When we talk about history in trumpets, we don't necessarily talk about events that will be obvious to historian. Such people don't see God's hand. Trumpets gives us cosmic perspective to look at X/an history, from Cross to SCJC.

The Exodus as example – if secular historian reports, he'll give one account, not seeing God in it.

How we know the Exodus was act of God – Bible says so. We see God when we look in history. Same is true of the Cross – the greatest and mightiest act of God in history. Secular historian could describe in one way, but with God's hand in it – different view.

If it were not for inspiration and Scriptures, we would not have the evidence to know that God is there, to know that God is there, that God is working on our behalf. Studying BOOK OF REVELATION shows us how God is working and intervening in history, how he intervenes in our lives.

Nature of Trumpets: Fall on wicked; offer series of interventions of God in history. We should be able to see some of the things that the Trumpets are about. We should see how God cares for us in history and how we cares for us.

Third aspect of b/g of Trumpets – the Creation story (Gen. 1, 2). Strong ||.

Creation – 1<sup>st</sup> day: light shining on Earth; 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet – affects Earth.

2<sup>nd</sup> day of Creation – separation of water below and above; 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet – sea

3<sup>rd</sup> day – rivers, springs of water; essence of life n dry ground; 3<sup>rd</sup> trumpet – falls on these

4<sup>th</sup> – stars, sun, moon; 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet affects these

5<sup>th</sup> day – animals in water and air; 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet – flying creatures

6<sup>th</sup> day – humans, animals on dry land; 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet – talks about men, horses, serpents, etc.

7<sup>th</sup> day – Sabbath rest; 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet – earth receives its rest.

Trumpets are portraying an undoing of the Creation. In Trumpets God is taking apart the creation, piece by piece. He is preparing the way for New Creation. Very common theme in Jewish apocalyptic – old creation has to be destroyed before new begins. NT – old age is here, but JC has inaugurated a new age, dismantling the old age piece by piece, preparing for the new age (not New Age spiritualistic) to come.

Third aspect to nature of trumpets – undoing of Creation, dismantling of this earth, so he can prepare the world for a New Earth. Frightening things of this earth – disintegration, as part of Satan's kingdom.

Fourth aspect – exodus motif. Both Babylon and Egypt are in b/g of Trumpets. From Egypt: hail and fire, water turns to blood, darkness, locusts, etc. Allusion to fall of Babylon – in 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet, idols, sorcery, etc. Trumpets – built on fall of Egypt and Babylon together.

Trumpets come significantly on these OT motifs, of fall of enemies of God. Message to God's people – oppressors won't last forever. Just as God dealt with enemies of God in past, so He deals now. Just as God lead His people to New Promised Land and back to Jer/m, so those who walk with JC will be lead out to JC's new kingdom at SCJC.

Spiritual lessons:

First, Trumpets are response to persecution of God' people. Trumpets have message to God's people – if only you know , God is already judging the powers persecuting you. It is rough when you suffer rejection to think that God is in control and that all is ok. Trumpets' message – God is in control, even if there are demons on earth. God holds keys to Abyss. Trumpets are saying that no matter how bad things happen, God is still aware of injustices in the world, and He will deal with these. God is not waiting for end that is far away. God is intervening in history now, actively interested and acts. He is able and does deal with situations you now face.

As with JC on Cross, God does not show his presence and does not act as we would like Him to act. But the resurrection is coming, even if we don't see it.

Second, Trumpets are designed to show history in advance. God outlines history in advance, history has purpose, moves toward a goal. God is in control of history. The better we understand His purpose for history, the better we can understand how he moves in, and how history operates. That's what Trumpets help us understand – history in God's view.

### **No. 9 First and Second Trumpets Rev. 8:7 - 9**

Many people have been abused, yet it does not seem that God is doing a/th? What about those who abused JC? Did God do a/th to them?

First Trumpet - Rev. 8:7 (T1)

Rev. 8:7

Revelation – John is pretty clear about what's going on, but what does it mean. What is the meaning of hail and fire mixed with blood, and hurled to earth?

No other part of BOOK OF REVELATION where the OT b/g is important, to understand the terms then, and their meaning now. Two types of allusions – direct (direct allusion to previous literary context; direct allusion to OT passage, reader knows direction of the BOOK OF REVELATION, OT text, and larger context of BOOK OF REVELATION) and echo. Author shows you an idea, but no direct allusion, reflecting the ideas of apocalyptic, but no direct pointing to previous literature.

We have to see previous OT texts of this material, and then we'll look at key terms of passage, and see what OT teaches.

Exodus 9:22-26 In LXX (The Septuagint) the text/passage is closer to T1. Interesting addition in LXX is that this lightning set fire on earth, and crops were burning on ground. Exodus is in view here, very clearly; allusion to 7<sup>th</sup> plague – plague of hail. In original context – hail from God justified on Egyptians for refusing let Israel go.

Another major allusion in OT – Ezek. 38:22, 23. In this prophecy Ezekiel tells us of future nation that will come from Israel after they come back from exile in Babylon; this nation – Gog. God said Israel does not have to fight Gog – God will take care, pouring hail and fire.

Hail and fire in T1, and in case of Ezekiel – poured on enemies of God's people. God intervenes in Judgment on the enemies of God's people. Imagery of hail and fire – God's execution of judgment on His enemies.

Is. 28:2, 3 – hail on Ephraim. 10:16-20 – fire on Assyria.

Hail and fire – judgment from God on oppressing nations against God’s people.

In T1 – hail and fire don’t fall on symbols of enmity of God, but on God’s people. 1/3 of earth, 1/3 of trees, all green grass –burned up. In OT vegetation consistently represents God’s people – Psalm 1:3; tree = faithful person of God. Psalm 52:8 – faithful Israelite is like olive tree; Isaiah 40:6-8 – grass = people of God. Here – interesting contradiction built into this passage.. On one hand – symbols of God’s judgment – fire and hail. In OT these symbols represent God’s intervention in judgment. Here in T1 – poured on vegetation and grass. How can we reconcile the fact that it looks as if God is pouring judgment on His people.

In later prophets – hail and fire used against Judah. Generally hail and fire poured on enemies of God. In prophets these are poured out on God’s people. Jer. 21:12-14 – poured on God’s people, in Jer/m. Ezek. 15:6-7 – used against Jer/m. Psalm 80:8-16 – poured on Israel as a whole. It would not be correct to say that in OT it is never the case that the judgments of God fall on His own people. Because God does send these on His own people.

Secondly, it is clear in OT prophets that God’s vegetation can be destroyed.

Jer. 11: 15-17. God’s own people have forsaken Him, moved away from Covenant, burn to Baal and worship other gods. As result of these actions, God pours judgments on them, to wake them up. Imagery in this text – use of olive tree, with beautiful fruit. If this tree would serve purposes contrary to God, He would set it on fire and destroy it. God can use hail/fire as judgment on His own people when they go away.

Isaiah 5:1-7 Israel and Judah are likened to vineyard, but it is not fruitful, disappointment – sour fruit. God reserves the right to destroy this vineyard and start again. Vegetation – symbol of God, but no guarantee that it won’t come under God’s judgment.

Third, in OT there is a distinction b/n green and dry tree, b/n faithful and unfaithful people of God.

Ez. 20:45-48 Here we see that the vegetation of God is in two types. Green tree = faithful people, dry = the unfaithful. Because of dry trees that judgment falls. In this case (context is in reference to Exile from Babylon) – both green and dry suffer together, because of sins of dry trees. In T1, when we see weapons of God used against God’s own people, we can und/d from OT b/g, that this is possible. OT imagery in T1 is common imagery.

NT b/g for these images. Matt 3:10. Picks up on OT imagery. Luke 23:28-31. Scholars are generally in agreement that JC is referring here to AD 70, the day of destruction of Jer/m. JC is the green tree, but those who reject Him – dry tree. They take themselves out of God’s protection. If Romans will treat green tree the way they treat JC, what about nation as dry as Israel? JC is referring to AD 70. In X/an context the T1 the judgments fall on those who rejected JC in Jer/m and surrounding areas.

Judgment of T1 is on those who rejected JC from inside the house. JC ministered to religious community; many accepted Him, majority rejected Him. 1 Peter. 4; Ez. 9; Jer. 25:15-29 –judgment begins with house of God.

T1 represents 1<sup>st</sup> decisive event in history – judgment that fell on Jer/m in AD70. Spiritual significance of trumpets on this destruction – because rejected JC, the tree has become dry. Israel gets God’s judgment, even though they are God’s people.

Second Trumpet (T2) - Rev. 8:8, 9

Rev. 8:8,9 – fiery mountain

Strong OT allusions. Ex. 7:19-21. Water turned into blood. In Egypt – water of Nile – was lifeblood of Egypt. It almost never rains in Egypt, hence plagues are so remarkable there (precipitation in place w/t rain). Nile provides the source of nourishment. When water of Nile turned into blood, that's serious judgment that threatened Egypt's entire economic existence.

Allusion to Jer. 51:25 + - judgment on ancient Babylon, oppressor of God's people, in part through His own instructions, in part because of their own wickedness and desire to control & destroy. God pronounces judgment on Babylon that great mountain will be destroyed.

Jer. 51:41-42 In T2 mountain falls into sea and is drowned.

Jer. 51:63-64 – tie stone to scroll, throw in Babylon, prophecy pronounced. Judgment on Babylon is judgment of sinking into sea and burning of mountain. In Daniel – God's kingdom is described in terms of great mountain. Here – Babylon is counterpart of this mountain. Waters of Babylon are source of its destruction, a continual image used often in BOOK OF REVELATION. Jer. 50, 51; Is. 44-47 and other fall of Babylon passages are helpful to und/d BOOK OF REVELATION.

Is. 46:2, 3 Images of God's judgments against Gentile nations. They are to be taken care of, they are to be judged because of how they treated God's people, and God acts on behalf of his people. Imagery in T2 is different from imagery T1 – there judgments on God are against his people, but not in T2. Isaiah 46 how God's people escape judgments on Babylon. T2 – falls on explicit enemies of God.

Rev. 8:8, 9 Look at some of the echoes of OT. 1/3 of sea into blood – echo of Nile turning to blood. Fish in OT symbol of people (Hab. 1:14); destruction of fish – God's acts of judgment on people (Zeph. 1:3). Sea – represents nations in opposition to Israel. Is. 17:12,13. Ships – symbols of human pride (Is. 2:16). Sea here – Euphrates river; sea of Babylon is Euphrates, passes through center of Babylon. Babylon and Egypt – enemies of God.

What's going on here, what's the point of this imagery of judgments against God's enemies? Is there any point in X/an history that seems relevant here, b/n Cross and SCJC. Best suggestion – God's judgment on Roman Empire. Roman Empire was involved in destruction of Jer/m receives its own destruction. God uses other nations to judge His people, but when the people of God repent, ten God's judgments fall on oppressors.

T1 and T2 fall first on house of God, then on powers who have acted in judgment on the house of God. Roman Empire was also instrumentation in death of JC. God deals with powers who crucified JC.

In Ancient Times, Rome was associated with Babylon. Found in Jewish apocalyptic. 1 Peter 5:13; Rev. 17:18 – great empire of Rome associated with Babylon. Prediction – one day Rome will fall under great sea of nations. Roman Empire fell under huge hoards of pagan nations from the East, and fell apart. Nations who destroyed Rome, they suffered too. We realize that fall of Rome Brought great trouble and suffering to world; Brought Dark Ages – knowledge, trade, science, etc. was forgotten and suffered; most knowledge came from Muslim world.

T2 result – devastation of social and economic order; foretastes of end-time realities of Rev. 18. Fall of Babylon finds its 1<sup>st</sup> fulfilment of fall of ancient Rome. End-time Babylon will also fall, world-wide federacy in opposition to God.

Judgment falls first on the 2 powers who crucified JC – Jews and Rome; religious and political power. One thing to notice in BOOK OF REVELATION – it seems Satan's goal to unite his forces against what God is doing in the world. Rev. 16:13, 14 – 3 beasts sending frogs to the nations, to gather them in common cause in battle of Armageddon. Satan tries to unite his forces. One of the essences of evil is anarchy, selfishness. How do you get bunch of selfish people to work on common cause? That's Satan's problem – he created it, he has to live with it. His strategy at end time and in JC's time was to unite his forces. Satan has to unite Jews and Romans in one to crucify JC; both Jews and Romans hated

each other, but they came to agreement to crucify JC. In crucifixion of JC we see two powers to destroy JC. In T1 and T2 we see God in judgment on these power.

Like seals, trumpets appear in 3 groups. First 4 – like 4 horsemen, all on natural aspects on earth. Then 2 trumpets – deal with demonic powers, || 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> seals, which also lean toward the end. 7<sup>th</sup> one, after long interlude in both cases. 4-2-1 in seals and 4-2-1 in trumpets. If the first two trumpets are dealing with opposition that arouse to JC in 1<sup>st</sup> c; then 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trumpets might introduce two new enemies of God, replacements for Jer/m and Rome. Perhaps T5 and T6 will depict the two new powers, religious and political.

Spiritual lessons from T1 and T2:

First: JC's experience is model for X/an life. We suffer, He suffered. He raised from dead – we are raised from dead now when encouraged, and at SCJC. Just as JC suffered, so we do. He is our model, take courage from that, that JC understands and knows.

Second: In this life, God has judged those who crucified JC. So it is with us, and will be. In times of trouble and persecution, God is still in control, God is still dealing with those who have hurt us. We don't need to revenge, it belongs to God; He will do it.

### **No. 10 The Third and Fourth Trumpets Rev. 8:10-13**

Where does the greatest threat for the church come from – from inside or outside the church?

Third Trumpet – Rev. 8:10, 11 (T3)

Great star, fell from sky, 1/3 of springs of water; water turns bitter, people die from bitter water.

Direct and indirect (echo) allusions in OT. Direct allusions don't help a lot.

Ex. 7:20 – water into blood, as direct allusion. Water turns bitter, rivers and springs too. Echoes of OT language in here, pattern maybe.

Fallen star – Is. 14:12-17. In symbol reference to Lucifer, who was once in God's garden in heaven. Here – time of his fall to earth. North- reference to Babylon and God's throne. Babylon is North-east of Jer/m, and Babylon would attack from North, because of the desert that lies east of Jer/m and Israel, hence Babylon seen as coming from North. North – reference to God's throne, the zenith in heaven. People in AT (ancient times) would talk of North as above and South – as below, when the thought of heavenly things.

Lucifer is cast out and falls down.

Little horn in Dan. 8.

Falling star – blazing like torch. In Bible – lamp or torch – connected with Word of God. Psalm 119:105; Prov. 6:23. Connected with falling star, this can represent counterfeit of truth. That is symbol of spiritual decline – Rev. 2:5; Hebr. 4:11. Falling star, blazing like torch, would seem to give s/th like Word of God, but being counterfeit, one that sinks and leads away from truth.

Rivers and springs – they receive what the falling star Brings to earth. Water – can be used in destructive way, like Flood. Water – symbol of washing and cleansings; used to make people and food clean. Water – symbol of spiritual nourishment; human bodies need water.

All three of these symbols are there in Scripture; all three are found in BOOK OF REVELATION. Which of three is case here? Nourishing water here. Because of waters of rivers and springs is what people use to drink. v. 11 – many people died from waters that became bitter. Falling of star make waters bitter, no nourishment.

Strong spiritual symbolism – John 7:37-39. Here in John 7 the rivers and springs of water are symbols of spiritual nourishment. In OT – we have similar illustration; Ps. 1:3. Nourishing waters represent scriptures and sound teachings, that nourish God’s people and keep them on the way.

Wormwood and bitterness: consistent OT symbol for apostasy and its consequences, when people have known God, his word and have fallen away; described in terms of bitter herbs. Deut. 29:17-18. Bitterness – symbol of apostasy and its consequences. Certain OT Greek consequences have exactly the same word, “Wormwood” – Jer. 9:15; 23: 15, those are in b/g of author here.

Lament. 3:15, 19; Ex. 15:25 – bitter water cannot sustain water; it promises life, but cannot sustain life, even though people drink it. Poisoned water is source of death.

Images are coming together – images of apostasy, of false doctrine, of counterfeit of truth. How does false doctrine affect people? Steals people’s assurance. It is like a manual giving you wrong direction to operate s/th. Same when Scripture is destroyed – people seek salvation, but false doctrine steers them away; grave consequences.

What is T3 about? Star, rivers and springs, and people who drink.

Star – symbol of leaders of churches, who fall away from clear und/ing of truth. Dan. 12:3; Jude 13; Rev. 12:1; 1:20. Stars are symbols of leaders of churches. Stars = angels of churches.

Lamp, rivers, water springs – sources of spiritual life and growth. Light = truth; water = spiritual nourishment. All symbols are here distorted – they Bring death not life. T3 points to church that accepted JC as truth, but allowing its own life-giving teachings to be perverted. Falling away from JC and from truth – that’s the symbolism here; fallen star, bitter waters =- truth mingled with error. Consequences – of those who drink such water. More consequences – yet to come in next trumpets.

Overall concept of T3 – falling away from truth.

Concept of falling in apostasy – spread in NT. Found in Jewish Apocalyptic.

2 Thessalonians – Paul talks about apostasy.

Acts 20:26-31 – apostasy, warning of such.

2 Tim. 4:2-5.

1 Tim 4:1,2 – doctrinal decline.

2 Peter 2:1,2

1 John 4:1-3; Jude 3-4, the 7 letters in BOOK OF REVELATION.

All show that the concept of coming apostasy is wide-spread in NT. This common theme we find clearly outlined in T3.

What we do with this? How we fit it into history? With fall of Jewish leadership and Roman Empire, Satan is looking for new territories to conquer as JC tries to spread the Gospel. Here is a rise of X/ty in name, but not in heart and doctrine. What’s happening here – time when the church itself, the main-stream body of church, is not longer serving as God intended, not following JC’s plain teachings. Jewish nation – internal and external opponent, and Rome – external opponent. T3 – greatest danger is inside of church; rise of false X/ty. When – after the fall of Rome, perhaps in the Dark Ages, with the preceding ages. That was time when the brightest church authors – St. Francis of Assisi, Bernard de Clairvaux, realized s/th was going wrong. This is not to condemn who condemn anyone or particular church, but to realized that in the loss of true teaching from Bible comes the true and honest walk with JC, and life is distorted and fall away from God. When truth is keep from people, they don’t follow God as God would want them.

T3 – true opponent to God’s true people, spiritual and religious opponent, from inside the house.

#### Fourth Trumpet (T4) - Rev. 8:12

Rev. 8:12 – sketchy trumpet/description. Strong allusion to 4<sup>th</sup> day of creation – star, moon, stars; day and night; darkness. Language is reminiscent to Gen. 1:16. Reminiscent – Ex. 10:21, 23 - Plague of Exodus – 9<sup>th</sup> plague on Egypt was darkness. Total darkness covered Egypt for 3 days. All Israelites had light. 9<sup>th</sup> plague on Egypt – plague of darkness. Ezek. 32: 7, 8. Exodus plague of darkness is major source for the T4. Ez. 32 –renewed plague on Egypt. Joel 2:10; 3:15 – other foreshadowing of darkness as judgment of God.

Echoes – star, moon, sun. Darkness as concept has root in Gen 1:2 – darkness over all earth, until God created light. Light and darkness can symbolize presence / absence of God. Darkness is one of the covenant curse – Duet. 28:29. God reverses creation. Darkness – OT symbol for punishing sin. Psalm 69:23; Isaiah 5:30; 50:3; Ez. 30:18; Joel 2:2, 3 – darkness is consequence of disobedience. Destroying present creation to make place for new creation - there also we see darkness. Is. 13:10; Joel 2, 3; Amos 5:18, 20. Darkness – consistent symbol in OT, begins in Creation, curse of Covenant, part of punishing sin, part of end-time upheavals.

Light and darkness symbolize the battle of good and evil; eclipse of light – eclipse of truth, attack on truth. What does this mean?

OT symbolism. Sun becomes symbol of Word of God –Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23. Sun can symbolize blessings of God in spiritual realms. Just as sun makes crops to grow, so JC helps us to grow spiritually– Ps. 84:11; Is. 30:26; 60:20.

Moon and stars – no independent significance in OT. Less bright, less significant. Show order of creation, show guidance of God. Stars – used to navigate at night. Possibly – stars = god’s guidance. Day and night –literal

T4 – partial darkness, further development of the apostasy of T3. Star, moon and stars correspond to waters in T3; embittering = darkness. Again, attack on God’s word, different attack from T3. In T3 – water can be seen and tasted, but water was defiled/perverted, not functioning as water is supposed to function. Here attack is on different order –Sun, Moon, Stars – obscured. While Wormwood = perversion, darkness = obliteration. No perversion, but absence of Gospel. Different issues re: Gospel, compared to T3. External enemy of Gospel comes into view here. Just as Rome and Jewish leaders worked to destroy JC, now Satan raises again religious and secular/political competitors. Pharaoh – model of opposition to God’s people. – Ex. 10 and 32 – we see how Pharaoh opposes God’s people. Egypt makes atheistic statements in OT (the only power in AT who makes such statements) – Ex. 5:2 “Who is YHWH?” Nebuchadnezzar believed in existence of YHWH, but Pharaoh denied it. Egypt had become a symbol of bold defiance against God.

What relationship is there with the apostasy of the T3? When church does not shine as it ought to shine, falls away from truth, when it makes secularism, atheism, all the more attractive. People, who don’t believe in God today or reject God and X/ty, you’ll find their account with X/ty very strange and useless. Apostasy of Church encourages secularism and atheism. Consequence of the apostasy of the church in T3 and T4.

#### Summary

Rise of tow great anti-Christ philosophies: false religion and anti-religion. Power-play b/n these two becomes all the more the stuff of what’s happening. Rev. 13-18 there is intensification of these two forces, as involved in earth’s history. Spiritual fall of organization does not mean that individuals in it are helplessly fallen. That does not mean that Jewish people are rejected by God. There are

organisations, both spiritual and secular that steer people away from truth as it is in JC. Be careful to understand the different organisation and their role in history.

### Secularism

Is it bad or good for church and faith? There are many pros and cons to secularism. American Revolution – secular revolution. There were religious aspects to it, but the revolution was result of secularism. Religious liberty – positive result of secularism. There is s/th b/n putting church and state together that ruins both. Some of the most religious nations in the world allow very little freedom. Religious freedom seems to follow secularisation of society.

Secularisation has encouraged education – the freedom to search, reason.

Bible societies are recent phenomena, because of the freedom that comes from more secular world.

Scientific progress – can be done in free society.

Archaeology, and other sciences on the Bible –help us study it better.

Study on linguistics – Kiddel's theological dictionary; result of secularisation. These types of things did not exist before the times in which we exist.

The negatives of secularisation: Communism and Atheism, the French and Russian Revolution – very negative. Extreme ecumenism – people have to learn to live together, but people say “Why be fanatic, join us.” That way of ecumenism steals away faith, makes people not secure about what they believe.

Materialism – obsession with things and less time with God.

Secularism has lead to increasing spiritualism. Fall of USSR – increase in para-normal and spiritualism. USSR was tremendously interested in occult, and so in the Western world. What secularism cannot fill, spiritualism and demons fill in.

Secularisation – interesting phenomenon, used by God as well. In T4 we see in the darkness of the trumpet (though partial), the secularisation, the negatives, the loss of knowledge of Scriptures, etc. Today, many Bibles available, but less knowledge of Bible.

T4 – point to rise of secularisation. Historically –toward the time of Renaissance and Enlightenment; from 14/15 – 18/19c. Decline of faith, because of false X/ty and false representation of X/ty to the world.

T4 closes with transition passage – Rev. 8:13. This eagle here most likely means vulture; circling vulture means there is something dead. OT symbol of God's impending judgment – Hosea 8:1 speaks against Israel; Ez. 32:4 – God speaks against Egypt; Hab. 1:8 on Judah. Vulture – symbol of God's judgment, attacking the spiritually dead. In these three woes, the worst is yet to come.

We move from divine warnings to demonic woes. In T5 tragic things will take place, and the powers of hell are being unleashed, and things will not get better until SCJC.

### Spiritual lessons:

One: let no church or organisation turn you away from Scripture. If you have to deny Scriptures to be member of organisation, think twice.

Two: Ignorance of Scripture causes spiritual loss. To pervert Scriptures is worse than not knowing them at all. Let Scriptures mould what we think, not vice versa.

Three: There is often danger in the house. Being member of a X/an church is not guarantee that what's going on in there is acceding to the Bible. We have to know the Bible for ourselves and live by it. Trumpets warn of dangers of not knowing Bible.

Four: God works in history, even when bad things happen in history, God is still in control

## **No. 11 The Fifth Trumpet** **Rev. 9:1-11**

At first reading, T5 is horror show? How do you find JC in there?

Rev. 9:1-11

Sounds like horror show? Can you find JC in here? This is strong imagery, powerful.

Background of T5

Joel 2:1-11. Nearly all elements of T5 are found in there. Blowing trumpet; all who live – tremble; Day of the Lord – day of darkness, etc.

In Joel 2 – gigantic plague of locusts, described as judgment on Judah from God for failing to obey God. Many elements in common: trumpets, chariots, leaders (Joel – God, in BOOK OF REVELATION – Satan, angel of Abyss).

Smoke: Burning of Sodom – Gen. 19:28. Sinai – Ex. 19:18. Exodus 10 – fifth plague is locusts and 9<sup>th</sup> plague is darkness; two of the Egyptian plagues are here. Ez. 9 – sealed are protected from these judgments. Job – story of s/o who longs for death and does not get it. Luke 10:17-20 – many elements of this plague are mentioned here. Demons – in BOOK OF REVELATION word is not used but implied; also - a star that falls from heaven. Six or seven words parallel. Luke – time of God’s protection in midst of demonic harassment; same imagery in BOOK OF REVELATION, same idea – creatures coming from Abyss.

What is the Abyss? Place where demons dwell, as described in Bible. Here – angel gets key and opens the Abyss, and demons come out released.

Rev. 9:1 – fallen star. This is perfect tense in Greek – means: star does not fall during time of T5, but had already fallen. Same star as in T3. Here – reference to same star. If star represents apostate X/an leadership in T3, possible the same in T5. Church has fallen from its true position has opened the demonic powers. When X/ans don’t give clear testimony about God, terrible consequences come to world, and demons feel very much at home here.

Star – given key to shaft of the Abyss. Who gave the key? “Was given” – divine passive, very popular expression in Judaism. Jews did not name God in public, except for rare occasions. When people would talk a/t God in public. JC uses this divine passive in Beatitudes: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” By who? By God. Rather than say God’s name, divine passive used. Very common in 1<sup>st</sup> c. Judaism. There are several of these divine passive.

As terrible as this plague as it is, God is still in control.

Abyss – very common in OT. Gen 1:2. Abyss – pre-creation chaos. Gen. 10:22 in Aramaic translation; Abyss concept describes the fate of the wicked when punished. Rev. 20:1-3 – same concept. In BOOK OF REVELATION – Abyss in BOOK OF REVELATION – source of of Beast – Rev. 11:7; 17:8. Concept that seems relevant here that Abyss is demon’s abode. Luke 8:23-31 – JC confronts demons; they say “Don’t send us to the Abyss.” Abyss – place where demons are confined.

T5 – time in history, when the door of Abyss is unlocked, freedom of movement for demons – all allowed by God, God in control

Rev. 9:2

Smoke. Connection with T4. T5 || T4. In T5 – partial darkness of T4 has become total, total eclipse. Reflects darkness that fell on Egypt so people can't see each other. Imagery – locusts plague that blocks the sun to point of total darkness.

These are not ordinary locusts.

Rev. 9:3

Very unusual locusts – have power of scorpions. Locusts in quantity. Locusts do show in quantity. They have power of scorpions, their harmfulness is much more intense. Scorpions do harm. OT functions as judgment on apostate. Joel 1 and 2 – plagues of locust are used by God against those who have fallen away from their proper way. Used to judge Babylon – Jer. 14, 27; and Egypt - Exodus 10:3,7. Babylon and Egypt face power of locusts.

In case of both Egypt and Babylon, the issue that Brought to the descent of locusts was religious liberty – God was looking to deliver His people.

Vegetation is sealed – the T5 hurts the unsealed. These are not literal locusts – they don't attack the vegetation. Sealing is of those who God knows are His. Plague here does not affect the true believers, they are not hurt. Many commentators have suggested that these locusts are the Muslims, the Islamic invaders. But that's not what's happening here. Here we see distinction b/n true and false believers in God. This plague distinguishes b/n true and false believers in God; it does not simply hurt wicked, non X/ans, or those who are part-time X/ans, but distinguishes those who are in genuine relationship with God and otherwise. In the persecutions against X/ans by Muslims, they did not always make such distinction – Muslims would kill a/o.

What kind of historical event would makes such distinction b/n true and false X/ans? Rev. 9:5-6

Rev. 9:5-6

This is a psychological torment/torture. Death will allude them. Whatever the plague is not political and economic, but spiritual and psychological.

5 months – Flood story; the only place in Bible where 5 months are mentioned. Genesis 7, 8 and Rev. 9 – the 5 months are mentioned; the only 2 places where mentioned. Result of locusts' attack – suicidal anguish. Psalm 71:20-21.

Rev. 9:7-9

Image upon image. Jon Paulien does not think John the revelatory intended these images to be taken every detail seriously, but piling upon of images that help us realize the intensity and awesomeness of the attack. These torments are coming from Satan, to torment people – strong as king, cunning as wiliest men, seductive as women, cause pain like scorpion, cause anguish that comes from battle. This plague is awesome one, one that you don't want to be struck by.

Rev. 9:10

Tail and stings like scorpions. Instrument of torment is in the tail. The tail leads to despair, to suicidal anguish. What is the tail? What is the instrument that Brings the power of this plague against the people? Is. 9:15 may be in mind here.

Source of torment/anguish? Ideological, false doctrine, not a military surge. Language of insect plague, of military attack. It is not what's seen, but the meaning. The Tail is instrument of this attack – it is false teaching. SE begin to see why the true and genuine believers in God are not troubled by this plague, because it is of false doctrine, and those who buy in the false teaching will be plagued.

Rev. 9:11

King – angel of the Abyss Abbadon/Appollion. Satan – angel of the Abyss, leader of the forces behind him. He rewards them with torment. . Satan attracts people in many ways, makes his ideas and practices very attractive, but at the end they are only a torment.

Abbadon / Appollion – very interesting devices found in the Bible. That is to use words from 2 different languages for same thing. Abbadon – Hebrew for one who destroys; the same in Greek. Essence of these two names – destruction – Angel of the Abyss the destroying one, one who ruins and mages. He ruins the ones who follow him and the earth on which all dwell. In OT locusts have no leader, but here in BOOK OF REVELATION they do. It is very clear it is a figurative language.

How to make sense of such horror show? Where is JC. Basic theme of this passage is clear. There is time in history when God permits the demons to plague the earth, but this plague is not allowed to affect the righteous. Luke 10: - followers of JC are not hurt by the demons. Whatever the center of the attack, it cannot hurt the true people of God.

In NO – light and darkness have to do with the Gospel. Light is the Gospel, JC. John 3:18-21. Darkness – the opposite of the Gospel, taking away the truth. What we see in T5 – intensification of the T4, of the secularism and atheism in our society.

Summary of T5 – triumph of the secularism in Western and other world Secularisation is spreading everywhere, in all ways possible. Secularisation fits well in this trumpet. IF that’s what is in view here, the trumpet is speaking to our present experience today.

Why God’s people are not hurt by this trumpet? We know from experience that that’s not the case. However, secularisation can’t hurt those who are following JC closely. Secularisation tries to tell us – your 5 senses count only; live for the moment. Secularisation is very attractive. What keeps a X/an to fall victim to secularisation? Cry of secular world – cry for meaning; why is living better than dying. The key is to know God, to know Him personally. True followers of God, those who know Him day by day; they see through the clouds. Secularisation is a curse to institutional religion, it can be blessing to true followers of JC. Religious liberty – in secular society can spread truth of God. Secularisation is damaging where walk with God is not preserved.

In T3 – secularisation hurts. Church historians – excesses of the Dark Ages lead to Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Atheism of French Revolution. People were looking for light in X/aty, but the X/ans were looking for light away from God. Secularisation would not have happened, if the church had remained true to God, so e/o could see its’ light. Once the truth of God is extinguished in people’s lives, when they can no longer see Him or know that God exists, there is despair. Despair of atheistic philosophy. Today’s world – alienated form God, from each other, from self, from nature. Meaninglessness is the great cry. TV is manifesting things that were in the past only in the back alleys. Nihilism, rejection, etc. (movie “Pulp Fiction”) – no meaning, kill each other. Life w/t God – no meaning.

The T5 is portrayal of where we are today/. This is the end-time manifestation of the Great Rome, come to reality in T4; now replaced by secularisation – a force around which the political, secular, economic forces can gather and agree.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ of BOOK OF REVELATION, we see the joining forces come to force.

Relation of T5 to T6. BOOK OF REVELATION does not indicate that the last days of earth’s history will be days w/t religion, but times with false religion. As we move in T6 – pendulum will swing: again we’ll see language of false religion. Dan. 11:40-45. This text is obscure and difficult as the trumpets. Notice few things: King of the South – Egypt, south of Israel. King of North – Babylon. Daniel 11 portrays the final events of earth’s history as battle b/n kings of South and king of North, which ultimately affects the people of God on His Glorious Mountain. Early part of the war goes to the King of the South, he seems dominant. At the end, Babylon, king of North, clears him out, and Babylon and the entire world turns against people of God. T5 and T6 – dominance from secularisation to

dominance of religion, false religion. Pendulum at tend will swing from secularisation to religion. Bitterness of secularisation will create longing, for which demons will run in to fill in the space.

If we have rightly understood this text, the secularisation of this world would not last forever. New Age movement invigoration of Islam. The world is getting more secular, and slowly getting more spiritual. We are in time of transition – from dominance of secularisation to dominance of Babylon; new phase of religion.

Rev. 9:12

This shows that T5 is the 1<sup>st</sup> woe, and it will come to an end, and the next one will come in chronological order.

Spiritual lessons:

One: Beware of secular thinking. Nobody wakes up in morning and chooses to become secular person. People tend to drift away from JC in their lives. Secularisation takes away our attention away from JC.

Two: T5 warns those who toy with JC. There is no joy in rejecting JC. Such life is full of torment. Not every secular person would admit it. Bible thinks deeper than surface. It makes us aware of things that are below surface. Secularisation – leads to emptiness that will be filled with demonic power from abyss.

Three: Comfort for the saints. At a time in earth's history, when error seems to triumph, God offers security in JC. Luke e10 – demons have no power over the redeemed. Those in JC can tread upon snakes and scorpions. Rom. 8:35-39 – that is the theme of the T5. Satan will be allowed no power over those who walk with JC.

## **No. 12 The Sixth and Seventh Trumpets** **Rev. 9:12-21 / 11:15-18**

Do the nations of the world seem angrier than ever before? This should nor surprise us – that's part of what to expect before SCJC.

In T5 – significant number of people are seeking death. In T6 – 1/3 of humanity are getting such wish granted.

There are number of parallels in BOOK OF REVELATION with this passage. Rev. 7:1-4. Rev. 7 – gives you exact opposite of what's happening in T6. T6 – 200mln people are portrayed as the alter-ego of God's end-time people. In both passages – 4 angels, restraint, "I heard the number." T6 – portrays the same period in history as Rev. 7, the final years, maybe months before the end.

There is another parallel – Rev. 20:7-9. Here too – gathering of people, but this time – against New Jer/m.

Rev. 16: 13-16 – closer ||; gathering for battle of Armageddon. Rev. 16:13-19 portrays the gathering for battle of Armageddon. Like Rev. 9, that's the only other place in BOOK OF REVELATION where you have military language combined with demonic imagery and Euphrates River. 6<sup>th</sup> Bowl || T6 here.

With exceptions of few last verses of T6, there are no significant direct allusions to OT, but echoes.

Rev 9:13

Golden altar of intercession is still in view, still people can be saved, still can hear the voice of God. Voice of center of horns of altar – voice of God.

Rev. 9:14

This is in contrast with Rev.7. There the angels are binding the winds, but here the angels themselves are bound by Euphrates. When released – they go to the extremes of the world. Rev. 7 – relish evil, here – evil restrained until moment or released. Maybe angels in 9:14 correspond to winds in Rev. 7:1-3. Here maybe we see in T6 a later state of Rev.7:1-4, the time when the winds are released, when forces of destruction sweep across world. T6 – gathering and execution of Satanic powers just before end.

Euphrates River in OT functioned as border of OT Israel, though in reality they never reached, only in theory. Gen. 15:18; Joshua 1:4. Euphrates – seen as origin of threat – Isaiah 8:7,8. Assyrian attack on Israel is described in terms of river overflowing its bank, Euphrates river reaches “up to the neck” – ref. to Jer/m. Water symbolism in Bible – cleansings, flooding, nourishing. Here – destructive/flooding type of water. Whatever happens in T6 models on attacks that took place in OT, attacks on Israel. Just as Abyss was source of demons, so Euphrates is source of demonic power hoards, to kill people.

Rev. 9:15

Sounds like a divine passive. Problem in v. 15 – the time of preparation. Kept ready for this time/day/year. In Greek time – it has to do with point in time. A particular time when the angels will be realised. Time of end, as in Daniel 11. Another option – to see this as series of time – prophetic year/day/time/hour. That does not reflect what’s the original Greek. In Greek – point in time, not period of time.

It is clear that time when they are released is time of end.

Rev. 9:16

200mln =  $2 \times 10\,000 \times 10\,000$  (in original Greek) – Daniel 7 and Rev. 5 – the only places where you see figuratively 10 000. Numbering of Satan’s host, that can be counted only at time of end. This is end-time. Counterpart of 144 000, of God’s people.

In BOOK OF REVELATION – many parallels b/n God’s people and their enemies. Wicked – call to mountains to fall on them, 200mln; contrast – Rev. 10, 11 – 2 witnesses. Then - 144 000; Rev. 13-14 – wicked: beasts; Rev. 14 – righteous symbol by 144 000 and 3 angels and their message. Series of pairs in BOOK OF REVELATION contrasting people of God & their opponents.

Cross –references b/n these pairs. 200mln of Rev. 9 || righteous of Rev. 7. Rev. 11 – 2 witnesses || beast of earth.

In BOOK OF REVELATION there are no sharp distinctions b/n good and evil, but parallels can be drawn b/n forces of God and forces of evil. One reason for these parallels – there is no clear line b/n truth and falsehood in BOOK OF REVELATION and twd end of history.

Rev. 9:17-19

These army is equipped with material from lake of fire – smoke, sulphur, blue flames. Rev. 16:13 – demons come from mouth of Satan. Here – fire, smoke, sulphur. Rev. 13 – mouth fo the beast; from there great things are proclaimed.

Rev. 9:19 – tails. Power of forces in T5 – power of secularisation is described in terms of the tail. In T6 central power is mouth, but also the tail. Power of T5, though T5 ended in v. 10, the power of the tail is incorporated in this plague. Both mouth and tail are incorporated in this plague. This

plague incorporates the very worst from previous passages. Secularisation will last until the end, and will be used by the powers in the T6 for their own ends. Will see that in Rev. 16 and 17.

Rev. 9:20, 21

Here we have allusions to OT. Dan. 5 – fall of Babylon. Describes Babylon before drying up on Euphrates River. Belshazzar's feast – idols of gold, silver, stone, etc. Isaiah 47:9, 12 – sorceries remind of fall of Babylon.

Failure to repent in Rev. 9:20, 21 signal the approach of close of probation. In spite of this plague and all other efforts of God, they refuse to repent, and mark themselves for destruction.

T6 portrays gathering for battle of Armageddon, a X/an bend toward it; Babylon's religious power is in view here. What happens to all the atheists? Apparently they are born again? To Communists – they change their heart. Apparently, as we approach the end, there will be a world-wide revival to religion, transcending what has come before. It will be genuinely world-wide, will tie people in one; will be a confederation of all faiths/religions; final Babylon will be a blend of error, oppression, scepticism, ecumenism, and secularism. What will God's people do then? Rev. 10 and 11 is the answer.

Secularisation is dominant today, but we see a mov/t toward faith. But not necessarily X/an and Gospel faith. We see much faith and spiritual life, but no great revival of the Gospel yet.

Seventh Trumpet

Rev. 10:5-7

Start with this passage here to understand T7. Great b/g text – Dan. 12:7. Point of Rev. 10 – time prophecies of Daniel have run their course. Deut. 32:40 – this is intro to Covenant woes. Same language as in Rev. 10. This passage is telling us that time will come when time-prophecies of Dan will run their course; we run into unsealed time of Daniel. Rev. 10 – call for study on large scale of time prophecies of Daniel.

In time of 7<sup>th</sup> angel – s/th else will happen. You would expect that when you come to conclusion of time prophecies of Daniel, that time will end. But, in Rev. 10 – in the times of the 7<sup>th</sup> angel, then the mystery of God will be finished. In the complex Apocalyptic language we have a hint of the SCJC. Many people in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c. thought the Daniel's time prophecies were coming to an end.

Here – though time shall be no more, not until time of 7<sup>th</sup> angel will the end come. When the 7<sup>th</sup> angel is about to sound, the mystery of God will be accomplished. What is the mystery of God? Romans 16:25-26. Mystery of God = The Gospel of JC, the message God Brought to world thru JC. See Col. 1:25-28; Eph. 6:19. It tells us that just before the blowing of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, there will be one great proclamation for the Gospel, in the light of the time – prophecies of Daniel. We'll see in Rev. 10.

This great final presentation corresponds to Rev. 14:6, 7 – a mighty angel proclaims to the people. At close of T6 God's people are proclaiming the Gospel one more time. Wicked prepare for Armageddon, God's people share the Gospel. Sharing of the Gospel draws to close before T7 blows. T7 symbolizes close of probation, and the irreversible onset of final events.

It notices that this Gospel has been presented thru his servant the prophets – Amos 3:7,8. Strong prophetic sense Gospel has been proclaimed for 2000yrs, but at end-time – focus on time-prophecies of Daniel and Rev. That's why it matters to study Bible and prophecies.

Seventh trumpet itself

Rev 11:15-18

T7 – consummation of all things, the coming of Kingdom for which God’s people have been prayer. Blowing of T7 does not produce SCJC (v. 18). There is period of time b/n close of probation and the end, b/n the final proclamation of the Gospel and the SCJC. There is horrific period of time b/n close of probation and end.

Nations are angry, New World Order – peace coming to few places. But there is uneasy sense, violence lying below service. Bible – before end there will be turmoil, when God’s wrath will be poured, rewards for righteous and punishment for wicked.

Angry nations – angry because they seek to oppose God and His kingdom. Anger of nations – reference Battle of Armageddon. When nations gather together, they will gather to oppose God and His kingdom. The T7 covers the last few months of earth’s history, gives us summary foretaste of God’s final victory.

Third woe is all that there is to come in BOOK OF REVELATION, the sum and substance of all plagues in BOOK OF REVELATION. T7 Brings foretaste of the end.

Spiritual lessons:

One: because s/th is religious does not mean it is right, or beneficial, or it honours God. BOOK OF REVELATION predicts that in final days of earth’s history there will be a great outburst of religion, or spirituality and of revival; it will not be beneficial and will not be honouring God. Just because s/th is religious, does not mean it is good for us/beneficial/honouring God.

Two: The Gospel will not be available forever. Day is coming when probation will close for all earth, it will be before end. We will not know when this time comes.

Three: Time of reward is coming, both positive and negative. Time of setting things right. God is in control, but things are not yet as they should be. Resurrection and Judgment tell us that that’s not all there is, that one day God will set all things right.

Trumpets – God has made down-payment to Bring justice to the Universe. We may not see that yet, but God has launched to that activity, and at end will set it all right.

Rev. 6-9 – most difficult and spiritually driest, because they focus on negatives, on great movements on people and nations.

## Series IV: Revelation 10:1 - 16:11 Building to the Final Crisis

### No.1 Seven Thunders and the Gospel’s End Rev. 10:1-7

We know we can’t predict exactly when JC will come, but can we know when we are in the final era of earth’s history?

In this section main focus – on final events of earth’s history. There is other material as well – SCJC, but primary focus –the crisis that comes on earth right before the end. We have to understand this part of BOOK OF REVELATION, because it deals with the time in which we live.

Frankly, Rev. 10 and 11 are difficult parts of BOOK OF REVELATION.

Rev. 10:1-7

How does this text fit in rest of BOOK OF REVELATION? Comes as interlude to 7 trumpets. 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is separated by the 6<sup>th</sup> by 2 chapters of material – Rev. 10 and 11:1-13. Material in Rev. 10, 11 – different from rest of trumpets. Instead of focus on catastrophes and judgments, and anomalies, Rev. 10 & 11 focus is on preaching, prophecy, experience of God’s people, interlude within the seven trumpets, set apart in some way. Similar in Rev. 7 - where 6<sup>th</sup> seal ends in Rev. 6, but 7<sup>th</sup> seal is not Broken until Rev. 8.

Rev. 6:17’s question – answered in Rev. 10 and 11. Interlude seems to provide view of God’s people and their experience.

Does the material in Rev. 10 and 11 relate to the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet and other trumpets? Rev. 9:12. 1<sup>st</sup> woe – clearly material in T5. 2<sup>nd</sup> woe – begins in Rev. 9:13, with account of T6. Rev. 11:14 – 2<sup>nd</sup> woe has passed, 3<sup>rd</sup> woe is coming. Clearly, these two connectors – Rev. 9:12 and 11:14 show that Rev. 10 and 11 are considered to be part of T6. Just as Rev. 7 answers decisive Q raised in 6<sup>th</sup> seal, so material in Rev. 10 and 11 is part of T6 and is related to what’s happening in T6.

We are at particular point in history. This is the time when the angels at Euphrates River (ER) are released, time when 4 winds are held so sealing can take place. Rev. 7:1-3. Time for gathering for Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16). Time just before close of probation (Rev. 10:7).

Rev. 10 & 11 – material that relates to time of end, view of God’s people, view of righteous as they live in such time, before end, parallel to experience of wicked - Rev. 9:13-21. Rev. 10 & 11 – God, thru prophecy preparing people to counteract the same threat seen in Rev. 9:13-21.

Rev. 10 – catch glimpse of view of God’s people.

Rev. 10:1-2

Description cannot be taken totally literally. Too many things raise Qs and look for answers.

“Another mighty angel” – not a trumpet angel. This material is part of T6, but that’s another angel, perhaps because there is a different mission in view. Angel of T6 is related to host of Satan, which appears under T6. This angel has different mission. Notice – there are strong parallels with Son of Man in Rev. 10. JC appears on Patmos – Rev. 1:12-20. Here – mighty angel, wrapped in cloud. In Rev. 1:7 – JC comes with cloud, Rev; 14 - -JC comes with cloud. Here – angel comes on cloud. His face – like son. JC’s face like Sun – Rev. 1:16. Legs like fiery pillars; Rev. 1:15 – feet of JC are like bronze glowing in furnace. Word for ‘feet’ and ‘legs’ is the same in original.

Mighty angel here is the same as in Rev. 1, that appeared to John. Is this JC? Perhaps so. Much of symbolism of this two verses is divine symbolism. In OT YHWH makes clouds his chariots – Ps. 104:2,3. Exodus 13:21-22 – YHWH appears in clouds. YHWH rides chariots - Ez. 1:7, 28. Divine figure appears to Daniel – Dan. 10:5, 6.

Transfiguration of JC – similar description – Matt. 17:2. This mighty angels is like transfigured JC, at Mount of Transfiguration. Rainbow – reminds of Rev. 4:3 – rainbow around the throne.

Mighty angel – appears to be JC, or representation of the authority of JC. Whatever takes place in work of this mighty angel, it comes directly from JC. JC is in charge and control.

Mighty angel with scroll, speaking in loud voice – Rev. 10:2,3 – reminds of Rev. 5. There a mighty angel cried out “Who is worthy to take the scroll and Break the seals?” The only worthy one – JC. Then when Rev. comes to close – JC holds the scroll in Rev. 4, 5. Then this mighty angel, described like JC, is holding in his hands a scroll. In this case the scroll is open.

Here – legs like pillars; fire, rainbow. This imagery reminds us of Flood, Exodus, and OT Covenant in ancient Israel. This is fascinating, heavenly description. This angel reminds of JC, of YHWH of OT, of God’s great mighty acts – Exodus, Flood, Establishing Covenant at Mt. Sinai. Something momentous is about to happen.

### Scroll

What is the scroll about? “Lay open” is an attempt to express what in original is perfect passive – the book had been opened. The angel does not open the book in our view; this took place in Rev. 6. JC Breaks the seals, opens the book. This book is already open when angel appears to John. Could it be the same book as Rev. 5? Could it be that now that the 7<sup>th</sup> seal is Broken, the book stands open? Could this be a revelation of the contents of the little scroll? Most scholars would say ‘no.’ Because in Greek there is different Gr. word for book than in Rev. 5. ‘Scroll’ there is called ‘biblion’ but here in Rev. 10:2 – ‘bibloridion.’ Both of these are diminutives, meaning these are small books. ‘Byblos’ is Gr. for book; the others are diminutives. Caution: though this scholarly observation, it is not that significant in BOOK OF REVELATION. If you make a careful study of John’s use of various book – biblos, biblion, bibloridion – you’ll discover that John has no consistent pattern. He could use biblos and biblion for Book of Life in Rev. 20. Rev. 20:12 – biblion; 20:15 – biblos. John is not concerned about the fine point of distinction. That does not matter to John. This may be that in the angel’s hand this scroll is the same scroll as in the hands of the Lamb. Rev. 10:8 – same book called ‘biblion’ in v. 2 is called ‘bibloridion’ in v. 8. That suggests that the author of Rev. does not have a consistent purposeful or consistent use for the word of ‘book.’

From choice of words we can’t determine if this is book from Rev. 5. Strong parallel b/n Rev. 5 and 10 – book in Rev. 10 is the same book that Lamb held in Rev. 5.

Rev. 10 book – has to do with contents of the mighty scroll of Rev. 5, which has to do with the mighty acts of God, with the opening of the scroll in Rev. 5. When Lamb appears, e/o is happy. This scroll is extremely important. Rev. 10 is probably revelation of the scroll of Rev. 5 as it applies to the world’s end-time history.

Angel – 1 foot on land, 1 foot on sea. Suggestion – this is world-wide proclamation of Gospel/message. Will go everywhere.

### Rev. 10:3, 4

John hear loud shout like roar of lion. Rev. 5 JC is Lion of Judah. 1<sup>st</sup> living creature sounds like Lion. When the 1<sup>st</sup> liv. cr. speaks in Rev. 6:1, voice is like the sound of thunder. Number of connections here. JC speaks like Lion, voice like thunder. Lion –used as symbol of YHWH in OT – restores his people from enemies (Hosea 11:10; Jer. 25:30). Like Lion he comes to judges people (Amos 1:2; 3:8). YHWH like Lion – used in prophecy - Amos 3:7,8. YHWH speaks with voice like Lion is associated here with gift of prophecy. We get the impression that whatever is going on here has s/th to do with prophecy. That’s what we’ll discover along the way.

### Seven thunders

Quite a mysterious concept in BOOK OF REVELATION. The 7 thunders are not written down. In BOOK OF REVELATION – Rev. 4:5 – thunder associated with God’s throne; or Heavenly Sanctuary Rev. 8:3-5; 11:19; 16:17-18. Thunder is concept noted repeatedly and always with direct presence of God. The 7 thunders portray a theophany, Gr. term for appearance of God.

OT b/g text – Psalm 29:3-9. Thunderstorm – described in terms of voice of God. Voice of God – as voice of thunder. Consequences of this voice – mighty acts, taking place in Lebanon. Thunder –

recalls mighty acts of God. When God speaks and acts in powerful way, thunder is appropriate way to describe it.

Job 37:5 – another passage to thunder - God relation.

Seven thunders seem on basis of their b/g actions on part of God. Decisive actions, but cannot be und/d w/t revelation – Amos 3:7,8. Voice of Lion – mighty actions of God, in relation to prophecy. We'll see more of it in Rev. 10.

John 12:28-30. Thunder – speaks on behalf of God. In this case, when God speaks to JC, it sounds like thunder. Thunder is the voice of God, and God spoke thus in hearing of people of Jer/m before Cross. Here in BOOK OF REVELATION -7 thunders before SCJC.

Voice of heaven in John 12 and Rev. – in Rev – voice from heaven, “Do not write what the 7 thunders have said.” This voice is not the mighty angel, different voice from that of angel. Whose is this voice? God Father's? This voice says, “Seal up the 7 thunders, do not write them.” Sealing reminds us of Daniel 8:26; 12:4, 9. This last portion of Daniel was to be sealed, and not understood until time of end. Different from BOOK OF REVELATION. Rev. 22:10 – do not seal up words of prophecy, because time is near. In Daniel message is to be sealed up to future time; in BOOK OF REVELATION such message is unique and John is commanded to write. John is told not to seal up the words of this book. Seven thunders deal with s/th totally beyond John's time, not e/th in BOOK OF REVELATION was near. Difference b/n BOOK OF REVELATION and last part of Daniel was that BOOK OF REVELATION was always applicable to the generation that had it, e/th was relevant. This portion of BOOK OF REVELATION has to do with events that were future from perspective of John's time and his readers.

Rev. 10:5-7

Powerful allusion to Dan. 12. We've noticed the allusion in concept of sealing up. See Dan. 12:4-7.

Parallels b/n Rev. 10 and Dan. 12. Seal up the words of scroll till time of end. S/ot stands by river and any of its side; Q: How long; lifting up hand; swearing; time, times, and ½ time – no more delay. Dan. 12 is very much in mind when Rev. 10 is written.

Why author of BOOK OF REVELATION wants us to keep in mind Dan. 12? Point of Rev. 10 is that the time prophecies of Daniel would have run their course. Greek says, 'time' = chronos, will be no more. Time he has in mind is time from Daniel's book, such as time, times, ½ times; 2300 evenings and mornings. Time prophecies in Daniel, that point to time of end, that lead to time when JC is about to come.

Daniel 12 answers the four issues first raised in Dan. 8:13. Spending time on Daniel 8, 9, and 12, will help deal with this issues. Quick overview – Dan. 8:13, 14 – raises four issues: Daily Sacrifice, Rebellion that causes desolation; Sanctuary and Host trampled under foot; Q: How long? All of these issues are addressed in Rev. 12. Rev. 12 draws Daniel's whole book to a close. Dan. 12 – v. 11 – daily sacrifice; v. 11 – rebellion that causes desolation; 12 – sanctuary and host trampled; v. 7, 11 – raises Q: How long? Book of Daniel – strong sense for time; appointed time, the time of the end. What Rev. 10 tells us is that the chronos time is over when Rev. 10 comes along;; that times is an end. God is about to avenge His people, to deliver His saints on earth.

Key point on Rev. 10 is that the T6 reflects final, last days of earth's history. We don't know when JC will come. But we can know if we know the time prophecies of Daniel, when we live in the time of the end, because prophecies of Daniel have all run their course.

See: SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 971. Back in 19<sup>th</sup> c. many students of Bible prophecy studied Daniel, and found that all prophecies of Daniel were completed by 1844. They took the natural course of action – if all time prophecies are fulfilled, then JC comes. They were wrong, they missed the first word in Rev. 10:1 'but.' In Greek 'but' is very strong adversative. In days of 7<sup>th</sup> angel, not 6<sup>th</sup>,

mystery of God will be accomplished. Rev. 10 – time-prophecies of Daniel don't run until end of time, but until time of the end. Time of the end begins when Daniel's prophecies close and ends with SCJC.

We live b/n times, in period b/n close of Daniel's prophecy and close of probation.

Purpose of this period – offer opportunity for one final proclamation of the Gospel. That's what Rev. 10 and 11 lead us to. We live b/n no-more-delay and about-to-sound. We don't know when JC will come, but we know we are in earth's final prophecy.

### Spiritual lessons

What to do with this info?

One: Living in time of end is serious business. If we live in last stages of earth's history, no more for delay, wishy-washy delaying. We are in time of history when JC's coming is immanent.

Two: God has always said "end is near." God delays for our sake. Every generation of earth's history has had to know, in order to decide to join JC. God's word has had deeper understanding with passing of time. Disciples thought that JC after resurrection will establish the kingdom, but JC said that the Gospel has to go to all world. So was with the Millerites in 10:7. God is not fooled but has planned a period for Gospel-prophetic proclamation.

Three: JC is the source of this final proclamation. In last days of earth's history the prophecies will be better understood, and the Gospel will be clearer in its prophetic thrust. Impetus for that comes from JC Himself. When we preach prophecy this way, we preach is the way JC wants it preached.

## No. 2 The Scroll and the Temple

### Rev. 10:8-11:2

If God is in full control of the Universe, what does it mean to say that God delays?

Rev. 10:8 – 11:2. It seems unnatural Break in a sense, yet the chapter divisions in BOOK OF REVELATION are not inspired and are work of individuals later after Bible was written. Chapter Breaks come s/t in such a way that this may hinder the understanding of the chapters. Close relationship b/n Rev. 10 and 11.

Rev. 10:8 Here is interesting description – the scroll that this angel had, is offered for John as food; tastes good, but bitter in stomach. Voice from heaven recalls v. 4 – not voice of mighty angel, though this mighty angel is in background. John is told to take the scroll and eat it. In the process – sweet to taste, sour in stomach. Explanation- you must prophecy again.

Eating book – sweet in mouth, bitter in stomach. This concept is found in Ezekiel. Book Ezekiel is alluded to here – Ez. 2:8 +.

Ez. 2:8 onwards. Ezekiel's message is sweet, no mention of sour in stomach. People's experience – sour; rejected Ezekiel. Ezekiel goes away bitter in spirit, not in stomach. Rev. 10 and Ez. 2 – connected. In Ezekiel – message to house of Judah. Rev. 10 – message to the nations, to gentiles. Parallels and differences b/n Ez. and John. In view – message, proclamation to the world, both to Judah and to the world. Message is sweet, of joy, of abundant living, but becomes bitter as there is disappointment in the giving of the message.

Verse 11 – you'll give a message again. "About" is Gr. 'epi' = concerning, about, against. Presumably what here this prophesying again has to do, it has to do with Rev. 11.

What's this all about – sweet in mouth, bitter in belly? Look at this at 2 levels, both concern concept of delay. Delay of consummation of earth's history, of return of JC. John is disappointed in delay. He expects that Revelation's prophecies will Bring God's coming soon. Thru his book at time of end he will have to prophecy again by means of another people. At second level – chapter suggests that

at close of Dan's prophecies – there will be people who will believe that the consummation of these prophecies will Bring end of world, but not until 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is blows that end comes. There is period of time after close of Daniel's prophecies and this passage suggests that although the message will be sweet, this will be a bitter period for God's people since they think that JC would have come and they would be in heaven.

Rev. 11

Rev. 11 – answer to what's going on in Rev. 10. Rev. 10 – gives the message to prophesy to the nations. Rev. 11 – much a part of T6 as Rev. 10, time of gathering for Armageddon, b/n end of Daniel's prophecies and closer of probation.

What is John to say as he is prophesying again, what is the message to go to the world? Prophecy to nations reminds of – Matt. 24:14. If this period from Revelation is the very time of the end, then this would be the final proclamation of earth's history that will Bring the end of all. What will this Gospel be? Rev. 11:1,2 - Gospel of the heavenly temple restored in context of Judgment.

This proclamation seems to be illustrated by last section of Rev. 11 by the ascension of the 2 witnesses up to heaven. The 2 witnesses are killed, then resurrected and ascended to heaven; as if model after JC. Fate of martyred witnesses seems related to eating the scroll. Scroll in itself is good news but Brings bad times. However, ascension of these witnesses illustrates the final proclamation of the Gospel.

As mentioned before, big parallels b/n witnesses and JC's life: 3 ½ yrs, die-resurrected-ascend to heaven; two witnesses are end-time counterpart of JC's ministry on earth; final proclamation of NT gospel.

Many parallels b/n 2 witnesses and Rev.13 – counterpart of 2 evil beasts in Rev. 13. Beast from Sea – 42 months ministry, as the 2 witnesses have ministry that lasts that much. Beast comes from Abyss – like Beast from Sea (Rev. 13:1). Beast from Rev. 11 makes war against the witnesses and overcomes; Beast in Rev. 13 makes war against saints. Beast in Rev. 11 – overcomes witnesses; Beast Rev. 13 –overcomes saints. Rev. 11 – earth rejoices at death of witnesses; Rev. 13 – earth is amazed at activities of Beast.

Parallels b/n witnesses and Lamb-beast: Two witnesses Bring fire from their mouths; Land beast Brings fire from heaven. Witnesses receive Book of Revelation from God; Lamb-like beast puts life into image of Beast. We have to see number of connections b/n Rev. 11 beasts and Rev. 13. Whatever the beasts mean have to do s/th with final proclamation of Gospel and people who'll do the proclamation.

Time periods

Rev. 11:2 – 42 months

Rev. 11:3 – 1260 days

These periods remind of Dan. 12, which is in background of text. Rev. 10 has set the stage. Time, times, and dividing of times – 3 ½ yrs = 42 months = 1260 days. Initial experience of the 2 witnesses comes before the time of Rev. 10, because it goes before the time of Daniel's prophecies. Much of Rev. 11:1-6 precedes Rev. 10:8-11. Prophesying again is begin after the close of 1260 days, one of the key prophecies of Daniel

Experience of 2 witnesses as initially introduces goes before time of Rev. 10. Witnesses' death, resurrection, ascension Brings to the prophesying again, the very final events of earth's history.

In this section of BOOK OF REVELATION, John begins to take active role in his own visions. So far he's been fairly passive, he's given rod to measure. Prophets often performed symbolic actions as part of their proclamation. Ezekiel acted out various things that he was supposed to prophecy. Acts – Agabus acted out things he spoke about from God.

Here in Rev. 11 we see John involved in his prophecy.

Rev. 11:1

John is given measuring rod, to measure Temple of God and what's in it. Recalls Rev. 21:15 – similar description. Main difference – Rev. 21 measuring rod is made of gold, not of reed. Rev. 21 – he measure the city, not Temple. Nevertheless in Rev. 21 is like a Temple because this is where God dwells. Perhaps the two are very parallel. Ez. 40-48 – measuring of temple taking place there. Rich OT b/g.

Why is measured the Temple in Ezekiel? In order to be restored; measuring Temple site illustrates God committing Himself to continue to be Israel's God despite their apostasy, that Temple will be rebuilt, and they will be His people and He – their God.

Ez. 43:7-9

Problem that caused Temple to be destroyed – mixed worship; they were not faithful to God, but had idols and had worshippers to idols next to Temple. Here is call for repentance – if you will put away the mixed worship, I'll rebuild the temple, will live a/g you forever. Ezek. 40:1 – vision comes on Day of Atonement, when the Temple is measured. Day of A/t – most solemn day, Sanctuary was cleansed on that day from all sins; day of cleansing and restoration.

Is that the case in Rev. 11:1? Is there allusion to Day of A/t? Count the worshippers there. Same three elements – worshippers, altar, Temple – same cleansed on Day of A/t – Lev 16:16-19, 30-31. Both Ezek and Leviticus' b/g of Rev. 11 emphasize Day of A/t. As on Day of A/t (DOA), the measuring here has strong sense of the evaluation of the end-time, of the judgment just before the end.

2 Sam. 8:2 – measuring of people in judgment, who'll live and who'll die. Parables of JC – sheep and goats, good and bad fish, wises and foolish virgins, wheat and tares. Judgment and division – b/n those who serve God and those who oppose Him. Righteous receive reward, wicked receive their rewards.

Final Gospel that is to be proclaimed at last days – Gospel of restoration of the Sanctuary, of serious pre-Advent Judgment. Measuring of the professed followers of God, particularly measuring God's people, calling them to get prepared to meet JC. This is “added value” message. There are many people who understand the basic Gospel of JC. Truly, the Gospel of JC is the fundamental message of the X/an faith. If you don't und/t Gospel, it does not mater what you know about prophecy. If you don't know JC, you got nothing. 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

Message of Rev. 10 and 11 – added value message, particularly valuable. Sobering message to get ready for SCJC. When T7 calls, time to get ready to meet JC. T6- signal to get ready for end.

BOOK OF REVELATION – kind of message that God's people will be presenting at time of end.

Rev. 11:2

Here – exclude the outer court. Outer court in OT Sanctuary – key furnishings; there the people could enter and Bring their sacrifices. In Rev. 11:1,2 - the outer court is not to be measured. The word 'but' in Greek does not appear, but there is a word that should be translated 'and.' Implies that excluding is part of the measuring – measure the Temple, and as you measure it, make sure you exclude the outer court. These Gentiles in Rev. 11: 2 are professing people of God. The measuring of God's people Brings to conclusion that some are found faithful and built in Temple of God – Eph 2; 1 Peter 2. This measuring in Rev.11:1,2 divides true professing X/ty and those who are only by name but not substance.

Major theme: just before SCJC God will act in such a way as to divide those who profess to be His people, the genuine professors of X/ty, and those who are not true. Pre-SCJC work of God.

In Ezekiel – 'exclude,' 'ekballe' same as John 9:34,35, setting aside s/th that was before part of. Excluding people from benefits of Gospel. In Rev. 21:15 word 'exclude' is with ref. to exclude the wicked.

Outer court –given to Gentiles. Reminds of 1<sup>st</sup> c. Temple – outer court, for Gentiles, and no Gentile could cross over. In the Jewish context the Gentile was not welcome into the Temple. Outer court was place where Gentiles could worship.

“They will trample on Holy City” for 42 months. 42 months in BOOK OF REVELATION – associated with wicked (Rev. 13:5). Holy City = God’s NT people. First glimpse of frequent allusion in BOOK OF REVELATION – 2 cities: New Jer/m and end-time Babylon, city of Satan and wicked. Here – Holy City = God’s people, in contrast to Rev. 11:8’s Great City.

Trampling - Rev. 14:20; 19:15. Trampling, of wicked by wrath of God at end. Traitors of Rev. 11:2 get trodden in Rev. 14 and 19.

Strong parallel to Luke 21:24 – trampling for 42 months. Times of Gentiles fulfilled. Jer/m will be trampled – for 42 months; in Luke – during the times of the Gentiles. Rev. 11 and Luke 21 – have common background, found in Daniel 7:25. Compare with Dan. 8:13.

Parallels to ‘trampling’ down of people of God/city of God. Outer court = represents the world, in which forces that are excluded from KOG seem to be in control of lives of people here on this earth.

Last questions: What is this all about? Why OT Sanctuary called to view in Rev. 10 and 11? Where is the Sanctuary – in heaven or on earth? Where is the NT Sanctuary?

Sanctuary in NT is wherever JC is. John 2:19-21. Temple is JC, who Himself embodied the shekinah glory, the glory that made the Temple..

Matt 12:6. For Jews only 1 thing was greater than Temple – that was glory of God, standing in Temple. JC here meant that the very glory/presence of God was in Him, in His body. In NT sense – wherever JC is.

Where is JC today? In heaven? Yes, according to book of Hebrews, in heavenly sanctuary. That’s not the only place where you find Temple language.

1 Cor. 3; 1 Peter 2 – Church is also God’s Temple, because church is place where JC lives on earth today. Matt 18:20 – where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name... Every gathering of believers is a Temple of God, because JC is present.

Our body is also Temple of JC – 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. Our bodies are also temples. Temple in NT – wherever JC is. He dwells in heaven, He resides where 2 or 3 gather, and thru HSp can reside in us.

Theme of Rev. 11:1,2 – has to do with restoration of Sanctuary at end of time. All three levels – church, heaven, bodily sanctuary – are involved and embodied in restoration of sanctuary at end of times. For BOOK OF REVELATION Heavenly sanctuary was most central and body sanctuary-least central. As we approach end of time, we can ask the Q – what is it in heavenly sanctuary that has to be restored? God’s restoration of God’s rulership all over Universe; vindication of God’s character.

About the church? Restoration of true doctrine. False doctrine – burning hell. Does not the church need to learn to show love? Are there not churches who have done spiritual abuse and toxic faith? Is it not time for churches to shine thru God’s love?

Our bodies. Would not the message of the last days not be a message of health – how to live, eat, treat each other? Would not our bodies glorify God?

Final proclamation of Gospel – will speak with power in this last hour of earth’s history.

Spiritual lessons:

One: Delay of end is painful, but this does not mean that God is not longer in control. When we say that God is in control of history, we wonders what it means when Bible says “He delays.” God foresaw the delay; He is still in control.

Second: Final proclamation will face opposition; it won't be easy. It will triumph.

Three: Final presentation of Gospel will be added value proclamation, uniquely formulated proclamation for the end. It will proclaim the same Gospel as in Bible, but tailored for the time it is preached in.

Four: God's end-time people will be divided by the preaching/profession of the Gospel. In final judgment of earth's history, God's professed people will be divided by the Gospel they are proclaiming.

May the challenge of the Gospel be responded by us.

### **No. 3 The Identity of the Two Witnesses Rev. 11:3-6**

Who are the two witnesses (2W) of Rev. 11? Answer is not as simple as we might think.

More info, but less certainty about the identity of the 2W.

Rev. 11:3 – power to the 2W, prophesy for 1260 days. Olive trees, lamp-stands. Fire comes from their mouths. Have power to shut up sky while they prophesy. Can turn water into blood. Can bring plagues.

Who are the 2w. What is this all about? Another literary dynamic in BOOK OF REVELATION – quite often the author of BOOK OF REVELATION takes time out when introducing new theme/concept/character, time out to define it and give identity.

Example: Rev. 1:12-16 – JC appears first time, and He is described in great detail before He speaks or does a/th. Rev. 13:1-7 – much description is in past tense, describes beasts for time before the main time of him showing on the stage.

Rev. 11:3-6 - that's what's happening there. This portion of Rev. 11 comes actually before Rev. 10:6, when end of Daniel's prophecies are predicted. Here, events take place during 1260 days, during the time prophecies of Daniel. They are identified with the activities they have during this time. The real action that related to Rev. 10:8-11, that real action will be dealt with later.

Here – identity of 2w. Reason why it is worth separate presentation is because it is vexing issue. Commentators have looked at these 2w, with different answers. Not easy to identify.

Rev. 11:3

Who will give? Voice is from heaven, that began speaking in Rev. 10:4, appeared in 10:8-11. All one scene – Rev. 10 and 11. Voice: "I will give." The 2w will have divine authority to do whatever they are doing. Prophecy 1260 days in sackcloth. They are called 2 prophets (11:10). These are prophets who will deliver the last message, spoken about in the previous chapter. These witnesses are the fulfilment of the prediction – to prophesy. Recalls Deut. 19:18 – the law of the 2 witnesses. In Jewish legal court system, must have 2 or 3 witnesses, to establish truth. Not only 1 person, but 2 or 3 witnesses, whose testimony reasonably agrees in all decisive points, in order to establish truth.

Jewish legal method is very effective, both observe and describe event.

Seriousness of the message of the 2w. Their testimony is true and believable.

1260 days

What about the 1260 days? Same period as 42 months of previous verse. In BOOK OF REVELATION – 42 months for wicked; for God's people – 1260 days used. These 2w are on side of God/Gospel; they accomplish their work within the Holy City is trodden down. When it says that the

2w are dressed in sackcloth, implies that the message they are given is given in rough times, maybe parallels to the bitter in stomach experience.

Sackcloth – associated with repentance and mourning – Gen. 37:34; Jonah 3 – Ninevites, repentance before God.

2w are messengers who are preparing to give the final message of God in last days of earth's history.

Who are 2w?

Rev. 11:4-6 – identification. Lamp stands – remind of churches in Rev. 1. In Temple – the only light, 7-Book of Revelation candlestick, that gave light in Sanctuary, and it went into the Most Holy place, over the curtain. Trees – symbol of God's people - Rev 7:8,9. Olive tree – most common tree in Palestine, reminds of God's people. Lamp-stands point to church. Allusion to Zech. 4 – Joshua and Zerubabel were restoring the Temple. Author in BOOK OF REVELATION does not pick willy-nilly allusions from OT, but where the lesson is pointed. Rev. 4 and 5 – OT throne; Rev. 6 - themes related to Covenant curses – Zech 1; Lev. 26; Deut. 32; Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Here - basic theme, restoration of temple. Constant reference – to Ezek.40-48, to Lev. 16- DOA; here Zech. 4 on Temple restoration. Here Zech. 4 – most important OT allusion.

Witnesses – symbols of Holy Spirit's power to enlighten the whole earth on God's word thru His people.

Rev. 11:5

2w devour their enemies with fire. OT context – both related to Elijah. Mt. Carmel – fire came on Elijah's altar. Decision on who is the true God. 2 Kings 1 – Elijah repeatedly confronted with soldiers to arrest him, and he warns that fire will come from God to punish/devour them.

2w are not weak even if they suffer for God. They have tremendous divine power, and it is dangerous to oppose them.

Rev. 11:6

Reminder of Elijah's 3 ½ yr of draught; sky was shut up. Here – for 1260 days power to shut, no rain. 2w reflect Elijah, but also turn water into blood – Moses' 1<sup>st</sup> plague at Exodus time. Reminds of plagues of Egypt. These 2 witnesses were Moses and Elijah, or modeled after them.

Both Moses and Elijah talked to God on Mt. Sinai – Exod. 33; 1 Kings 19 – Moses talks to God, Elijah listens and talks to God; both encounter God.

Moses and Elijah were the two who met with JC on Mt. of Transfiguration. Elijah was predicted to return in Mal. 4:5,6.

The 2w serve as Moses and Elijah. These 2w are the righteous counterpart of the mouth and tail of the power of the end. Rev. 9:19. Forces of dragon in the battle before the end have weapons that come from mouth and tail, 2 key weapons. God responds with 2 witnesses.

This follows the pattern of contrast – 144 000 – 2mln; true Trinity – false Trinity; 3 angels offering final proclamation of God – 3 frogs; Babylon – Jer/m; Prostitute – Virtuous Bride. So many contrasts in BOOK OF REVELATION, where God's people are contrasted, and their work.

Identity of 2w

Two main identifications, and reason for them.

One – Bible, with OT and NT is in view here. OT scriptures, for Jews, had 2 parts – Law and Prophets, identified with Moses, and Prophets with David or Elijah. Draught in 1 Kings 17, 18 – not only absence of rain in Elijah's time, but departure of God's word from Israel, as God's prophet himself withdrew from the nation for 3 ½ yr. Luke 4:25,26 – talks about this. Bringing in Elijah could

be symbol of Scriptures of OT and NT, that when the 2w are killed the Scriptures are removed from people.

OT scriptures - Law and Prophets – John 5:39-40; 19:35-37- give testimony to JC. When JC talks about OT, he talks about it as a Witness to Himself. It could be OT Law and Prophets as giving testimony to JC – this could be the reference to Scriptures in identifying the 2w.

Quite often messages of God are described in 2-fold form in BOOK OF REVELATION – Word of God and Testimony of JC. Rev. 1:2, 9. Word of God could be ref. to OT, and Testimony of JC – ref. to NT. In BOOK OF REVELATION we may sense that God's revelation is in 2 parts: old - to Israel, and new - of JC, the Messiah.

Candlesticks – reminds of H.Sp. in Zech. 4:6. HSp produced the NT –John 16:14. Through the NT we have witness of HSp and JC.

Faithful witness in Rev. 19 – called Word of God; JC is the faithful witness, He is the Word of God. Word of Lord Brought plagues to Egypt. Rev. 22:18 – threat of great harm to anyone who tampers with the Word of God; plagues on Egypt will fall on a/o who tampers.

2w – associated with fire; Jer. 5:14 – God's word as fire in Jer's bones.

Number of ways to see the Symbol of Bible here in 2w. These will be proclaimed one full and last time, once again.

Another view – has some powerful parallels as well. The 2w – represent the people of God in last days of history, or the church. The Temple of God is applied to people of God and church; here in Rev. 11 – message of restoring the Temple. Eph. 2:20 – apostles are foundation of NT Temple of believers. Very presence of Temple imagery in Rev. 11 may point to church being in view. Mention of Holy City – Acts 4:24-28; 15:15-18 – OT prophecies applied to Jer/m are applied to JC. OT prophecies predict that certain things will happen to Jer/m, and such texts in NT are applied to the church, to the people of God. In a real sense- church on earth is New Jer/m; God sees in this church same function as Jer/m in OT.

Witnessing is primary task of God's NT people. 2w idea – good symbol of church. Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8 – witnessing primary task of God's people.

Olive trees – represent people of God in BOOK OF REVELATION and in NT– Rev. 7:1-3; 8:7; 9:4. Trees represent people of God. Olive tree is most common in Palestine, represents God's people well

Lampstands in Rev. 1-3 = church; just as lampstand is the only light in OT Sanctuary. Church is the only light in this world, that's how people come to Scriptures in NT.

Concept of 2w is parallel to mouth and tail of Rev. 9:19. This suggests that just as Satan's forces at end-time are made of people and organisations that support his plans, so God's side is presented by people and organisations to support God's mission, namely church.

You can make strong case that the 2w = church in final crisis of earth's history. They may represent the authority that lies behind church, namely God's Word.

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2w as people who proclaim the message is attractive, but also the idea that this could be the word of God is attractive too.

What should we do? Two options, you decide. If the people of God identification is primary, then main trust of passage is final proclamation of Gospel and suffering of witnesses who make it. 3 ½ days should not be made much of, which could be a reference to JC's death and resurrection. They

suffer for their witness as JC did for His. What we see in Rev. 10:7,11 favour this view; what these witnesses do is final prophecy/message to nations; message sweet in mouth, bitter in belly.

If Scripture interpretation is correct, then we have to look for some special problem with Scriptures, especially when Daniel's time prophecies come to an end. Particularly year 1798. (No time to explain how we come to that). At time of French Revolution many scholars understood that Daniel's prophecies are coming to end. They saw the French Revolution as time of killing the 2w. French Revolution declared Bible and X/ty dead. If you choose this, then 2w and their ascendance to heaven – distribution of Bible and proclamation of Gospel.

Whichever one of these two you chooses, the ultimate end of passage is the same. Whether people of God or Scriptures, what's in view of Rev. 11 is Rev. 11:11-13 – final prominence given to God's people and church of God. If Scripture view is taken, then message of this passage is that secularism and atheism will seek to destroy faith – but they can't / won't.

#### Spiritual lesson

One: Fire from mouth - ignoring word of God is dangerous; huge consequences for not taking God's word seriously. Word of God tell us how we are made and how we best function.

2w = church → 1) Witnessing with our mouth; 2) Living out in our lives the experience of JC. To be like Him and to speak about Him is what being church all is about.

### **No. 4 The Death and Resurrection of the Two Witnesses Rev. 11:7-13**

BOOK OF REVELATION talks about Sodom, Egypt, Babylon? What's the story about these? Why does John use them in here and why?

#### Rev. 11:7-13

Material comes after close of 1260 days. Same time period – close of Dan's time prophecies. Interesting passage, filled with puzzles and questions. Study it verse-by-verse.

#### Rev. 11:7

They = 2w. Reminds of Rev. 10:6,7 – finishing mystery of God; Matt 24:14 – Gospel is proclaimed to all world.

Period b/n close of Dan's prophecies and the very end of earth's history.

New figure from Abyss. First mention of Abyss – 'the.' Why definite article – the original readers were expected to know. We are not original readers and have not heard preaching of John, we know all that is in NT and in BOOK OF REVELATION. Can we unpack the meaning of the Beast from Abyss.

Abyss – home of demons; Luke 8:31, demons are confined there. If s/th comes from Abyss, symbol of demonic attack. T5 – Rev. 9:1 – Abyss, locusts, demonic attack on people of world. Rev. 17:8 – there is beast that comes out from Abyss, that beast represents the great symbol of secular powers in the end time. Satan is later bound in Rev. 20:1-3. Who is this Beast from Abyss? Either Satan or certain working behind civil power.

Was this beast throughout the 42 months or arises at end of 42 months? Rev. 13- Beast from Sea (Sea can be called Abyss in Greek OT). That beast from Sea has dominant period during the 42 months. Is this beast same as Rev. 13, or does it come only after the 1260 days/42 months.

Rev. 11:7 Beast comes up from Abyss will overpower. Comes up – present participle in Greek, means action taking place in same time as main verb. When they have finished their testimony, then the ascending beast will attack. Not very clear/definite in this structure, because of adjectival, but not adverbial use. Time is not very important in this particular use of the participle.

The Beast comes from Abyss when witnesses finish their testimony. This is not beast of Rev. 13, but another beast, that comes right at end of that period. Both beasts represent some power that dominates in world in some way or another.

If 2w=Scriptures, then the traditional designation of this beast as the French Revolution would fit. Greatest attack on Scriptures took place in context of Fr. Rev. In 1780's and 1790's after Dan's end-time prophecies are over.

Abyss tied in with T5 (Rev. 9); T5 represents triumph of secularism, triumph of end-time God-philosophy. French Revolution would be the most blatant example of blatant secularism that took place. Fr. Rev. is the foundation for much in the world today – universal conscription, communism, democracy, modern secularisation – all have their root in Fr. Rev. Most wide spread of Gospel has happened since time of Fr. Rev. In 1790's – Great Missionary Mov/t.

2w = Scriptures, Beast from Abyss = French Rev. Makes sense, fits well; can be interpreted.

This power makes war with 2w and overpowers them. Reminds of Dan. 7:21. Here we have Beast from Abyss, that attacks people of God. IF this is what's in mind here in Rev. 11:7, then the 2w are representative of the people of God, and the power is enemy power that hurts and persecutes God's people.

Rev. 11:8

Image, symbol. Their bodies will lie in streets of cities. In original – it is not their bodies, but “the body of them.” The 2w are described as single body, as single individual. Rev. 11:9 – singular used again, but switches to plural at end of v. 9.

2w – never separated, they are not literal persons, they function as single entity, thus they are symbolic of s/th – either Scriptures or Church.

Great City – contrast with Holy City (11:2); First appearance of concept of Babylon. Constant interaction in BOOK OF REVELATION b/n Babylon and New Jer/m. Great City – represents power of evil in opposition to God; normally is equated to Babylon. Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, etc.

Concept of Great City is repeated in BOOK OF REVELATION, equated with Babylon, but always power in opposition to God.

Sodom – ancient city, recorded in Genesis. City that was renowned for immorality, for luxury, for flaunted behaviour. Gen. 19:4-8; Ezek. 16:49-58.

Egypt – another ancient power in opposition to God. Known for its atheism and self-sufficiency. Exodus 5:22 Egyptians felt self-sufficient, because they had Nile River. Because of Nile Egyptians were not dependent on rain for crops. In Palestine – people look to heaven for rain, espec. b/n May to Sept/Oct. In place like that growing crops is difficult. In Egypt – things are easy, Nile overflows and waters around, rich crops. Egypt is renowned not so much for immorality as for self-sufficiency.

Only three of the great enemy powers in the OT are mentioned in BOOK OF REVELATION – Sodom, Egypt, Babylon. Why only these three and no others? Have common features. All three are associated with significant rivers: Nile, Jordan, Euphrates. Visited by people of God, prophets; all 3 rejected God's messengers; all 3 received God's judgments and destruction.

Symbol – of enemy powers, who hear Gospel, but rejected it and are defeated by loss of the great river. Drying of Euphrates – symbol of end of Babylon.

Rev. 11:8

“Their Lord was crucified.” 2 possibilities – literal ref. to literal Jer/m as enemy of God. In OT, though Holy City and with Temple, God treated the people as enemies as they rejected and neglected God. Literal, OT Jer/m can become enemy of God. This could be ref. to Jer/m that crucified JC, as Sodom and Babylon.

Associated death of 2w with crucifixion of JC.

Sodom and Egypt – place where JC was crucified. Opponents that they faced – same as JC faced; their death – in same place and kind as JC.

JC is crucified again His witnesses.

Rev. 11:9

3 ½ days – miniature of the 3 ½ yr of which 2w clothed in sackcloth; intensified obscurity.

More obscure – not to be there at all, they have ceased to exist.

3 ½ days – JC spends 3 days in tomb. Crucified in midst of week – 3 ½ period, allusion to death/burial/resurrection of JC.

“People from every tribe.” – Rev. 10:11 (reflection of). Perhaps this is the bitterness of eating the scroll. Here the exact same terms are used. Nations are rejecting the witnesses. Bitterness of the message is that it is rejected by same people that it was intended for. Nothing more bad than to Bring a message of salvation and be rejected- message and messenger. Refused even burial. To ancients – to refuse burial was gross indignity. 1 Kings 21:42; Jer. 8:1,2; 14:16; Psalm 79:2,3.

Witnesses are disrespected and rejected along with their message. People of the nations refuse them burial.

Rev. 11:10

“Those who live on earth” – ref. to wicked in BOOK OF REVELATION. Rev. 6:10; 8:13; 13:8-14; 17:2,8. Wherever it appears, it is reference to wicked, to those opposed to God and God’s people.

“Those who dwell on earth, they send each other gifts” – people rejoice, enter into relationships. Esther 9:2 – Jews celebrate deliverance, by giving gifts. Luke 23:12 – two enemies, Pilate and Herod, were reconciled. S/t people get reconciled and people learn to be united in common opposition of JC and His people.

What will happen to the 2w?

Rev. 11:11

Indignity of their burial lasts 3 ½ days. “After” Does not mean immediately after, but could mean s/t later. If 3 ½ were prophetic, then 3 ½ yrs of silence. If this silence is 3 ½ yrs, then it is true historically that during the Fr. Rev. there was a period of 3 ½ yr of silence on the Bible. Then they come to life – Gen. 2:7 – “breathed into Adam.” God himself Brings them back to life. Ezek. 37 – dry bones and life into them. Ez. 37:9, 10.

Field, full of dry bones, life comes to them, because God speaks. Whoever the 2 witnesses are, they suffer terrible indignity and death, and later are raised to life by God. Some commentators suggest that this reference to expansion of Bible societies after Fr. Rev/n. In the 1790’s – greater apposition to Bible, but 18<sup>th</sup> c. and 19<sup>th</sup> c. – wide spreading of Bible. OT and NT came to life again as never before (if that’s the meaning of the prophecy).

Response of wicked - “Terror struck them” – same word as in Rev. 14:7. Appearance of God – caused godly fear in those who have observed. Revival of 2w is same as judgment hour msg of 1<sup>st</sup> angel. Rev. 14:7. Resurrection of witnesses Brings same kind of result as msg of 1<sup>st</sup> angel.

Rather than being a msg about SCJC, it is msg about heavenly things. Rev. 11:12

Rev. 11:12

Crucial to resurrection of witnesses is voice from heaven, and ascending up to heaven. It is not so much as ascending to heaven for their own sake, but to be observed by people on earth. Final proclamation of Gospel on earth has s/th to say about going on in heaven – about Heavenly Sanctuary, judgment, pre-advent judgment.

“They went up to heaven in cloud” – Acts 1:9-11: JC went up to heaven in cloud. Before He went up, “You will be witnesses for me through the world.” Concept of witnessing is associated with JC on clouds. Here too the 2w ascend to heaven in cloud as JC. Clouds generally indicate ascension, presence of Divinity/God. – Ex. 13:21; 1 King 8:11; Rev. 1:7; 14:14. This is divine experience we are seeing.

Rev. 14:6 – three angels proclaim final message from mid-heaven.

Rev. 11:11-13 - portray very same thing as in Rev. 14:6-7. Final message from God to dying world, to give glory to God. Both Elijah and Moses were raised to heaven. Elijah – 2 Kings 2:11; Moses – Jude 9.

This text pulls themes from Bible to Bring its point.

Rev. 11:13

Severe earthquake; 1/10 of city collapses;

“At that very hour” – Rev. 11:13 events on earth are related to heaven’s events in v. 12.

Ascension and earthquake happen at same time, and are related. Wording of severe earthquake is same as 1<sup>st</sup> earthquake in Rev. 6:12. It seems to signal beginning of time of end, and final approach to earth’s history.

1/10 of city collapsed – Great City: Egypt, Sodom, Babylon. It is partial, not total collapse of Babylon (as in Rev. 17, 18.) Foretaste of 7<sup>th</sup> plague, when Babylon fully and totally fall. Events are still in T6. End of all things takes place in T7.

If this city represents France, then it is only a part of the Great City. Events here trigger final crisis of world’s history.

“7000 killed” – Elijah: 7000 remain faithful; here – contrast. Perhaps these 7 000 represent those who continue to resist Gospel. Survivors – terrified, gave glory to God. Survivors – usually translated with ‘remnant.’ In Rev. 14:7 – same word for giving glory; same response called for. Rev. 11:11-13 run parallel to Rev. 14:6-12.

Rev. 16:9 – “and glorify Him.” Giving glory to God = repenting. Remnant in Rev. 11 repents; Remnant in 16:9 does not. Final Gospel msg at close of earth’ history divides world in 2 groups: Remnant, and those who refuse to repent.

Rev. 11 is parallel to Rev. 14:6,7. Some of the people who experience all the events related to the 2w give the appropriate response in the Rev. 14:6,7.

Whether 2w represent church or Scripture, focus of passage – proclamation of Gospel, and the acceptance of the Gospel by people. We can expect that Gospel will again go in might power, in context of prophecy, of heaven. Sanctuary and restoration there, in drawing people’s attention to the great Gospel of God. When this day comes, we want to be found accepting this Gospel

Spiritual lessons

One: Majority is not always right. Masses of people rejoiced when 2w died, they felt vindicated when 2w died. Sinful human nature – don’t go with majority.

Two: Enemies often become united in common opposition to God’s people. Those who oppose a person drawing closer to God will unite, even if the don’t have a/th in common. Nothing unites people so well as opposition to God, or faithful people.

Unity with Gospel vs. Unity in opposition to Gospel.

**No. 5 Introduction to the Last Half of Revelation**  
**Rev. 11:18-19**  
**Revelation 12**

Is the story in 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ of BOOK OF REVELATION about animals, or do animals represent something else?

Rev. 11:18, 19 mark a major turning point in structure of BOOK OF REVELATION. 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ of BOOK OF REVELATION is more consistently interested in last-day events. 1<sup>st</sup> half – easier to structure; 2<sup>nd</sup> half – more difficult to structure.

It will be helpful to find author's key to intentional structure of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the book. Rev. 11:18 contains a key in advance, left by author, to make sense of 2<sup>nd</sup> half of BOOK OF REVELATION. Here is the decisive turning point where we move the last events of earth.

Here are the roots and soil where our spiritual food grows into faith, more than the food itself.

In most books there is particular order that is followed. Chapter would have intro, body to the chapter, and conclusion, and so on. In BOOK OF REVELATION it is different. Instead of concluding one section and introducing another, John embeds the intros for one section in the conclusion of the previous classic example – Rev. 3:21 – intro to 7 seals: throne, overcoming of throne. Rev. 3:21 provides intro to 7 seals of BOOK OF REVELATION. Similar in 5<sup>th</sup> seal – climax of 4 horses and intro Q to 7 trumpets, “How long?” This statement points forward to the judgment of trumpets.

The author of BOOK OF REVELATION weaves his intro summary in the preceding conclusion. Rev. 11:18 – similar technique, climax of 7 trumpets, essence of T7, leading to concluding events of earth's history. Rev. 11;18 – summary in advance of major themes of BOOK OF REVELATION.

Rev. 11:18

Five basic statements in this verse. “Nations were angry.” “Your wrath has come.”

Time – for judging dead, awarding servants, destroy those who destroy earth.

These 5 statements forms climax, but also summary of the last events in BOOK OF REVELATION's 2<sup>nd</sup> half. Compare with decisive statements in last part of BOOK OF REVELATION. Each of these phrases summarises part of the BOOK OF REVELATION later on.

First, “nations were angry.” Rev. 12:17. “Enraged” in Rev. 12:17 – same as “angry” in 11:18.

“Your wrath has come” – Rev. 15:1. Statement in 11:18 – summarized in 15:1

“Time for judging dead” – Rev. 20:12 – judgment of dead

“Time for rewarding servants” – Rev. 22:12

“Destroying those who destroy earth” – Rev. 19:2 in Gr, “The one who corrupted the earth.”

“Corrupted” and “Destroyed” – same in Gr.

Each phrase of 11:18 has counterpart in 2<sup>nd</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION. Each of these counterparts comes at decisive points. Rev. 12:17 – decisive text, summary of entire battle b/n dragon and Remnant of Rev. 13 and 14. Rev. 12:17 – summary in advance of Rev. 13 and 14. By choosing “Nations were angry” author points to whole section of BOOK OF REVELATION 13 and 14. He shows us that this is a unit that has to be taken as such.

“Your [God's] wrath is completed” – 15:1 – summary of all 7 plagues sequence. 11:18 – points to Rev. 15-16 blows of plagues; even in Rev 17 and 18. “Your wrath has come” – summary of Rev 15-18.

Rev. 12-18 – central issue: nations were angry, power of world are setting themselves up against God and His people, and they make their attack.

Rev. 15-18 – God responds with anger, to execute His covenant, and to punish nations that have punished His people. Rev. 15-18 – proves to be essence of final battle b/n nations of world and God's people.

“Dead were judged” – Rev. 20. Millennium. “My reward is with me” – New Jer/m, reward of saints.

11:18 – will destroy “those who destroy earth” – Rev. 19, the final destruction of earth.

Rev. 11:18 – structure of what's to follow in nutshell.

First section of 2<sup>nd</sup> half of BOOK OF REVELATION – 12-14. Dragon – wrath in Rev. 13. Remnant's response – Rev. 14. In 12-14 – essence of battle.

Second section - Wrath of God – Rev. 15-18 – final battle from God's perspective, as response to anger of nations, 7 bowls of plagues, prostitute Babylon (17) defeated, ch. 18 – city of Babylon defeated. Section is about wrath of God.

3<sup>rd</sup> section – Rev. 19 – God destroys destroyers of earth.

4<sup>th</sup> section – Rev. 20 – Millennium

5<sup>th</sup> section – Rv. 21-22 – New Earth.

First half of Rev – very easy to structure. Problems of structure – 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Rev. Helpful to find author's own indication on how to structure 2<sup>nd</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION. In Rev. 11:18 we have author's giving in advance the major movements in the BOOK OF REVELATION.

Second point on structure – key turning points of 2<sup>nd</sup> half of BOOK OF REVELATION can all be associated with the 7 trumpets => main focus of 2<sup>nd</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION is on final events of earth's history. 2<sup>nd</sup> half of BOOK OF REVELATION – covers X/an history as a whole, from Cross to SCJC. 2<sup>nd</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION – focus on end of time and final events on earth's history.

BOOK OF REVELATION is difficult enough and these types of hints are very important to und/d BOOK OF REVELATION.

## **Revelation 12**

Rev. 12:1-5

One of several strange beasts in Rev, for first time. Such beasts described for first time. Obviously, from this time the things will be different in BOOK OF REVELATION.

“Lion King” movie film was about people and their relationships, but not about animals. Makes you think about relationships. BOOK OF REVELATION is like “Lion King” for ancient world. BOOK OF REVELATION is not about animals, though there are a lot of animals there. BOOK OF REVELATION is about issues, powers, relationships, b/n people. Rev. 12-14-anilams, people. BOOK OF REVELATION is not a story about animals. There is s/th about each figure that shows that these figures are to be taken symbolically; it's all about life and relationships.

Rev. 12

Stage setting for Rev. 12 is Rev. 11:19. Here we have stage setting for Rev. 13-14 – that is the Ark of Covenant. What’s that all about? Suggestion - Mercy seat is the key here. If that mercy seat is what’s in view here, then it would suggest that all in Rev. 12-14 is under the blood, or sheltered under mercy of God, that human events are undertaking in light of what took place on Cross.

Second possible interpretation – all focused on 10 Commandments. Then, if that’s the case, the Law of God, is central point.

Third – the view of the Most Holy Place – the DOA is in focus. If DOA is in view, then emphasis of Rev. 12-14 has to do with last judgment.

Which is most correct? All fit well Rev. 12-14, but you need to ponder.

Rev. 12 builds on Most Holy Place, is divided in 4 sections; 3 main sections, but think of them as 4.

Rev. 12:1-5 – war over a child

Rev. 12:7-12 – interlude; war in heaven

Rev. 12:13-16, and maybe v. 6 – war in heaven has earthly counterpart

Rev. 12:17 – climaxes the chapter, introduces Rev. 13 and 14. It is duo-directional passage.

Rev. 12:17 – climax of Rev. 12, sets stage for Rev. 13 and 14.

Let’s talk on Rev. 12:1-5 here.

Rev. 12:1, 2

“Sign” – first time the word appears in BOOK OF REVELATION. In BOOK OF REVELATION ‘sign’ refers to demonic miracles, with purpose to deceive. Rev. 13:13,14; 16:14; 19:20. Normally in BOOK OF REVELATION ‘sign’ is applied to demonic miracles. Here, sign seems to mean striking visual scene. Rev. 3; 15:1 – same use. In NT – signs are portents of last days – Luke 21:11, 25; Acts 2:19 – signs as pointing to last days. Perhaps use of this word here is clear indication that focus of BOOK OF REVELATION is particularly on last days of history, even though Rev. 12 flashes back to X/an era.

Author here focuses on what X/an era and what’s to follow.

Woman clothed with Sun, crown with 12 stars. Woman is dressed in Sun, Moon, stars. OT – Joseph’s dream, where stars, sun, and moon bow to him. Bride of the king - Song to Solomon 6:10. That obviously is exaggeration. Solomon was in love with this woman, and describes here in excessive ways. Woman, dressed in Sun, Moon, and stars – found in Song of Solomon. Represents Israel – Isaiah 54:5, 6.

Here, a woman is symbol of Israel. Ez. 16:8; Hosea 2; 1 Cor. 11 – idea of woman as symbol portrays the people of God.

Woman can also illustrate apostate Israel in OT – Hosea 2:1-13; Jer. 3:6-10; Rev. 17. It seems that this woman, dressed in spectacular fashion, represents people of God, particularly as she is crowned. Rev. 12:1 – crown on 12 stars - 12 tribes of Israel and/or 12 apostles.

She is the 1<sup>st</sup> of 7 mystic figures in 2<sup>nd</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION, then 3 figures that refer to Satan – Dragon, Sea Beast, Land Beast (Rev. 13); 3 figures ref. to JC – ch. 12 – Michael, Lamb – ch. 13; Son of Man – ch. 14.

These 7 mystic figures Bring substance to this part of BOOK OF REVELATION – 3 apply to Satan and his forces, 3 to JC, and 1 to church (the woman). issue here – rest of the book. War on earth is playing out the issues from the war in heaven. What happens to woman happens because of what’s happening in war b/n Satan and JC. This war is fought on this earth as well. Consequences are experienced also by God’s people on earth.

More interesting also is pregnant. Woman representing Israel is a woman in labour. What's that all about? We won't find right away, but we have to come in contact with new figure – Dragon. Rev. 12: 3, 4

Rev. 12:3, 4

Dragon – new figure, another sign, closely related to sign in 12:1, enormous red dragon. Primary figure behind dragon – Satan. Language here reminds of Gen. 3:15; the war b/n Satan and Woman. Extended meaning in this passage – reflects pagan Rome. Why say so? Who is the woman? Israel. Child? JC. This woman represents OT Israel with 12 tribes, who bring into being the Messiah. Devil, thru Herod, tried to destroy JC. Rev. 12:5 – recollection of Herod's treats against JC. Civil power at time of JC's birth – pagan Rome; behind pagan Rom – Satan. Dragon was throwing down stars.

Reminds of Dan. 8:10 – little horn tears stars from heaven. If these stars are some of the 12 that are in woman's crown, then it could be persecution of the faithful/true leaders of Israel. It may have some deeper meaning; later we'll talk about it.

Here we see dragon throwing down stars, threatens God's people and their offspring. What's going to happen?

Rev. 12:5

Birth to son. Iron Sceptre. Snatched up to God.

Male child –not yet clear. “Will rule with iron sceptre”, “snatched up to God” – clearly JC. Rev. 2:26, 27 – JC rules with iron rod.

JC is the one who rules with iron sceptre. At the end he'll share rule with His people. Rev. 12:5 – in view is JC, who, after the dragon sought to destroy him, ascended to heaven.

Rev. 12:5 – more than just birth of JC. Contains all of JC's life – birth, temptation, death, ascension, heavenly rule. JC was born to die, but now – enthroned in heaven. Rev. 12:5 – Great Controversy began in heaven. In heaven battle b/n dragon and JC began. On earth JC carried on earth the battle/war in heaven. After ascension, the church will face the wrath of Satan. Rev. 12:16, 17 – that's what these verse are all about –what happens to woman and God's people after ascension.

Summary:

BOOK OF REVELATION is not about animals. It is about people and relationships a/g groups of people with consequences for every individual on earth. Animals in BOOK OF REVELATION are about battle b/n Michael and Dragon, b/n JC and Satan. As we open ourselves to deeper meaning of symbols, we'll find information that we can't find from other sources.

One tragic thing about being secular – you have no idea where you came from, where you are going, what's going on in the starry universe. If you believe in God and und/d BOOK OF REVELATION, you will see the bigger issue in the Universe as a whole. Important to have part in such conflict in the Universe. Good to be part in such a big thing.

## **No. 6 War in Heaven and on Earth Rev. 12:6-16**

If you had a choice, would you rather die than sin? I hope you never have to find the hard way.

Previous presentation: woman, dragon, male child. Struggles of JC with Satan – had heavenly origin. Focus of war after ascension moves to the church. Rest of Rev. 12 continues theme of Rev. 12:1-5. Now - Rev. 12:6, 14. Reason for such picking – later.

Rev. 12:6, 14

Double reference to same experience. Some time after the male child is snatched to heaven, woman herself comes under attack of dragon. Fed and cared for in desert for 1260 days, or time, times, and half a time. How long is time, times, and half a times. The 1260 days correspond to the same period (3 ½ yr). These 2 mentions of time period remind of Dan 7 and 12; also of early ministry of JC, because his ministry –from baptism to crucifixion was about 3 ½ yrs. Woman’s experience – modeled after earthly experience of JC.

In BOOK OF REVELATION, when this term is spoken of in 1260 days is in positive – 2w (11:3), woman in desert (12:6). Refers to God’s side of conflict. Whenever this same period is referred to as 42 months, it is negative, referring to enemies of God. 42 months Gentiles trample on Holy City (11:2); 42 month Beast from Sea dominates humanity (13:5). This time period is the same – on one hand domain of evil for 42 months; on other hand – people of God, oppressed, persecuted, but surviving under God’s protection.

Historically, was there 1260-day period, or possibly, as in Biblical principle – 1260 years in history, when on one hand Bible and true Israel were in obscurity, and when there was persecuting power. Middle Ages, from 538AD until 1798AD – 1260 yrs period: Bible in obscurity, true followers of JC – persecuted. That’s not anti-Catholic prejudice, but observation of reality of history. Many of the medieval saints made same observation – Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, Eberhard of Salzburg. These people had pointed things to say about RCC and its leaders during this time. It had become more interested in political power and financial gain than spirituality.

God had predicted that such time will come – church as persecuting power, true X/ans hiding.

In Rev. 12:6, 14 – woman flees in desert. Reminds of the Exodus – people of Israel escape into desert, of trial and testing. Rev. 12:14 – Exod. 19:4. Parallel to experience of Exodus. Wilderness prepared especially by God for her. Nothing takes God by surprise. God sees to it that there are limited places on the power of enemy to hurt us.

Woman taken care of in desert – in Exodus: Manna, nourishment. In Sinai – dry land; miraculous food becomes necessary under such circumstances. Woman = Israel, nourished.

Rev. 12 – interesting movement from imagery of Eden (Eve, giving birth, threatened by serpent) to Exodus. Church is people in the wilderness b/n Exodus and Jordan. Exodus – used to describe the Cross in NT, X/an’s exodus from sin. Jordan – SCJC. Church – caught b/n Cross and SCJC, b/n its Exodus and Jordan.

Rev. 17:3 Woman on scarlet beast, 7 heads and 10 horns. Striking parallel. Woman in desert in Rev. 12; Rev. 17 – woman in desert. Different women. John was astonished in vision of Rev. 17 (17:6).

War in Heaven

Rev. 12:7-12 War in heaven. Behind every earthly war, there is cosmic conflict. If not for BOOK OF REVELATION, we would know little about it. Take BOOK OF REVELATION out of Bible, and we’ll know very little of heavenly context doing on earth. This part of BOOK OF REVELATION is very important. Behind e/th happening on earth, war in heaven. Dragon and his angels are part of war.

Since stars can be angels in BOOK OF REVELATION (Rev. 1:20). Dragons hurls down 1/3 of stars from heaven. Could it be that dragging down of stars from heaven is indication of Heavenly war? That Satan has taken his associates from heaven?

Michael – reference to JC; Satan – anti-Christ. In heavenly places – Satan and JC in battle for allegiance. Satan/Dragon were not strong enough. Dragon is not strong enough.

In Rev. 9 demons coming out of Abyss, but not allowed to hurt those who are sealed. Dragon is not strong enough. Rev. 13 – That’ the reason why in Rev. 13 Dragon gathers allies, Sea Beast and Land Beast. Because not strong enough, they lost their place in heaven. Dragon is fearful – that because lost place in heaven, will loose place on earth.

Rev. 12:12, 17 Dragon is insecure because has lost place in heaven. Human beings – person who has been humiliated and lost status, takes it on every one around. Dragon, who looses place in heaven, takes it out on those who live on earth.

Dragon = Devil, serpent, Satan, leads world astray. Satan lies behind all powers for evil in world. Clearly, great events that take place on Earth are part of major battle that started in heaven, and is now spilled to earth.

“Now.” That word appears here. “Then” is in Greek “Now.” “Now has come ...” At the point where Satan is cast down, the kingdom of our God and authority of JC is set up. When did it take place? To the enthronement of JC, time of ascension to heaven, after death on cross, AD 31. Main theme of Rev. 5 – enthronement of JC. Rev. 12:5 – male child, born, snatched to God; same message as in Rev. 5. Rev. 12:10 – when Satan is cast down, comes the kingdom of God and authority of JC. Casting down of Dragon and exalting of JC comes together.

What is the cosmic conflict about; the heavenly war? At cross JC exalted and Satan cast down.

John 12:31-33. According to John, it is the death of JC that is the decisive event in human and cosmic history. Point of death of JC that cast down Satan; because of death of JC that JC takes throne in heaven.

Rev. 12:10 – deepest theology in Bible. Rev. 12:11 – Brings conflict home. “They” = brother of JC and God. Overcoming by blood of Lamb and word of their testimony. Believers overcome – how? – thru blood of Lamb and Word of Testimony, even unto death. Believers’ authority to overcome is rooted in the Cross of JC. It is the Cross of JC that means all to us; Cross of JC provides foundation for JC’s victory over Satan and ours as well.

Rev. 12:12

Why rejoice – heaven is rid of Dragon. Earth now has Satan’s undivided attention. Interesting dichotomy – believers have never been stronger than now, because of power of JC’s blood, but never have they been more vulnerable because of the undivided attention of the dragon’s fury. Dragon – furious, knows has short time. Short time is assured. He realizes that in a real sense war is lost, but tries until the end to win the war. Defeat is assured, but war is still not over. Defeat – assured, but Satan tries to make JC miserable and tormenting His people. That stage is what we see.

Since attacking the male child, Dragon plays on heavenly realities. War in heaven begins before JC’s birth. In real sense war goes back to beginning of time. Rev. 13:8 =- Lamb slain from beginning of world. In Context of Rev. 12:5,10,11 – decisive event for war in heaven – Cross, Death, Resurrection of JC. Blood of JC, Death of JC – Brings victory.

“What does it mean that Satan is cast down at Cross – Rom 3:25-26. Cross shows that God is just when God justifies. God is justified. How can God treat people who have sinned. as if they have never sinned? Because of JC’s death on Cross.

Do Satan's accusations against God, which he acted out when He accused JC thru Jewish leaders? These accusations – refuted by JC on cross. Satan –murderer from beginning, but never clearly seen as when sending JC on Cross.

Sin throws the Universe in turmoil. Satan slanders and accuses God. That's one person's word a'st another. God has permitted the conflict, to find out and point out at tend who's right and who's wrong. God could take control over Universe any minute. That's not the issue, though. Rev. 5 – something happened at Cross, that causes entire Universe to say, "We worship God and Lamb. Lamb is worthy, God is worthy of our praise." S/th happens at Cross that wins hearts of all who und/d.

In AD 31 happened in heaven, but not yet on earth. There are many people who believe Satan's lies, many citizens of this earth who believe that God is unjust and that Cross has accomplished e/th. Church ahs this responsibility to make this clear.

E/o knows God can seize control of Universe if He wishes. It is not issue of power, but issue of being righ and honest.

Story of Daniel and King Darius – Dan. 6. It was not issue of power, but of right. Darius could not Break the law. "Might makes right" – but that's not the way with God. With God – Being right makes might. Reason why things have gone for long w/t conclusion is because right ahs to be established forever. At Cross proven that God is right, that He has the right to rule. On earth we have task to continue doing what's right. While on earth, we have to und/d cross and make it clear to all.

Rev. 12:10-11 – in middle of Rev. Promise for overcoming – many in BOOK OF REVELATION. How to overcome? By blood of Lam, by Word of Testimony, by coming to place where you rather die than sin. You are so settled on God's sight that you rather die than change decision. IT is by Blood of Lamb, firmness of Commitment, and Word of God / Word of Testimony. Overcoming is central theme of BOOK OF REVELATION.

Rev. 12:13

Devil angry with church, because He can't touch JC. Parallel with Rev. 12:5 – can't seize JC, but tries to seize the woman. As if return to Rev. 12:5 –if you can't snatch the male child, persecution to woman. Rev. 12:15,16. Remember from previous presentations – water can be used in 3 different ways in Revelation: water as nourishment; cleansing; flooding/destructive power. Here, we see the destructive power. Image: great flood of water, coming from river. This water is swallowed up by earth. Which part of earth? Where is the woman? Woman is in desert.

This water that comes from mouth of serpent – could be allusion to deceptive words of serpent in Garden of Eden. Water could be deceptive words and also persecution powers. This passage shows more than persecution. Satan's way of attack: threat, attack, persecution; and also – persuasion.

"Water like river" – Flooding rivers were spoken of as dragons with wings. Imagine a river that over floods its banks. Where the river floods looks like wings of dragon. Concept of overflowing river – symbol of dragon with wings. Here we have deception and persecution by civil and secular power soft h world. God's true Israel rejected by dominant power sof ht world for 1260 years. History of the Waldenses, who lived in Southern France and Northern Italy. These people studied the Bible faithfully, from 12<sup>th</sup> c. onwards. They kept the Scriptures and were free people.

"Earth helped the Woman." The Exodus story – desert put distance b/n Israel and Egypt. Here in Rev. – a thematic reversal. Flooding water saved Israel at Red Sea, was a blessing during Exodus. Here – reversal – drying up of Flood saves Israel. Israel finds refuge from Egypt in desert. Desert here is positive concept. Any historical even that matched this events? At close of 1260 years many forces came together to restore Scripture and stop persecution of faithful: Enlightenment, French and American Revolution, Reformation, missionary outreach in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c.; all came to life at end of 1260 years; these forces Brought religious liberty. Desert and earth that helped the woman. Historically that represents the great forces that Brought change in the world around 1800s.

Spiritual lessons:

One: In final days of earth's history, prayer will be vital protection of God's people. Not explicit in this passage, but in Psalm 32:6 – very clear. BOOK OF REVELATION describes final days of earth's history as days of great threat to God's people but in these days – prayer will be vital protection to God's people.

Two: Rulership of God will be effective only to those who acknowledge Him. Ps. 104:1-5 – rescuing of God's people in Rev. 12 was effective because of their relationship with God. Rulership of JC is effective on earth for those who acknowledge Him.

Three: Behind earthly conflicts is a Cosmic Conflict. W/t BOOK OF REVELATION we would know very little of it.

Four: Believers have never been stronger than they are now in the power of the Blood, but never too vulnerable because of angry dragon in X/an era. We live in time b/n JC's rule and time of great threat of the dragon.

Five: At Cross s/th happened that wins the hearts of all who und/d. Cross – AD31 – in heaven its implications were fully und/d, but has to be und/d on earth as well. At end of time – great proclamation on Earth, to make visible and understood the great sacrifice of JC.

## **No. 7 The Last Deception on Earth's History** **Rev. 12:17**

This are not always what they seem to be.

Rev. 12 – from JC's birth and life, ministry, to persecution, to final battle b/n Dragon and Woman's seed. From this point, focus of BOOK OF REVELATION is on last day events. Dragon and Michael in battle. Dragon attacks JC, attacks woman, and the last-day people of JC.

Rev. 12:17 – climax of war in heaven. Last verse of Rev. 12. Dragon was enraged, n/th new. Rev. 12:12 – dragon is angry again. Frustrated by failed efforts – Rev. 12:8. Later – God takes care fo the woman. Time and again, dragon is frustrated fro his purposes. At end of Earth's history, he faces the remnant of the woman's seed.

“He went off to make war” with seed of woman. Going away is not the way to make war. Dragon, instead of confronting situation, goes away. Reality is, Dragon realizes he has not enough strength, that he has failed on his own. He will not enter into final conflict w/t allies. He retreats from conflict of a time, and there he calls 2 beasts – from the sea, and other from the land.

He is preparing to make war with rest of her offspring, the remnant of woman's seed. That is in parallel with 1<sup>st</sup> offspring of woman – JC. JC's experience on earth- sets model for experience of last generation of woman's seed.

Who are these people, signified by Remnant? “Those who obey God's commandments” and “hold to the testimony of JC”, ie. have prophetic gift as John Revelator. Last generation of earth's history –marked by prophetic gifts and willingness to keep God's commandment.

How Dragon carries out war? Calls 2 beasts. Remnant faces 3 opponents – Dragon, Sea monster, Land monster. God is spoken often in 3s in BOOK OF REVELATION – Rev. 1. God in terms of Father, Son, Holy Spirit. In BOOK OF REVELATION allusions are made to these 3. In Dragon, Sea Beast (SB) and Land Beast (LB) – we have counterfeit of God. Dragon is in charge, who took action to Bring others into action, who has authority and gives it to others; who counterfeits the position of God the Father.

Sea Beast is counterfeit of the Son, JC. Rev. 13:1-5. We'll discover that SB is deliberate counterfeit, parody, of JC. This beast has 10 horns and 7 heads. Dragon has 7 heads and 10 horns. This beast looks like Dragon. John 14:9. JC came to earth to show what Father is like. Monster from Sea models what Dragon is like – both have 7 heads and 10 horns. If you saw two animals alike, you have species. Dragon and SB – look-alike. Rev. 13:2 – SB gets from Dragon authority. Matt. 28:18 – given by Father.

Rev. 13:3 – fatal wound means what? To have a wound that kills you. If a person is dead and is healed, what would that be? Resurrection! SB has death and resurrection. It tells us that he SB is like JC, counterfeit of work of JC. Dies and is resurrected just as JC is resurrected.

Rev. 13:5 – ministry of 42 months. JC's ministry – 3 ½ yrs. Ministry of JC counterfeited by SB. Like the "Lion King" this is not about animals, but about something else. Counterfeit of JC in last days of earth, maybe even figure that resembles JC to such point that we cannot say the different. Dragon Brings to bear a beast that is counterfeit of JC.

Land Beast must be then counterfeit of Holy Spirit. Rev. 13:11. Lamb-like beast, i.e. is like JC. HSp – another comforter in Gospel of John. Why HSp be another comforter and not "the" Comforter? Purpose of HSp is to replace work of JC in lives of HIS disciples. JC – Comforter of these disciples. In Upper Room disciples are depressed because JC is about to go, but JC says "I will send HSp, another Comforter. Another one just like me." HSp is one that models work of JC and carries it out. LB – counterfeit of HSp.

Rev. 13:12 – LB is not interested in promoting himself, but promotes the interest of the SB. This too reminds of HSp – John 16 – Spirit does not speak of himself but of JC, points to JC. LB is a counterfeit of work of HSp on Earth.

Rev. 13:13 – Great signs, fire from heaven. Reminds of Acts 2 – fire from heaven, to earth, to anoint original disciples. Counterfeit of HSp in Rev. 13:13. For purpose? – Rev. 13:14 – deception, to honour SB. Counterfeit of HSP – to deceive world, to give counterfeit Pentecost, counterfeit work of HSp, so people are confused about work of HSp.

Rev. 13 – great world-wide deception, counterfeit Trinity that stands before world at place where God alone has right to stand. Devil's two primary methods to deal with people. One – counterfeit; two- by force: persecute, kill. Which is more effective? Persecution has often backfired on devil – when faith has come under threat, faith has been becoming stronger, their prayers and live, and faith have grown stronger. Second method – refined method, almost to perfection – method of counterfeit, to make impossible for people to say which side is right, to confuse people whether you deal with JC or Satan.

What difference should that make in our lives?

One: We ought to search Scriptures as never before, just as we are doing now.

Two: Pray, as we have never prayed before.

Three: Exercise self-distrust; don't go by little knowledge of Bible, but use much and more of it. Deception is alive in world, and Satan tries to destroy us. As we study and pray over Scriptures, we need to distrust our own opinion. We have to pray that we see what God has to say in Bible to us, not what we want to see.

Are you worried about Satan's deception? Do you think you know the Scriptures well enough not to be deceived? Do you think you won't be deceived? See Rev. 13:13, 14. Deception of inhabitants on earth. Signs in heaven and on earth. Miraculous and powerful works. Do you believe your 5 senses, your experience? This passage tells us that in last days of earth's history tells us that in last days of earth's history you cannot trust your five senses.

See how scary that deception could be. 2 Thess. 2:8-10. Do you see || b/n this passage and Rev. 13:13,14? Signs, wonders, deceive earth's inhabitants. These 2 texts are on the same page. Notice s/th interesting here – at end of v. 8 – JC will destroy the lawless one with splendour of His Coming. 2

Thess. 2:9 – last word of v. 8 and first word of v.9 (in Greek) – are same, ‘coming,’ ‘parousia.’ ‘Parousia’ – describes coming of JC. JC will destroy the end-time deception with splendour of His Coming. Coming of Lawless One – will be in accordance with working of Satan. Which will come first – the coming of the lawless one or the coming of JC? Lawless one will counterfeit coming of JC. Before or after coming of JC? Answer – coming of JC comes last. When JC comes He destroys the lawless one and his deceptions. Lawless one’s deceptions precede JC’s coming. Miraculous signs, etc. will be to counterfeit the coming of JC.

It does not matter what one thinks, but what JC has told us in the Bible. Take Bible as your guide, not what people tell you to believe. At last days – the only way to avoid deception is to believe in the Bible and stay firm with it. Only way to avoid implications of deception is to know the Word of God for yourself. Then you’ll recognize deception when it comes. If you don’t know Scriptures for yourself, Satan will find way to convince you that he is JC.

2 Thess. 2:9 Coming of Lawless one – in accordance with work of Satan; miracles, signs, wonders. What’s that all about? Acts 2:22. What is it that the leaders of Israel knew about JC? His earthly life, ministry a/g them. Acts 2:22 is summarizing JC’s life and ministry- miracles, wonders, signs. 2 Thess 2:9 – lawless one, in accordance with Satan, miracles, signs, wonders. At end of earth’s history – Satan will counterfeit the SCJC but also the earthly ministry of JC. Isn’t that amazing? He’ll walk this earth, look and talk like JC. Only way to know that’s not JC is to know Scriptures for yourself and to watch for little deviations from path of truth. Before SCJC there will be counterfeit of His return and ministry.

Matt. 24: 23-27 Things get even worse. False Christs and false prophets. Did you notice that? False JCs and prophets. Rev. 13 – great counterfeit of JC and His prophets, doing great signs and miracles, to deceive God’s people. Even God’s people will tremble. What’s God’s people to do? Matt 24: 25 – secret is that we are warned by JC well in advance. In Scriptures and in the prophecies we have the fortification for our faith – that deception will come, that we are not to trust our senses. Matt 24:26. Even within evangelical X/ty there are many who teach that there will be 2 coming of JC. Not just teaching found in Bible, not explicit teaching. Particular way of interpretation Bible teaches that there will be secret rapture and then, 7 years later, the real SCJC. That’s not explicitly taught in Bible.

Reason to be scary- one text in Bible teaches that there are 2 comings of JC – 2 Thess. 2:8,9. The first coming there – will be counterfeit. If you hear that JC is here or there, don’t believe it – JC’s coming will be as lightning, shining from east to west. When JC comes, will be spectacular and visible; you won’t need TV to see it. JC will be public and seen by all. History, as we know it, will come to an end.

Those who don’t study word of God in depth, who don’t wrestle to und/d the prophecies, will be deceived by their senses and their experience. In times like these, we need to search Scriptures, to study and pray, to distrust our senses, and to plead with God for openness to our own misconceptions.

Feeling uncomfortable by now? Is it fair of God to allow such deception? Should sincere people be taken by deception that is so cunningly crafted that no ear or eye can tell? 2 Thess. 2:10-12 deals with this issue. In this presentation we have set the stage for careful study of Rev. 13 and 14.

2 Thess. 2:10-12 “Refused to love the truth.” Amazing truth in this text. God sends powerful delusion. Here God takes responsibility – not only He allows deception, but is part of God’s plan. Why would God do s/th that will torment people so? 2 Thess. 2:12. what is God’s purpose in this end-time deception? To single out those who have not believed the truth, to expose the light and the darkness, the wickedness of those who profess to be X/ans. In the world today there are 3 groups of people. 2 Thess. 2:10. Three types of people: those who love the truth; those who hate the truth; vast majority today rein the 3<sup>rd</sup> groups- those who neither love nor hate truth, but sit on fence b/n God and Satan.

Purpose of deception at last days – to get people off the fence. At end of earth's history, each person will end in either one camp or another. Final events on earth's history – will lead to place, where everyone on earth is either in love with truth or opposite side. This deception will expose where people do stand. Those not truly committed to God, not thoroughly in love with truth, will find themselves accepted deception and enjoying it.

How to avoid being at wrong side? 2 Thess. 2:10 NIV does not translate text very well. Key to overcome deception seems to be to love truth. Greek text underlining – 'because they did not receive the love of the truth in order that they might be saved.' Love of truth is not s/th that you and I work up, it is not s/th we choose, but s/th we can receive as free gift, s/th we can ask God for.

Prayer like this, "Lord, I would like to have love for the truth, no matter what the cost." Truth can cost you – job, family, life. People have discovered through the centuries that following the truth can be very costly? Does the truth matter to you, are you willing to accept love for truth no matter the cost?

### **No. 8 The Beast from the Sea Rev. 13:1-10**

Rev. 5 – JC the Lamb is given authority over the whole earth. Rev. 13 – Sea Beast (SB) is given authority over the same territory. How can they both rule over same territory at the same time?

Rev. 12:17 – duo-directional passage. This passage Brings us to the climax of the earth's history. It is the point of climax, but it states in nutshell the essence of the war in Rev. 13 & 14. In Rev. 12 – great war, began in heaven, spilled on earth. Rev. 12:17 – heavenly war will continue on earth until end of human history. Rev. 12:17 – context for end-time battle in Rev. 13 and 14. Rev. 13 – Dragon's war against Remnant. Rev. 14 – Remnant, message, result of conflict. Final battle – Rev. 16-18.

Rev. 13:1-

Dragon's end-time war. Rev. 13 – key players in final crisis of earth's history, key opponents, key issues. SB – thought often as Anti-Christ, crucial opponent to God.

In BOOK OF REVELATION major characters tend to be described first visually, and then in terms of their general actions. First major player in BOOK OF REVELATION – you get first description of physical features and then of actions. Introduction of JC in Rev. 1:12-18 – extensive physical description of JC in vision. Then follows outlines of actions and intentions of JC in Rev. 2 and 3.

Rev. 11 – same with 2w. First – physical description, and then general description of their behaviour and actions. Rev. 11:7-13 – actions of 2w that are specifically important to the vision. Not e/th mentioned about the 2w is happening at crucial point of vision. Rev. 11 – has to do with time of T6, with end-time. The 2w don't start at that point, but describes their role in entire human history, and only then their role in that part of history is given.

Rev. 13 – there are number of things said about the SB that don't necessarily apply to the end of time. They apply to the early experience of that beast, but the focus of Rev. 13 is on the last part of earth's history. SB is described, some of his general actions and characteristics, and then a description of how SB actions in the end-time history.

SB – Rev. 13:1-7 – described in terms of identification; material there is general in nature. Rev. 13:8-18 – how the beast functions at time of final crisis, which is the primary focus of Rev. 13 and 14.

### Rev. 13:1

Beast is seen coming from Sea. Dragon is standing on the beach/shore. Dragon calls SB out of water. SB is described in the order of which his various parts are coming out of the water. First point of description is the horns, next – head, next body, and then finally – feet. Description in v. 1 and 2 – body parts are described as they come out of the water. There is motion to that particular description. Beast is coming out of the sea and is described as such. Physical identification of beast comes first.

The 10 horns and 7 heads remind of Dragon in Rev. 12. SB looks like dragon. Reminds of Dan. 7 – another passage where we have cartoon-like animals, describing nations and powers affecting life on earth. Dan. 7, totalling them up – 7 heads and 10 horns. Author of Revelation wants you to have Dan. 7 in back of your mind here. In Dan. all these animals represent empires, great nations of ancient world. This suggests that this beast represents nation or power of some sort, that has long existence, but in the end of time will play significant role.

There are 10 crowns on 10 horns. Reminds of Dragon in Rev. 12 – difference: in Rev. 12 dragon has crowns on head, but not on horns. Why the difference? This is also based on Dan. 7. In Dan. 7 there is series of 4 beasts coming out of sea, like this beast – lion, bear, leopard, and indescribable beast, unseen on earth. These four beasts in Dan 7 describe series of 4 powers that will rule the world: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Roman. Last beast – 10 horns, symbol of Breaking of Roman Empire in 10 parts. In Dan. 7 – prophecy that moves thru major blocks of ancient history.

If crowns in Rev. 12 are on the heads, it will imply that this vision is picking up on Daniel's vision and the Dragon operates when these 4 beasts have power. Dragon and SB=Rome, through Herod, tried to destroy JC, in 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, pagan Rome.. Crowns on heads because Pagan Rome was one of these 4 beasts in Dan. 7. After this power would pass from scene and divided into 10 horns, they would represent power and history after fall of Rome. If author of BOOK OF REVELATION has Dan. 7 in mind, then author must be telling us that SB represents what is to follow ancient Roman Empire; that would be a new power that will come in world, after Rome falls. That Empire will function in opposition to God's people

SB – historically: later than Dragon. Rev. 13:1 – blasphemous name. Blasphemy has to do with God. If a beast is blasphemous power, that beast is in some way in direction opposition to God. If this power is political, in some sense it is religious. It is not in support, but in opposition to God's people. This concept of blasphemous name reminds of the 4<sup>th</sup> beast in Dan. 7:8, 25.

### Rev. 13:2

Here clearly Dan. 7 in b/g. Read Dan. 7:3-6. 1<sup>st</sup> beast – Lion, 2<sup>nd</sup> – bear; 3<sup>rd</sup> – leopard. In Rev. 13 – a composite beast, sharing characteristics with all four. Has 10 horns like 4<sup>th</sup> beast in Dan. 7; a composite of Daniel's beasts, all came out of sea. What is it doing here? Almost like listing the beasts' family tree. Rev. 13 – represent all powers that came before it. Dragon gave its power and throne, and great authority. Somehow this beast receives its power and authority from Dragon. Receives it from Satan, but receives it from Roman Empire as well. Later in time, later in authority.

### Rev. 13:3

One of this seven heads had a fatal wound. If these heads are und/d consecutively, then there is time when the beast is not, when beast is dead. Rev. 17:8. A fascinating thing – this beast has a period of time when it ceases to exist. Fatal wound has been healed. This beast has a resurrection; it is a parody of death and resurrection of JC, acts like counterfeit of work, ministry, death, and resurrection of JC. Here in this text the NIV says “fatal wound had been healed.” In Greek this verb is Aorist Indicative. There are Aorist Indicatives throughout this section; it signifies a point in past time. In

Greek there are different ways of expressing past – continuous past, completed past, past that was completed before the past. Use of Aor. Ind. suggests that John views this beast's history from perspective of end-time war. As John describes the SB coming out, its characteristics and actions, he describes events that precede the time of Rev. 12:17. The calling out of the sea is end-time event, but beast's historical characteristics are being described by way of identification. The characters that make war with Remnant are characterized before war is described. War is not described until Rev. 16 and 17. In Rev. 13 we see main characters of war, their characteristics and actions.

“Whole world astonished” by what? Resurrection of SB. There is time when SB dies and is resurrected, and the whole world is astonished by this death and resurrection.

Rev. 13:4

Men worshiped the Dragon because it was the source of SB's authority. They worshipped the beast because of its resurrection. “Who is like the Beast?” Previous reference to JC is “Michael” in Rev. 12. Michael = (in Hebrew) Who is like God? Here – who is like the beast? Beast from Sea tries to be like JC, to be seen as JC in end-time of history. Its history is to be the Anti-Christ. Its history is to be counterfeit. Final question is raised – who can make war against him. At the time of the end-time battle, this beast will seem to be invincible.

Rev. 13:5

Proud words, blasphemies. Beast in Dan. 7 – speaks boastfully; 7:25. Here – mouth that utters proud words, blasphemies, etc. Rev. 13 alludes to Dan. 7, to activities of little horn, that arises after 4<sup>th</sup> beast. Apparently, we are looking at the same time of history: power that arises from Rome, and succeeds it.

SB has ministry of 42 months. Reminds of Dan. 7:25 – oppression for ‘time, times, half of time.’ Historical 1260 yrs of Dan. 7 are incorporated here as part of the ongoing characterisation of SB. This beast has history – of oppression against saints, of opposition to God, for 1260 years. Reference here is to the religious oppression of the Middle Ages.

Summary of Rev. 13:1-5

v. 1, 2- general b/g of Dan.7's beasts.

v. 3, 4 – move forward in time, just before final attack in Rev. 12:17

v. 5 – move back again of description on Beast

Rev. 13:5 – focus is not on beasts of Rev. 13, but on Dan. 7

Rev. 13:6

Description of SB. Here – elaborating on v. 1, 5; Dan. 7:25. Who lives in heaven? Metaphor for saints. Not that they are living in heaven right now, but NT speaks of us living in heavenly places with JC. Those who dwell in heaven implies saints, just as “those who live on earth” implies wicked. This power blasphemes God.

Rev. 13:7

Given right to make war against saints – reminds of v. 2, where we have power delegated. Given power to make war against saints – Dan. 7:25

Authority over people, languages, nation – Rev. 14:6, 7 - same grouping. Rev. 5:9, 10 – same grouping here as well: tribe, language, nation. Rev. 13:7 describes people of earth in same language as in Rev. 5:9,10; 14:6. In both of these cases, these terms are used to describe the people of the Gospel, the people from whom the New Israel is to be drawn. Here, the SB is given power over these same people.

“Now and Not Yet” – an extended NT theme. Many things are happening in NT and not happening in another. Freedom of Satan in JC, but God’s people are still oppressed by Satan. Satan is cast down, nevertheless, he has power to torment. JC has universal authority, but so many people are allowed to flaunt that authority. B/n Cross and SCJC, X/an lives in “now and not yet.” On one side, we are under the authority of JC, but on the other – we must live under that authority of powers, who blaspheme authority of JC. These powers will be destroyed at time of SCJC and JC’s universal kingdom will be established forever.

Rev. 12:6,7 – reference to still to medieval period of history, since the SB’s authority over earth will be exercised by LB. This beast is worshiped by e/o at end, but exercises civil power thru others. At this time, when SB has authority over all, reflects time earlier than then time in the last part of earth’s history.

Rev. 13:8

All inhabitants on earth will worship the Beast – all whose name has not been written...Did you notice change of tense? It does not say that all inhabitants ‘worship’ the beast, but will worship the beast. This verse recalls the setting of v. 3, 4, but the switch is to the future tense, to the end-time context. In this one phrase we see the activities of the SB in final crisis, in the final battle. All earth will worship the beast. Dragon sets the beast in counterfeit of JC and in attack against the saints – to have all earth worship the beast.

Notice rest of the verse – “all whose name have not been written in book of life.” that book is record of saved, where e/o who has relationship with JC is marked down. Book of Life gives us that knowledge. The book belongs to the Lamb that was slain from beginning of end. S/o observes the scene from perspective of end-time, and sees things that are things that are recent part and things future in perspective of the en-time, and then even to Creation. Typical for BOOK OF REVELATION to make large jumps in history to search of events that mean a lot to us and all who believe in JC. This verse here – “Lamb slain from creation of earth” drops a hint that the pain of Cross was anticipated in heart of God from beginning of Creation. Although JC died in middle of time (as if b/n OT and NT), the point of the cross was there. God paid great price to resolve problems of the Universe. This price was paid not only during the time of JC on earth, but throughout the entire world’s history.

Rev. 13:9, 10

Change of tense – from Aorist – to Future – to Dawn of Time – to Present Tense. That is universal warning – a/o who reads this book, who has ear, has to pay close attention to what’s happening here. Rev. 13 – focus on end-time, but this universal appeal is appropriate, as this SB has been there always in some form. We are tempted to take BOOK OF REVELATION’s characters and apply them so specifically to mean only on thing at one time. But the SB has long history, and has appeared in different forms and in various times/places. Scenario remains the same, but the individual players change in course of history. What we learn in Rev. 13 – just as there was great religio-political power in Middle Ages, that persecuted saints, so at end of world’s history, that religio-political power will play role and its fulfilment will come to place, even if particular players change during course of history.

Rev. 13:10

Here we switch from prose to poetry. Set of matching pairs – first speaking of captivity, second – of killing. Continuation of Present Tense. This suggests is partakes of that universal warning – captivity and death will be the consequence of X/an history for those who stay faithful to God. That's true for all victories – not only of SB, but all other opposing powers. Perhaps this is the song of the SB – if a/o is marked for captivity, if marked to be killed – will be killed.

What we see here – power of oppression and force against God's true people – will use imprisonment and death. RB describes all these events in terms of war – these are not military events, but private ones. The SB activities are more like concentration camps – whoever believers in God is captured and brutally killed because of their faith.

Two ways to read this text. NIV “If a/o is to be killed by sword...” – focus on God, that God has marked some people for captivity and death. That he saints have to be sure that God is in control. that in all captivity and death, God is in control. God will not allow a/o to take more than they can bear.

Another reading: “If anyone kills with sword, with sword he will be killed.” That means that the ultimate end of the SB will be in proportion with SB's activities.

So, God's people are to have patience endurance and faithfulness.

If we read text in first sense, then – it God permits you to be killed, don't fight it, endure, God is in control. If 2<sup>nd</sup> reading: SB will get what he deserves.

Summary:

Rev. 13:1-7 – focus on time before time of end; identification of SB's activities.

Rev. 13:8 – time of Dragon and SB attack Remnant; all world that does not follow JC will worship him.

Rev. 13:9,10 – exhortation to all saints – to endure.

Spiritual lessons:

One: X/ans are caught b/n two ages, both JC and Satan rule in this world today. Though we acknowledge the rule of JC, we may fall under the penalty of the SB's rule.

Two: Cross – in focus since beginning of world.

Three: Suffering is inevitable in this world, and has to be endured. One day the power that causes suffering will be destroyed.

## **No. 9 The Beast from the Earth**

### **Rev. 13:11-18**

US has often been described as nation of destiny. Does BOOK OF REVELATION have s/th to say in this regard?

Rev. 12:17 sets the context for the banal battle of Rev. 13 and 14, and even further throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of BOOK OF REVELATION. Rev. 13 portrays the dragon's war against the Remnant. He calls 2 allies – SB and LB.

Just as SB here in Rev. 13:11-18 we find the LB. First, by way of identification, and then – by the activities of LB. Identification of LB is shorter than SB. That's clearly different power, functions

indifferent way in final crisis. In some ways, it is unique – not only a/g the bests of Rev, but also from beasts from Daniel. This is a different kind of entity from other beasts that have come on the scene.

Rev. 13:11

This beast is “another” beast, it is a different beast, comes from land, not from sea; all other beasts came from sea. “Sea” is negative concept in BOOK OF REVELATION. E.g. Rev. 21:1 – there was no longer sea. Sea is something to be feared, to get rid of; it separates; it is full of wild and angry waters; separates people from one another.

Term “Earth” has ambiguous meaning in BOOK OF REVELATION. Those who live on earth are always in negative – 11:10; 13:8, 14; 14:6, etc. But the earth itself is not necessarily negative, very ambiguous. It is a place where people worship the SB – 13:3, 12; earth can be acted upon in various ways – Rev. 14:3, 15, 16, 18,19; earth can be associated with good - 11:4; 12:16 - protection.

In Rev. 12:16 ‘earth’ actually represents Palestine. In Greek ‘earth’ and ‘land’ is same word. Rev. 12:16 – dragon sends flood of water after woman who was in the wilderness. This represents Exodus experience scene, how ancient Israel escaped through the waters and finding safety.

Rev. 12:16 – land helps the woman.

Beast from Earth – could be a beast arising from spiritual Palestine; that arises from very positive scene. “Earth” in 13:11 is very positive. It is the LB that makes the earth worship the SB. The Land Beast – arises from positive connection, has to do s/th with the true Israel. It’s origin recalls all forces that deflected the medieval persecution in.

Earth helping the woman (Rev. 12) – recalls the American Revolution, the Renaissance, the Reformation, etc. That helped save the people of God from persecution.

LB is world-power, arises in context of these events. Defender of religious liberty.

Any world power to fit such interpretation? Some 100 years ago most popular interpretation – USA. Founded by X/ans, persecuted in Europe, to establish power for defence of religious power. This power becomes most powerful in the world.

Keep that identity in back of mind and watch the development of the LB in the passage.

Rev. 13:11 – two horns, like lamb. “Lamb” – x29 in BOOK OF REVELATION, of which 28 with ref. to JC, but here – to the beast, in opposition to God and God’s people. Reminds of JC, religious tone to this power. At first – characteristics of lamb, history – positive history. Could it be that one characteristic of this power is that it exercises its governing authority with gentleness that has been unknown before? It is clearer that it has positive history and identification than the SB.

Persecuting power – 2 types: religious or anti-religious. “The tyranny of the righteous” – worst oppression in history tends to arise from people with religious bend. Example: ancient Babylon, papacy in medieval times. Anti-religious power – France (during time of Revolution) and Russia (during time of Communism).

It seems that persecution arises b/n unhealthy bond b/n state and church – ancient Babylon, medieval papacy. Or, hostility of state toward the church. Nations represented by the LB have friendly distinction b/n church and state, the opposite of what we find later in this chapter. This nations arises like more benevolent power, has positive power in history. US have been admired for openness of the society and the freedoms there. The very violence in US society is very much there because Americans are willing to tolerate it. Russia had much less crime when it was much less free.

Philosophy of US government – to give people freedom, even if people abuse it.

Power in Rev. 13:11, though it is positive power, speaks as dragon. “Earth” and “Land” are positive images, but for all its positive qualities, it comes to service of the dragon.

Rev. 13:12

Here begin the actions of the LB. LB exercises authority of the SB. This moves to the Present Tense in the Greek. We are now in time of Rev. 12:17 when final earth’s history come; then LB

replaces the SB in dominance of people on earth, takes over the SB. The medieval authority of the SB is now to be exercised by LB on behalf of SB. SB is in view, but does not exercise its authority directly. LB makes people worship SB. The causing is Present Tense, but the 'worship' is in Future Tense.

Reminds of earlier part of Rev. 12 – in v. 4 the worship is part of the identification of the beast, but in v. 8 it is end-time in its nature. "Earth" in Rev. 13:11 is positive earth, it does not wish to worship SB, but is forced to do so by LB. Forced to worship SB whose wound has been healed. This reminds us of Rev. 3.

Resurrection of SB seems to be a past reality of time of final battle, when all peoples of earth are forced to worship SB, its resurrection and healing of wound has taken place.

Change in time significance.

SB – had time of great authority, then loses it, as if not, and died; but then has resurrection and joins forces with LB; consequently LB makes people worship SB.

Rev. 13:13

The "great signs" happen in Present Tense, but it is before the time for worship; the "worship" is in the Future Tense in Rev. 12. Dragon went out to make war – Rev. 12:17. Essence of attack are the great miraculous signs. Purpose of deception – to make whole world worship SB. Greatest of these signs – to cause fire to come down from heaven to earth. Reminds of two great events in past: Mt. Carmel and Pentecost. LB uses strategies like those that took place at these two cases. At both cases – challenge of authority, and the challenge was answered with mighty sign from God. At Acts 2 – people challenged the authority; God's answer – HSp, tongues, miracles. Mt. Carmel – fire came to demonstrate that God is YHWH. Both cases God shows by fire to demonstrate where He is.

In this case – counterfeit God Brings signs; the counterfeit is confirmed by miraculous events. The end-time deception will be so great that Mt. Carmel event will take place again. Attention of whole world taken, e/o aware of the challenge b/n unholy Trinity and the true Trinity.

However we may wish to identify the LB – as we suggested some kind of id with US and its basic principles, the major focus – its spiritual and political authority. If US is in view here, it is in view here for both spiritual and political authority. Spiritual and political authority is equally strong. Final events in earth's history – will Bring many power together. Focus on Rev. 13 – the demonic Trinity that the Dragon has set up and its manifestation thru the working of the LB.

Rev. 13:14

"Signs" recall Rev. 13:13, with fire being the major sign. "He was given power" – both the LB and SB have delegated authority. This is modeled on JC and HSp, who receive authority of God the Father. The SB and LB are the counterfeits of JC and HSp. LB creates counterfeit of Pentecost; a powerful substitution that claims to be as if the powerful Trinity. It does all these things on behalf of the first beast (SB). Somehow in the public eye the SB is subordinate to LB; the LB is more persuasive and more powerful. Thru means of signs LB deceives people on earth. In Greek – 'deceive' is in Present Tense, not in past as in NIV.

The attack takes form of great, powerful, miraculous signs that causes people no longer to worship JC, but a counterfeit of JC - that is the SB; the SB that have been given power and dragged to prominence by LB.

Reminds of Pharaoh's magicians – could work miracles to counterfeit Moses' and Aaron's miracles.

Tool to get the world to worship SB – deception and counterfeit. Spiritual power exercises to deceive.

Rev. 13:14

Term “ordered them” is not really in the original. In original – “he said to them.” Saying is = to deception. Thru deception – setting image of SB. Word “honour” not in original. “Image of Beast” is a new player – it is not the SB nor the LB, but looks like SB. IF symbol is played further in BOOK OF REVELATION, it seems most likely that this is referred to again in the Beast in Rev. 17. Rev. 17 – another beast with 7 heads and 10 horns; looks like SB of Rev. 13 yet in many ways is different. It is not quite religious in the sense SB was.

Things are getting interesting - SB, LB, ‘image of SB,’ and Satan exercises its second tool to deceive people.

Rev. 13:15

Satan’s 2 methods of dealing with people – persuasion/ counterfeit/ deception; and persecution/threat / death. First method - used to persuade people thru deceptive miracles. That is extremely effective. The whole world it seems worships the first beast because of the actions of the Lamb-beast and abilities to deceive.

Not everyone worships – a Remnant refuses to worship. Rev. 13:15. Image of Beast (IB) looks just like SB, but also looks different – raised up to exercise persecuting and coercive power. He was given power – delegated from Dragon – to give life to SB. Gen. 2:7 – God giving breath to Adam. In Hebrew and Greek the word “breath” and “spirit” play together. There is spiritual power that is exercised on behalf of Dragon.

Further evidence for Counterfeit Trinity motif. In final crisis of world history – powerful working of spirit. Simply because there is power in religious mov/t or because there is work of Spirit, that does not mean it is from HSp. IB put in action by desire of LB – given breath, comes to life, so it can speak. In OT images are noted for not having ability to speak – Habakkuk 2:18, 19; no breath – Jer. 10:14; 51:17. Images in OT can’t breathe or speak.

This idol is unique – can breathe and speak, and speaks with threatening tone, saying “Worship or die.” Reminds of OT death decrees: Dan. 3; Esther 3: 8, 9; Dan. 6:5 – all death decrees based on religious beliefs and worship to true God and not the religion set by the government of that time.

Issue in final days of earth’s history – worship: who do you worship, how, for what reason/why?

Rev. 13:16-17

Not only are people threatened with death, but LB forces e/o to receive a mark. This is still in Pres. Tense, still of end-time setting. This mark – contrast with sign of God in Rev. 7 and Ezek. 9. Just as God marks His true people for protection purposes, so does Satan – to identify those whom he is seeking to destroy.

In ancient times – covenants would be sealed. The mark here reminds of the OT covenants, of the 10 commandments that are marked on head/hand (Deut. 6). Inkling of how battle of end-time will be concerning God’s commandments.

Forced to receive a mark. People who serve LB and IB come in two types – mark on head and on hand. Some people believe from the head, but other take it only for economic advantages. The latter group does not believe in IB, but join for economic purposes or out of fear. Economic consequences of religious decisions.

“Mark” is name / mark. In Greek it is either/or proposition – the name of the Beast or the number of his name. Name in OT – symbol of character. Those who have received the Mark of Beast (MB) have character like the Beast, have bought into the system, believe in it, serve it honestly with hearts and minds. Others – marked on hand – joining and identified for practical purposes.

Which beast is in view here – LB or SB? Seems the SB is in view here, the counterfeit of JC that is central to this description.

Rev. 13:18

Readers are invited to figure out the number; it must have been relevant to the original readers, as Rev. 1:3 says “... whoever reads understand.” Original readers must have understood what 666 was all about. It is a human number. It is 666. What could it mean.

Few possibilities as how it may have been und/d by original readers.

First, number 6 is number of Babylon. We think in tens, but they thought of in sixes. We also think in 6es all the time – the watch/clock: 60 seconds to 1 min, 60 min to an hour. Very use of no. 6 would have recalled Babylon in ancient times. Dragon / Beast / False prophet make up Babylon, and number of Babylon is 6. Is that all to 666.

Number 6 is one short of 7. Number 7 is the decisive positive number in BOOK OF REVELATION. It is number of Lamb, of people of God. E/th good in BOOK OF REVELATION happens in 7. So, 6 is falling short of God’s number, no. 7.

No. 6 is also ½ of 12. In BOOK OF REVELATION 12 is number of Israel and of the church. No. 6 – falls short of number of God’s people.

In Creation – day six is one short of God’s full week, precedes the Sabbath. On day 6 humans and serpent created.

False Trinity uses three sixes. 666 represent the three-fold nature of the False Trinity.

There maybe even deeper connection. Dan. 3 – image set up; measures based on 6. Cause of setting image – to worship idol/image or die. Rev. 13:18 – has Dan. 3 in mind. 666 and 6 – intimately related of image in Dan. 3.

Babylon, sin, deception – called into view in Rev. 13:18.

No. 666 appears in 1 Kings 10:14. Here – represents income of Solomon on average per years – 666 talents of gold per year. In Hebrew thinking sometimes a number or name or place or word may be given in NT as trigger to real OT setting. Happens here as well. If reader of BOOK OF REVELATION wants to remember 1 Kings 10:14, what’s going on? There – 666 b/n 2 events in Solomon’s life – b/n visit of Queen of Sheba, his most high point, when he witnessed about God to pagan Queen. Right afterwards comes marriage to Egyptian princess. Solomon’s marriages to foreign wives lead him away from God. Solomon – son of David. JC also son of David. In 666 – false representation of JC, Son of David. 666 tells us that work of JC will be counterfeited in that time.

Perhaps this number is not so mysterious, but fits all sorts of series in here.

Spiritual lessons:

One: power in opposition to God tend to be coercive and oppressive; God’s government – open and persuasive. Church – to be modeled on God’s form of government, but unfortunately, church has often modelled after Satan’s not God’s model.

Two: Relying on things of this world at end-time is foolishness. If we are in love with money, and love money more than God, we will make the unwise choice to join God’s opposition. It is prudent to prepare for future, but life is not found of things we possess. If we believe life is made of things, at end we may join the opposition to God.

Three: Reality of deception is based on the five senses. At last days of earth's history there will be a great demonstration of deception that this is the true God. Only thru Scriptures, prayer, and God's guidance can we be sure to avoid deception.

## **No. 10 God's Last Generation** **Rev. 14:1-7**

When JC comes, what will His people be like?

Let's begin by looking at Rev. 12:17 – the foundational passage for all that happens in Rev. 13 and 14.

Basic nutshell setting for Rev. 14. Rev. 12:17 – Dragon will be angry with Woman, will make war with offspring. Dragon's war – in Rev. 13. Dragon calls affiliates to help in the war, to form counterfeit Trinity, to force people to worship Dragon/Beast/False Prophet.

Rev. 14 – Remnant's response to the battle.

When new figure is introduced in BOOK OF REVELATION, a time for identification is given. Rev. 14:1-5 – identification; 14:6-13 – message; rest of Rev. 14 and 15 – end-results of Remnant's mission.

Rev. 14:1-7 – looking at God's Last generation

Identity of Remnant – Rev. 14:1-5

Rev. 14:1

144 000 standing on Mt. Zion. These remind of Rev. 7 – 144 000, described as God's end-time people, who answer the questions "Who will be able to stand in the last day of God's wrath?" These are God's end-time people, but are these the Remnant of Rev. 12:17.

Joel 2:32 – in this text, in the last days, on Mt. Zion and in Jer/m there will be survivors, called "remnant" in BOOK OF REVELATION, or "rest of woman's offspring."

Joel 2 – "survivors"; Rev. 14:1 – 144 000. Joel 2 is the b/g text for Rev. 14, hence the 144 000 in Rev. 14 are the remnant of Rev. 12:17, the saved ones; God's end-time Israel. Rev. 12:17 – remnant. Rev. 14:1 – God's end-time Israel, as in Rev. 11:13; 12:17 are called "remnant."

"name of the Lamb and His Father's name..." Just as there is mark on those who serve the Beast, so there is a mark on the foreheads of those who serve God, those who have the Character of God.

Two sets of people – those who serve the Dragon and the Beast, those who develop the character of the Dragon and the Beast, who use coercive force and deception. And we have those who have the character of the Lamb, who have the character of God written in their lives.

Written on foreheads = total devotion to God, not nominally. Same is true from the Beast and Dragon, plus those who follow for economic purposes. The followers of JC/God – totally committed, total transformation of life, not facility but authenticity.

Rev. 14:2,3

Allusions to Rev. 4,5 – song, throne, creatures, elders. New song – reminds of Rev. 15:3 – song of Moses and Lamb, of deliverance. Here - deliverance from Beast. Ex. 15 – Song of Moses was song of experience, gone through the Red Sea, delivered and standing on the other side.

The 144 000 goes thru experience of deliverance as nobody else, and nobody else would understand this experience. And nobody else can share in their song.

These are redeemed from the earth. That is heavenly location. It could be understood as scene that takes place after the SCJC, when they are literally in heavenly places. But most likely, this is a spiritual location – just as those who live on earth are constantly associated with those who are wicked, so here those who live in heaven, the righteous – earthly followers who walk with JC. It is quite possible, and even likely, in Rev. 14:1, that even though it looks like this location is one of anticipation, in reality these are individuals who face the great final attack of earth's history as in Joel 2:32, where ancient Israel is waiting for the final attack of the wicked.

BOOK OF REVELATION Brings us to this point. Rev. 13 – part of the final attack. Here in Rev. 14 – clearly identified the people of God, their minds are like JC.

Rev. 14:4,5

In original – use of “virgins,” not ‘pure.’ In NT “virgin” used in natural way. Matt 1:23; Luke 1:27, 37 – applied to Mary. Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 7 – used in normal and natural meaning. Virginity can imply spiritual lesson, such as readiness for the marriage of the Lamb.

2 Cor. 11:2,3 Virginity can express s/th spiritual, as in this text; God's people preparing for their ultimate wedding with JC, preparing their character. Matt. 25 – the parable of 10 virgins.

Israel in OT, associated with “virgin” – Jer. 14:17; 18:13, etc.

Term “virgin” does not necessarily mean absolutely pure, in a sense that there was never unfaithfulness. Israel was at times unfaithful to God, but God would still call them “virgin.” Something like “second virginity.” This was the case in OT. Israel was s/t described as promiscuous, but would call her, set her apart for God, and call her “virgin.”

Here – not literal virginity, but implies a group that is totally devoted to JC. Follows JC e/w JC goes, mature to the relationship matter what the cost.

“Purchased” at cost – by the blood of JC, the payment on the Cross (Rev. 5)

“First fruits” – 144 000 are seen again as the wheat harvest. Rev. 14 – harvests, wheat (144 000) and great. In this context – the 144 000 represent all the righteous.

Rev. 14:5 – no lie found in their mouths. Rev. 21:27; 22:15 – lying excludes from New Jer/m. Lying is part of the end-time deception – 2 Thess. 2:9, 11, “lying wonders.” Those who receive the deception will be believing a lie. God's end-time people will not be deceived by the deceptions out there in the world. They will have authentic, not counterfeit experience.

“Blameless” – the goal of X/an life; Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Phil 2:15. Such blamelessness is result of JC's salvation, JC's cross, intercession and work of grace in the heart. Col. 1:22; Jude 24. Blamelessness – characterized JC; The Book of Revelation. 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19. By following JC, God's end-time people have become like Him.

Comp. 2 Cor. 3:18 – by beholding JC, by studying Him, walking like Him, relating to Him, we will become more and more like Him. Last generation of earth's history will become like Him, who will be like JC.

What will God's remnant, end-time people, will be like?

Rev. 12:17 – obey God’s commandments and faithful to God; have the testimony of JC. They have the spiritual gift of prophecy. Rev. 14:1-5 we notice other characteristics of the remnant. They reflect JC’s character, totally loyal to JC, continual relationship with JC, authentic, relationship is real, no deception found in them; not wearing masks. They have become more and more like JC.

Rev. 14:6

In last days of earth’s history there will be a major proclamation of the Gospel. This will not be a new Gospel that rejects the NT Gospel, but in its root is the same as NT Gospel. It is about what JC has done, his life, ministry, resurrection, intercession, rule of Universe, his coming, etc. It is specially designed for end-time audience, but will be fundamentally the same.

To proclaim this message to all nations reminds of Rev. 10:10, 11. John himself, personally and literally, would not do that, but it would take place at end of time. Rev. 12:17. BOOK OF REVELATION becomes central to this world-wide proclamation; to every nation, tribe, people. Matt 24:14.

What’s the content of that Gospel? Rev. 14:7 Four component: Fear God; Give Him glory; Hour of Judgment has come; Worship Him.

“Fear God.” What is the fear all about? To be scared, to run and hide? The word really mean “to have reverence, to have awe.” Go fear God means to take Him seriously. Psalms and Proverbs have references to “fear God.”

To fear God means to know Him personally – Prov. 9:10

To do His commandments – Ps. 111:10

To avoid evil – Prov. 3:7; 16:6

To fear God means to take him seriously, to do His commandment, to do His will. To fear God means a call to be accountable to God, to be serious enough about our X/an faith, to life each moment as people who will give account one day. Such serious call is part of the experience o God’s end-time people at the end.

“To give glory to God” – by nature we glory in the things we posses, in our performances and relationships, in our possessions, etc. We glory in ourselves. But this is great call to God’s end-time generation. Call to give the glory to God.

We do that when we exalt the Gospel, when we share what God has done for us. Essence of OT worship –was praises for God’s mighty acts: creation, Exodus, etc. For NT X/ans – that is the actions of JC, His life, resurrection, exaltation in heaven. We give glory to God when we teach the Gospel and show it in our lives. We give God glory when we have healthy body; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31. In our eating and drinking we give God glory; when we treat ourselves as valuable objects in God’s eyes.

Gospel: we are so valuable that JC would have died even just for you. When we truly appreciate the Gospel, we will value ourselves, out bodies, health, our accomplishments, etc. – all will be done for glory of God. God’s end-time generation will be a generation that praises Him. It is a call for outward focus on God, not inward on us. Outward focus on looking at God and what He has done.

That’s what the end-time people of God will be like.

“Hour of His Judgment has Come.” Message to be given is given at very end of time. In NT judgment can be a almost any time. Judgment took place at cross, at JC’s resurrection. There is judgment taking place in NT in preaching the Gospel – whenever it is preached, people are held accountable. In NT judgment is also in the end. In BOOK OF REVELATION particular focus is on judgment in the end.

In Rev. 18 the judgment begins before the end. Hour of judgment has come. The preaching of the Gospel in the end-time is the judgment. When JC comes at SCJC the rewards are with him. The investigative part of the judgment will be complete before JC comes. That pre-Advent judgment comes before the end.

The context of the judgment is the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel.

Rev. 14 – 3 angels; Rev. 16 – 3 frogs, with counterfeit Gospel; at end-time – great showdown, as at Mt. Carmel, with 2 messengers, 2 messages, and the whole world will be called to see who’s got the true Gospel. There will be a serious call for taking a stand. That’s going to be a call for accountability.

You may not like accountability – sounds scary, threatening. But very little is accomplished without accountability. Can you accomplish a/th great without a/o keeping you accountable? The end-time judgment can have positive influence on our lives – to live accountably, to move and take action on things that are right.

Judgment is also positive – there will be justice, there will be setting of things right. God will deal with war criminals, oppressors, abusers; God will also reward the quiet acts of righteousness, and everyone – God will set things straight, will reward people. Matt 10:40-42. Even small acts will be remembered. That action will have positive reward at end of time. Accountability can be scary, but it is for our good.

“Worship Him who made ...” Virtual quote from 4<sup>th</sup> commandment. “worship” – used x8 in Rev. 13, 14; x7 – call to worship Beast. Only one time is there call to worship God. Worship is clearly the central issue b/n Dragon and Remnant. This call to worship God is central affirmation of the whole section. With this clause we have come to the most crucial part of the proclamation of the Gospel. At end-time there will be a special call to give attention to the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment.

How are we sure it refers to 4<sup>th</sup> commandment? Rev. 14:7 – comp. Exodus 20:11.

Rev. 14:7 is not quoting Ex. 20:11 directly. BOOK OF REVELATION never quotes OT directly, but alludes to it here and there. There are ways and hints of allusions. Only in handful of places in BOOK OF REVELATION do we find more than one or two words common with OT; only at handful of times do we have four or five or six verbal parallels between BOOK OF REVELATION and its past context. Here we have 5; that’s one of the strongest usage of OT parallels.

Parallels: “made,” “heavens”, “earth”, “sea”, “God.” Word “God” is not used here, but “worship Him...” Serious verbal parallel of 4-6 words are intentional of the author of BOOK OF REVELATION.

Is 4<sup>th</sup> com/t in view here? There are also thematic parallels to this text. Both in Rev. 14 and Ex. 20 there are calls to worship the Creator. In both cases it talks about the Lord who made and “the One who made.” Creation is common theme b/n Rev. 14 and Ex. 20.

Most convincing parallel – the structural parallels; where OT parallel lies behind BOOK OF REVELATION. Here – the commandments of God. Rev. 12:17; 14:12. In Rev. 13 Beast counterfeits the commandments of God. 1<sup>st</sup> com/t – have no other Gods before me; Rev. 13 – counterfeit Trinity. 2<sup>nd</sup> com/t – no images; Rev. 13 – image to the Beast. 3<sup>rd</sup> com/t – no taking God’s name in vain; Rev. 13 –Beast speaks blasphemy.

Rev. 14 – seal of God, the God who created heaven and earth; Rev. 13 – corresponding mark from the Beast. Com/ts are sub-text that lies under Rev. 13-15. The stage setting for this portion of Rev. is in Rev. 11:19 – the ark; in the center of the ark – the 10 commandments. The first few commandments are in concern here, those that are concerned with worship. When John received this vision and recorded it, he saw that central to the message of God’s end-time people is the call for worship; the context is to have worship, and worship God alone in the last days. Call to worship God on the Sabbath day.

What is worship? To recognize value in another, to recognize what that person has done, to acknowledge that person publicly, to account him worthy of that worship; to show that you are on this person's side and are showing that that person is worthy of that worship.

Strange to call at end-time to call people to worship on God's Sabbath day? Is that not legalistic? But worship on Sabbath is a call – according to Hebrews 4 – to rest from our works as God did in Creation. If God saves us through JC, it is a call to rest from our works and to rest in the new creation, the salvation, of JC. JC rested from his works on the Sabbath day. Just as JC rested from His mighty acts, so John calls the end-time people to rest from their works. Sabbath is ideal response to the Gospel. It is test to loyalty. Other commandments are logical. After all – if you love your neighbour, if you want to obey God, if you don't want to be killed, you don't go around and kill. We preserve life and property because we want the same done for us. If God is who God is, it will be a foolishness to worship other God.

Most commandments are logical. One com/t does not seem logical – to worship on Sabbath. We don't do it for our self interest, but because God asked for it.

Call to worship on Sabbath is to follow JC all the way. JC worshiped on the Sabbath while on earth. In BOOK OF REVELATION church is modeled on JC; even in our end-time lives, there is a call to obey JC fully.

Spiritual lessons:

One: Key mark of remnant – they will have a character like JC; not only external acts, but authentic, genuine modeling on JC' character.

Two: Accountability to God will be crucial to the remnant consciousness; they will give account for every action.

Three: End-time judgment will set all accounts straight.

Four: Keeping the Sabbath is ideal response to final proclamation of the Gospel; demonstrates the loyalty of God's people to JC even in face of greatest trials on this earth.

## **No. 11 The Consequences of Unbelief Rev. 14:8-15:4**

Have you ever heard a “fire-and-brimstone” sermon? Did you like it? How would you feel if you found on in BOOK OF REVELATION?

Here we move from description of Remnant to the consequences of unbelief. Not e/th in this section is pleasant, but e/th is according to God's plans for humanity. We need to und/d this book and this matter in order to be where God wants us to be.

From 1<sup>st</sup> angel's message to messages of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> angel. Begin with Rev. 14:8.

Rev. 14:8

“Fallen, fallen.” First mention of Babylon in BOOK OF REVELATION. In 11:8 – mention of great city; reference to Babylon. Here – first time name Babylon mentioned for first time. Babylon seems to be in final crisis/events of earth's history a composite of the unholy trinity – Dragon, Beats, False prophet (16:19). This end-time Babylon is world-wide unity of religious faith, but not in service of the true God, but in service of the counterfeit trinity. Babylon is very limited in its duration. End-time Babylon will be a temporary phenomenon. However, it takes control of the whole world for some

time. Rev. 17:2 – concept of drinking of wine of Babylon is union of Babylon and Beast. Beast in Rev. 17 is union of secular power. Babylon achieves end-time unity b/n religious and political powers.

It is clear that even before it happens, the Remnant give up warning that time comes when religion will serve worldly powers. That those who are going to church because of habit or because of s/o telling them to go, may find themselves at the wrong side of the event/situation.

Rev. 14:9

This is more frightening message. Here it continues the theme of Rev. 14:7 – if anyone worships the Beast or the Image. A/o who rejects the message of the 1<sup>st</sup> angel and worship the Beast not God, will find himself at the wrong side of worship. This individualizes the call for worship from Rev. 14:6,7. There message is to the whole world, more general; 3<sup>rd</sup> angel makes the call more individual – they will drink the wine of God’s fury. Reminder of Rev. 18 – God’s response to anger of nations.

Wine of God’s fury corresponds to wine of Babylon’s adulteries. We’ll see what’s God’s fury all about. The wine of God’s fury is poured out full strength; it is the last, final wrath of God, totally unmixed, no mercy; total and final attack on God’s enemies.

Concept of cup of God’s wrath seems to be drawn from Isaiah 51:17-23.

Isaiah 51:17-23. Cup of God’s wrath – poured on unfaithful Jer/m. At end of passage – God will give the cup to the tormentors of Jer/m. Cup of God’s wrath – symbol of God’s judgment; can be poured out on His people, but in Rev. 14 – cup of God’s wrath poured on those who reject God and persecute His people.

They will be tormented with burning sulphur – Rev. 19:20 – the fate reserved for the Beast. Apparently people can escape the final punishment, the burning sulphur. They can either worship God who made the heaven and earth, or the Beast and his image.

In the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb – reminds of Rev. 20:11, 15 – the final and full fate of the wicked takes place at end of Millennium.

Rev. 14:11 – fire and brimstone, that burns forever and ever. What is this? Everlasting burning hell? Does this lake of fire burn all eternity? OT b/g: Is. 34:8-10. Notice: smoke will rise forever; next phrase – from generation to generation, lie desolate. According to this text – “forever and ever.” What does it mean? Is Edom burning still today? Edom does not burn today. It is not burning today (located in nowadays Jordan); destruction of Edom was complete in ancient history. ‘Forever and ever’ in the Hebrew concept = long enough to accomplish God’s purpose; the fire burns until there is nothing more to burn.

No doubt that’s what Rev. 14 is built upon. The destruction that God Brings is complete, uninterrupted, and continues until it has completed the purpose for which God Brought it into being. But that is not everlasting burning hell, with righteous looking at the wicked tormented.

The Bible teaches that there will be final destruction, but not burning forever and ever.

Rev. 14:12

Here we have a positive message. “Patient endurance.” Rev. 13:9,10 – a call for patient endurance, in light of the fact that God is aware of what the saints are going thru. The saints are to wait for God’s judgment and justice to be done in public manner. Here – a call to the saints. Rev. 6: 9,10 – how long will you, Lord, not judge? Rest of BOOK OF REVELATION involved in answering the question; wait until God’s justice is done in full and public manner.

Saints remain faithful to JC; that’s a characteristic of the saints. Here the Remnant have the faith of JC. In Greek – subjective genitive. They don’t have faith in JC; that’s pretty plain from previous material. But faith OF Jesus; the faith of JC that sent Him to the cross. If that’s what it means,

then it means that the Remnant is covered in the righteousness of JC; they have the knowledge of that; they are saved in what He has accomplished at the Cross.

Marks of the faithful:

- They have accepted the Gospel
- They are covered with the righteousness of JC
- They are in continual relationship with JC
- Rev 12:17 – have the prophetic gift
- They obey God’s commandments
- They are loyal, even to the point of loyalty of accepting the Sabbath
- Rev. 14:1-5 – they become like JC; reflect JC’s character.
- Rev. 14:13 – This is one of seven blessings in BOOK OF REVELATION; suggests that there maybe special kind of resurrection for some of God’s people. There was a special blessing on those who die in the time of the last proclamation of the Gospel; they will rest from their labours and their deeds will follow them. There will be martyrs in the final crisis; they may be relieved from future calamities; their death is a relief from persecution. Based on Daniel 12 some suggest that there may be special resurrection just before the Second Coming for selected some of God’s saints – that they may see the Second Coming with their own eyes. This may go a step beyond what is clear in the text.

There will be those who survive thru the final events, thru the deception, persecution, tragedies of the end, etc. – they will live to see JC come. Those who die ahead of this time, they will rest from their labours.

Rev. 14:14-20

Here we see the entire world, divided in two camps – the wheat and the grapes; it is harvest time for the world.

There is a major structural parallel of Rev. 14 with end-time scene of Joel 2:28 - 3:21. We’ve noticed the parallel with Joel 2:28 – in first part of Rev. 14; Remnant standing on Mt. Zion. In Joel 2 – Spirit poured out; heavenly signs; Remnant is attacked by nations of the world; God pronounces judgment from Mt. Zion and threshes the enemies.

Joel 3:1, 2 – double gathering. Remnant gathered from nations at Mt. Zion, and wicked – in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, outside of Jer/m, where they meet their fate.

BOOK OF REVELATION builds on this section of Joel. In BOOK OF REVELATION Spirit is poured out in Rev.5; 6 - Spirit poured out. Heavenly signs – Rev. 6:12-7:3. Remnant – attacked by nations of world – Rev. 13. Nations gather outside Jer/m – Rev. 14:20, attack but trampled. Rev. 13, 14 – build powerfully on picture of Joel.

Jer/m stands on hilltop, surrounded by valleys on three sides. Image here is of God’s people, huddled together in fortress, surrounded on all sides by enemy forces. Final battle of earth depicted in local terms. Method of interpretation – in BOOK OF REVELATION the local/OT interpretation is applied for worldwide. Israel huddled in Jer/m = Church hiding from its enemies. In BOOK OF REVELATION – this gathering is spiritualized those who follow the three angels’ messages vs. those who follow the message of the three frogs.

2 Cor. 10:3-5 – how for the X/an warfare is spiritual matter. X/an is to battle not so much against through processes, theologies, ideas, etc, that might steal away her/his assurance of faith.

Rev. 14 – in nutshell: the great division of the world, those who serve the True God and those who oppose God, serving Unholy Trinity.

Rev. 14:14

Reminds of Dan 7:13, 14 – Son of Man coming to Ancient of Days on a cloud. One of the three designations of JC – Michael (12); Lamb (13); Son of Man (14). Wears a crown of gold; reminds of Rev. 6 – victory crown) – reminds of rider on white horse of 1<sup>st</sup> seal. Reminds of overcomer's crown – Rev. 2:10; 3:11. Recalls crown on woman – Rev. 12:1. Victory crown – spiritual victory, victory in JC. Sharp sickle – harvesting time, end of earth's history. Time to harvest earth's harvest.

Rev. 14:15

Rev. 14 – three main angels offer message of salvation to rest of world; another angel comes to help in serving the purposes of God. Rev. 14:15, 17 - reminder of Rev. 11:19 – Temple in Heaven; ark. View of Temple in 11:19 – a back stage setting, a back drop; time for harvest. Quotes Joel 3:13. In Joel's situation – the redeemed were in real Jer/m, surrounded by armies from all around. God gave the signal to sweep the sickle for the harvest is ready. In BOOK OF REVELATION the harvest takes world-wide application; it is the earth's harvest.

Rev. 14:16

Presumably this is the grain harvest of the earth. This is the first fruits mentioned in Rev. 14:4. This harvesting of the grain represents the harvesting of the righteous; JC will make sure at his SCJC that his people are rescued from the turmoil.

Rev. 14:17, 18

Now in addition to the grain harvest of the earth comes the harvest of the grapes. This probably means that when the righteous are harvested the probation for the wicked is over. There is no more repentance, no more turning back. The grapes are gathered in order to be trampled.

There are two main harvests in Palestine. Grain harvested in spring, fruit – harvested in fall. Here, in this passage – grapes = opponents of God.

Rev. 14:19

“He threw them into the great wine press of God's wrath.” This anticipates Rev. 15. There we see the intro to the close of probation and the 7 last plagues that fall on wicked. The grapes are in the winepress of God's wrath and trampled outside of the city. In Joel 3 – local application; in Rev. – world-wide application. The wrath of God poured in relation to SCJC – on wicked, due to their rejection of JC.

We see the 7 bowls of wrath of Revelation.

What are the 1600 stadia? Not sure – multiples of 4 and 10. 4 – related to s/th worldwide; 4 corners of earth, 4 points of compass. This tells us that the judgment falling on Jer/m (as prophesied in Joel) fall on whole earth. We see the world at the end is divided by 2 proclamations – one serving God, the other – the false Trinity. And their fate is different and sealed.

Rev. 15:1

This is the first explicitly heavenly scene since Rev. 12. Rev. 14:1 may be in heaven; Mt. Zion could be a term ref. to earth as well. Here is another sign – reminds of Rev. 12:1, 3 – great signs in heaven, the Woman and the Dragon. Matter has gone full circle. Rev. 15:1 draws to completion the material that began in Rev. 12. This completes the vision that began in 11:19. The first part of Rev. 15 belongs to what precedes that to what follows. This verse is duo-directional. It introduces the 7 last

plagues. Recalls plagues on Egypt specially the last ones. With the plagues, God's wrath is Brought to completion. Rev. 11:18 – when nations are angry, God's wrath will come.

Rev. 13 has portrayed the anger of nations, in their deception and in their force. So far God has been mixing his judgments with mercy, but no longer. Wicked in Rev. 15, 16 and beyond, will stand without any intercessor.

Victorious Remnant – Rev. 15:2-4

A positive closing of this study. This concept of sea of glass – only twice in BOOK OF REVELATION (Rev. 4:6). Sea of Glass in Rev. 4:6, clear as crystal, before throne of God. Rev. 15:2-4 – sea of glass mixed with fire; location – not specified. B/g of this seems to be Ex. 15 – Israelites stood at sea shore, watching the destruction of Egyptian. Perhaps the mingle of fire with glass is ref. to blood of the wicked who have been destroyed in Rev. 14:20; or of the Egyptians destroyed and floating in the water in the Red Sea.

Just as Ex. 15 Israel stood by the sea, so the redeemed here are standing by the sea. They have been victorious over the Beast; they are by the sea after their victory.

Rev. 15:3-4

Song of Moses; Ex. 15. God's actions at the end are seen to be in full harmony with His covenant. When e/th is over that this song can be sung. This is the song of Rev. 14:3 – song that nobody else by the Redeemed can sing; song of deliverance and experience. They alone can say that God's justice and mercy are true. Revelation shows that at the end God's interventions will be seen as just and true.

Who will not fear God? All nations will worship God. Allusions to Rev. 14:7. Message that is borne by the Remnant with so much suffering and opposition has borne fruit; and they will come to fear God and worship Him. Why? Because God's righteous acts have been revealed and God proven right.

Spiritual lessons:

One: Two types of motivation, positive and negative. We prefer the positive motivation, but s/t the negative is also necessary. Why fire and brimstone? Why description of the wicked? In part, because sin can look so attractive in the short run. Because sin is so deceptive, so allusive, God has to make it clear that this is the way. These are warnings, in advance, while there is time to repent and to receive JC. When we think and look at sin, we are sucked in great deception. Negative warnings help to keep us away from what is destructive in the long run while attractive in the short run. Warning is of no use when it is too late. Warnings are appropriate while there is still time to accept JC.

Two: X/an life in end-time calls for patient endurance. Pace of life seems to be accelerating these days; everyone seems to be worn out. Maybe that's the place where we'll come to; maybe only those who have patient endurance will survive; faith that we are ok with God.

Three: Rev. 12:7-10 – the bottom line of it all: Is God fair? Does he tell us all the truth? Can we believe God; are his ways true? When we see that at the end, we'll be clear about God.

## **No. 12 Theology of the Bowl Plagues** **Rev. 15:5-16:11**

We can usually accept suffering when there is purpose. In Rev. 16 suffering comes after it's too late to repent. What purpose can it serve then?

Entirely new vision in BOOK OF REVELATION. This one corresponds to phrase "Your wrath has come" in Rev. 11:18. This vision moving from 15:5 to end of ch. 18 is on God's response to anger of nations seen in Rev. 13 and 14. This vision begins with sanctuary scene, then vision of bowl (parallel to 7 trumpets). Bowls affect whole of earth, while trumpets affect 1/3s of the world.

Examining intro scene and bowls 1-5. Later bowls – examined later.

Rev. 15:5-8 – Sanctuary intro scene as in Rev. 4; 5; 8:2-6; 11:19.

"After this I looked" – signals a major Break in text. Not used in every text, but whenever found, it's a major issue. E.g., Rev. 4:1; 7:1, 9; 18:1, and so on. Same as in 15:1-4. This is a new section; this does not continue previous scene. Previous scene – directly related to 11:18. Here – Temple of Heaven, Tabernacle of testimony. Combines – Mosaic Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple. Capital "T" in NIV is not signalled by the text; it's simply 'temple' in ordinary sense. In BOOK OF REVELATION this word – reference to Most Holy Place; Temple means not so much holy building, but the place where God appears. This term is not used in Rev. 4; 5, or in Rev. 8, where the Holy Place is in view.

Here: Temple is opened; reminds of 11:19; 4:1 – where heavenly throne room is open. Heaven itself is opened in Rev. 19:11. Interesting picture.

What's going on in Temple?

Rev. 15:6

Heavenly temple is consistently the source of plagues on earth; not quite what we expect. True in Rev. 14:15-17; 16:1,17; and 15:6. Bowls, trumpets, and seals – coming from Temple. Temple – place where God's mercy can be found, but also place from where justice and judgment emanates when mercy is rejected. Plagues – consequences of disobedience to God's covenant. Same as in Rev. 6. Covenant curses that comes from Temple, result of Broken relationships b/n people and God.

Rev. 15:6 – 7 angels and 7 plagues. Bowls are not given yet; they job descriptions is to carry the covenant curses. These are maybe the 7 angles that were carrying the trumpets. They receive bowls here as instruments. Reminds of 15:1 where it mentions the last 7 plagues. Rev. 15:2-4 serve as interlude b/n 1<sup>st</sup> mention of 7 last plagues and the time when these plagues are in view.

"Golden sashes" – vision in Rev. 1:13, where JC is carrying for churches, but here – judgments are about to come. Tenderly carrying for churches and executing judgments are not seen as contradiction. These are qualities of the same God. Same uniform is worn for same actions.

Rev. 15:7

One of 4 living creatures giving to 7 angels 7 golden bowls. These living creatures are the closest to the throne; with the horses – living creatures are involved, and the plagues are on whole humanity. Here – only wicked subject to plagues. Probation has closed. Only wicked are subject to plagues. Angels receive 7 golden bowls. Reminds of cup of God's wrath. Is. 51 – concept of God's wrath, long history in OT. Interesting in Aramaic of Isaiah, very word for 'cup' is used in Is. 51 as used in Rev. 15. Aramaic translators borrowed word from Greek Bowls of wrath are not vastly different from cup of wrath in Rev. 14. Term used frequently in Greek OT, for bowls in OT Tabernacle. These is their

function here – Tabernacle bowls – Ex. 27:3; Numb.4:14; 1 Kings 7:40,45,50; 2 Kings 12:13; 25:15. These term –used frequently for bowls, associated with Tabernacle or Temple. Here – instead of offering service to God, they are means for God’s wrath; mercy has ceased for the recipients of the bowls. Temple wrath for recipients of wrath. Rev. 15:8 – smoke in Temple, nobody can enter. This reminds of scene of inauguration of Temple in OT.

Ex. 40:34-35 – inauguration of Tabernacle in wilderness. 1 Kings 8:10-11 – parallel text. Both occasions of inauguration – glory of God in Temple, that services had to stop, too glorious for people to enter. Here: smoke in Temple of God; here – nobody will receive intercession; a cessation/closing of heavenly Temple’s ministrations till end of 7 bowls of plagues. Here – description of close of human probation; nobody will receive intercession at end of human probation. Same noticed in Rev. 10:7 – mystery of God – finished. The 7 bowl plagues are to wrath of God coming under 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet. These plagues – after mercy is over, after time of probation is over; consequences of disobedience are revealed.

Rev. 16:1

“Pouring out” – language of Leviticus, pouring of sacrificial blood. Rev. 16:6 – pouring out of bowls is in response of the pouring of blood of saints by nations. What’s decreed in heaven is executed on earth.

Rev. 16:2

Pouring on land; sores for worshippers of beast and those who have mark of beast. Rev. 8:7 – land and earth. Parallel to 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet.

First 4 trumpet plagues fall on natural world, in terms of surface imagery; the first 4 bowl plagues directly affect humanity. Greek word ‘source’ appear frequently in Greek OT – it is used on the plagues falling on Egyptians. These affected the Egyptians, not Israelites. Lev. 13:18-27 – used for leprosy as punishment from God. Word used as punishment for sin – 2 Kings 5:25-27; 2 Chr. 26:16-21. Word for ‘sores’ – curse of covenant; Deut. 28:27, 35 – in relation to disobeying covenant. Job. 2:27 – ‘boils.’

Are these boils to be taken literally? Quite possible. No strong figurative meaning that makes sense here. One of consequences of being found among wicked – painful skin sores; falling on those who have mark of beast and worship his image. Here words describes oppressors from Rev. 13:15-17. These are not just ordinary people, singled out for retribution of God randomly. God uses this source to stop oppressors in their traces. They have issued death decree, now God uses these plagues to stop them in their tracks and put end of executions. God does what he promised in Rev. 14:9-11.

Rev. 16:3

Rev. 8:8-9 – parallel to 2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet, where only 1/3 of seas and 1/3 of sea animals died. Here – all turns to blood and all animals in seas die. Intensification of what’s happening in trumpets.

Rev. 16:4

Reminds of 3<sup>rd</sup> trumpet. All waters turn to blood, no death; praise time and song.

Rev. 16:5-7

Here we have song praising fairness of God; God exercises punishment parallel to the crime. God is praised because saints were held guilty in earthly courts for serving God; in heavenly courts they are proclaimed innocent, God executes judgment on those who unjustly execute his people.

Echoes song in Rev. 15:3

Rev. 16:8

Sun, intense heat. Reminded of 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet. Here – no longer a 1/3 of plague, but entire plague on the sun. Instead of diminishing intensity of sun, it is increased. Pain of 4<sup>th</sup> plague is pain of excessive heat.

Rev. 16:9

Seared by intense heat; curse name of God, refuse to repent and glorify God. Crucial point; preaching 1<sup>st</sup> angel's message, had opportunity to repent, but refused it. Plagues here don't make them change their ways. They refuse to glorify God. This identifies opportunity to preach for repentance. Some do repent in response – Rev. 11:13; great mass of humanity does not repent. They curse God who is in control over plagues. God takes responsibility for His action in relation to the lost – 2 Thess. 2 – “I sent the deception.” Rev. 17:17- unity of nations against His people is part of God's controlling plan. Wicked blame God for their own actions. God takes responsibility for His actions, but not the wicked.

Tension in these texts: God is in control on one hand, but on the other – humans are held responsible for their actions. In the Book of Revelation new way of thinking – no contradiction that God is in control and that humans are responsible for their actions. This is wonderful dichotomy. We suffer from extremes: On one hand people believe that God is not in control and life is impossible to manage; on the other – that God is so fully in control that humans have no freedom, no responsibility.

Book of Revelation new thinking: Full sovereignty of God and full responsibility of humans – most satisfying. God is in control – all will turn well at the end; but we have to participate in God's power and control, and participate in one way or another.

Rev. 16:2-9 – are these figurative or literal plagues?

Normally in Book of Revelation a figurative reading is to be preferred, but here – difficult to make a case for figurative way. In 4 horsemen – figurative and symbolic way, made sense. Here – can't make a case. If the bowls are taken as figurative, then they represent consequences of result of sin: covenant curses. Boils as leprosy – punishment for sin. Waters turn into blood – sufferings of wicked will be in similar nature of those whom they oppressed. Part of destruction of wicked – universal war, abandonment of law and order. It will be quite a battle that would turn the waters of the ocean into bloody red. Scorching heat of sun – intensified Glare of God's word as it points sin.

If bowls are taken literal – unprecedented bouts of environmental disaster, pestilence, etc.

Author's preference – to see these plagues as literal, but is not dogmatic about it.

If these plagues come after close of probation, what's the point? Why torment the wicked after probation is closed? It seems vengeful and capricious on God's part to torture them after they have no chance to repent. Answer to question lies in underlying theme – justice of God in executing judgment on the wicked. This is clearly stated in Rev. 16:5-7. God is just and fair in these torments because the wicked are receiving in kind what they have done to others. Plagues are appropriate to the crime. They answer a further charge against God – that He is arbitrary to save some and punish the other. What if the wicked had the same opportunities as the saints had? The plagues only show that no matter the circumstances, the wicked had same chances to repent, but they have not. They are in opposition;

previous punishments in Book of Revelation have brought people to repentance. They are not longer capable to repent than before, to grasp God's salvation. The sufferings of righteous have not turned away from God; righteous and filthy remain as they are. Close of probation is not arbitrary decree of part of God, but is simply a time when world affairs are so arranged that e/o on earth makes decision for or against God at the same time.

Even though the plagues come after close of probation, and seem arbitrarily, they are part of God's plan.

Rev. 16:10-11

Throne of beast thrown into darkness. Seems clearly a ref. to Rev. 13:2, where the authority of Beast. Beast of time of resurrection receives encouragement from Land beast. God's throne – Rev. 12:5; 14:3; 16:17. Throne – location of seat of authority, place from which people recognize that authority flows; delegated or asserted power. Either way – throne is place from which authority and power flow. This plague suggest that Sea Beast power will face some kind of direct challenges to its assumed authority – either by literal darkness or through some kind of devastating loss of knowledge of function. Sea Beast is humiliated before the world. Sense of awe, wonder, amazement, and adoration in Rev. 13 is gone. This change in situation Brings to destruction of the Unholy Trinity, represented by harlot in Rev. 17.

First 4 plagues – poured on individuals; people begin to realize s/th terrible is happening. 5<sup>th</sup> plague – poured on seat of Beast, and those opposing God. These people nod their tongues in agony. Suggests that darkness is not literal; darkness is more severe, a devastating humiliation in some kind. The people cursed the God of heaven. Whatever God does, these plagues make no change in mind/behaviour of those who oppose God.

Conclusion of series IV: Unhappy ending of a series; the conflict is still going. The Great Final Victory is still coming.

Series no. 4 still not over: God's people can be comforted: deception, bitterness, persecution and trouble will have end, won't last forever. God will act on time, nothing will stop it, until all evil has been banished from the universe. In Rev. 16 – God's counterattack against nations is set in motion. Nothing will stop it until death, sorrow, suffering, etc. comes to an end. BOOK OF REVELATION – sobering book, we need to make sobering decisions. We can look toward that glorious ending in next series.

## **Series V: The End of All Things**

### **Rev. 16:12-22:21**

#### **It's Worth the Wait**

##### **No.1 The Drying Up of the Euphrates**

###### **Rev. 16:12**

What's the most dangerous non-nuclear weapon in the world today? You might be surprised to hear what the Bible has to say about this issue.

In this series we are looking at the consummation of the earth's history, with attention to the description of the latter part in the BR. Rev. 16:12, which is pivotal text for understanding the Battle of Armageddon (BA).

Armageddon – mentioned only once in Rev. 16:16. To understand the BA, we need to go from 16:12 and beyond.

Rev. 17-19 – this material elaborates on the brief summary on BA. Showing how powers on earth will meet their end. Rev. 20 – the Millennium. Rev. 21, 22 – glorious eternal condition of saints.

If you are primarily interested in the final events on earth in BR, you've got it here. In series of images, all books of Bible are coming to a full. We are moving to completion of BR, and complete end of study of Bible. If that's your first time studying the Bible, this study maybe excellent to read the conclusion first.

God intended to have the Bible and have sense of the end. Otherwise, we'll be left w/t hope. Knowing what's coming at the end helps hands the tough stuff from the end.

Rev. 16:12

Two things from first glance: 1) on surface, Revelation is simple. Images there are plain. We can figure out what is being described. The problem is that while it is simple to find out what is going on, it is difficult to know what do these images mean. Pictures may be clear, but the deep underlying dynamic is another story. Rev. 16:12 – fairly simple to know what's going on, but what do these mean – time consuming.

Start on surface: 6<sup>th</sup> angel. There are 7 bowl angels, pouring plagues on earth. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> angel. Bowl – probably sanctuary images; bowls – for drink offerings, for use by priests. These bowls in Rev. – of destruction, not of offerings. There are sores, water on earth turns to blood, Sun – overheats, etc. In comparison with earlier plagues, these one seems nothing. Drying of Euphrates – simple, nothing important. Euphrates river is seasonal, and can be dried up at times. So this plague is not so significant.

Simplicity on surface, but deep figurative purpose.

Euphrates River (ER) – in BR, major entity is Babylon as part of prophecy. In Ancient Babylon, ER passed through, Babylon was like a twin-city (Kansas City in USA, Budapest in Hungary). Kings from east, the kings from the rising of the sun. Overall picture is clear. Waters are dried up and kings from east come.

What is Euphrates River all about? (ER). Rev. 17:1 will help us. Rev. 17:5. Bowl angel comes to explain to John. Which angel comes? Angel of 6<sup>th</sup> bowl was one related to ER. Prostitute, named Babylon, sits on many waters. (cf. Rev. 16:12). Angel speaking to John in Rev. 17 is angel of 6<sup>th</sup> bowl. Rev. 17 elaborates in some sense what happened in 6<sup>th</sup> bowl.

Cf. Jer. 51:13 – not just general term, but specific way to speaking about ER. In most parts of Middle East rainfall is minimum or non-existent. Nile, Euphrates; reason why they bring so much water is because these rivers have their sources in ice-cap mountains in Africa and Turkey, that provide much water.

“Many waters” – intended by John to be understood as Euphrates River.

Rev. 17:15 – Euphrates River is the national powers of the world. It is the multitudes, the nations, namely, the civil and secular powers of the world. ER here is symbol of many nations of the world that in the end time will give their support to end-time Babylon. Babylon – empire, a grouping of nations united for common cause. Modern similarity: NATO. In ancient times, these nations were held together by force. Euphrates – symbol of all nations supporting Babylon.

What's the drying up of ER? Are you suspecting the fall of Babylon? If many nations supported ancient Babylon and are symbolized by Euphrates River, then the drying up of the ER is the fall/lack of and withdrawal of support to Babylon, in ancient times and in Book of Revelation.

Babylon described in OT: Jer. 50 and 51; Isaiah 44-47; Daniel 5.

Pretty solid idea where we are heading. In Rev. 16, 17, 18 – multiple allusions and hints to the OT texts about the fall of Babylon.

Jer. 50: 33-34 – Reason for Babylon's fall: God's desires to deliver His people Israel. Babylon has become an oppressor, of God's people Israel, in particular. God would demonstrate His power to deliver His people by conquest of Babylon.

Jer. 50: 35-37 – Here we see in summary terms, an attack on strengths of Babylon, on the qualification of Babylon that enabled her to be major nation: false prophets, military and financial resources, people, religion etc. God will destroy Babylon by desolating all that makes her strong, successful.

Jer. 50:38 – Drying of river - means for all of the above to be taken from Babylon. Because of drying of river, all people, nations, religion, etc., all will be destroyed. When river dried up Babylon, became weak. River – source of success. Drying up – destruction.

Jeremiah makes it clear that there are two grounds for attack on God's part. First, to rescue oppressed Israel, and second - to punish idolatrous Babylon. When John Revelator refers to OT, it is usually with purpose to bring the background of the context. If you know why Babylon in OT fell, then you will expect that God has similar purposes with the end-time Babylon.

Jer. 51: 36-37 Basically repeats info in Jer. 50. Drying up of Babylon's sea is because God defends the cause of Jer/m, Israel's capital. This statement becomes more significant and more clear in light of Isaiah's testimony.

Isaiah 44:24 – 45: - Here we see words of the Lord. Destruction of Babylon – part of prophecy. Not only destruction and fall of Babylon, but also re-building of Jer/m. God destroys Babylon, delivers His people, takes them to Palestine, and rebuilds Jer/m. Agent for all this – Cyrus. He conquers Babylon by drying up the river, he delivers God's people, he begins rebuilding of Jer/m and Temple. Two further reasons for Babylon's fall: 1) Prophecy must be fulfilled; 2) Restoration of Israel.

Four reasons for destruction of Babylon: 1) Oppressive nature of Babylon; God needs to liberate Israel; 2) Idolatry; 3) Fulfilment of prophecy; 4) Restoration/rebuilding of Temple and City of Jerusalem.

Is. 45:1 – Cyrus, a pagan king, non-believer in God, is called "messiah." Messiah – special OT term, used in sense of future deliverer. Once, in reference to Messiah, the Jesus, in Dan. 9; 2<sup>nd</sup> time – in Is. 45, in ref. to pagan king. God is bigger than just Israel; "messiah" can be a/o He can use to deliver His people.

Not only God dries up ER, but promises Cyrus that gates of Babylon won't be shut. Drying up of ER – not enough to win over city. God dries up the river and makes sure that gates are open for Cyrus' army to enter. Even Cyrus does not know or acknowledge God, God still uses agents that are less than worthy.

Is. 45:4 – God summons Cyrus by name, bestows on Him title "messiah." Fulfilment of prophecy of Jer. 51 and Is. 45 was exact in OT times. From North Cyrus comes, besieges Babylon, discovers walls are too hard to overcome. Siege won't work, so he dries up the river, and marches underneath the river's gates. At same time Babylon is having a drunken orgy/feast, guards are not

paying attention, gates are left open, and Cyrus conquers the city. He makes decree for Israel to go to homeland, to rebuild City of Jer/m and Temple.

This OT story fits with BR 1:1. Jesus, the NT Cyrus, conquers an end-time Babylon, by drying up the end-time Euphrates, and delivers the end-time Israel, so new Jer/m can be rebuilt. The OT story of Cyrus becomes sub-text of the BR's story in Rev. 16.

Rev. 16:12 – “waters were dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east.” Who are these kings? East = sun-rising, rising of sun.

In NT, rising of sun used in two ways. One – directional reference in NT. Term used with symbolism, with reference to JC and His work. Luke 1:78. Song of Zachariah, celebrating birth of John the Baptist. “Rising sun” – in context, his son will be preparer of the way for the Rising Sun from Heaven. Here – reference to 1<sup>st</sup> coming of JC. Similar reference in Matt. 24:27, sunrise in reference to SCJC. Rev. 7:2 – angel ascended from sun-rising, from east; angel is either JC or agent sent by JC.

Kings from East are related to JC. Why plural term, not singular? Why “kings” not “king” since in OT Cyrus was “the king.” Look at Rev. 17:14 and the elaboration there. Lamb – King of Kings, hence “kings” in Rev. 17. These kings are called, chosen, and faithful followers. God's side in end-time battle, described in terms as kings from East. God's side of battle – fought by Lamb and those who belong to Lamb. Those who are with JC are defined in Rev. 17:14 as in 17:15 is defined ER. Battle – not in heaven, but on earth. JC's followers are in midst of battle, he is with them in real presence.

Believers in BR – called other names. Rev. 16:15. Rev. 16:15 – believers are called “those who keep watch” and “keep on to their garments.” In other places in BR these people are called “144 000,” “great multitude,” “remnant.”

“Kings of east” – reference to great end-time people of God, under leadership of JC. Why called “kings?” – Remember Rev. 1:6; 5:9, 10. Because of mighty works of JC on cross, those who believe in Him become in reality kings and priests. Kings of the earth find their way prepared, their victory prepared by drying up of ER.

In final crisis of earth's history there will be a world-wide confederacy of the saints. The are called by many ways, many figurative ways, described in the final battle – kings of East, those who are with the Lamb, great multitude, watchers, remnant, 144 000. This is world-wide confederacy of the believers, people who are believers in JC, acting their part in the end-time. It is not necessary in BR that these people be organized as denomination or organisation. These people are defined by whose side they worship. In last days of earth's history, despite pressure to worship Beast, there will be few who will be worshipping God, from every nation and people.

In process of this study we have used the whole method, as outlined in Session I. Studied the whole text, noticed the context and how larger context affects the rest. OT context, images with relation to studied text, how imagery is brought to completion in NT context, the Gospel meaning of it all.

What kind of battle are we talking about? There is battle b/n God's people and confederacy of evil.

2 Cor. 10: 3-5 – “weapons of world” = fleshly weapons; these tear you to pieces. X/an weapons are not fleshly kind, they have divine power, work according to spiritual and not physical powers. What kinds of strongholds do these weapons destroy? Spiritual battle; intellectual weapons. WE expose every pretention, the faking. We take captive every thought. Battle of X/ans is battle for the thought, to focus on priorities of life. That's battle of end – battle for intellectual, emotional, and spiritual allegiance in the world. In a sense, the battle is on. We all battle with our thoughts, we can all now prepare to be effective on God's die at the end battle, to be on God's side. WE can learn to be disciplined, to keep thoughts on God, to expose unauthenticity, etc. This is the great battle all X/an face.

Pray a prayer of dedication to this end.

## No. 2 The Battle of Armageddon Rev. 16:13-21

BA (Battle of Armageddon) – do we understand what it means?

First presentation of this series – “Kings of East” = JC and His people. These people are scattered around earth, but are known to God. They are with Lamb, they are remnant, they are called “Chosen” and “Faithful.”

Now we’ll study the forces opposing to God’s people. Rev. 17 and 18. Entire final battle on earth – Rev. 16:12-21, with major player and outcome of battle.

Euphrates River – people, multitudes, nations, and languages = secular, political powers of entire world, serving end-time Babylon. Babylon itself –not mentioned in Rev. 16:12, but it is brought to our attention thru mention of Euphrates River. It is not yet clear in book what Babylon is, but we’ll learn this later.

Rev. 16:13

Three unclean/evil spirits. This term ‘evil’ means ‘unclean’. Original Greek – ‘unclean.’ Term ‘unclean’ and ‘clean’ – very important role in this part of Revelation. The author of book use to distinguish b/n God’s people and things belong to God. Jer/m – clean, Babylon –unclean; bride – clean, prostitute Babylon –unclean. Angels of heaven – clean; spirits of Babylon – unclean. Here ‘unclean’ signals this verse is tight with all of this section, in ref. to Babylon, even though term “Babylon” is not mentioned.

“Unclean spirits” look like frogs. Why frogs? Exodus imagery runs thru Rev. 16, thru the 7 bowl plagues; the 7 last plagues modeled on Exodus plagues. Now – frogs. All images – built on plagues that fell on Egypt. In Rev. 16:13 – role of frogs in original Exodus story. Moses and Aaron – given special rods, to carry before Pharaoh; regular walking sticks. Ex. 7:8-13 – Aaron’s rod turns into snake; Egyptian’s sticks also turn into snakes. Pharaoh’s heart gets hardened; the acts of imitation blunts Pharaoh’s heart. Ex. 7:14-24 – Aaron and Moses turn water of Nile into blood; follows duplicate. Next plague – frogs (Ex. 8:1-15). Irony: instead of getting Egypt rid of frogs, they multiply them. Egyptians worshipped the frog. Humour: God gave Egypt all frogs they could handle. In duplicating, Egyptians were blunting Pharaoh’s heart; they made it hard for Pharaoh to let Israelites go. If they had not duplicated, they would not have made it so hard on Pharaoh.

Magicians of Egypt could not – after the frogs – duplicate plagues. Frogs in Revelation – the last deception of earth’s history. After frogs, Satan’s options are out, no more can Satan deceive, battle is over. Since deception is major part of Rev.’s outline, frogs are important part. Frogs indicate we deal with last deception of earth’s history.

The frogs come from mouth of beast, false prophet, and beast. Frogs’ work – persuasive work. Agents, with message to persuade/deceive, to turn away from God’s message at final crisis. Just as miracle of frogs in Egypt persuaded Pharaoh not to take Moses’ message seriously, so in Revelation the message of the frogs persuades people to turn away from God’s message. These frogs are the evil counterpart of 3 angels in Rev. 14:6-12.

Who are Dragon, Beast, False Prophet? Demonic trinity of Rev. 13. Dragon, Beast from Sea = Beast, False Prophet = Land Beast, from Rev. 13. In Rev. 13 – only mouth of Sea Beast is in view, but in Rev. 16 all three of the trinities have a working mouth. Historically, Sea Beast did Dragon’s work of blasphemy; in final battle all three members are involved. Babylon – a religious empire; a collection of entities working together in spiritual power; that’s what end-time Babylon is all about. Babylon is, then, all three of these characters. Rev. 16:19 confirms; when Babylon falls, splits in 3 parts. End-time

Babylon = unity b/n Dragon, Beast, and False prophet. All these characters have a history of their own. When end-time comes, all three come together to play a common role.

Rev. 16:14

Unclean spirits are defined here as spirits of demons. What does it mean 'demon?' To Greeks, demons were beings, superior to humans and inferior to gods, similar to angels in Hebraic thinking. In Judaism, before NT, demons are subordinates to Satan, who serve his purposes, like angels serve God. In NT demons function/serve on behalf of evil. Terms 'demons,' 'evil,' 'unclean,' 'evil spirits' seem interchangeable in Gospels. Mark 3:7-30. Three frogs – demonic counterparts of three angels of Rev. 14:6-12. They are evil angels, play role on behalf of evil as 3 angels play role on behalf of God. Their role is not of persuasion only, but do miraculous signs. Rev. 13:13,14. In Rev. 13 – this action is limited to the Land Beast, but in Rev. 16 – all three take action. What was reserved to Land Beast in Rev. 13, now in Rev. 16 is characteristic/activity of all. These deceptive miracles are part of the end-time deception, to give homage to unholy trinity, not to the holy trinity.

Two great God-like entities, with messages.

"Go to kings of all world" – equivalent to ER as defined in Rev. 17:15. Demonic trinity sends 3 demonic angels to persuade political, secular, and civic powers to serve them and not true God. Deception is method of persuasion used here. Success of persuasion is measured by the fact that king gather for battle a/st God. If these three succeed to gather the kings for Battle a/st God, then success is on their side, in their thinking. When civic, secular, political powers lend authority to demons, the stage is set for the final battle. How does this happen? Frogs succeed in unifying the two great evil forces at end-time Babylon, the civic, political, and secular powers. Purpose – to gather the entire corpus of those serving Satan under one banner.

Things move to slight change in v. 15.

Rev. 16:15

In midst of description of Battle of Armageddon, in midst of evil activity, comes a glimpse of God's people in middle of battle.

Allusions: call to be watchful – Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21 – JC: Be watchful! Paul – same language in Thessalonians. Allusion to Laodicea. Rev. 16:15 – JC's letter to church in Laodicea. Gathering here of all great messages of God related to end-time: JC, Paul, letter to 7 churches from 1<sup>st</sup> ½ of Revelation. Here John ties together all end-time messages. Background – Rev. 16:15 – final call of God to the end-time confederacy of the saints. That's not a military, but spiritual confederacy. Keep watch over thoughts, attitudes, words, actions. Faithful to be to lamb no matter what. Discernment is one of their chief qualities. Ties up with letter to Laodicea and messages from Synoptic Gospels. Discernment – important for avoiding deceptions of last days.

Rev. 16:16

This verse takes where 16:14 left. There we have gathering for the end-time battle. Here the verse continues – they gathered the kings together to ... Armageddon.

NIV: "they gathered"; in original, "he gathered." No reason for switch; no manuscript problem. "He" – either Satan or God. Satan – behind the 3 frogs. Or initial hint as in Rev. 17 – behind the deception is the controlling hand of God. That's the best explanation for Rev. 16:16.

What's Armageddon all about? It's a Hebrew term, so we should not try to define it in terms of the Greek language in which we find it. It is rather Greek equivalent for something in Hebrew language. There is a multitude of use. This is one-time occurrence in all Greek literature to this point at

least. Word “Armageddon,” or “Har-Mageddon” (Hebr.). What does it mean? See article on Armageddon in *Anchor Bible Commentary* by Dr. Jon Paulien.

What does it mean? How would you find out? Conclusion: “har” = mountain (in Hebr.). Mageddon – uncertain, but one definite link we have in Greek NT is that the Greek word “Mageddon” is used several times in the NT for Megiddo, well-known city in northern part of Israel. There is no mountain of Megiddo. When you stand within ancient city of Megiddo and look at Plain of Jezreel, you see no mountain in this direction; in the opposite direction you see Mt. Carmel. At Mt. Carmel – great challenge on who’s the true God. Rev. 13:13, 14- echo of Mt. Carmel experience, as Beast of Land brings fire from heaven to persuade people on earth. Further illusion of Mt. Carmel may be forthcoming in the book of Revelation. Armageddon – abbreviated word for the Great Battle b/n God and Satan.

Battle of Armageddon – symbolic reference to the great show b/n God and Baal took place in OT. That is replay of Mt. Carmel. Challenge again – who’s the true God: the True Trinity or the False Trinity; the description of 3 angels or 3 frogs? Mt. Carmel – the battle is to settle once and for all who’s the true God. Same at Battle of Armageddon – who is the true God, the God of Revelation or the god of the False Trinity.

In BR Battle of Armageddon has to do with last deception of earth’s history. Unlike the original, in the Battle of Armageddon the fire falls on the altar of the false god, on the counterfeit God. At Battle of Armageddon God’s people will have to stand on raw faith, fortified by words of Scripture, particularly on prophecy. IT is a battle for the mind. All the 5 senses will be unreliable to establish truth.

Dangerous to be secular person – who establish truth on 5 senses. We all do to some degree all the time – we judge by them. But for spiritual things the 5 senses are not enough. To trust the 5 senses is not enough. To trust in 5 senses alone is to set yourself up for end-time deception. End-time deception will zero in on these senses, and will use sense to deceive that the counterfeit Trinity is the True God. Only those who have fortified their faith in the Bible will endure.

It suggests that the end-time deception will come after the great end-time proclamation of the Gospel (Rev. 14:7). Other words, the world will need to hear the Gospel in order for its counterfeit to become meaningful. Counterfeits are no use if there is no original from which to bounce off. It is essential that there be an original for the counterfeit to make sense. It suggests that after the great end-time preaching of the Gospel there will be a great end-time deception, at which the counterfeit will appear to win.

Although the nature of the Battle of Armageddon becomes clear from careful study of Revelation comes under the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl plague, the Battle itself is not fought under the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl. It is coming at the pouring at the 7<sup>th</sup> bowl.

Rev. 16:17-21

This plagues comes out of the Temple, which is in the intro scenes in Rev. 15. The Temple appears in heaven, there is great glory in Temple until plagues are finished. Voice comes out of Temple, out of Throne. There is no distinction in Book of Revelation from Throne room or Heavenly Temple; both are used; if one is at frontline, the other is assumed to be at the background. Here explicitly the two are tied together.

Voice, “It is done.” Nutshell summary of God’s end-time actions, to undo the work of demonic powers of the end. At the end-time Mt. Carmel experience the evil would seem to have won, but at the 7<sup>th</sup> plague God will quickly act to destroy anything that Satan has gained.

Rev. 16:18

Flashes of lightning, severe earthquake, etc. – picture associated with Throne. Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19. It indicates that the severe earthquake will be like no other earthquake. Earth's final hour is accompanied by earth's final earthquake.

Rev. 16:19

“Great City” – clear reference to Babylon, as associated in Rev. 17:18; 18:10. Dragon, Beast, False Prophet – the three components of Babylon are shattered. Not only Babylon's components fall; the cities of the nations also collapse. This is another way of speaking of the civil, secular, and political powers of the world. They fall shortly after Babylon falls. This anticipates Rev. 18:5 – God has remembered her crimes.

Rev. 16:19 – God gave her the cup. Reminds of Rev. 18:6 – give back to her as she has given... Word “cup” reminds of Rev. 14:10, where everyone who worships the Beast and receives the mark, drinks the cup of the wine of God's wrath. Here we see God's final execution of judgment on Babylon. Here we get a nutshell summary of God's action to destroy those nations, those powers who have frustrated his work on earth.

Rev. 16:20

Reminds of Rev. 16:14 (6<sup>th</sup> seal). Both 6<sup>th</sup> seal and 6<sup>th</sup> bowl are in the context of the final events, before the SCJC. Great earthquake, then the final events.

Rev. 16:21

“100 pounds” = “talent” originally; varied in weight 60-100lb; it does not matter a great deal. Recalls use of hailstones in Joshua 10:11, where God used them as weapons to destroy Canaanites. Used also in Ez. 38:18-22 to describe God's victory over Gog and Magog. If hailstones are symbolic, then these imply God's full and final judgment on his enemies. Those, on whom the stones fall, curse God. That is a recurring theme of the plagues; repetition of the plagues. Rev. 16 – the more God judges, the more they curse God. Those who oppose God have gone beyond ability to return. Probation is fully and truly closed and God has rightly divided. When God identifies certain individuals as His saints, He does so completely; He does not leave even one out. God has rightly separated them from His saints. Whatever God does to them or for them, they respond with blasphemy.

From the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> bowl plagues there are 2 great forces arrayed against God's saints. Civil and political power unified against God's people – Euphrates River, Kings of the World, Cities of the Nations. Then there is Babylon, a unity of the ungodly trinity – Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet, a world-wide religious confederacy in opposition to the confederacy of the saints at the last time. Both of the opposing forces meet at the Battle of the Armageddon.

Spiritual lessons:

1. Rev. 16:15. Discernment - chief quality of God's end-time people. God's end-time people need clear minds to discern; consequently they need good physical health. So God's people will be healthy people. But they will also be people who will take advantage of mind food and mind exercise, not just the physical ones. If God's people find that their only way out from the deception is to know the Bible, then they need sharp and clear minds, and also to study in groups the Bible. In groups people find opportunities to learn. If we are to be discerning people at end time we'll need to study the Bible as never before.
2. Key and ultimate issue at final crisis of earth's history is who is God, and on which side of the final crisis does He come. That's what the Mt. Carmel experience is all about. From the previous presentation. That's where the Sabbath and Ten Commandments fit. It will be in the

- context of the selective disobedience of the Ten Commandments that the end-time enemies of God will be found and discerned. So, we need to know who God is and where He can be found.
3. Don't trust your senses nor your opinions. What you hear and read – check with the Bible. People can even put Bible texts together even to deceive. Don't trust your senses and your opinions, but discern God's will from the Bible. IF you are not sure, check the 1<sup>st</sup> series of this set of five to find out. As we approach end-time, we need best possible strategies for interpretation and for discernment.
  - 4.

### **No. 3 Prostitute Babylon and the Resurrected Beast Rev. 17**

It would be nice to know what kind of opposition will God's people meet at end-time. Rev. 17 does so. But can we understand the text so well, beyond doubt?

Vision proper of Rev. 17 is in v. 1-6a. From v. 6b is prophet's reaction. Rev. 17:7 onward – the explanation of the angel. This passage is as difficult as any other passage we meet in Revelation.

We need prayer for wisdom.

Rev. 17:1

This statement shows that this new vision will give more info about one of the seven bowl plagues. We saw the Euphrates River, here as 'many waters' represents the civil and secular powers of the world, united a/st God's people. "Many waters" = worldwide political unity that dominates at the end.

"Prostitute Babylon" – made up of demonic trinity (Rev. 16:19); a world-wide confederacy of religion, united a/st God and His people.

Here we have two powers united a/st God's people.

Rev. 17:2

"Kings of earth" – another way of describing the political confederacy. It mentions that the kings of the earth have committed adultery. Not in literal sense, but indicates that there is some kind of union b/n the political and religious confederacy; that in God's eyes is illegitimate.

We often talk about peace among nations on earth; it is a good thing. But it is possible that it is made in such a way that becomes a bad thing. Example: peace treaty b/n Hitler and Stalin; had bad repercussions about Poland, but also for the both powers.

This is an illicit union b/n civil and religious power, contrary to God's plan. In OT "adultery" and "fornication" was used for illicit unions b/n Israel and surrounding nations. Example: Ezekiel 16: Jerusalem is rejected infant. God raises her, nourishes her, and marries her. But she scorns the covenant of marriage, and she unites with any other nation; she becomes a prostitute, but unusual one. Ezek. 16:33, 34. Jer/m gives payments to those who would come to her. She is going to any length to get attention and be favoured by other nations.

Rev. 17 builds on imagery of Ezek. 16. Rev. 17 – adultery is reward for kings of earth to accept Babylon's rule for short time. Thru this attention that Babylon lavishes she gains control of the kings of the earth. Rev. 18 – reward is in terms of economic benefits. Rev. 18 – tremendous mourning of kings of earth bcs Babylon has fallen and she cannot lavish the benefits from the past.

"Inhabitants of the earth" – of the people, not the leaders. These are intoxicated by the wine of her adulteries. Kings of earth – commit adultery; people of earth – intoxicated. Rev. 14:8. Lust and

drunkenness describe the condition for the people of the earth. Most of the people go along with what's happening. Is it a wise decision; has it been well thought? Lust and drunkenness have in common – one does not think clearly and makes unwise decisions.

End-time battle of mind – there will be such a state that people will not be thinking clearly. Lust and drunkenness don't last long. They affect the decision making process. Once past, there is strong sense of regret. Lust and drunkenness are not good grounds for long-term unity. Union entered based upon lust and drunkenness doesn't last long. Nations enter into union with Babylon, thinking they'll be better off. In Rev. 17 this union will be short lived. Fortunately for God's people and God's plan for them.

Rev. 17:3

Angel in v. 3 – same as in v. 1. He takes John into a desert to see the woman. Interesting, in Rev. 12:14 we have a parallel text. Woman sitting on the beast is found in the same place that the woman of Rev. 12 is found. Rev. 12 – woman in chased in the desert by a dragon; dragon has 7 heads and 10 horns. Rev. 17 – woman sits on beast, with 7 heads and 10 horns. Is this a transformation? Has the woman been transformed in some sense? John is astonished by the vision (Rev.17:6b).

Apparently, the various confederacies in Rev. can go by different names, but the relationships are the same. Rev. 17:1 – prostitute sitting on many waters, the Euphrates River. Rev. 17:2 – prostitute in union with kings on earth. Rev. 17:3 – woman sitting on scarlet beast. All three of these pairs of images are parallel. In all of them – symbol for Babylon, always a woman – is always associated with a symbol of secular and political power (Euphrates River, kings of the earth, Beast). These symbols are explained by using other symbols for the same things. We have a pair of confederacies who unite to oppose God and His people. Scary thing about this is that if we take the woman, the Beast, and the desert, Rev. 17:3 would imply that in some sense the greatest opponent to God's end-time people will be a power that once seemingly was the people of God, perhaps part of this whole deception. A power masquerading as the true church of God. In previous series of presentations – the Sea Beast, a counterfeit of JC in end-time. Counterfeit continues even here. This Beast contains blasphemous names. Reminds of the SB, but this is not the Sea Beast - the SB is part of Babylon. This beast represents Babylon as a whole.

Seven heads and 10 horns, like beasts of Rev. 12 and 13. Here – no crowns; seems appropriate as the harlot is in charge. The political power has given up all its power and authority for the time to be ruled by another.

Rev. 17:4, 5

Dress of woman – modeled after the dress of High Priest in OT. She's dressed in scarlet, purple, and gold. Ex. 28:5,6 – ephod of High Priest. Precious stones – Ex. 28:9-13, 17-21. Has a cup in her hand; may well represent the drink offerings in sanctuary – Exodus 29:40,41; 30:9; Lev. 23:13, 18, 37. She has an inscription on forehead; Ex. 28:36-38 – the inscription on the turban of the High Priest in OT, "Holy to the Lord." In Rev. 17:3 – Babylon symbolizes in end time symbolizes God's people gone to seed. Ez. 16 background is important – once faithful people of God are now in opposition to God and God's people. She is now in opposition. Gen. 11 – all apostasy goes to Tower of Babel. All nations who ever opposed God originally go to this Tower of Babel, where nations were scattered. Biblically speaking, Babylon is appropriate term for the end-time opposition to God bcs in OT Babylon was always in opposition to God's people.

Rev. 17:6

This woman looks like Rev. 12, is in desert like woman in Rev. 12, dresses like High Priest, but she is in opposition. Destruction of saints - reminds of Rev. 13:15-17. Destroys those who carry testimony of Jesus. She is the enemy of the remnant, of the end-time confederacy of the saints.

At this chapter we come to the end of the vision: a woman sitting on a scarlet beast. That's a photograph, not a moving scene. She's described as identity. In previous places in Revelation, there is time to describe that power and its background, a bit of the history, so we can understand it. Here we have a vision of a woman sitting on a beast.

Rev. 17:7

The interpretations begin from v. 7; these interpretations are more confusing than the vision. Rev. 17:7-11 are probably the most difficult to understand in entire Book of Revelation. We are elaborating on the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl, which includes the mention of the Battle of Armageddon.

v. 7 – she rides on the beast, she's in position of dominance. Person riding on the horse is in control of the horse. Religion, for short time, controls politics. Reminds of two other cases in history, among others: Daniel 3, where religious Babylon for time dominated the political Babylon. Daniel 6 – same story. Hence, Babylon is end-time image of the opposition power a/st God's people. We may be reminded of the situation of the Middle Ages in Europe: papacy, a religious power, used political power to enforce its religious dominance. Same here in Rev. 17.

Rev. 17:8

Beast seems associated with the inhabitants of the world, with the political and secular authorities. Beast is identified – “was, now is not, and will come up.” Reminds of description of God in Rev. 1:4; 4:8 – similar description applied to God. He is one who was, is, is to come. Here – identification of the overall characteristics of the Beast.

Rev. 17:8 – “was, now is not, will come up.” The word “now” is an addition in NIV. This beast would seem to not be something that is in view in John's day as “now” would suggest. But the beast was, is not, and will come up – this combination is waved in by way of identification. It is a counterfeit of God and God's government on earth.

Such a world-wide political union has happened in the past. Example – Dan. 2: four secular political figures have ruled the world. This type of world-wide political union will cease for a time, and then be reconstituted in the final battle of Armageddon. Taking on Daniel 2, where there are 4 kingdoms, period of division, and then the end-time events, it seems that this period of no-union reflects the world for the last several hundred years. Such union may not be the reality now. We live in time when world-wide political unity is not a reality and does not seem to be one such.

The Beast goes to destruction. Reminds of Rev. 19 and 20, when Beasts are destroyed.

The inhabitants of the world are astonished at the Beast. John is astonished by the prostitute bcs he recognizes her from earlier imagery in the book. Here the “inhabitants of the world” not the readers of the Book, these are astonished. Worldwide political union is truly inconceivable in this world. But if what Revelation says here will take place in our time, then we will be truly astonished. The New World Order seems more like disorder nowadays.

Rev. 17:9

A call for wisdom – needed really.

“Hills” = mountains (in Greek). Seven hills – may recall the 7 hills of Rome to the readers of the book. On the other hand, the 7 heads and 7 hills are consecutive, rather than in the same time, so perhaps it is not Rome who is in view.

The 7 hills are the ones that the woman sits. That suggests that the 7 hills are the same as the ‘many waters,’ ‘the kings of the earth,’ ‘the Beast’ – the represent secular and political power. The term ‘mountains’ is often used as symbol of kingdoms – Is. 13:4; Jer. 51:24,25; Dan. 2:35,44. As in OT, symbolism points to great powers that undergird this woman and give her strength.

Rev. 17:10

These kings, hills, waters, the Beast, etc. – consecutive, not contemporary to one another. These represent a series of worldwide political powers through history. What we get here is the pedigree of the end-time east. Just as the pedigree of the Sea Beast went to the kingdoms of Dan. 7, the Land Beast has a pedigree that goes to the imagery of Rev. 12. Here again we receive a pedigree of the Beast. Can these 7 be identified? The crucial issue is the time of the one that is. When is the “now”? At John’s day or another time.

Principle involved: In Scripture God meets people where they are.

The vision takes us to future, but the explanation to the prophet takes time/place at his time/place. The one ‘is’ is Rome of John’s day. The other 5 – the 5 great world empires from OT: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece. The one that is to come – a future manifestation of world-wide power. One possible identification of these would be the papal power, to dominate the world in Middle Ages. The reason for this suggestion is that the end-time power is not one of the 7. It is an 8<sup>th</sup> power.

Rev. 17:11

The end-time power is an eighth power. The Beast of the final crisis is not one of the seven, yet is one of the seven. At the end-time comes an eighth that is one of the seven. Which one of the seven? It could refer to Babylon, to Rome, to papacy. The final beast is of a character of the earlier ones, but distinct in point of time.

Rev. 17:7-11 – are we closer to understand the meaning? The closer we look at the original Greek, the more puzzling they become. See v. 7-11 as primary in identification of the Beast, like Rev. 13:1-7 for Sea Beast; Rev. 13:11 for Land Beast; Rev. 11:3-6 for the two witnesses. If we see this as identification, it is not necessary to see every detail. This is a world-wide political power that functions much as the other seven powers that were governing the world before.

Move to simpler material, beginning with v. 12.

Rev. 17:12

We have kings of the east, kings of the whole earth, 7 kings, now we have 10 kings. How do they fit in the picture? They have not yet received the kingdom. They have neither pedigree nor relevance to the John’s time, but are an end-time entity. They receive kingdom for 1hr, for one decisive period of earth’s history, along with the beast. The time of the 10 horns is the time of the 8<sup>th</sup> head. Their relevance is to the end-time crisis.

Rev. 17:13

Apparently this is the decisive move in the creation of the world-wide political unity. These 10 kings represent a sub-group among the nations of the world, a special group whose allegiance to the world-wide political confederacy become decisive moment in its creation. What is this group? Time will tell. It is clear that the grouping of nations, under whatever auspices, happens only when this group of 10 kings place their allegiance into this political confederacy. Those who are watching the prophecy must watch for this move of the nations of the world toward world-wide unity.

Rev. 17:14

Here we have a description for the final battle in nut-shell. We saw this battle starting in Rev. 12:17, when the battle was given in nutshell. Extended version in 16:12-21, and here again.

The Lamb will overcome them. The end is not in doubt. The outcome is clear. Ultimately, the Lamb wins, not the powers of this world.

War of Rev. 17:14 is later of events in Rev. 17:16. Rev. 17:14 describes end/destruction of the political world-wide confederacy, which is still active in v. 16; more actively taking in Rev. 19:11-21; there we have destruction of the political unities of the world, and their opposition to God.

Rev. 17:15

Angel – still of the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl; waters – Euphrates River, referring to the nations of the world.  
Now notice the decisive action of v. 16.

Rev. 17:16

Beast and 10 horns are the unity of political power. They change their minds. They were willing to have the prostitute ride them for a while, to be in unity with them. Then they turn a/st the prostitute, and destroy the religious power with which they have been allied. This reminds us again of Ezek. 16.

Ez. 16:35-41 In Ez. 16 Judah is described in her attempts to gain favour with the nations, but the very ones she sought after turned on her. The support of the prostitute Babylon in Rev. 17 turns against her. They burn her with fire. In OT prostitutes were stoned as punishment. One exception – Lev. 21:9 – if prostitute was daughter of a priest. Here, the woman is X/an, appears to be a true follower of JC, but is not. Entire picture of Rev. 17 reminds us of psychology of lust. How many times after a rape, the person who lusted much after the woman then hates her – see 2 Sam. 13:1-19.

Rev. 17:17

Here we see the amazing truth that God is in full control, even of Satanic deceptions. 2 Thess. 2:11; Rev. 9:1-5. The temporary unity of religious and political powers in the world accomplishes the purpose of God to bring the ultimate conflict to conclusion.

Rev. 17:18

Term “Great City” means more than just an end-time Babylon; symbol of satanic powers ruling over rule. Present participle – rules continuously over the kings of the world. This is one of the most continuous expressions in the Greek language. This Babylon lies behind all political powers and manoeuvres on the earth.

Rev. 17 elaborates on the drying of the Euphrates motif in the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl plague. Tells us who Euphrates is, the pedigree, and they will act in the last events.

Rev. 17:18 – switching from prostitute to Great City. The same identity, but different description. From destruction of prostitute to destruction of Great City.

Spiritual Lessons:

1. No matter what happens, God is in control. Same lesson as in Dan. 7. All nations and people serve His purpose.
2. Beware the attractions of the world. Babylon described in terms of pornography, miracles. Today’s society – full of excitement, philosophies that bring excitement. But they at the end bring destruction. True for society as a whole and for individuals too.

#### **No. 4 Babylon, the Great City, Falls Rev. 18**

In Rev. 18 the wicked are sad about Babylon's fate, but the righteous rejoice. Is it ever appropriate to rejoice over someone's sorrow/death?

Rev. 15-18 - section in BR that describes wrath of God. In previous presentations, Rev. 11;18 gives summary of the key mov/t in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of BR. There we read about the wrath of God a/st nations. Rev. 15-18 that's what's the picture is all about. Rev. 18 – wrath of God a/st nations described 3<sup>rd</sup> time.

In Rev. 16 – how Babylon falls, by drying of Euphrates. This symbolizes the withdrawal of support by nations and people who realize they've been deceived.

Rev. 17 – fall of Babylon – by execution of prostitute, as by law of Moses; burned by fire. This provides further info on how end-time Babylon is brought to end.

Rev. 18 – fall of big city.

Rev. 17:16 is elaborated on in Rev. 18.

Rev. 18 – divided in 5 parts.

1) First, situation of Babylon before destruction – 18:1-3 – doom is pronounced, but not executed.

2) 18:4-8 – functions as sentence on Babylon; describes the results of the heavenly investigation on Babylon, and prophecies the consequences that will come on Babylon. Rev. 18:4 – anyone associated with Babylon is to exit before the fall.

3) 18:9-19 – execution of Babylon's doom. "in one hour" – repeated. Three different groups are described as mourning the fall of Babylon.

4) 18:20 – interlude (as v. 4-8) – celebration of fall by God's people

5) 18:21-24 – doom, fall, execution recounted once more, and celebrated.

Five portions of Rev. 18. Parts 2 and 4 serve as interlude to God's people. Part 1 is before doom of Babylon; part 5 – after fall; part 3- actual execution of Babylon's doom.

Section 1 – Pronouncement of Babylon's doom condition – Rev. 18:1-3

Rev. 18:1

"another" angel? Proclamation angel as in Rev. 14 or doom angel? This particular angel addresses the world, but the angel of Rev. 17 addressed John. Angel in Rev. 18 – comes from heaven, as 18:4. Angel in Rev. 18 is more in line with Rev. 14 than with Rev. 17. Angel here in Rev. 18 is proclamation angel.

"Has great authority" – authority is major concept in Revelation. Take concordance and look "authority" in original language; notice how word used.

All true authority derives from God. Authority can be used for good or evil, but is always under God's control. This particular angel exercise his authority for God, does so in God's behalf. Earth was illuminated by His splendour. This is foretaste of the new earth, where the New Jer/m is illumined by God's glory – Rev. 21:23; 22:5. Domain of Babylon is invaded by foretaste of the New Jer/m. Whole earth is affected by it. Last chance for people on earth to turn from their destructions and focus on God.

Last description of God's last message to the earth.

Rev. 18:2

Fall of Babylon is not physical fall; this comes later in chapter 18. The people of God are still found in Babylon at this time, as 18:4 indicates. This is declaration of Babylon's spiritual condition. First time – Rev. 14:8; 2<sup>nd</sup> proclamation – Rev. 18:4. First time Babylon is described as fallen in light of 3 angels' message, Gospel proclamation. Here again proclaiming angel comes, illuming the world with splendour, and in light of this, again description of Babylon's fall. This is the last positive message to God's people, and last negative message about Babylon. Describes what's about to happen was probation is closing in the world.

Babylon is called "Fallen" is bcs it is the place of unclean spirits, demons, and unclean birds. This situation of spiritual condition is not unique, but startling to see that in organisation that claims to belong to God. There is strong spiritualistic component in Babylon, but it is a power from below. Rev. 16:13,14 – unclean spirits like frogs come. Strong demonic/spiritualistic component to end-time Babylon.

Rev. 18:3

"Have drunk here" – perfect tense; suggests even later state point than Rev. 17:2. There is describes the nations having adultery with the woman in past terms, but immediate past. Here – distant past. Here we are at the time of unity b/n Babylon and political powers of world, but this unity is about to break out.

Added element. While Rev. 17 focuses on political unity b/n Babylon and beast; here – economic element. This picks from hint of economic authority in Rev. 13 – where boycott is brought a/st a/o w/t mark of beast. Here we see - religious and political motivation for unity, but also economic.

Second Part – Rev. 18:4-8 – Appeal to God's people on Account of God's Sentence

Rev. 18:4

God's people are called out, bcs of what God has found in Babylon.

Second voice speaks directly to God's people who are still left in Babylon. Completion of 3 angels' messages – for the undecided to take stand, for God, for side of truth. Pointed message: "come out of her that you may not share...."

This message is the final and complete gathering of the confederacy of the saints. Anyone who lingers in Babylon will end up identified with the anti-God confederacy. Lot was attached to Sodom. When Sodom was about to be destroyed, Lot had to leave, or he would be identified with the city to the point of his own destruction. If a/o lingers in Babylon, will be considered/counted with 'hand' people, those who have mark of Beast on hand. They are there for personal benefits, economic benefits. They may not be in there for spiritual reasons, not even reasoning to be there for spiritual purposes. Purely economic reasons. Hearts may not be in Babylon's deception, but fear loss of economic benefits if forsake Babylon.

Here close of probation is imminent in Rev. 18:4

This part of chapter is connected with Babylon before close of probation. IN Book of Rev. you are constantly moving back and forth in visionary time. Then you move back and forth with the vision, looking at various events from various perspectives.

We saw this in 6<sup>th</sup> bowl plague (Rev. 16) – first, drying up of Euphrates, which comes after description of Rev. 16:13-16, where you have the gathering of the very powers that will constitute the drying up Euphrates. Here, even though we have seen many events that go past the close of probation even up to SCJC.

In Rev. 18:4 we move to time of Rev. 11; Rev. 14; Rev. 6:12-17; 7:1-4, etc.

Apparently, before this final appeal in Rev. 18:4 connection with Babylon does not doom a person. When we are tempted to condemn a person who is not associated with God's people because of his/her wrong association. God does not judge in this fashion. There are many sincere and godly people in various religious organisations, regardless of their religious associate. But there comes time when everyone associated with Babylon will lose their place in God's kingdom. That requires serious warning.

Rev. 18:5

Reasons why it is imperative to leave Babylon immediately: her sins, God has remembered. Crimes of Babylon are unaccountable, uncountable. Rev. 18:5 begins the sentence of Babylon. Babylon has already been judged. The great end-time judgment is before the SCJC. Here we see the results of the judgment before the Fall. Here we hear the pronouncements of the charges against her.

Rev. 18:6

Basic theme here – justice. Her punishment is intended to fit her crimes. Seems to be based on law of malicious witness in Deut. 19. Observe Deut 19:16-19. This is interesting rule; how would our own court system be affected if same rule is applied. If witness gives false information, penalty for perjury was same as if the person accused was to be found guilty.

What text in Rev. 18:6 implies is that Babylon has accused God's saints in earthly courts; but she receives Heavenly court judgment. Issue – justice. She is to receive according to what she has done. She receives double punishment for double crimes. Another way of saying: pay her full for her crimes; full and final punishment. Compare with Jer. 16:18; 17:18.

Quite a bit of poetic repetition.

Rev. 18:7

Since her glory and luxury came at expense of others, this became basis/reason and ground for her condemnation/punishment. She knows her crimes are against God, but defies God and His justice. It is defiance against God. Her acts are criminal, but she boasts against God.

This based on Is. 47:7-8.

Background text for Rev. 18:7 – she knows her acts are criminal, but she defies God. Like Laodicea, Babylon has unquestionable faith in her own resources. That makes her have no faith in God.

Rev. 18:8

“In one day” – a prophetic year? Perhaps. Perhaps not. Whatever, it is a decisive point in time. There is a set time when Babylon will receive punishment for her activities, punishment for the fruits of her activities.

Plagues mentioned here are clearly the plagues of Rev. 16. At this point of Rev. 18 we are before the time when the plagues of Rev. 16. That indicates that much of Rev. 17 and 18 are giving background leading to fall of plagues. Much of this is part of the material of Rev. 13 and 14. In previous discussions, Rev. 13 and 14 depict the anger of nations and their attempts to destroy people. Here we see God acting to deliver His people and bring judgment on Babylon.

In contrast to her boasting, she'll receive death, mourning, famine; will be consumed by fire.

Rev. 18:8 – ‘mighty is the Lord God who judges her’ – “who judges her” is aorist participle. That means that God's judgment had already taken place, prior to this verse; that it was already in the past.

What we have here in v. 8 and previous, is sentence, based on deliberation of jud/t. All investigation has taken place. All facts have been laid out. Babylon deserves to be condemned.

This is the sentence at close of the Jud/t and before the execution. Because God has judged her, her plagues will come (future).

### Third Section – Rev. 18:9-19

Three litanies – begin with “woe, woe, woe,” and end with “in one hour.”

In point of time Rev. 18:8 points to time of Jud/t; Rev. 18:9,10 reflect on that jud/t. The political rulers of world caused Babylon’s destruction (Rev. 7:16), yet they mourn Babylon’s destruction. It was done in fit of rage, but when it was done, the results of the loss begin to sink in. Actions taken in lust and drunkenness are with short-lived value. So is with passionate anger – foolish decisions.

Rev. 18:17 we find the merchants of earth mourning. They were profiting from Babylon. The economic benefits were not highlighted in Rev. 17, but here we see it. There is tremendous loss.

Rev. 18:17-19 – sea captains. This particular group acts little to previous section. Those who transport the goods suffer too. Babylon’s wealth was engine of their wealth. Bcs of Babylon’s wealth the merchants and the sea captains were wealthy. When Babylon falls, world-wide depression is the result.

Rev. 18:18 – in Greek “Who was like the Great City?” Reminds of beast – “who is like the Beast?” and Michael = Who is like God? Babylon was treated like Christ, but she failed those who trusted in her.

While the powers of the earth who are regretting the loss of Babylon, there are those who rejoice.

Rev. 18:20

### Fourth Section – Rev. 18:20

Same thing that causes mourning on earth, brings joy to saints on earth and in heaven. That seems unfair - as if revenge and vindictiveness. Not the case. Notice what the rejoicing is all about? God has judged her for the way she treated you. Rejoicing is not taking delight in Adam’s fault, but joy when injustice is reversed, when a person is acquitted when condemned.

This is reversal of v. 6, where Babylon jails or puts to death those who are unjustly accused. Human courts have been delivering unjust verdicts, but God delivers true justice. There is rejoicing when dictator loses power. That does not mean to stop being sorry for the individuals who suffer as result. There is rejoicing over fall of system that has brutalized people.

### Fifth Section – Rev. 18:21-24

Reflects Jer. 51:59-64.

Here in Rev. 18:21 we see that this fall of Babylon is the final fall of Babylon; will not be found again.

Rev. 18:22-23. Here in this lengthy poetic series we see that Babylon’s fall is total and complete: no more music, no more marriage, no more workmanship, etc. Babylon, whatever that means, has come to an end, and will never rise again. Hint of important concept: Sin, such as represented by Babylon, will not last forever. When God deals with Babylon’s sin, it will not rise again.

Interesting that it says, “by your magic spell all nation were lead astray.” Babylon is indicted for the leading the world into deception (Rev. 13; 16; 17). “Magic spell” in Gr. “pharmakea.” Unique in Revelation; related to similar word Rev. 9:21; 21:8; 22:15. Magic spells are one of practices that keep people out of New Jer/m. “Deception” in Greek – “planao”; Rev. 2:20 (Jezebel’s teaching); Rev. 12:9 – about Satan; 13:14 – actions of land beast; 19:20 – false prophet. Such deception occurs again after Millennium according to Rev. 20:3,8,10.

These passages offer further demonstration that whatever we mean by Babylon, it must include the Dragon, Beast, and False prophet.

Rev. 18:24

Chapter ends with 2<sup>nd</sup> indictment or listing the ground for Babylon’s destruction. The final is about how she treated the saints.

This text is not full with beatitudes nor with great and obvious spiritual lessons.

Three importance concepts:

First, higher court. All earthly tribunals can be appealed to higher court – the Court of God’s End-time Jud/t. That justice is coming, that even if it looks that our treatment is not right, God will set e/th right that was done wrong.

Second, rejoicing over oppressors is appropriate, when those oppressors loose their power. We may feel sorry for people who are part of the oppressor’s system. Appropriate to rejoice over fall of oppressive system. In Book of Revelation - joy over fall of system, not sadistic glee.

Third, as we approach end of world’s history, time to break away from any system that opposes God. Some system can oppose God even if they carry His name, even if they name themselves after God. There are systems that can take name of JC and rejoice in the Spirit, but they are not from God. Examine by Word of God where we stand. Examine where you stand, where your affiliation is – by the Lamb and His people or not.

## No. 5 Outline of the End of Time

We would like to have a clear chart of the order in which the end-time events take place. Does the BR provide evidence for such a chart?

With ch. 19 BR begins to take a turn beyond the end. Although elements of Rev. 19 mentions events and characters from the earlier periods of the book (Rev. 13 -18), there is move toward consideration of the final outcome and beyond. That is the center of Rev. 20-22.

In this presentation – summary of events before end, as much as possible. Summary as much as possible of what lies in the future, as much as BR gives. What will happen, in what order?

Many speculation and speculative charts have been created in the past. At least, let’s provide a solid outline based on what’s presented in BR. There are some things that are explicit, others – implicit. Let’s lay the basics, based on exegesis and solid study.

Let’s begin. A series of 12 events, that happens in fairly certain order in final history of earth. Number 12 is just by chance, not required by BR or exegesis of it.

### Stage 1: World-wide Proclamation of Gospel

Rev. 14:6-7

This is the eternal gospel, the everlasting Gospel, given by the remnant of the Woman's seed. These indications tell us that this Gospel will not be radically different from the NT Gospel, not something totally new for the end-time. Just like remnant of carpet is the same as the rest of carpet, so this Gospel will be the same as the Gospel proclaimed from the life, death, and resurrection of JC/ NT times. It will be uniquely packaged for end-time, but in essential harmony with the Gospel.

Will be of world-wide significance, goes to every nation; galvanizes attention; in context of pre-advent jud/t. Summary in three basic statement: 1) Fear God = take God seriously; 2) Give Him glory = put Him first in thought and action; 3) Worship Him = not any counterfeit of God; obedience to Commandments, incl. Sabbath commandment.

Several other parts of Rev. that run parallel to Rev. 14:6, 7, that also give aspects of this final proclamation of the Gospel. Rev. 3:17-22; Rev. 16:15 suggests that Laodicea's message is particularly relevant/important to the end-time people. However, those who give the message must be cleansed from inauthenticity first. This may be parallel to the cleansing of the 2 witnesses – Rev. 11:3-10. Their trying experience may parallel that of Laodicea. This may suggest that the final proclamation of the Gospel has long pre-history of preparation, maybe since the closing of Daniel's vision, until Gospel will ready great climax.

Gospel will be proclaimed at time of end; long preparatory process. God's people cleansed from inauthenticity. Rev. 7:1-4 – similar text; final events are held back until all those who are open to God's leading have made their decision. The language used here is the language of sealing. When all those open to the Gospel will be sealed, then the 4 winds will be released and final events will start.

Rev. 11:11-13 – public display of the resurrected witnesses corresponds to the final proclamation of the 1<sup>st</sup> angel; as seen in 11:13.

Rev. 18:4 – seems to give one great final impetus to the Gospel, before close of probation.

This concept that the end-time events begin with the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel. Mark 13:10; Matt 24:14 – JC's words, spreading Gospel precipitates final events.

2 Thess. 2 takes up the same theme – great end-time deception takes place in great e/t proclamation of the Gospel. Result – w/w confederacy of saints: “remnant” (12:17), “144 000” (7:1-8; 14:1-5); “great multitude” (19:1; 7:9-17); “called, chosen, faithful” (17:14); “watchful ones” (16:15); “keep their garments” (chs. 3; 7; 19). God's people join in one great w/w union of faithful believers. How does this happen?

How does it happen that the Gospel, that is often ignored in the world today, overwhelmed by conflicting messages, comes to universal attention? IS there some universal twist to it?

Not according to Rev. 14. If we accept the NT's claims of the finality of the NT Gospel, then the decisive turn in human history is God's overruling and placing the Gospel in the center and focus of attention. When this time comes, God's people will have to be ready to deliver such message with clarity and belief. It is not some new type of Gospel. It is the old, known Gospel.

## **Stage 2: World-wide Counterfeit of the Gospel**

In contrast to the proclamation of the true God, there rises at end-time a counterfeit. Rev. 12, 13. Specified in 16:13. Message – 16:13,14 – 3 frogs. This also may have lengthy pre-history. Rev. 9:13-21- message of 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet. There we find counterpart of Rev. 10 and 11. Four angels of Rev. 9 are deliberate contrasting power of 4 angels in Rev. 7. Rev. 7 – 4 angels come from God, serve God. Rev. 9 – the 4 angels release the forces of evil that bring calamity on earth.

Before end of world – two contrasting and powerful pairs of angels: groups of 4 in Rev. 7 and 9, representing the Gospel; 3 angels each in Rev. 14 and 16, representing the Gospels and counter-Gospel.

In context of proclamation of true Gospel, there will be a w/w proclamation counterfeit Gospel. First comes true revival; counterfeit comes next.

2 Thess. 2:3,4 – parallel to this message of Rev. Here – mystery of iniquity, satanic message that has gone through the ages. Satan has expressed his message through different means. In 2 Thess. 2 this message has been restrained. In 2 Thess. 2 the message is also un-restrained, it goes out and has deceptive power. Result – w/w confederacy of religion, in opposition to true God. Described by many names: unholy trinity (16:13); prostitute Babylon (17:1-6); city Babylon (17:18; 18:1-24); Great City (11:8; 16:19; in 17 and 18). Order b/n these two is clear – true Gospel must come first. Only in context of proclamation of true that the counterfeit makes sense.

First – proclamation of Gospel. Saints may not be visible, but they are there, and God knows them. Then – w/w confederacy of religion. This will be more obvious.

### **Stage 3: World-wide Civil, Secular, and Political Unity**

Parallel to religious development comes a world-wide civil, secular, and political unity. It has many names in BR: Euphrates River (16:12; 17:15); kings of inhabited world (16:14); many waters (17:1, 15); kings of earth (17:2; 18:3,9); earth dwellers, beast (17); 10 horns (17); cities of nations (16:19); seven mountains (17:9); seven kings (17:9). Obvious – a world-wide secular, civil, political unity. The development of this confederacy - not much detail given, but so much is clear. It's heritage are previous world empires.

Rev. 17:10, 11 Heritage of this confederacy – the previous world empires, such as Babylon, Persia, Greece. This political confederacy becomes viable when a significant leading group, known as “the 10 kings” joins up. Rev. 17:12, 13. When this significant sub-group lends its authority to the land beast that the world-wide confederacy is actualized. What is this group? Very hard to say. It is hard to predict. God's people have to be watchful. But also can't be too specific, more than BR allows. If we know the text, when the true fulfilment comes, we'll recognize it.

This w/w political confederacy is part of God's plan – Rev. 17:17. God himself precipitates the w/w political confederacy. God is in control. God is precipitating w/w attention to the Gospel. This attention flashes out the counterfeit Gospel. Just as God has precipitated the Gospel and its counterfeit, so is God in control of the political confederacy.

In Paul the uncommitted are implied by those who love and those who hate the truth. 2 Thess. 2. – for truth, people who hate truth, people on fence. At end – there will be two groups only: love truth, hate truth.

In Rev. – there's more of a universal, political, national approach to same thing. Three great confederacies on earth: 1) God's saints; 2) Counterfeit religion; 3) Political and secular. It is the battle over this third group that energizes the other two confederacies. Vastly, the majority of people throughout history have been those who have been indifferent to the truth.

First three stages – arising of three great confederacies. They are in process of development.

### **Stage 4: Valley of Decision**

The civil and secular powers of the world represent many who do not affiliate with either side of the religious sides; the religious confederacies are working to gain adherents. On side of righteous is the call of the true Gospel. Rev. 18:4 – a call to uncommitted to leave emerging Babylon. Message of 3 angels receive assistance from heaven; some have called it Latter Rain or Loud Cry. There is much

power of this cry in contrast to the emerging super-powers. It is clear from Rev. 11:13 that many people respond to this proclamation, even among those identified with the Beast in Rev. 11.

Unholy Trinity has also persuasive power of 3 frogs, the miraculous spectaculars of false Mt. Carmel, the great counterfeit of SCJC. And when all fails, there is the increasing coercion mentioned in Rev. 13:15-17. The unholy trinity has great deal of power at its disposal.

For time the world is involved in two great religious positions struggling for the uncommitted centre. Three angels to go the world in Rev. 14:6-12, and those who accept unite with the saints, become followers of the Lamb – Rev. 17:14. The three frogs got the world also – Rev. 16:13, 14 – those who accept unite with Babylon, directly or indirectly, through the Beast. Babylon takes control over all world either by direct spiritual control through the various powers that make the Unholy Trinity. Or by political power – the Beast controlling the nations of the world.

Many will commit in action even if they don't do so in heart and mind. Mark of Beast (Rev. 13) that can either be received in hand or forehead, Those who are truly committed represent Babylon. Those who pitch in for political status or economic/.political hand, are those marked on the hand. They go along with Babylon but not of conviction.

### **Stage 5: The World Religious and Secular Confederacies Unite**

Certain unifying forces brings Satan's agents together. First, we have the frogs. Frogs represent the spirit of demons going out to gather the kings of the earth. This suggests that spiritualism will be a powerful agent unifying the world in these end-time events. "New Age" doctrines take place even among secular people. "New Age" unites Eastern religion with Western mindset. By definition secular people are not interested in religion. But since the Flower Children of the 60's, spiritual interests have become popular. Apparently Babylon will wield convincing supernatural power. Maybe séance room or more spectacular (like the original Mt. Carmel experience). Babylon will have great spiritual power at its disposal as the work of the 3 frogs.

Rev. 16 – if the first 4 plagues are taken literally, there may be ecological reason for the world powers to come together with religious confederacy. If world come to place of total ecological breakdown and desperation may cause drastic measures in area of law and order. It may be seen that these are jud/ts of God on the people of the world. If these are jud/ts of God, then anyone who is opposing these laws and order, may be seen as opposing God and bringing His jud/ts on the world. If that's the case, it may be seen that in this context the nations will comply with Babylon.

"Fornication" is another symbol by which the unity b/n religious and political confederacies are described. Fornication suggests mutual self-interest. People rarely break from bonds to engage in extramarital sexual affairs, unless they feel – wrongly in most cases – that they are gaining some interest and benefit for themselves. That's illusive, but it's still there. That fornication explains how both Babylon and the nations would benefit. There will be political and economic benefits.

Possibly the world-wide breakdown of law and order would bring unification and unity in motion and unification a/g nations.

Whatever, they succeed in uniting at one point. Imagery: Babylon on Euphrates River; prostitute on waters, woman on Beast. There will be time in history when the religious and political confederacies in the world will unite. It is not clear when and how, but they will come together.

### **Stage 6: Saints are Singled Out for Destruction**

When world is united in service to counterfeit trinity, those who are not marked and are not unifying, they will be sided out for destruction. Rev. 12:17 – Dragon enraged a/st woman; 13:15;

13:16,17 – sanctions a/st God’s people; Rev. 7:1-4 – all hell breaks loose around the world, as God’s restraining influence is taken away from power that be.

### **Stage 7: Close of Human Probation**

Rev. 10:7 – at sounding of 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet; after close of Gospel’s commission. Stage 1 continues throughout the first 6 stages. Gospel goes forth as Babylon is gathering, as Babylon gather the nations, as Babylon and the Beast unite. Gospel goes forth even as saints are singled out for destructions. There comes time when everyone on earth has made their decision. Rev. 15:5-8 – Temple in heaven in empty. Rev. 22:11. From that point on everyone remains as they are, spiritually. If they do any changing at all, it will be in the direction of further growth of where they are. No one will transfer across the barrier from that time on.

### **Stage 8: Opposition Powers Seek to Destroy the Saints**

They seek to execute the death decree of Rev. 13:15. They engage in Battle of Armageddon – Rev. 17:14. This could be described in terms of the rising waters of Euphrates. Eventually Euphrates is drying up, but it has to be to deliver God’s people. It will be the rise of flooding of Euphrates River that threatens God’s people.

Is. 5:5-8 – here image of Euphrates river rises until it covers up till Jerusalem with waters. This is the kind of threat that God’s people will see at the end. Rev. 18:5-8 – the opposition powers may succeed up to a time. Toward end of time many of God’s people may loose their lives. But not after Close of Probation – afterwards no death of saints.

### **Stage 9: Christ Intervenes in Behalf of the Saints**

Rev. 17:14 -

Rev. 16:12 – deception is revealed

Rev. 17:16 – nations hate the whore

When confederacy of nations tries to crush God’s people, God intervenes and exposes who’s on whose side; deception is undone; nations realise what’s going on – they turn their attention from the saints to those who has deceived them. They change their mind.

### **Stage 10: Nations Turn Against Their Deceivers**

Rev. 17:16 – Babylon is destroyed by the very powers she depended on. God remains in control of this process. He even encourages the breakup of Babylon of ecological means – Rev. 16:19. Babylon is exposed, is revealed as fraud. In Rev. 18 the same nations who destroyed Babylon, at same time regret what they’ve done, bcs e/o looses – those involved and those on the edges.

EGW, “Great Controversy,” p. 653-656. Very interesting scenario there. It seems that what we’ve seen in stages 7-10. From world-wide perspective as described in Revelation to more detailed and localised in EGW’s writings. God’s people will be in small companies, they will not be organised in one visible community; hiding away from the world. At time of death decree wicked seek saints to destroy them. Police forces of unified world will try to seek and kill the saints, but God intervenes, and

as result the police forces, realising they've been deceived, turn on those who have lead them into deception.

There will be time when all world will be united a/st God's people. But at time when all want to destroy God's people, God turns their hearts to see what the deception is all about, and the powers supporting Babylon turn a/st it. Babylon splits in 3 parts.

### **Stage 11: Christ Finishes the Destruction of Evil at His Second Coming.**

This is described in the 7<sup>th</sup> plague. Rev. 16:17-21. Rev. 17:14 – in terms of Battle b/n JC and His people and Beast and His Horns. Rev. 19:11-21 – describes SCJC as military campaign. What's left of the unholy trinity, of secular-political confederacy, is destroyed at SCJC.

### **Stage 12: Christ Gathers His Saints**

Rev. 14:14-16 JC takes saints home with Him.

Twelve major movements in end of world's history. Not necessarily 12, or same order, or naming. That's not canonical, but it's the base of the history. Don't stay with speculations.

God's people need to be prepared, to know what's coming, to e rightly discerning what's coming.

### **Spiritual Lessons**

Great precipitating force for end-time is Gospel, spread clearly and powerfully throughout the world. God creates the environment for such rapid spread, but it's God's people who give it out clearly and powerfully. Question for ourselves: How can we prepare to present this Gospel with power? How can we practice, discipline ourselves to be ready for such day?

Formula in book by Bill Hybels "How to become Contagious Christian?": Maximum impact for the Gospel will come when three characterisations on part of God's people: 1) High potency X/ty, genuine, real, attractive daily experience with JC; 2) Come in close proximity with those who are lost, or Gospel will be ineffective; 3) Need of clear communication – so that people can understand the Gospel. When these three come together, there is maximum impact.

Many things in life are neutral in life by themselves. Media – TV, Internet, etc. – can be used for good or evil. Desire to preserve the environment can be good thing, but can be evil is directed toward those who are presumably thought of as destroying environment. Peace and unity a/g nations really is neutral thing – can be good or evil. Wicked people can make peace so they can have energy to destroy God's people. Spiritual interests can be neutral – used for good or evil; both types of spiritual interest will be there at end of world's history.

## **Summary of Final Events Revelation 19**

Have you ever had a difficulty breaking away from cherished sins? Rev. 19 offers some serious motivation for proper living.

In previous presentation we looked at outline of end-time events, as much as Bible allows us to know, before SCJC.

First, events will bring two great Gospels to world-attention. Final presentation of true Gospel (Rev. 14; 3 angels) and demonic gospel (3 frogs). Result – a polarisation of world in 3 confederacies. Confederacy of saints – loosely organised, but coherent in beliefs and convictions. Confederacy of religions. Confederacy of political, economic, military powers.

As religious and political confederacies unite, the world has to decide which trinity / side to join, until all world is found on one side. As human probation closes, united confederacies seek to destroy Saints. Secular confederacy turns on the religious confederacy bcs it has deceived it, people turn on the religious confederacy. Jesus comes to rescue the saints on earth. At this point enter Rev. 19.

Rev. 19 – divided in four parts:

- 1) v. 1-5 – continues theme of Rev. 18 – the emotions of the saints as they see destruction of enemy.
- 2) v. 6-10 – description of righteous in terms of image of Bride of Christ.
- 3) v. 11-16 – description of armies of heaven coming to rescue righteous and finish wicked.
- 4) v. 17-21 – armies of earth to fight rider on horse, but find themselves destroyed in the end.

Rev. 19 comes at this point - after fall of Babylon, but before final destruction of evil and final rescue of saints. Rev. 19 – transition chapter.

## Section 1

### Rev. 19:1-5

This section ties up many sections of Revelation so far – praises God for His acts of rescue of saints and destroying Babylon. Recapitulation is regular tool in BR, where various parts work together. Certain themes do come over and over again. In Rev. 19 we tie together various themes of how saints rejoice over fate of wicked Babylon.

### Rev. 19:1

This picks on Rev. 7:1 – great multitude. These are the ones who stand at Day of the Lord. Rev. 7:10-12 – “salvation of our God” – same theme in Rev. 19:1. In Rev. 19:1 – tied up together Rev. 7:1-17.

### Rev. 19:2

Rev. 15:3,4; 16:5-7. He has condemned the great prostitute.... This of course picks Rev. 17:1-6. Finally, 19:2 – “avenged blood” – picks on Rev. 6:9,10. The souls under the altar. Happens to describe what has clearly taken place in Rev. 13.

Rev. 19:1-2 ties together many parts of the book.

### Rev. 19:3

This reminds of Rev. 14:11.

### Rev. 19:4

Language reminiscent of Rev. 4.

### Rev. 19:5

Picks on Rev. 11:18.

Rev. 19:1-5 ties together many similar themes in Rev. Rejoicing in this passage has 2 objects: relief among righteous that they have been delivered. Rejoicing also at the supernatural work of God at this deliverance. Righteous are pleased that they have finally escaped their difficulties, but equally pleased that they have seen the mighty hand of God at work. Reminds of OT when God did mighty things for His people.

Here we see the relief, joy of the righteous. In next section, we have a second look at the righteous – Rev. 19:6.

Rev. 19:6 (CD Track 7)

But then in the next section of Rev. 19 we take a 2<sup>nd</sup> look at the righteous, beginning with v. 6.

Mention of great multitude – Rev. 7:1; same group found praising in v. 1-5; here – they continue to praise. Focus in on the enemies of God and their fate in view of God’s righteous jud/ts, but focus on the righteous, on what God has done in the lives of the redeemed.

Rev. 19:7

Rejoicing over wedding of Lamb; JC and Church unite at SCJC. Rejoicing of this event – in language of a wedding.

Hebrew wedding ceremony: First, they would begin with betrothal/engagement, in the bride’s house, in the father’s estate. Groom and father of groom would come to the bride’s house and her father. There would be a ceremony in which they will deal with the engagement details. Second: at that point the groom returns to his father’s house and prepares place where he and bride will live. If living on farm and with parents, son will build house on father’s farm, to sustain life. Bride gets reading for the wedding while waiting.

Third step – groom leaves his father’s house and goes to the bride’s father’s house; wedding feast takes place. Then, after wedding, groom takes her to his home.

JC describes the SCJC in terms of Hebrew wedding ceremony: betrothal. JC prepares place for the bride. At SCJC – wedding.

Rev. 19:7 – the bride has made herself ready.

When place and bride are both ready, the wedding takes place. This text is on the readiness of the bride, not on the place. The place is assumed.

Rev. 19:8

White linen in BR – used without any specific attention in BR, but here – corresponds to the right and good acts of the bride. This dress is bright and clean; in distinction from Babylon’s dress – Babylon is also described in fine linen. This bride’s dress is bright and clean.

Particular function b/n dress of bride and qualities of New Jerusalem. Jer/m also described as bright and clean. Bride of JC and New Jer/m are one and same thing.

Righteous acts of saints – found only once in BR – 15:4. Special term emphasising actions in harmony with the covenant. Not to be confused with forensic righteousness, the legal type of righteousness that Paul is talking; see Rom. 5:18.

Rom. 5:18

What is righteousness, a righteous act? In OT – act done in harmony with the Covenant. When you do what God expects, these are acts of righteousness. Righteous acts – in harmony with Covenant. Rom. 5:18 – JC did what’s correct and righteous in view of Covenant. His perfect acts can be imputed to His people. Legally His people are accounted as JC; JC’s faith becomes theirs.

In Rev. 19:8 – not what’s going on as described in Rom. 5:18. Here – the righteous actions of the saints. There is no contradiction but an intimate connection b/n God’s faithfulness on one hand and

that of the saints on the other hand. Christ's bride is made ready by faithful actions. The faith that JC had is imitated by the saints. This is what it means for the saints to prepare themselves. It is to be so immersed in the righteousness of JC, that those actions are imitated in the lives of those who believe in JC.

Who is the Bride of JC? One answer – the church, those who must do those righteous acts, b/n the Cross and the SCJC. Rev. 21 – New Jer/m, the city. How to reconcile these two? Pretty clear – city w/t population is not a place to live. What dresses up the New Jer/m is the saints; they both become the bride of JC.

Rev. 19:9, 10

Image turns again – who are those invited? The same saints, who are also the bride – that what appears to be. Are the invited to attend or invited to be the bride? Don't press figurative language too logically! Don't apply Western logic to Hebrew symbolism. This part of Rev. 19 describes God's people experience at the last events – both bride and guests. See JC's parables for such parallels.

Rev. 19:10

“Brothers who hold to testimony of JC” – Rev. 12:17 – testimony of JC is a special possession of the last day people. These brothers – confederacy of the saints, another way of speaking of the bride or the saints. Testimony of JC is prophetic gift; God's end-time confederacy gains the assurance since they have the spirit of prophecy in their midst.

Third Section – Rev. 19:11-16

Rev. 19:11

Heaven is seen standing open. Same Greek words used here as in Rev. 4:1. Then doors of heaven are open, so John can come up thru them to heaven. Now gates are open so JC can leave heaven and come to earth.

White horse – reminds of the 1<sup>st</sup> seal. Most reasonable explanation – both horsemen are JC. Here – faithful and true, compare Rev. 3:14. With justice He judges and makes war – JC makes fair and just war; this is the right thing to do. It is holy war, execution of covenant. JC is not as much as military commander but doing what the law requires.

Rev. 19:12

Eyes like blazing fire – Rev. 1:14.

Many crowns – crowns are 'diadems,' the royal diadems, in contrast with Rev. 6 where it is “stephanos,” the Olympic diadem of conqueror. There is “advancement” in JC's career. He is now given authority to rule in all reality. As long as there are those defiant on earth, his rule was real in actuality, but limited by the opposition, by those who refused to become citizens. But here – no more opposition to his rule; his rule is made complete.

Contrast the 'many crowns' with the many crowns of the dragon in Rev. 12:3. Dragon claims authority on earth, claims to rule on earth. JC demonstrates the falsity of these claims in Rev. 19.

Rev. 19: 13, 14

Authority on earth established by Cross; by His blood he now reigns, rescues the saints, and deals with those who have shed the blood of the saints.

“Word of God” – the only place out of John (for example John 1:1), that this term is used.

Heavenly armies – reminds of Rev. 17:14. Heavenly army is another way of describing the saints, joining JC in final battle of history. This is not the only place in Revelation that the saints are described as being in heaven. Eph. 2:6. God’s people are in heavenly places in JC.

Rev. 19:15, 16

“Sharp sword”, “Iron sceptre” – Rev. 1:16; 2:27; 12:5. Seems that in describing the rider off the white horse, the author of Revelation gathers earlier images that describe JC as Lion and as Lamb. JC uses the weapons to strike and smite down the nations.

This passage clearly moves back from the time of the wedding to the time of the destruction of the nations alluded to in Rev. 14:17, 20; 16:17-21. Babylon was dealt with in Rev. 17; 18. Attention now turns to what’s left from the world-wide confederacies.

This passage completes the picture that was interrupted by the view of the righteous in Rev. 19:1-10. Author of Revelation took time out to celebrate the fall of Babylon and redemption of the righteous, and now returns to the question of what’s happening to those who remain.

“Wine press” – allusion to Rev. 14; place where wicked destroyed.

“King of kings, Lord of lords” – reminds of Rev. 17:14, where same words used. In Rev. 19 – here he completes what’s begun in Rev. 17.

Brings us to completion of actions in Rev. 19:17-21.

Rev. 19:17-21

Birds in mid-air- Rev. 8:13 – threatening vulture. Here – fulfilment of what was threatened in Rev. 8:13.

Reminds of Rev. 14:6- angel of gospel proclamation flies in mid-air. This message – designed to bring the final great completion of the gospel work, the final destruction of the wicked.

This destruction – described as great destruction of the wicked; as great supper of God’s people. Saints will be taken to heaven to attend great supper/banquet. Wicked here become part of God’s great supper. This is the post-war feast of the vulture, rather than the feast celebrating the wedding.

Rev. 19:18 –

Picks on the theme of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal – here destruction of entire political confederacy takes place, parallel to the passage in Rev. 6.

It is not over yet. Rev. 19:17-18 – part of preparation that God undergoes too.

Rev. 19:19

Political confederacy is still alive. Babylon is broken up; it is being mourned, but the political confederacy has enough still energy to attack God’s people as they come. Greek language – similar to 17:14, those who fight the Lamb and those belonging to Him. But the battle is in vain.

Rev. 19:20

Here – clear reference to Rev. 13. Elements of Babylon still remain to oppose God along with the political forces of the world. The great political confederacy is not yet done; they are still there to threaten God’s people and oppose God.

The false prophet and the beast – captured and thrown in the fiery lake.

This fiery lake appears in Rev. 20 – same also in Rev. 19. At end of Millennium (M/m) – fiery lake. The world on fire. Is this at the same time as Rev. 20? Is Millennium before or after the SCJC? If M/m is after fiery lake, then fiery lake in Rev. 19 and 20 will be the same. We leave that open for the moment; will look in later presentation.

Rev. 19:21

Indication that the rest of them were killed by the sword. Who holds the sword? JC, who died on Cross, expressed love for people while on earth. JC takes responsibilities for the destruction of wicked; he does not delegate to s/o else, but takes responsibilities himself. JC uses the natural forces of natures – fire, stones, hailstones, earthquake, birds – to destroy his enemies.

Gory chapter – all who oppose God finally destroyed.

Spiritual lessons:

1. Best reason for X/ans to rejoice is the mighty acts of God. In OT – what is it to worship? – n/th more than rejoicing in what God has done. This is best and safest reason for rejoicing. God's acts are righteous, fair, true.. When we see God's actions we can rejoice.
2. We are getting ready for a wedding. Our job – to get ready to meet JC. To model His life, to be faithful as He was. One of best motivations for right living is to be in right relationships with JC, to contemplate His life, to imitate it. To behold JC and to be modeled like Him. To be ready for SCJC requires practical actions, to act in accordance for what He has done for us. Weddings take a lot of preparation.
3. It is a crucial need today to forsake sin. Even among God's people there are those who take sin lightly, who believe it does not matter how you live or what you do. But in BR – behaviour is very important. Our loyalty is tested to the degree we are willing to accept His decrees and live. When we face the issues that hinder our spiritual growth, that dishonour God, yet we cling to them bcs they are attractive and exciting. Such sins – we cling to them. But total up the consequences. If you have a choice to go with or a/st God's Word, write down pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages to follow up sin. Total up the consequences. When we do that, when we see the consequences of sin, it's a disincentive to sin. When we consider the results of theft, lying, adultery, etc. When we see what happens to people to break God's commandments. One consequence you need to add to the list – when JC comes. Rev. 19:21. Revelation does not give this picture to satisfy curiosity, but to motivate action today. One of most important action we can make – to break away from cherished sins. By God's grace and the followers of JC, we can make the breaking away from sins, and to total up the consequences of sin, and be ready for the wedding when it comes.

## **No. 7 The Hundred Years, Verse by Verse Revelation 20**

The Concept of the Millennium (M/M) is one fo the most controversial subjects in Scripture. What does the book of Revelation ahs to say about the M/m.

With close of Rev. 19 the history as we know it has come to an end. Various powers of earth have been destroyed, and Jesus has come to rescue His saints. What then? This question is answered in Rev. 20. Here in Rev. 20 – important information.

Rev. 20 – the most controversial passage in Rev.; not the most difficult to understand, but what is controversial is where you place the 1000yrs. Is it after the SCJC - as it would appear in first glance? Or part of the recapitulation of the Revelation, where you have material that has been covered earlier in different form and comes back again here with different symbols, in new context?

First, look carefully verse by verse in Rev. 20, seek to understand dynamics of passage, and in next presentation we'll discuss when the M/m takes place.

Rev. 20, like Rev. 19 can be divided in 4 parts.

V. 1-3 – fate of Dragon at SCJC

V. 4-6 – fate of saints at SCJC

V. 7-10 – final fate of wicked

V. 11-15 – flash-back of final jud/t of earth's history.

Rev. 20:1-3 Fate of Satan at SCJC

“And I saw” – in Greek signals a major break within the book; that here we are moving in different direction. It seems that binding of Dragon would be the natural follow through to the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. In a way that's true. Yet, it introduces something new, hence the break “And I saw.” He saw angel coming out of heaven. Language as in 18:1, but also in 9:1 – angel and star coming from heaven.

Rev. 9:1 – star holds key to the abyss. Here, it is the angel that comes with the key. Rev. 9 – abyss is opened; Rev. 20 – abyss is sealed.

“Abyss” – Luke 8:31 Abyss is placed where the demons are confined. When they are confined to the Abyss, there is restriction to their activities on the earth. One possibility for sealing of Abyss is to stop demonic activities on earth. Further use of Abyss – Gen. 1:2 – chaotic earth before Creation. Earth – entirely covered with water, darkness on face of Abyss.

Abyss – chaotic world/earth, or place where demons are confined.

Jer. 4:23-30 – Abyss = empty Palestine, uninhabited land.

Angel – carries big chain, purpose – to bind the Dragon.

Rev. 20:2

Strong parallel to Rev. 12 – use of words “Dragon, serpent, devil, Satan.” Here – further step down for Dragon. Rev. 12 – Dragon cast to Earth, in Rev. 20 – chained in Abyss for long period of time.

Rev. 20:3

Throwing into Abyss is reversal of Rev. 9:1 – there permission was granted to escape Abyss; here – Dragon thrown into Abyss, locked and sealed above Him. Locked with a key. “Sealed” – as in Rev. 6 and 7; reminds of Matt. 27 – tomb of JC sealed.

Locked Abyss – in 20:7 – called prison.

Abyss – as place of locking demons, very appropriate here; Satan cannot deceive the nations here. Why can't he deceive? Bcs no more nations, or bcs he's confined to place where nations do not exist? There are now 1000 years w/t deception. Implication that the deception Satan did to nations before SCJC would not continue.

After 1000 years he'll be set free for short time; reminds of Rev. 17 – a Beast was, is not, yet comes back from Abyss.

After the 1000 years there will be a resumption of the deception.

#### Rev. 20:4-6 – Fate of Saints

View moves from the Dragon to the saints. One of the most pivotal verses in the chapter. Once again we have a major break here – “and I saw.” He is not necessarily happening at s/th happening one earth as in v. 1-3; this is a fresh vision. There are thrones and on them – some who have authority to judge. Are these who sit on the thrones and judge as the same as those who follow? In v. 4 there is a potential for two different groups – 1<sup>st</sup>) those who sit on the thrones and judge; 2<sup>nd</sup>) souls of those who have been beheaded. Are these one and same or different groups?

If the first group is different, they are not mentioned again. Jon Paulien's suspicion – that they are same group; but will hold till further.

Next follows language of martyrdom, similar to Rev. 6 – martyred bcs of Word of God. Parallel to Rev. 1:9 – John in exile bcs of Word of God and testimony of JC.

“Beast”, “image”, “mark” – reference to saints of end-time; comp. with Rev. 13 & 14. Immediate impression of Rev. 20:4 – we are seeing resurrection of group of people who have been through the experience of Rev. 13 and 14 – people who have refused to worship Beast, worship image, refused to receive mark. These people come to life. They are resurrected and reign 1000 with JC; present continuous tense – reign throughout the 1000 years. Reminds of Rev. 7:15-17, picture of great multitude.

Rev. 7:15-17 – there saints reign in heaven reign with JC; in Rev. 20 – not clear where the saints are in heaven, but presumed to be so. It is not stated in Rev. 20:4 whether these resurrected saints are in heaven or on earth, but on basis of Rev. 7 we can lean on the direction to be in heaven.

“Reigning” – is this same as judging or different? In OT two concepts went together. Psalm 72:1-4 – so one of the central functions of kingship in ancient Israel – to judge and to reign.

Resurrection of martyrs comes at same time as chaining of Satan. Possibly the two acts are related.

#### Rev. 20:5

Does resurrection of martyrs represent special group of people, or are all Christians represented here? Are these only the wicked or some X/ans?

Clearly, there is another resurrection at end of 1000 years? Who is going to be resurrected? Clearly, everyone outside of the first group. Resurrection after 1000 years – 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection (though not so called such in Rev.), as we have 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection clearly called to be so.

Is this resurrection of Rev. 20:4,5 before or after the 1000 years?

#### Rev. 20:6

First resurrection comes at the beginning of 1000 years. This will include the martyrs of v. 4 and also the ones sitting on thrones and judging. First resurrection is exclusively for those on God's side, but not clear whether it includes all saints or not.

Three reasons for being “blessed”: second death has no power over them; they will be priests of God; they will reign with Him 1000 years.

“Second death has no power over them.” What is the 2<sup>nd</sup> death? It is associated with lake of fire in Rev. 20:14-15. Lake of fire is the 2<sup>nd</sup> death. Second death is associated with lake of fire; eternal separation from God and His plans for the universe. Faithful overcomers are exempt from this. 2<sup>nd</sup> death has s/th to do with final fate of wicked. They are freed from 2<sup>nd</sup> death, they are priests of God – Rev. 1 and 5, where true believers in God are kings and priests. Recalls Exodus 19 – kingdom of priests, holy nation that will bring blessing of Abraham to all world.

Those who participate in 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection reign a 1000 years. Maybe there is allusion to Genesis – the longest life spans were all just short of 1000 years. Certainly, here in Millennium we have counterpart to first chapters of Genesis – after sin came in there were such long lifetimes. Perhaps during the M/m we see gradual reversal of effects of sin.

Summary so far: Beginning of M/m involves 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection; this includes sitting on thrones with authority to judge; it involves martyrs from Mark of the Beast era; they are people secure, who reign with JC for 1000 years. These are king-priests, who also serve as judges. Maybe this was anticipated in Matt. 19:28. Reference to all saints, to all Israel, represented by JC’s saints. First resurrection is selective resurrection; second resurrection – universal. First death – universal; 2<sup>nd</sup> death – selective.

Rev. 20:7-10

Events that come at close of 1000 years, and final fate of wicked.

No special transition language is used here – v. 7 – when the 1000 years are over. IT is a turn, a new direction for narrative; move to the close of 1000 years. At end of the 1000 years – rest of dead are raised, Satan is released, the Abyss is opened, and demonic powers come loose again.

v. 8 – “he goes out to deceive the nations.” Were the nations there for the M/m, or these made of the wicked that are raised at end of 1000 years? Text does not answer. Reminds of Ezek. 38 & 39, where Gog and Magog are enemies of Israel. Nations in Rev. 20 are not mixed bag – they are solely made of the wicked. Satan gathers these nations for battle; replay of Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16).

“Numerous of sand as seashore” – parody of Abraham’s seed in Gen. 22:17; parody of all the wicked who ever lived.

v. 9 – These nations are hostile to God and His people; they surround the beloved city. This scene is a surprise movement. This scene comes after the city comes down from God from heaven in Rev. 21:2.

Rev. 21:2 precedes 20:9 in chronology, as in 20:9 city is present and comes under attack. We notice that Rev. 20:7-15 and Rev. 21:1-8 are parallel accounts.

“Fire comes down and devours them” – final destruction of wicked is described here; further descriptions comes later.

v. 10 – fate of Satan; here Satan = Devil = Serpent = Dragon. Dragon finally joins Beast and False prophet in lake of fire.

Does the 1000 year separate the 2 events? It seems so. But in Revelation you don’t want to make superficial judg/ts; s/t what looks superficially different turns out to be the same.

Burning/tormented in the lake of fire. Reminds of Rev. 14:11. In Rev. 14:11 that language builds on fall of Edom in Isaiah 34. In Hebrew concept “forever” does not mean million and billions of years, but long enough to accomplish God’s purpose.

Rev. 20:11-15

v. 11 – Major break “kai eidon” = “and I saw.” Unique description here in Rev – the great white throne. Earth and Sky fled from presence, lit. “earth and heaven;” sounds like disillusion of earth and heaven. This suggests that there was no place to flee from God since God is everywhere present according to Scripture. Reminds of Is. 51:6; 2 Peter 3:10-12.

Here in Rev. 20:11 in the fleeing away of earth and heaven – destruction of old age of earth; God takes away all that’s wrong and brings it to full and final destruction.

v. 12 – Once again the language of major break. “And I saw.” Content – closely related to what’s before that. When it mentions books being opened, reminds Dan. 7 – books on which the fate of dead will be decided. End of verse – “dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the book.” Jud/t here is according to the deeds/works; that’s not a new concept/theme for the NT. Jud/t according to actions – Rom. 2:6; 1 Peter 1:17 – jud/t according to actions.

“Book of Life” – Rev. 20:15. Clearly Book of Life is eschatological register of righteous, record of who is to be saved. In ancient times Book of Life was understood register of those who belonged to the Israel, those who deserved the blessings of the covenant. Exodus 32 – sinners blotted out from Book of Life; Ps. 69 – righteous listed in it; Isaiah 4 – contains names of those living in Jer/m; Dan. 12:1 – expands concept of eschatological register of saved.

In OT entire concept of Book of Life – contains those who are to be saved, those who belong to Israel, particular focus on end of time.

v. 13 – sea, death, Hades – these provide additional images of the universality of the second resurrection; it does not leave anyone untouched. Some of the righteous have been raised at the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection but at the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection e/o is resurrected, there is no one left who have not experience resurrection. Sea, death, Hades – all experience 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection and give up the dead.

v. 14 – No more hell, no more death. Apparently concept “lake of fire” is figurative concept; does not describe ongoing burning experience; it is a place of endings. It is a place where the wicked come to an end. Dragon, Beast, False prophet; death, pain, suffering – all come to an end. Eternal torment language is not chronologically eternal, but the lake of fire is the place of endings. When lake of fire goes out, when all that has brought suffering and death is brought to an end. Lake of fire – agent of death, also here agent of death’s destruction. Not literal fire, but symbol in Revelation of full and final ending, as seen in Rev. 20

Beginning to see why Rev. 20 is so controversial? We find more and more questions here coming up. This verse-by-verse approach has left many unanswered questions.

Summary of Questions, raised in Rev. 20:

What does it mean that Satan cannot deceive nations during the 1000 years? Are the nations still around, safe from temptations, or are they gone and Satan is frustrated bcs he is all alone?

Where are the righteous during the 1000 years? In heaven or on earth?

What about these martyrs – special group, or represent all righteous?

Nature of judgment during 1000 years – who, why?

When 1000 years take place – after SCJC, before SCJC?

Is Lake of Fire happening once, twice, all the time?

## No. 8 Various Views on the Millennium

Have you felt that life always reserves the bottom of the barrel just for you? That you always get the short end of the stick? Find out how God makes sure that does not happen to you in eternity.

In preparation for this presentation, there are more than 30 texts related to this topic. We'll move faster in some areas, to cover up the material.

In last presentation – focus on text in Rev. 20; here we look for answers to the questions raised. When: when the 1000 years take place – before or after SCJC? There are 3 basic views on this matter – amillennial, pre-millennial, and post-millennial view.

### Post-millennial view

JC comes after the Millennium. Generally considered a period of progress, improvement; things get better and better before JC comes. View popular in 19<sup>th</sup> c. Based on whole idea of evolution, education, progress – very popular then. This view does not match reality as we know it. Post-millennialism today died with WW1; with WWII things did not get better. People today believe that life is not getting better today, it's getting worse.

2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13-19 – Bible texts that show that before the end the world is going to go through terrible times.

Post-millennial view is largely abandoned.

### A-millennial view

The 1000 years do not exist; just another view of describing the X/an era; this is the period from the Cross to the SCJC.

### Pre-millennial view

SCJC is before the 1000 years; the 1000 years are after the SCJC.

### Amillennial view

Why would a/o believe that? It seems on the surface at least that in the Book of Revelation the Millennium is after the SCJC and described as period of 1000 years. Amillennial view moves further than that. There are three specific reasons to consider this. First, elsewhere in the NT the final jud/t always takes place at the SCJC, not in additional period beyond. Second, John 5:22-30 describe 2 resurrections, but one is a spiritual resurrection that takes place in context of JC's life and ministry; the other – comes at the end of the X/an era. Third, you don't base a doctrine on one text only. If Rev. 20 is the only text that takes us beyond the SCJC, you don't build doctrine on that and look further.

In NT – final jud/t is **at** the SCJC, not **beyond**. Look Rev. 20:7-15; note the various characteristics of the passage. E/th we are reading here comes at the end of the 1000 years in Rev. 20. First, the devil deceives the world here. Secondly, the devil at the end of the period is destroyed – lake of fire and punishment being dealt out.

Rev. 20:11 – throne of jud/t before the 1000 years.

Rev. 20:12-13 – here we see great jud/t by works, according to works.

Rev. 20:14 – lake of fire is the 2<sup>nd</sup> death; concept of everlasting death, 2<sup>nd</sup> death.

There is a whole list of event, that according to Rev. 20 take place at close of Millennium:

1. devils deceives the world
2. devil is destroyed
3. lake of fire

4. punishment
5. throne of jud/t
6. jud/t according to works
7. everlasting death
8. second death

Here is the crucial argument of the amillennial view. In the rest of the NT is portrayed as happening at the coming of Jesus, not 1000 years later.

Jude 14, 15 – in the context of the SCJC we see a great final jud/t. What John the Revelator describes as happening after the Millennium, is placed at the SCJC in the other places of the NT. This would suggest – if true - that the Millennium in Revelation 20 actually occurs before the SCJC and is in the context of the entire X/an age.

2 Thess. 2:8-10

In this passage we see the concept that Satan deceives the world through miracles, signs, and wonders, and at the SCJC he is destroyed (as in Rev. 20). This concept of world-wide deception is found in Rev. 13:13-14.

Lake of Fire – Matt. 25:41.

Punishment, everlasting punishment – 2 Thess. 1:6-10

Here we see, repeatedly in the NT, the kinds of events happening at end of Millennium.

Throne of Jud/t – Matthew 25:31

Here – throne of jud/t, separation. Notice Matt. 25:46. Jud/t, division before the throne – eternal life for the righteous and eternal punishment for the wicked.

Matthew 16:27 – there is a sense of doling out according to works, to what one's done.

Every item in Rev. 20 found at end of Millennium is found in some form elsewhere in NT applied and related to the SCJC. The amillennial view suggests that the Millennium is not another period before or after the SCJC, but is another way of speaking of the entire X/an age.

How do you explain the 2 resurrections of Rev. 20 then? First, the resurrection of the righteous and then the resurrection of the wicked. The Amillennial view places these in context of John 5:22-30. The same John who wrote the Gospel and Revelation should be able to explain this. Notice the 2 resurrection.

John 5:25 – concept of resurrection; this is the reality of JC's ministry

John 5:26 – here in John 5 we have 2 resurrections; first is one in context of JC's life and ministry; it is spiritual resurrection to life, abundant life in the immediate context. Then, in the future, comes a time when there is physical and literal resurrection, both of the righteous and the wicked. The amillennial view, the first resurrection of Rev. 20 is the spiritual of John 5: 24, 25 – resurrection of the righteous only, an only a portion of them (maybe martyrs); and then is the physical resurrection (as seen in John 5:29, 30) as described in Rev. 20; this is resurrection of both righteous and wicked.

Key to amillennial view is concept that binding of dragon/Satan, took place at Cross, and as result there is spiritual resurrection, and the saints are in heavenly places with JC even though they are on earth. At the end comes a physical resurrection, the great final jud/t and great end of all things.

The amillennial view has 2 powerful arguments: 1) that e/th found in Rev. 20 is found elsewhere in the NT; 2) John 5 we see parallel picture to Rev. 20.

Strength of amillennial view – makes use of entire NT to build its teaching; you don't base doctrine on just one text.

What are we to make of all this? Is the amillennial view what John intended in Revelation? Debate that does on over the Millennium you can find in many other places in the Bible. There are two different approaches – the exegetical and the theological approach. Exegetical approach (drawing idea out of the text) takes seriously the text in its immediate context, and seeks to understand the intention of the author in writing the text. Theological approach compares the text with other parts of the Bible, to understand it as part of broader theme that you may find in variety of places. Now, ideally, in fairly normally, the exegesis of the passage is in harmony with the theology of the passage. What an author intends for particular concept is similar to what this or other authors may have done in other texts.

When you are doing exegetical study, you may find that it comes in conflict with theological ideas/study. When you study exegetically, you may find that particular idea is used differently in other texts.

When you have conflict b/n exegesis and theology, you have a problem text. There are number of problem texts in Revelation. When they conflict, it is important to realise that exegesis takes precedence – the author has right to use terms as he/she sees fit, to use them in his own terms.

The question we need to ask: What does Revelation teach about timing of Millennium – before or after SCJC? What is the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection – spiritual, or physical of the dead? We need to look carefully in the text, and let the author of Revelation define it.

Dealing with argument of Amillennial view:

No question that the Millennium of Rev. 20 is intended to be after the SCJC. Becomes clear with structure of Revelation. There are number of pictures of SCJC – Rev. 6, 11, 14, 19. In each of those occasions, what comes after picture of SCJC, is actually before SCJC. This principle of recapitulation cannot be in play here. In Rev. 12-19 you have an interesting series of events. There are number of characters who come on the scene one by one – dragon, beast, false prophet, Babylon. These all come on the scene in Rev. 12-14. These characters also go off the scene one by one – Babylon - destroyed in Rev. 18; beast and false prophet – in Rev. 19; Dragon – in Rev. 20. Rev. 12-19 – sequence of events, to be seen as one whole unit. If main characters of Rev. 13-17 have passed off the scene by Rev. 20:3, then events of Rev. 13-17 must precede the millennium. This will be obvious if we look once again in Rev. 20:4

Rev. 20:4

Whoever these people are who are resurrected, one thing is clear – these people have experienced the call of the Beast for worship, the image and the mark; and they have been faithful through this time. Rev. 13 and 14 – the events there precede the Millennium of Rev. 20. If you want to place Rev. 20 before SCJC, then events of Rev. 13 and 14 must have been before the Cross. NO single commentator of Revelation places the events of Rev. 13 and 14 before the Cross. It is crystal clear that events in Rev. 13-17 are final events in earth's history, leading to SCJC. Then, first resurrection of Rev. 20 is resurrection that takes place after SCJC, or at least in context of SCJC.

This becomes even more clear when you take into account, that this resurrection must be a spiritual resurrection. It is coming to life of people who are spiritually dead; the resurrection in relation to the Cross will be a resurrection to spiritual life. But this cannot be the case in Rev. 20 – the people who come to life were beheaded due to their testimony of JC. Nowhere in Scripture is life in/for sin seen/depicted/described as spiritual beheading. People who are beheaded are people who are killed; they've lost their earthly life. The coming to life of Rev. 20:4 is bodily resurrection. Not only that, they were beheaded on account of the Gospel. It was not a dead apart of God, but as result of their faith in JC. They don't come to life from state of spiritual death, but are physically raised from martyrdom. The resurrection in Rev. 20:5 everywhere in NT is always physical, not spiritual; in Greek, "anastasos."

Seems clear that the Amillennial view – interesting theologically, but does not inform to what is actually going on in Rev. 20.

Final problem – can you base a doctrine on only one text? Or is there only one text? In at least 2 other places in the Bible, there are texts that imply events taking place after the SCJC.

1 Cor. 15:2 – onward; three great resurrection events: 1) JC; 2) when He comes, those who belong to Him; 3) then comes the end. In Greek “then” here is very specific; in Greek we have a parallel – first comes JC, then at His SCJC those who belong to Him; then – another period of time - comes the end. At some unspecified period after the SCJC comes the end, when the wicked will be raised, everyone will be raised; then death will be destroyed. This is very similar to the Millennium. All the righteous are raised at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming and at the beginning of the Millennium. Only the wicked are raised at the end of the Millennium.

Apostle Paul does not detail a Millennium nor speak of 1000 years, but it is clear that there is an extensive period after the SCJC, before the resurrection of the wicked and before the final settlement of the conflict.

Isaiah 24:1-6

Sounds like description of SCJC.

Is. 24:19 – onward; we see concept that all opposition to God will be hurded together as in prison, and only after many days will they meet their punishment. Notice sequence: earth destroyed first; prisoners bound but not punished; prisoners punished. This picture is directly parallel to Rev. 20  
Timing of Millennium has taken plenty of time.

Where are the saints during Millennium – on earth or in heaven? Here the wedding analogy is helpful. John 14:1-3. Remember the habits of Middle-Eastern wedding traditions.

In eastern marriage customs, the groom takes the bride to his father’s house, not the other way around. JC takes us where He is, not where we are. JC comes to take us with Him to heaven. Saints during Millennium are in heaven, not on earth. Martyrs in Rev. 20:4 – reference to all saints, not just those who died special type of death; 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection – of wicked only.

What’s going on earth during Millennium? The earth is empty – nobody to deceive: saints in heaven with JC, wicked are dead. Satan is bound by circumstances; his case – empty earth. Reminds us that “abyss” where Satan is confined can be picture of whole earth (Gen. 1:2); empty and desolate landscape (Jer. 4:20, 23-27). As in Day of Atonement a goat was led out in desert to die, Satan is by himself, confined by chain of circumstances.

You may remember – in Rev. 20:8 (nations resurrected at end of Millennium); reminds of Ezekiel 38, the great confederacy of the wicked. At end of Millennium the nations who are there are nations of resurrected wicked.

Nothing is going on earth during Millennium.

What’s the point of having Millennium?

Why not God deal with the whole thing and get over with it? Rev. 20:4 – it is time of judging. What kind of judging? Matthew 19:28 – JC’s followers will sit on 12 thrones; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3 – we will judge angels; Rev. 7:15-17 – saints will reign with JC in heaven 1000 years. If saints are saved in heaven, how come they are being judged again, what’s the point of it? Matthew 19:30. There will be many surprises in the kingdom – many we thought will never make it, others who won’t be there; people will have wounds to heal, will suffer bcs loved ones will not be there. Millennium is needed for recovery time, to find answer to questions. Millennium will provide opportunity for that.

Why go to so much trouble? It is important for God to be seen to be right; good for the ultimate health of Universe; Universe to understand God is just; so that e/o can sing song in Rev. 15:3-4.

It is crucial for the ultimate health of the Universe, all persons righteous and wicked, to come to understand that God is just. God will have to give time for the saints to find why someone is saved and another is not? It will be clear with all these opportunities that e/o has been fairly judged.

Millennium is time for God to vindicate Himself before righteous and wicked, before final destruction of wicked, to put beyond question all doubts about God's goodness and justice. During this time the redeemed are given the opportunity to judge. At close of 1000 years the wicked demonstrate once more that they have been rightly delegated for destruction, that their ultimate purpose was hatred to God; that in their hearts their only ultimate desire was to destroy what God has done.

One more question remains to be answered. Since lake of fire place role in the beginning of the 1000 years and at the end, is it there during the entire Millennium. Revelation does not give us an answer, but we can make an educated guess. At SCJC wicked are destroyed, and saints go to heaven. During the 1000 years, Satan is confined to earth, earth is desolate; saints are in heaven, recovering from their experiences on earth.

At end of 1000 years, New Jer/m comes to earth. Wicked are resurrected, Satan – released, and attack the city; wicked finally judged and destroyed. Lake of Fire plays role in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> destruction of wicked. If you take fire literally, it only plays role at beginning and end; it does not need to be there permanently. God uses fire as instrument/tool to cleanse evil, to prepare for new creation. It is not everlasting burning hell, but tool of destruction.

Matthew 10:28

The purpose of lake of fire is not to torment but to destroy; it is God's tool to cleanse universe from sin.

Spiritual lessons:

- 1) Satan was bound at Cross, and bcs of that the demons have no power over name of JC. Our spiritual resurrection is real, even if this is not the point of Rev. 20.
- 2) God cares about our feelings, even in eternity. He gives 1000 years so we be satisfied our with His justice and our position in His kingdom.
- 3) God is truly fair, in spite of appearances of contrary at times. He allows all, even redeemed, to judge his works, so e/o be satisfied.

How do you get into the book of life? How do you avoid getting the fate of the wicked? Answer: to overcome, but the Book of the Lamb and the word of testimony. The way to book of life is to receive what JC has done for you on the Cross.

## **No. 9**

### **The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21)**

Does the idea of the New Jer/m (NJ) seem strange and irrelevant to us? What relevance to they have for us?

With end of Rev. 20 we come to end of the great earthly conflict that began in Gen. 3. In New Jer/m – no more suffering, no more death.

Rev. 21:4

Is this not beautiful? BR is like a gigantic cycle – begins with wonderful place, with safety and security, but something bad happens – Gen. 3: sin, doubt in God, disobedience. Bible’s story from Gen. 3 – Rev. 20 is story of account of sin. Here in Rev. – end of the full circle; old and evil are destroyed and we have peace, joy, safety and security, just as in Gen. 1 and 2. Bible is a complete picture – it would not be complete w/t BR. Rev. 21 and 22 are as important as everything else in Book of Revelation.

Is the NJ a literal or symbolic city? The answer is probably – yes and no. Although the city is future, it describes things familiar from the past – the NJ is equivalent of Eden, Canaan, of Old Jer/m.

Hebrews 11:10

It tells us that when Abraham was wondering the world, looking for place, he was not looking for the Canaan or Old Jer/m, but for the New Jer/m. God told him the land he sees will be restored, to the NJ.

Hebrews 11:16

It is clear that the NJ was intended for the beginning of the new ideas, themes, dreams that the humanity has had ever since –from patriarchs till now. How can this be?

We’ll see later how the very structure of Genesis was looking forward to the restoration of the Garden of Eden.

The NJ in BR is the home of the saints that the people have anticipated since the fall. It represents all of God’s people had hoped for since the beginning. Many aspects of the text make sense if taken literally. But we don’t know how far to take the literal interpretation.

### **Structure of the Vision**

Begins with Rev. 21:1-8

Principle of duo-directionality. Here, 21:1-8 – a lot of material for forming the climax of the New Jer/m vision.

Rev. 21:1. Passing away of the old earth is described in Rev. 20, especially in Rev. 20:11.

Rev. 21:2. Here – a ref. to holy city coming down, the same city that was attacked in Rev. 20.

Rev. 21:4. No more death – in Rev. 20 death was destroyed.

Rev. 21:8 – Reference to fiery lake and 2<sup>nd</sup> death.

Clearly seen that Rev. 21:1-8 – climax of what took place in Rev. 20. This passage fits better with what follows than with what precedes.

Vision of Rev. 21 is made of 3 parts, of 3 visions – Rev. 21:1-8, 9-27, and Rev. 22:1 and onwards. All of the 3 visions is introduced by “seeing” formula – “I saw” (Rev. 21:1, 10 – he showed me; Rev. 22:1, 2 – He showed me). At beginning of each of these visions – “seeing” formula.

Each section/vision ends with “exclusion” formula – 21:8 – cowardly and unbelieving are excluded; 21:27 – nothing unclean will enter; 22:15 – outside of the city .... So, each of these 3 visions begins with John being shown something, ending with statement of those who’ll be excluded from the city.

These 3 visions serve as stair-step, from one vision to the other. Rev. 21:1-8 – city is announced; 9-27 – detailed description of the city; Rev. 22 - the most important details of the city are described.

City of New Jer/m is described as if John was approaching it – first, from distance, and as you come closer, the details come in focus. Rev. 21:2, 10 – distant description; later – the gates and foundations are noticed and described – Rev. 21:12-17. Then the materials from which the city is made

– Rev. 21:18-21. Then – view of the interior – Rev. 21:21, 22. Illumination, then the inhabitants – Rev. 21:21-17. Center of city – Rev. 22:1, 4. We can see that the entire picture is structured along the lines of someone who is traveling toward the city. The closer the person gets, the more details he sees.

This is also an universal city – some are excluded, but city is intended to be universal. Gates – continually open, not to be closed. Instead of people, use of “peoples” = many ethnic groups and tribes. At end of Rev. 21 – all nations contribute individuals, wealth, etc., to the city. NJ is for e/o who is willing to enter the city. No one is to be left out if they want to enter.

We can't understand NJ unless we understand the many backgrounds to the vision.

## **OT Background to New Jerusalem**

The NJ parallels the Garden of Eden. IN Gen 1 and 2 we find the original Earth, the original paradise, and the original ideal for life. This garden is described there. There is river in Garden of Eden – Gen. 2:10; Rev. 22:1 – River from God's throne. Gen. 2:9 – Tree of life; Rev. 22:2 – same. Gen. 3 – original curse; Rev. 22:3 – no more curse. The consequences of sin that remove God's people from the Garden are now done away, and God's people have access to the city without curse. In Garden of Eden Adam and Eve live happily; in NJ JC lives happily with the church. Garden of Eden has day and night; in NJ – only day, no night. Garden of Eden – garden-Paradise; NJ – garden-city. In Garden of Eden – tree and test; whether or not they ate fo the tree made the whole difference; in Rev. 22 – tree, but not test.

NJ – intended as fulfilment of the Garden of Eden, what's been looked forward to in the OT, the fulfilment of the great OT hope. Heaven will be like the Garden of Eden. The great promise – REST! There is a lot of stress today, but even tired from sin. There will be rest throughout eternity – peace, calm, safety, security. Even the patriarchs were looking forward to the NJ as the place that God had in store for them. When Abraham was looking for Canaan, he was looking for the Garden of Eden, that was lost due to sin. This is clear from the NT and OT texts.

In Gen. 3 – three great curses. First – the ground cursed with thorns; Adam had to work to get products from the earth. Second curse – child-birth was going to be more difficult. Third – exile from the Garden – God's people were prohibited from communion with God.

Gen. 12 – how Abram had the idea of Garden of Eden in the future. There are three great promises that God made to Abram in this passage. First – the land; 2<sup>nd</sup> – to make him a great nation; 3<sup>rd</sup> – all people on earth will be blessed.

This is blessing that reverses the curse from Gen. 3. Cursed land – promise of land; childbirth pain – many children; exile from land – inheritance to land, people on earth will be blessed through Abraham.

These promises to Abraham were actually the counterpart of the curses from Gen. 3. Is it any surprise then that as Abraham is thinking of the promised land that he is thinking of is the Paradise restored. Book of Hebrews is not distorting the truth, but revealing it – that Abraham was heading to the Promised Land, to the Garden of Eden. This was not fulfilled in the OT, but bcs of what JC did, bcs of his death, resurrection, etc, bcs of this even Abraham, who did not get to see the promise, will see it.

NJ is the complete completion and fulfilment of the promise for rest, for the return to Garden of Eden. God's people will have this place, bcs of JC.

There are multitudes of parallels in the NJ story to the book of Ezekiel. Ez. 40:2 – Prophet sees NJ from a high mountain; Rev. 22:9, 10 – John in Revelation sees it from a high mountain. Ezekiel saw the literal Jer/m, in the future; but it was a conditional prophecy – to nation/individuals, depending on their faithfulness to God. In Revelation takes up Ezek's vision and we see the fulfilment of the OT in the NJ.

Ez. 43:2-5 – Glory of God was in Jer/m; Rev. 21:11 – glory of God at center of NJ.

Ez. 48:31-34 – Jer/m will have wall with 12 gates; Rev. 21:12, 13 – same thing for NJ.

Ez. 40 – new temple will be established by process of measuring gates and walls; Rev. 21:15-17 that same process is undertaken.

Ez. 48:20 – square city; Rev. 22:16 – square city

Ez. 44 – some restrictions on envisioned Jer/m' inhabitants; Rev. 21:8, 27 – similar restrictions on citizenship

Ez. 43:7 – God sits on throne, dwelling with His people; Rev. 21:3, 5; 22:1 – God is on throne, dwelling with His people

NJ is fulfilment of Ezekiel's vision of NJ. Jer/m is ideal city. Cities can be exciting places – there are many things to do, great places to see, places to eat, excitement going on. It seems that eternity might not be quite the same unless the concept of the city be found in it in one form or another. NJ is fulfilment of the ideal city. In OT – God tried to make Jer/m the ideal city, center of eschatological hope. Concept of ideal city lying behind Jer/m found throughout OT. Over and over the City of Jer/m in OT is center of eschatological hope. Restoration of Jer/m was sign that the ideal has come, that the end had come and the ideal world is there.

So, in its parallels to Ezek, Rev. 21 and 22 take over the concept of ideal city for God's people, with all it offers.

One further aspect to this description – in Ezek, the central focus in the rebuilt Jer/m is great future Temple. In NJ, as God's ideal temple, is another aspect in Rev. 21 and 22.

In Rev. 21 and 22 there is drawing of 2 great OT concepts – Garden of Eden and its restoration, 2<sup>nd</sup> – restored Jer/m in more ideal state.

Structural parallels in Rev. 22 within BR. First – parallel to the 7 churches; a multitude of parallels in the promises to the overcomes.

Church of Ephesus – promised a tree of life – fulfilled Rev. 22:2

Smyrna – escape from 2<sup>nd</sup> death – Rev. 21:7, 8

Pergamum – new name – Rev. 22:4

Rev. 2:26 – speaks of authority of JC; in Rev. 22:5 – speaks of reign of God and of JC

Rev. 3:5 – promise white garments and Book of Life – Rev. 21 and 22 God's people receive these robes and their names are in the Book of Life

Rev. 3:12 – place in the temple promised, and in Jer/m; 21:3 – God's tabernacle equated with NJ; Rev. 21:10

Rev. 3:21 – place on God's throne; this is fulfilled in Rev. 22:3, 5

What is clear in all these parallels is that the citizens of the NJ have received the promises to the overcomers in the 7 churches. It shows what life is like throughout the X/an era; gives promises to God's people; the citizens of the NJ have received the promises to the overcomes.

NJ – place where spiritual hopes and dreams are fulfilled, not just safety, and e/th else new. NJ – attractive place, where we can do mighty things for God.

Another structural parallel to the Rev 21,22 the NJ vision, and the fall of Babylon in Rev. 17-19.

Both visions – introduced by one of the bowl angels from Rev. 16. Rev. 17:1 and 21:9 – bowl angel introduces the two visions. Babylon is known for its fornications – 17:2; NJ – known for faithful marriage to the Lamb – 21:9. In both cases John is carried away in the Spirit to see the vision – 17:3; 21:10. Two contrasting cities – Babylon and Jerusalem, 17:5; 21:10. Both are decorated with precious stones – 17:4; 21:11. Prostitute Babylon holds a cup of abominations in 17:4; NJ – offers water of life in 22:1, 2. Babylon is dwelling place of demons in Rev. 18:2; Jer/m – dwelling place of God – 21:3.

Babylon – home of unclean things, Rev. 18:2; NJ – no unclean, 21:27. Both vision mention Book of Life, discuss various nations and kings; both visions mention that “it is done;” in both visions mention that there mention of death and warning.

Abundant number of parallels b/n Babylon and Jer/m. Two basic types of relationship with God – faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Both cities represent contrasts in the two main types of relationship with God.

When we look at the exclusionary passages of NJ vision they describe individuals in much the same terms as the inhabitants of Babylon. Rev. 21:27 – nothing unclean will enter NJ; Rev. 18:2 – Babylon is home of the unclean. Nothing abominable will enter NJ – Rev. 17:4, 5 – Babylon is home of abominations. No murders in NJ, but Rev. 17:6; 18:24 – Babylon is full of them. No fornicators are found in NJ; fornications are major feature of Babylon – 17:1, 2, 5, 15, 16; 18:3, 9. NJ – place where sorcerers, liars, adulaters – excluded; but found in Babylon.

The people excluded from NJ are described in same terms as those who define Babylon and its citizens.

Babylon represents earthly hopes, earthly dreams. From Rev. 18 we see that Babylon is mourned when it goes down; all people’s hopes go down. Babylon was the best that this earth could offer. The destruction of Babylon and replacement with NJ is the replacement with God’s plan, to take place of earthly hopes.

NJ vision is not what we might or could be with God, but it shatters the dreams and hopes of humans for paradise on earth. What people look for in Babylon, what Babylon is all about - money, sex, power, influence, etc. – is gone. In NJ – we find real life, not in these things but in intimate relationship with God.

NJ vision makes whole new difference in our lives today.

What difference does this vision have for us today? What we dream for is not attained by earthly effort, but by work of God and JC. To focus our hopes on anything else, on a/o else but JC, is disappointment. We have to focus on the right focus – JC.

With this in mind, in our next presentation, we’ll take verse-by-verse study of Rev. 22, of the New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jer/m.

## **No. 10**

### **The Glorious New Reality**

#### **Rev. 21**

What would it be like to live in a place with no tears, no death, no suffering?

In this presentation we’ll look at some details in Rev. 21. Keep in mind the overview we did in previous presentation.

Rev. 21:1-8 – General overview; NJ announced, but not described.

Rev. 21:9-27 – Description of NJ, from perspective of s/o approaching the city from distance. Each description begins with announcement and ends with exclusion.

We begin with Rev. 21:1-8.

Rev. 21:1

New heaven, new earth, new Jer/m – what does it mean. “New” in Greek could mean various things:

- unused; new wineskins – new as unused
- something that is not previously present, remarkable, unknown – JC was described as offering new teaching, unheard of before
- something in contrast to s/th old; term can be used as not implying criticism of s/th old, but in comparison. More negative concept is possible – what’s old is obsolete

It’s possible that this last option is in mind here. The NJ, new heaven, new earth – new, but in parallel with what’s been before; they are far superior to what’s been before. The old has become obsolete, the old is not functioning. The word “new” here does not clarify that the old earth/heaven are totally remodelled or destroyed; simply implies that the new heaven/earth are better and superior.

“Have passed away” – the ruin-and-restoration theory; some scholars believe that theory, that Gen. 1 was not the beginning of the earth, that Gen. 1:2 describes the earth ruined and that Creation is the beginning of the earth, made new. Genesis does not support this idea. The first heaven and first earth are the ones we know. The Flood Story is more of a remodelling of the old.

In Rev. 21 – total remodelling; there is no longer any sea. Sea is good. Why no more sea in heaven? Is this a step backwards? BR is symbolic book – sea in BR is place from which destruction comes, separation b/n John and believers; sea is source of threat. Water could be a terrifying thing in the old world.

This is not saying that there will be no water in the new earth, but that there will be no waters that separate or are source of destruction. Water can be very terrifying thing in ancient world; waters separated people, people were taking as slaves across the seas. The absence of sea in NJ is symbol of absence of e/th that threatens and destroys. From sea come beasts, abyss (Gen. 1:2); absence of sea is absence of all that’s evil.

Rev. 21:2

NJ implying replacement for the old Jer/m. This NJ is part of new heaven and new earth, built on Is. 65. In Isaiah 65 we have New Heaven and Earth we have NJ in its centre. Rev. 21 builds here on Is. 65. Two main OT texts – Gen 1-3 and Is. 40-48. There are many other connections too.

NT talks about heavenly Jer/m. Gal. 4:26; Hebrews 12:22. This Jer/m is not s/th totally new in concepts of the Bible, but s/th that’s been there in heavenly places, according to John 14:1-3, and s/th that’s actualized here on earth at end of Millennium. It comes down from heaven to earth; is like bride ready, beautifully dressed. In presentation in Rev. 19 there are 2 brides in BR – the church (Rev. 19), the other is the city (Rev. 21-22). The same word is used for both – both are “prepared as bride beautifully dressed.” Dress of Jer/m is seen in Rev. 21:11-21 – gold, pearls, precious stones. Dress of bride in Rev. 19 is the pure, white garment.

This is in contrast with prostitute Babylon.

Rev. 21:3

This dwelling with God with men is interesting term. The term here goes to the OT term for “sanctuary” in OT. God “tents” with people – Exodus 25:8. God dwells among His people. God Himself will be with them, will be their God. This is the language of the OT covenant. They will be His peoples (plural). This is fulfilment of Deut. 28 – obedience = prosperity. Ultimate fulfilment – in Rev. 22:3.

Rev. 21:4

Interestingly that this text comes here, after the Millennium. Did they not have 1000 years to deal with their pain and memories? True, for God’s people to recover from loss of loved ones. AT end

of 1000 years God wipes away every tear from their eyes. Getting over the past takes some time. At the end of the 1000 years, when all these things have been processed by the redeemed, the time has come for the people to move on. God wants people to move on. Memories might be there, but the pain has gone. God has dealt with the causes of tears – abusers, oppressors, separation, death – all gone, banished. The old order is passed away – no more pain, tears, death, etc. The causes for tears is removed.

Rev. 21:5

E/thing new; “new” here is same as in v. 1 – God makes e/thing new, s/thing superior to what’s been before. The words are trustworthy and true. God wants to make sure his people are secure and that the promises from BR will take place.

Rev. 21:6

When this announcement is made, the change is complete and secure. It reminds us of the language at the beginning of the BR – the Alpha and Omega. The same JC who died for us on the cross, who ministers to us a/g the churches, tells that all things are now done. Come and drink from the Spring of Water of Life. This anticipates Rev. 22:1, where the River of Life flows from the throne, also anticipates Rev. 22:17 – ultimate salvation is as free as water.

Rev. 21:7

Recalls the promises to the overcomers in the 7 churches. These two visions are tied together as we saw before. The NJ provides all that was promised to the overcomers before in NT.

“I will be His God...” – language of covenant. We may not understand the language of covenant as we’d like, but in OT covenant provided security. People needed to know how God will react. Covenant makes it clear. God ties himself up to the Covenant, so that people will know how God will respond.

NJ is part of the Covenant – it is certain, God pledges that He’ll do it.

Rev. 21:8

The first exclusion list.

“Cowardly” being excluded from the city? Have you ever been a coward? If you are naturally timid, that can be frightening about you. That term “coward” is not related to the naturally timid people. “Cowardly” has to be understood in the view of those who are cowards in relation to standing up for God at the last days’ events, in relation to the end-time tribulation. These are individuals who prefer personal safety instead of faithfulness to God. When in spiritual matters push comes to shove, God holds us responsible. John 12:42-43; Mark 8:35; Matthew 13:21 – texts that help us realize that help us realize that God holds people responsible for spiritual timidity, not natural; in situations when/where life and death are a choice to make. There are very many naturally timid people who’ve chosen death rather than deny JC. “Cowards” here is in relation to those who in face of tribulation have not stood up for JC.

“Unbelieving” = apostates; those were once with JC but denied him and/or slipped away in the final battle. This text encourages us to hang on in tough times to come. BR teaches that there is no point in giving up to save your earthly life. You may save your earthly life now, but moments later will come the SCJC – on which side will you be then? Will you trade eternal life for temporary pleasures?

“Those who are vile,” “those who practice things that God ultimately detests” – that is idolatry. Idolatry was substitute for God in OT; vile are those who put God second.

Another group are the “Commandment breakers” – sexual immoral, murderers, liars, etc.

Another group – those who practice magic arts: there are some who go as far as getting in relationship with Satan; these are also excluded. It does not pay to toy with Satan neither with God’s commandments.

At the close of v. 8 we come to the fiery lake and the Second Death, both of which are banished from the Universe at the end.

Interesting - in Rev. 21:2 is introduced the New Jer/m, but is lost sight of. Since v. 2 we are in digression, till v. 8 we have digression, verses that focus in different direction – on the nature and finality and change at arrival of New Earth and Heaven, and New Jer/m. They focus on no more tears and death, on God being with His people, on the means being there and/or being excluded. Before detailed description of the NJ is given, we have a list of exclusion from NJ.

Rev. 21:9

“Bride” – reminds of Bride of the Lamb in Rev. 19. It mentions that she is the wife of the Lamb, and the Lamb is increasingly prominent. The word appears in ref. to JC 22 times, very prominent in Rev. 21 and 22.

Rev. 21:10

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time in the book that John is carried away in the Book. Some think that this introduces a new phase in his visionary state. Here it picks on language from v. 2.

Rev. 21:11

Glory of God is seen in the city; in fact, God’s very presence is the city’s glory. Is. 60:1-3; Ezek. 43:1-5 – there the presence of God brings the glory of the eschatological situation. The city is brilliant – this word “brilliant” is in Phil. 2:15 (refers to the church) and in Rev. 21:11. Jer/m is brilliant not bcs it’s made of precious stones but bcs the people of God are present in it.

1 Peter 2:4,5 – God is building a Temple; the stones are made of individual believers. The church is the Temple, the stones are individual believers.

Precious stones of NJ are symbol of the glory that comes to God bcs of the people who are in the city. It is like a jasper stone. Rev. 4:3 the throne of God was compared to jasper. NJ is now the throne room – heaven has come to earth; the center of the government of the Universe is located now in the NJ, is located on earth.

Rev. 21:12-14

This description is modeled on description of the cities in old times – walls, gates. 12 gates – of the tribes of Israel; foundations belong to the apostles. Reminds of the 24 elders and 144 000 – pairs of 12. “Watchmen” on the walls – picks on Is. 62:6, 7.

Here we see fulfilment of the ancient prayer – NJ is safe place. It’s not dangerous city, but safe and secure city for those who live in it. John uses the language of the past, but with new meaning. This is built on Ezekiel 48:30-34. In that passage we see the 4 directions, 3 gates on each side, total of 12 gates. There is difference. In Ezekiel the gates are there so people can go out. In Ezekiel the ideal Palestine is described as place with Jer/m in center, a city with walls and gates, each person lives in the city, and each person has garden outside the city walls, to go and garden. The NJ – has gates to keep God’s people in and the evil people out.

Rev. 21:15-17

John is invited to measure the NJ with golden measuring rod that the angel gives him. Reminds of Ez. 40-48, where Ezekiel is invited to measure the temple. Reminds of Rev. 11:2, where the Temple of God is being measured. So the NJ is a Temple as well as a church; all three of these images are tied up here.

NJ – place where God’s people dwell, God’s Temple, God’s church.

NJ is square, each side is 12 000 stadia in length (185m = 1 stadia); roughly 1 400 miles on each side. The City is absolutely huge. It is hugely long and wide, but also high. It is in a shape of a cube. Cube has 12 edges; if each of these edges there are 12 000 stadia long; the total measurement of the cube is 144 000 stadia long – reminds of the ideal home, the ideal place for God’s people to live in, both OT and NT Israel.

Measurement of the walls keeps this numerical symbolism (measurement) in mind – 144 cubits high (or thick – not clear from the Greek; 1 cubit = approx. 1 yard). The walls are out of proportion to the rest of the city. It helps us realise that whatever we do with this vision, it’s very much symbolic, as well as literal parts of it.

Rev. 21:18-21

Materials of the city

The wall was made of jasper; jasper is a variety of quartz, usually the reddish type, but can be designated to any stone. Reminds of v. 11 – reflection of God’s glory.

City streets – made of pure gold.

Foundations – contain all kinds of precious stones; this listing corresponds to the breastplate of the High Priest; the ultimate privilege of God’s people to be with God. The High Priest in OT was the only who had the privilege and right to speak with God face to face.

The first foundation is jasper (like the wall), and the other precious stones are built upon.

The 12 gates are described as 12 pearls. Pearls are very precious in ancient times; Matt 13 parable – pearls are precious. Here we have pearl the size of city gate, with wall 144 cubits high/thick.

Finally, the streets of city – made of pure gold, like glass. Solomon’s temple – floor made of gold (1 Kings 6:30). Redeemed are priests to God – Rev. 1:6; 5:9, 10. The gold of the streets for the city is not a new image but reminder of the ancient of the priestly and sanctuary life in the city.

Rev. 21:22

Startling statement – “I did not see a Temple in the city.” If so much of the imagery is associated with the High Priest and Sanctuary, why no Temple? Rev. 7:15 – seems to suggest Temple in Heaven. In Rev. 7 we have a picture of the redeemed being before God, serving in His Temple. In Rev. 21:22 – no Temple. Two possible explanation – temple of Rev. 7:15 in during the Millennium, the place where the records are stored, where God’s people can search the records, but after the Millennium there’s no more need of Temple. Other possibility – the Temple may be outside the City, as apparently is the case in Ezekiel’s vision – Temple is outside the city. Text in Rev. 21:22 explain – God and Lamb are the Temple. That perfect cube of the City reminds of the Most Holy Place where the High Priest meets with God. No need of Temple as Symbol has given way to Reality; God is in place. Temple is where God is present; now this place is the NJ.

Rev. 21:23

Reminds of Isaiah 60:19, 20 – Once again the story of the NJ picks up on the many themes of the OT.

Rev. 21:24-26

Who are these nations and kings? This is modeled on Isaiah 60, but it’s a transformation of OT language. These nations are the redeemed peoples of 5:9 and 7:9; picture of universal salvation. Now that the wicked are excluded, only saved will live in. The wicked are not allowed in the city but these nations are allowed in. Gates are not shut as there’s no need for security from evil.

Rev. 21:27

Another list of excluded, completing this section. “Nothing impure” means nothing ceremonial impure (e.g. lepers in OT). Here - a reference to the people who did not pay attention to God’s requirement, were ignorant of God. Although God’s requirements may seem minor and unimportant, that’s not the case in reality. We also have the adjectival form of the vile and the liars in v. 8.

#### Spiritual lessons

There are several spiritual lessons we can draw from this chapter:

- Promise of God’s presence to the overcomers – v. 3, 7, 11, 22, 23
- Coming end of suffering and sorrow – v. 4
- Certainty and security of blessed future – v. 5
- Overwhelming glory – 21-25
- Future is free – v. 6
- What can keep you out? – v. 8, 27
- Salvation is universal, available to e/o and every nation – v. 24-26

### **No. 11 The Tree and The Water of Life (Rev. 22)**

Have you ever been loved by someone who knows all about you and still loves you, no matter what?

Time to examine the NJ, approaching the centre of the city and closer to seeing JC in NJ. Rest of chapter serves as epilogue; center of city – JC, and that’s what the chapter is all about. The rest of the chapter finishes as epilogues of the Book, bringing to memory things noticed in Rev. 1.

Rev. 22:1-5 - Throne and River

Rev. 22:1

River of water of life. Water can be used in 3 different ways in the Bible – for cleansing (usually expressed as washing with water). This type is not found in BR – this role of the water is done by the blood of the Lamb. Second – threat, Flooding water; Rev. 12 – flood of water from the Dragon. Third – nourishment; that’s the case here; River of Water of Life brings life. Compare with Rev. 21:6; 22:17.

River is clear as crystal – parallel of this phrase is in Rev. 4:6. At that point the Sea of Glass might be associated with the laver of the sanctuary, where washing of feet/hands of priests took place before they moved in the sanctuary. More likely the River is associated with nourishment.

River comes from the Throne of God and the Lamb. Notice – the first time the Throne of the Lamb is used. Until now the BR has been speaking of “One Sitting on the Throne and the Lamb.” Here – for first time phrase “Throne of Lamb.”

Many scholars think that only after all Evil is destroyed that the Lamb takes its throne. Please, note that in Rev. 3:21 the Lamb is stated as having “sat down” already on the throne in the past. In one sense at least, JC sits on the throne all alone, but in another sense he is especially honoured in the events surrounding.

River flowing from the Throne – reminds of river in Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10) and River from the Temple (Ezek. 47; Zachariah 14). This image in Rev. 2 is taking up classic images from the OT.

Rev. 22:2

The river passes down of the throne in the middle of the great street of the city.

Tree of life in on both sides of the river. The term tree is singular, not plural; it's one tree on both sides. This may be a symbol, and we should not it press to what it exactly is.

This tree bears 12 crops, one each month; its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Image based on OT – Ezek. 47:12. Compare with Isaiah 66:22, 23.

We see this concept of monthly fruits may well be combined with monthly new moon festival in NJ. What was this be for? Perhaps for restoration of relationships, restoration of health/life; perhaps we will need to be fortified to live forever and not die.

Why leaves for healing of the nations? Perhaps it's linked to the wiping away of all tears; healing all hurts; Rev. 21:4; 7:17. As we mentioned before, there will probably need to be time for recovery from various hurts from life on this earth.

Rev. 22:3

No longer any curse – Curses of Gen. 3 are no longer there, brought to the end. Most crucial element – the banishment from the Garden and the Tree of Life. See in Gen. 3:22-24. A crucial part fo the original curse was to be separated from the Tree of Life, but not all can partake. No more sinners or sin will precipitate the curse. As long as we come back to JC at the base to His throne, we'll have eternal life and will partake of it forever.

Rev. 22:4

Best part of the eternal life will be not the gold or the good health, but the intensely good relationships with JC. We express character by face – by looking at a face we'll know the person most often. In looking at JC the redeemed will know JC, will have close relationship with Him.

His name will be on their foreheads – Rev. 14:1. The character of the redeemed will reflect the character of God. Their faces will look as God's face.

For the ancients the name was an expression of character; the character of God will be one with the character of His people.

Rev. 22:5

Mostly this verse picks up on the verse an concepts at the end of Rev. 21. New concept – “reign forever and ever” found in Exodus 15:18, where YHWH lives and reigns forever and ever. Continually through Revelation God is the one who reigns forever and ever. Here – interesting addition – the redeemed, they will reign forever and ever, and kings and priests.

Let's not leave this point, but at the last presentation we'll look closely, there is s/th special in there.

Epilogue of the Book

There is much in common with the Prologue of BR

Rev. 22:6

Here – a repetition of number of themes that appear in the beginning at the book. TI aso ties up many other themes. Word being “trustworthy and true” – reminds of JC in Rev. 3:14; 19:11. Appoied also to words of Revelation in 21:6. It tells that BR is reliable as JC is. This Epilogue serves as certification of the Book, as final documentation – that what we've read it true.

“Spirit of the Prophets” – reminds of Rev. 19:10, the “spirit of prophecy.”

Rev. 22:7

More focus on the SCJC begins with this verse.

Rev. 3:11; 22:12, 20 – “I am coming soon.” This is not description of the scenes of the SCJC (Second Coming of Jesus Christ), but an appeal. If you believe that JC is coming soon, if you believe the words in this book, then keep the words of the prophecy. This recalls Rev. 1:3 – the first beatitude. “Keep the words of this prophecy.” Essential preparation for the SCJC is attention to the BR and followed by appropriate behaviour.

BR provides the preparation for the final events of the earth’s history. Without knowledge of the BR we won’t be prepared for the SJCJC, the counterfeits of Satan. At the final days of earth’s history the knowledge from the words of BR will help us prepare and stand a/st deceptions.

Rev. 22:8, 9

Recalls the opening of the book – “I, John, heard and saw...” It’s bcs of what John saw and heard that we have the book. What did He saw and hear? The Testimony of JC.

At the close of the vision, John falls down to worship. This is strong parallel to Rev. 19:10. Compare the two verses – Rev. 19:10 and Rev. 22:8, 9; underline all words you find in common b/n the two texts. It seems to suggest that the Spirit of Prophecy is this special gift that John has, the gift of visionary understanding of the prophecy.

Rev. 22:10

Surprising statement, surprising text; see Dan. 12:4.

Daniel is a sealed book; the events there will be better understood in the future. BR is not sealed book; its words are to have immediate relevance to the people of the day. It is crucial as we understand BR that we give meaningful understanding to the words that would make sense to the original listeners.

Why is BR relevant now? Bcs time is near. Mark 13 – JC says “time is not near” using the exact same Greek Words. It’s only when certain events and signs pass that the time is near. In BR the time is near. John is writing toward the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> c.; all that had to take place has taken place. BR is opening a window to the mind of God to see what’s coming, including the 1<sup>st</sup> and last people who’ll read it.

Rev. 22:11, 12

Context of v. 11 is sandwich b/n “time is near” and “I am coming soon.” V. 11 is all about the close of probation of wicked and righteous of the earth. Before, just before the end, probation will be closed. Opportunity to hear the Gospel will be closed. Relevant texts to this effect – Rev. 10:7; 15:5-8.

In v. 12 it tells us that when JC comes He will reward each according to their works – reminds of Rev. 20:12, 13, where jud/t is according to works. This is a regular theme in the NT, and it has troubled many people. NT teaches salvation by faith, but also that jud/t is according to works. How can this be? How can we be saved by faith and judged by works?

Two things happen in the jud/t. There is a fundamental thing – first is what have we thought of JC, are we in relationships with JC, have we accepted His righteousness to cover us? Second – it’s not what our relationship is, but the evidence of our relationship. Anyone (a/o) can say the words, but what’s the evidence. Evidence is the behaviour – life, words, works – do they demonstrate that we are in relationship with JC. The final issue is if we have accepted JC. But in the same jud/t the other issue is if we’ve demonstrated evidence of that relationship. So, at the final jud/t, the people are saved by faith, but justified by their works too.

Rev. 22:13

This is JC speaking here; gives series of comprehensive titles, saying that JC is e/th that matter. He is e/th to the Universe; He is the comprehensive reality to the universe. He is the beginning of the end. On Him e/th else matters.

#### Rev. 22:14

This text is important bcs it takes to the right of who has the right to enter the city. It appears there is textual problem here.

KJV – “Blessed are those who keep His commandments”

NIV – “Blessed are those who have washed their robes”

There is scribal error underlying this text. We don't have the original manuscripts of the NT. Interested we have copies of copies of copies. When you have lots of copies when they agree (that's the exception rather than the rule). There are those who also disagree. In copying copies of copies, etc. allows for making mistakes. Copying manuscripts is a tedious task. Many mistakes creep in in this process.

How can something so radically different take place in BR? Well, not so “radical.” In Greek the text is “makarioi oi plutontes tas stolas ... In Greek “washing their robes” is “plunontes tas stolas” while “doing his commandments” is “paiontes tas entolas.” Basically, it's difference b/n two letters – a switch between two letters. In one case, you have a switch from “s” to an “e”, and in the original use of capital letters in the first manuscripts the two looked alike; the one could substitute for the other. They also sound alike in this case; a manuscript writer could hear either way.

Which is most likely to be the case? “Washing the robes” has more evidence; “Doing His Commandments” is most likely the scribal error. But in the BR we have the “doing” of commandments as important – Rev. 12:17; 14:12; Rev. 22:19 – where keeping the commandments is characteristic of the BR. But that's also part of the problem – when author of Revelation speaks of the commandments, he speaks of “keeping” not “doing.” The blessing of one who “does” the commandments is very unusual in BR. While there is strong emphasis in BR on keeping the commandments, probably the turn of phrase was not original. “Washing in the robes” is very common in the book; means immersion in the cross. Theologically it's very accurate – it is JC's keeping of commandments and not ours that recommends us before God that is the ground for our salvation. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb, not our deeds. The saved, however, will act as such, and reflect in their behaviour.

We don't cut one to the expense to the other – both are equally important.

If you take the NIV reading, this fits the theology of the BR; our salvation is based on the cross and not on our performance. Paul and James – we are saved apart from works, but the faith that saves is the faith that works. We are saved by faith alone, but saving faith is never alone.

#### Rev. 22:15

This seems to be a real hit on animal lovers. But “dog” here is a symbolic term. This is a passage of exclusion, but the unique word is “dog.” Deut. 23:17, 18 – “dog” is term for male prostitute. Matt 15:26-27 – use for pagans heathen, who reject God; Phil. 3:2 – opposing Judaizing opponents to Paul. Term “dog” is referring to things that God hates and the people who practice them.

#### Rev. 22:16

Text tells us that the entire BR is testimony for the churches, but not just ch. 2 and 3; all prophecies are for all churches, at all times. Rev. 22:10 – book for all times, not to be sealed, but continually relevant.

It describes JC in terms of Rev. 5 once more – the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. Both of these are symbols of Messiahship. JC is the Messiah of Judaism, of OT hope; JC is the dawning of the new age. NT affirms that the coming of JC is the beginning of the great eschatological movement.

#### Rev. 22:17

The attention now moves from JC to the witness of the Spirit of to the church and to the city. Story of BR calls people to JC. But now in our present context it is the HSp and the Bride (Church, people of God) who call people to JC. BR is Gospel Book, story of JC; at end of Book is a call to people – come to JC, drink from Water of Life freely. We call others to accept the free gift of the water of life. Gospel call is not to do commandments in order to be saved, but to be saved apart from works and to works, to become one who works. Salvation is free gift.

Rev. 22: 18, 19

This is a fitting ending. If Bible is Book of God, if it is designed to help us here on earth, then it is dangerous to tamper with it. Another exclusion text – if we mess up with the Bible, if we try to distort its meaning, its dangerous; it can lead to eternal death to understand and teach it wrongly. It is a serious thing to be a teacher of the Book of Revelation and the Word of God. We need the guidance of God at each step of the way.

Rev. 22: 20, 21

Here the language of coming becomes the language of response. Those who read all the way to the end of BR will want to see it coming to reality, will long to have it come to reality.

“Grace” – the last word of the BR. In midst of all the jud/ts and lake of fire, it is good to know that grace is still available. To e/o who hears the words of BR, the appeal is still clear; the plagues will fall only on those who resist the grace of God. In those terms and conditions, it is not hard to be saved. Grace of God is there ever before us.

What kind of life will God’s people have in eternity? Will it be worth living? Next presentation.

### Spiritual Lessons

Look forward to the time of the NJ, when there will be no more curse, evil consequences. No more consequences bcs no more actions that produce evil consequences. In life we face the results of many things that we’ve done. Today we have new fresh start at New Earth.

Second, at the very best part of heaven is to see the face of JC. That’s the ultimate relationship. That’s the ultimate relationship that we’ve been looking forward to. True fulfilment will be found only in this type of relationships. Of knowing One who knows all about you and accepts you the way you are. Our earthly friends don’t accept that us that easy, but God does. He knows all about us, He accepts us as we are. He is the Superstar who overshadows all the other superstars.

## **No. 12 Epilogue; Some Final Thoughts**

Does it really matter what heaven will be really like? Does it make any different in the world we live now?

What can we know about life in the world to come? Would it be fun and interesting or will we become bored? Will there be challenge and problems to solve? Who would like to live there?

Heaven does not appeal much to the people today. Heaven seems very limited to the life here – harps, gardens, etc. That’s child’s view of heaven. Can adults enjoy heaven too? Is there hints to what heaven’s life is like? Can we know a/th about life in heaven? Many people think – “eye has not seen, ear has not heard...” and think – we don’t know what’s life like there, so why bother thinking.

1 Cor. 2:9, 10 – God has revealed to us by the Spirit. This text has been misused. Text does not say that we don't know about heaven, but that we can only know by the Spirit. Spirit will reveal to us all that we need to know.

This text is very important. This life today is influenced by our vision of the future. If we have understanding of the life in future, we'll have courage to go through our daily challenges. If heaven is attractive enough, we'll have strength for today; we'll prepare for the afterlife. How we treat people today will prepare us for the future.

### Biblical evidence for the eternal life

Heaven can be boring, you know? If we do in heaven what we're doing here, heaven certainly will be boring. So, what will eternal life be like? Will it be worth our time and attention?

Let's look at three main tasks that people will be involved in eternity.

First, life of power and influence – Luke 19:17. The person is faithful in small matters and then he gets 10 cities. If ruling 10 cities in this world, what about the equivalent in eternity? A galaxy, or 10 galaxies? To be faithful in small things is to be in charge of 10 cities is to be in charge of big responsibility. Remember promise in Rev. 3:21 – sitting with God in this throne; to join JC on the throne. Is this too much? JC is not impulsive; he's thought about it for 1000 years.

Rev. 7:15 – Temple, throne – governing centre of the universe; redeemed are members of God's ruling cabinet. The one content to be faithful in small things can be content to serve in big matters. Reminds of story of Joseph – faithful in small things, brought to be prime minister of Egypt. We are destined for life of power and influence bigger than we can imagine. To suppose that heaven might be a drag means that God was not creative. God will unveil new plans and purposes, new goals continually for the universe. Sin delayed God's plans, but when Sin is wiped out, God's creativity will sprout out. As God's co-rulers, we'll be around organising, enjoying God. God may have hidden small things for us to discover in eternity.

Bible speaks of redeemed being kings in eternity, living lives of incredible power and influence.

Second, making different for eternity. Having relationship with JC is the greatest delight for us in eternity. Ultimately, heaven is the place where things can develop to new levels of intimacy and relationships. John 14:1-3. Heaven is more than just a gift – you also get the Giver. It means relationship with JC. Every month we'll be together with Him at the Tree of life. There will be relationship with the great saints of the Bible. There will be no threat to these relationships – there will be no loss, death, no moving; we'll have unlimited time to explore each other; unlimited opportunities to overcome all emotional barriers.

Emotional barriers? We've talked about this. Opportunity to recover in eternity. Rev. 5:9, 10 – we'll be kings and priests in eternity. We'll move from being sinners who need a priest, to being priests ourselves. What do priests do in eternity? Priests conduct worship. We'll have speaking, singing roles, roles of encouragement, roles of drawing people closer to God. Priests are mediators. Bible states that JC is the Mediator b/n God and humanity, and bcs he is a human being, he has special relationship with other human beings. What does it mean that God will choose ex-sinners for priestly role?

It will be very important to the Universe that we share our stories of sorry, sin, suffering, and salvation. Many questions will need to be answered – if God is good, why is there sin; why merciful God allowed sin to go for so long; will sin ever rise again if it's once wiped out and away; how did we get saved. Our priestly role will be very important – through our priestly role God will make sure that sin never arises again. Our presence and history, our experience and history will be eternal history/testimony. God will make sure that if He is going to create, that sin will not rise again. Satan

and Sin have taught us unforgettable lessons. No angel can understand God's salvation as humans. The beings who never experienced sin or its consequences will not know what it's like.

EGW, *Education*,

Eph. 2:6, 7 – In the coming ages God's grace will be manifested by us; there will be more grace; we'll be channels of God's character. How will this take place? Here is illustration: snow flakes are unique; if that's true for them is it not true for God's created beings. In our lives, each one of us offers a facet to God's character. That's so important for God, that He is willing to share this with us. It is important for God, and God wants each one to offer a special witness to the Universe.

Third area of heavenly life. IN the first sense, we spoke of heavenly life as kingship. Then in priestly sense – life emphasizing relationship, glorifying God. Third area – unlimited area of interest and personal growth; opportunity to grow and grow as a person, to become more of who and what you are.

EGW, *Education*, 301

Many people hated school, but every moment of life is a school. School as such is not a bad thing, but what you make of it is what matters. School helps you to find the world. There is nothing more enriching to life than the ability to discover what's around us. In no time of history has there been opportunity for more research, knowledge, and ideas, as today. That's a foretaste of what's coming in future eternity.

Happiness really has to do with our ability/capacity, combined with experience. Person with a lot of capacity, ability, knowledge, and ability to experience, will really grow.

Example: many people like classical music, others – don't. It's capacity you develop, it's opportunity to grow. The greater the music, the less it bores you. The more you go in depths, the more you develop and grow. That's what heaven will be like – without limits we'll grow and explore, and so our joy and fulfilment.

To help us in this, the future time is described in terms of restoration – Isaiah 35:5, 6. First thing we notice about heavenly school – complete restoration – our senses will be restored to us; what a boom to research, what an aid to true science. You have experienced in some point of your life you've experienced an opportunity of sudden high and flash of genius. In heaven this will be daily experience.

We'll have eyes that can see what now is invisible to the human eye, maybe the microscopic world. Ears to hear the impossible to hear. We'll not sleep – life will be “doubled” – we'll rest bcs we enjoy the rest. We'll have increased capacities.

What will we do?

Ps. 16:11. Life won't be boring. It's clear that in heaven every power and capability increased and developed. The grandest enterprises will be carried over, loftiest aspirations reached, highest ambitions realised. Always there will be something new to reach.

EGW, *Education*, p. 307

Ps. 37:3,4 – another text that gives us some idea of the future life. In eternity we'll be able to achieve the desires of our hearts, the dreams, ambitions, and dreams of our highest sense will be achieved. Your dreams will be realized. Is. 65 – architect. What about sculpting the environment, house, garden? Is. 65 – you'll have time to do that. Studying zoology, biology, music – you'll have time to do so. Travel – you'll visit whole Universe, not just galaxies. Art – you'll learn from the master artist, the one who can re-shape the entire Universe. Social life – we'll talk with the angels, their ministry to us; we'll see the effects on our actions – our good and bad actions. One smile in one day was encouraging for people, impact from one person to another, till someone made decision for heaven. History of infinite and universal scope – opportunity to explore. John 16:12.

What should this mean if we are going to be priests, kings, scholars, etc. in heaven? What can we do today to make difference then? How should we live with the vision of the future? How can we prepare for the future, for eternity?

First, develop your talents – speak, sing, play music. Further our education! Pursue your interests! Now is the time to become all we can be.

Second, be faithful in little things. Faithful in small prepares us for service in the future. No task is worth not doing well.

Third, humility – Rev. 3:21 – only given to Laodicea, to the most troubled church. Special trials yield special usefulness. N/thing scarier than country ruled by proud person, who uses authority for their own benefit. Future kings and priests are to learn humility. Do you love to rule, to bend other people's wills, to be in control – ask God to humble you! Watch out – expect trouble, bcs He'll answer it, and expect trouble for your pride.

The bigger the trials we experience now, the better preparation for service then. The greater the trust that God places on us, the higher the position He'll share with us. Only those who can be trusted to rule in highest places, who have been humbled to the dust can serve highest. Maybe that's the reason why God does not offer this to angels. God only gives this to the people who've been in trouble and know the results and consequences of sin. Only those God uses to serve.

What about the priestly role? 2 Cor. 4:17-18. Only then and there we'll be able to experience service in true sense. Here we see study, communion, prayer with JC – preparation for the future life. If we have fruitful relationship with Him now, it'll be even more rewarding in the future. To spend time with JC and others, to get to know JC more and better and serve others – that's a way to prepare for heaven. To keep a life-journal, a diary of experiences as X/and, to be open for the struggles we face – these will be good testimony for then.

Abandon all lesser things.

2 Cor. 12:4

Paul saw things from heaven, when he came back, he counted all things as loss in comparison with JC. When we understand the BR and understand the incredible greatness of heaven, we'll abandon the lesser pursuits. Day will come with we'll have universal and timeless witness for God.

How and can we prepare to be scholars? What can we do to make this possible now and then? The abilities we cultivate now will remain with us in eternity. Luke 19: - the parable of the 10 minas. In this parable the people are rewarded in eternity as to what they did on earth with what they had.

Luke 19:26

In heaven it won't be according to talent but according to effort we put here on earth.

Quote on use of our talents: EGW, COL 363 – the negative side; FE 49 – the positive side. We may not know much what heaven is like, but there is a lot we can do about what we can be like when we get there. Cultivate your talents, get further education – get into art, music, etc. Every moment counts. Nothing is unimportant. The qualities we have now will serve us in eternity.

Hebrews 11:24-28

By faith – Our attitude toward the future affects our present. We prepare for the future. We spend our time too much on earth and things on earth. It's necessary, but not the most important. Take inventory. Identify those aspects of our lives that endanger our future for heaven. Put first things first, for things that matter and count.

We are at the end of our studies. We made note previously that there is no Temple in NJ, but God and the Lamb are the Temple. In the light of the whole Bible, let's bring these themes – and Bible themes – together. In Gen. 1 and 2, God and humanity are one. After sin – barrier, God in Garden and humanity out. The battle is all about overcoming the barrier b/n God and humanity. Ex. 25:8 – temporary solution to the barrier. Temple/Sanctuary – with Holy and Most Holy Place. For the people - representative access via the priests. In Revelation – bcs of the cross and what JC did, humanity has

been elevated in JC to heavenly places. We see in Rev. 1 JC among the candlesticks. Churches have the living presence of JC among them. The church is drawn – through the imagery of the candlesticks – in to the Most Holy Place to the final presence of God, we have access to God through JC. NJ is perfect cube, representation of the Most Holy Place, the only cube in heavenly sanctuary. In NJ – God and people are in cube, in most perfect place, in Eden; no need of Temple as God and people are together. Ultimate experience of eternity is experience with God. That's what the Bible is all about. Relationship with God was broken by sin. Through and in JC is made one and whole again. In eternity we'll come once again face to face.

BR ends with glorious picture of e/th beautiful and absence of e/th evil. Sin, Satan, temptation – banished from universe. Sorrow, death, sickness – banished from universe. E/th that causes sorrow, death – gone. All that brings positive energy of full human potential is there. All we ever wanted is there. We don't want to miss that time and opportunity.

Let's plan to be there. Let's plan to meet there.