

**A Historacist's
Approach to the
Major End-Time
Prophecies of
the Bible**

Dr. H.C. Hilton

January 2021

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	3
Parallel Summary of the Historicist and Futurist Schools of Prophecy	4-12
The Statue and Four Beasts of Daniel	13-28
Daniel's 'Seventieth Week'	29-38
The Olivet Discourse	39-56
The Book of Revelation	57-140

Introduction¹

The Historicist interpretation of the Bible's end-time prophecies is virtually unknown amongst present Evangelical churches. However, this ignorance is not representative of the whole of the Christian era. The Futurist view - which is the current orthodoxy - gained acceptance only last century.² Prior to that, the Historicist view was an essential doctrine of the Protestant churches. It was an indispensable element of the Reformation period, and the Futurist view was repudiated absolutely. All of the modern "fathers of faith" were adherents of the Historicist approach.

The Historicist school believes that the major end-time prophecies of the Bible - *the little horn of the fourth beast of Daniel 7; the seventieth week of Daniel 9; the Olivet Discourse recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21; and the Book of Revelation* - have had a progressive fulfillment down through history. This school emphasizes the symbolic nature of the images described in these passages.

This contrasts with the Futurist school which believes that the major end-time prophecies are yet to have a future fulfillment, and emphasizes a literal interpretation (but adopts a symbolic interpretation when deemed appropriate).

¹ All Bible quotes are taken from the NIV unless otherwise specified.

² There are other systems of interpretation including the Praetorist school – that all of the major end-time prophecies were fulfilled long ago - and Spiritual school – that these 'prophecies' merely teach principles and in no way make predictions of actual future events.

Parallel Summary of the *Historicist* and *Futurist* Schools of Prophecy

Historicist School	Futurist School
<p>1. Origin of the Historicist School</p> <p>It is impossible to say exactly when this system of interpretation was devised and by whom.</p> <p>There is no doubt, however, that it was widely believed by the persecuted opponents of Catholicism during the height of papal power in the Dark Ages.</p> <p>Indeed, it was an essential doctrine of the Protestant Reformation and continued to be so in the Post-Reformation period.</p> <p>It was held unanimously by Christian leaders from the 11th century (e.g. Peter Waldo) through to the 19th century (e.g. C.H. Spurgeon). It has only been from the early 20th century until the present time that the Historicist view has been largely abandoned in favour of the Futurist view.</p> <p>A key element of the Historicist system of interpretation was the identity of the antichrist in the papacy.</p>	<p>1. Origin of the Futurist School</p> <p>The Catholic Church hierarchy was alarmed by the reformers' allegation that the papacy was the antichrist. Rome sought to present alternatives in order to counter the reformers' pronouncement, since such a claim posed a substantial threat to its power.</p> <p>The first counter-argument was presented by Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613), a Jesuit theologian, who devised the "Praetorist" school of prophecy.</p> <p>He proposed that the prophecies relating to the antichrist were fulfilled in the Roman Emperor Nero, long before the time of the medieval church of Rome.</p> <p>A more successful counter claim was presented by Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), also a Jesuit.</p> <p>His hypothesis is known today as the "Futurist" school. Instead of placing the antichrist in the past, he employed the obvious alternative and</p>

Martin Luther said *"We are not the first ones who applied the anti-christian kingdom of the Papacy: this many great men have dared to do so many years before us and that frankly and openly under the greatest persecution. The Papacy is the Antichrist"*.

John Wesley declared *"The Pope is in an emphatical sense the Man of Sin (the Antichrist), as he increases in all manner of sin above measure. And he is too, properly styled the Son of Perdition, as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers, destroyed innumerable souls, and will himself perish everlastingly"*.

C.H. Spurgeon wrote *"The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."*

The whole vast body of eminent Bible scholars, beginning with John Wycliffe in 1383 through to H. Grattan Guinness in 1880, taught that the

proposed that the antichrist was a future ruler.

Consequently, he ascribed most of the Book of Revelation to the distant future; having fulfillment immediately prior to Christ's second coming.

The antichrist would be a single individual who would appear at the end of the age in fulfillment of Daniel's seventieth week, and

- persecute Christians
- rebuild the temple in Jerusalem
- abolish the Christian religion
- make a covenant with the Jews
- claim to be 'God'
- kill the two witnesses of God
- conquer and rule the world from the temple in Jerusalem

Futurism made no inroads into Protestant churches until the middle of the 19th century.

J.N. Darby (1800-1882) must be credited with being the catalyst for the current dominance of the Futurist view. A Calvinist and one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren Movement, he accepted the Futurist system and incorporated it into his grand scheme of Biblical interpretation called "Dispensationalism". Key points within this system include:

- the nation of Israel is strictly God's elect

<p>Pope was the antichrist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Old Covenant remains in force for the Jews• the era of the Gentile church formed under the New Covenant is a sidetrack for God's ultimate purposes• Christ would return to reign over a restored and converted Israel. <p>Darby was influenced to accept Futurism by an associate of his, Edward Irving. Irving discovered a book written by a Jesuit priest, Manuel De Lacunza. It was a remake of the Jesuit Ribera's Futurist interpretation, and Irving translated it into English from Spanish adding his own lengthy introduction. The Futurist view was modified by Irving to include the concept of a "secret rapture" (i.e. that Christians would be miraculously removed by Christ from the earth to protect them from the tyranny of the antichrist). And this all dovetailed nicely into Darby's idea of the future role for Israel within his grand scheme of Dispensationalism.</p> <p>Darby's novel ideas were largely criticised and rejected at the time in England. They were seen to be a distortion of biblical truth and a radical departure from historic Christianity.</p> <p>(George Muller, also a founder of the Brethren Movement, could not accept Darby's view, and</p>
---------------------------------	--

broke away establishing the 'Open' Brethren Church. Darby's group became known as the 'Closed' Brethren Church.)

Nevertheless, Darby was warmly received in the United States by some Reformed churches making numerous visits there. Out of his U.S. connections he influenced Cyrus Ingersoll Scofield who published a hugely popular reference Bible in which he incorporated Darby's Dispensationalism. Scofield's reference Bible was used extensively throughout Bible Colleges and Seminaries in the early 20th century. Consequently, the Futurist view was eventually to command the adherence of virtually all evangelical churches to the exclusion (mainly through ignorance) of any viable alternative.

Current popular Bible teachers that present the Futurist view include Hal Lindsey, Tim Lahaye, Jerry Jenkins, Charles Ryrie, Chuck Missler, Pat Robertson, John Hagee, David Jeremiah, John Walvoord, Chuck Swindoll, Derek Prince, David Pawson, Jerry Falwell, Dave Hunt, Merrill Tenney, Harry Ironside and Walter Kaiser Jr.

(The principal Bible colleges in the U.S. which hold to Futurism are the Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary. Many of the church leaders who promote Futurism are

	graduates from these institutions.)
<p>2. Fourth Beast of Daniel 7</p> <p>Represents Europe firstly under the rule of <i>Imperial Rome</i> and then under the rule of <i>Papal Rome</i>; the Pope being represented by the 'little horn' on the beast.</p>	<p>2. Fourth Beast of Daniel 7</p> <p>Represents a persecuting world power right at the end of the age.</p>
<p>3. Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9</p> <p>"Seventy weeks" represents a period of 490 consecutive years (70x7).</p> <p>The seventieth week, i.e. the very last 7 years of the 490 years, represents the time of the ministry of Jesus (approx. 3½ years) finishing with the stoning of Stephen (approx. 3½ years after the crucifixion) when the Jews as a nation rejected the Gospel message.</p> <p>There is no reason to take the seventieth week out of chronological order. It can easily be understood in the context of the first advent of Christ.</p> <p>It is a wonderful prophecy of the precise time of, and events surrounding, Messiah's first appearance. Calculating from the time of Artaxerxes decree in 457BC, recorded in Ezra 7,</p>	<p>3. Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9</p> <p>The 69 weeks of v.25 ("seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks" is $7 \times 7 + 3 \times 20 + 2 = 69$) ends at the ministry of Jesus.</p> <p>The seventieth week is a period of seven years projected right into the future, at the very end of the age.</p> <p>The "the ruler (prince KJV) that shall come" (v.26) is a personal antichrist.</p> <p>The "he" (v.27) is the same antichrist who will make a covenant with the Jews for those seven years, but break it after 3½ years.</p>

<p>as fulfillment of Daniel 9:25 “the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem”, provides a date of 27AD when Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan.</p> <p>The "the ruler (prince KJV) that shall come" (v.26) was Titus, the Roman prince whose armies destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.</p> <p>The "he" spoken of in v.27 is Jesus (not the antichrist) who confirmed the (New) Covenant with many for that 'week'.</p>	
<p>4. The Great Tribulation</p> <p>The “great tribulation” prophesied by Jesus, in Matthew’s account of the 'Olivet Discourse', was fulfilled at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (when approximately 1 million Jews were killed).</p> <p>In the ‘Olivet Discourse’ - Matthew 24, Mark 13 & Luke 21 - Jesus was responding to <i>two</i> separate questions asked by His disciples (see Matthew 24:1-3): when would the temple be destroyed, and when would He return? In His response, Jesus prophesied about the events pertaining first to the destruction of the temple, and then secondly His return. The “great tribulation” occurred in the former.</p>	<p>4. The Great Tribulation</p> <p>A specific period of time (either 3½ or 7 years) under the reign of a personal antichrist at the very end of the age.</p> <p>The “tribulation” prophecies are all associated with the 'seventieth' week of Daniel 9.</p>

<p>The “great tribulation” spoken of in Revelation 7:14 occurs at a <i>different</i> time and refers to the persecution Christians suffered under Imperial Rome, during the first three centuries after Christ.</p> <p>Jesus warned in John 16:33 “In this world you will have trouble (tribulation KJV).” And in John 15:20 he remarked “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”</p> <p>Tribulation and persecution have marked the Christian age, though it has been more severe at particular times and places.</p> <p>Historically, there have been a number of cruel persecutions visited upon the true church: e.g. 10 million martyrs died under Imperial Rome’s brutality, 50+ million martyrs under Papal Rome, Mohammedanism and Communism ? millions.</p>	
<p>5. Antichrist</p> <p>The line of Popes constitutes the antichrist of prophecy.</p> <p>"Anti" can mean not only “against” but also “to stand in the place of”. The Pope is called the “<i>Vicar of Christ (or God)</i>” which literally means</p>	<p>5. Antichrist</p> <p>An individual who rises to power at the end of the age who rules over the entire world.</p> <p>The antichrist persecutes the church and makes a seven-year covenant with the Jews (which is broken after 3½ years).</p>

<p>one who is a substitute for, or who stands in the place of, Christ (or God) on this earth. This title in Latin, "<i>VICARIVS FILII DEI</i>" appears on the Pope's coronation crown and has a numerical value of exactly 666.</p> <p>Other titles claimed by the Pope are 'Lord of Lords', 'King of Kings' and 'Prince of Peace'!</p> <p>The "man of sin" (2Thessalonians 2; NIV fn & KJV) also represents the papacy.</p>	<p>He rules the world from a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem in which the Jewish sacrificial system is reinstated (which he abolishes after 3½ years into his reign).</p> <p>He is the "man of sin" (2Thessalonians 2; NIV fn. & KJV).</p>
<p>6. Mark of the Beast</p> <p>This was fulfilled during the rule of Papal Rome when rejection of official church membership resulted in being ostracized from society.</p> <p>The 'mark' was given to a person during the initiation rights into the church (called confirmation). In this ceremony, they knelt before the Bishop - the Pope's representative - and their forehead was crossed by the Bishop, using his right hand. (The practice continues to this day.)</p> <p>By being inducted into the Catholic Church, the person was pledging allegiance and obedience to the Pope.</p>	<p>6. Mark of the Beast</p> <p>The antichrist will force the inhabitants of the earth to receive a mark on their hand or forehead. Without this mark it will be impossible to engage in trade.</p> <p>To receive the mark is to invoke upon oneself eternal damnation regardless of whether one is a believing Christian or not (Revelation 14:11). (Note: This denies the absolute efficacy of the blood of Jesus.)</p> <p>Over the last 50 years the nature of the mark conjectured by Futurists has evolved from a tattoo to a barcode to a credit card to an implanted microchip to altered dna.</p>

<p>There are several papal edicts forbidding 'heretics', i.e. those who refused to submit to papal authority, from engaging in trade.</p>	
<p>7. Book of Revelation</p> <p>The Book of Revelation has been progressively fulfilled since it was first given to the Apostle John (approx. 96 A.D.).</p> <p>John was shown "things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1) and was told "the time is at hand" (1:3).</p> <p>The world is now in the closing stages.</p> <p>The symbolic nature of the prophecies is emphasized (see 1:20), recognizing the same use of symbolism in other prophetic books of the Bible. Literal interpretations are avoided.</p>	<p>7. Book of Revelation</p> <p>Chapters 2 and 3 alone cover the church age.</p> <p>From 4:1 the church is in heaven having been 'raptured' from the earth, and the remainder of the prophecies concern the 7 year 'tribulation' period under the reign of the antichrist.</p> <p>While most of the prophecies are to be interpreted literally, some portions are symbolic.</p>

The Statue and Four Beasts of Daniel

Introduction

The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are like a two volume compendium that predicts the rise and fall of the world's ruling empires, up until the end of the age. Daniel and Revelation are united in their use of similar imagery.

(Other prophetic books of the Old Testament – particularly Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah - also contain prophecies that relate to these empires. The prophecies concerning the first three empires have all been fulfilled long ago.)

The book of Daniel contains important prophetic information about the *nation of Israel* in relation to the first two empires.

Daniel's prophecies cover the period of history from his time until the end of the age. Importantly, it dates the appearance of Christ in 27AD with the establishment of the New Covenant, and predicts the following destruction of the (yet to be rebuilt) temple and (yet to be reinhabited) city of Jerusalem that occurred in 70AD.

The book of Revelation deals extensively with the last world empire listed in Daniel and its evolution. Revelation's focus shifts away from the nation of Israel to the *church*. Most of the Book of Revelation has also been fulfilled, and we are at the closing stages of this age.

(Other prophecies are given in the Old Testament that possibly predict future events concerning the *nation of Israel* and the end of the age. Two such prophecies are Ezekiel 38-39 and Zechariah 12-14.)

To understand the book of Revelation, therefore, it is first important to understand the book of Daniel. Jesus himself referred specifically to Daniel when he prophesied concerning the future of the nation of Israel, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Empire, in Matthew 24:15-16:

:

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

The complete prophecy that Jesus gave at that time (called the 'Olivet Discourse'), is an important link between Daniel and Revelation.

Symbols in Prophecy.

Daniel and Revelation use symbols to portray persons, places, kingdoms and events. Therefore, to understand their prophecies, it is important to understand the symbols.

The symbols used in Daniel and Revelation are consistent. So we use Daniel as the precursor to help us interpret the symbols used in Revelation.

God often uses repetition and expansion in the development of prophecy. The same history is repeated using different symbols as the themes are enlarged upon and confirmatory and/or extra information is given.

Some important symbols are:

- **Beast:** World empire.
- **Horns:** Rulers, kings, power and authority.
- **Sea:** Nations or multitudes of peoples.

- **Winds:** The forces of change, war, strife and turmoil.
- **Day:** A prophetic year (360 days).
- **Time:** A period of 360 years ('times' = 2 x 360 years; 'half a time' = $\frac{1}{2}$ x 360 = 180 years).
- **Sun, moon, stars and heavenly bodies:** Worldly authorities, governments and political (or religious) powers.
- **Earthquake:** A significant political/religious change or upheaval.

These symbols have become understood by looking back at history and comprehending their meaning according to fulfilled prophecies. We find such a strong correspondence between the prophetic predictions and historical facts that have occurred, that we are led to conclude that these predictions have indeed been fulfilled – and this also affirms to us the supernatural origins of the prophecies. Moreover, from this vantage point, we can project the meaning of prophecies yet to be fulfilled.

Nevertheless, it is important to impress the caveat that the interpretation of prophecy is not straight forward. It requires careful inquiry and a mind with wisdom (c.f. Revelation 17:9). And while we may sketch out future events with some confidence, often time the Bible offers detached fragments that must be combined to build a picture, and it is impossible to flesh out detail, though the temptation to do so is ever present. Therefore, we must be cautious in our interpretations of passages of scripture that contain yet to be fulfilled prophecy.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream – the Statue

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of ancient Babylon (reign 605 BC – 562 BC) had a prophetic dream. He could not understand it and, greatly troubled by it, sought someone who could explain it to him. Daniel was miraculously shown the dream by God, and given its interpretation. The dream was a prophecy concerning the rise and fall of world empires that controlled increasing areas of the Middle East and Europe (the total area under dominion often referred to as **"the world"** or **"the whole earth"**). This is the area of primary significance to God's people – the nation of Israel under the Old Covenant and the church under the New Covenant.

Daniel 2:31-45

31 "You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue — an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.

32 The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.

34 While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them.

35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

36 "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king.

37 You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory;

38 in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

39 "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth.

40 Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron — for iron breaks and smashes everything — and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others.

41 Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay.

42 As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle.

43 And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

45 This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands — a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."

The statue represented four world empires, the first identified as the Babylonian empire, whose king was Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, Daniel prophesied that three future world empires would yet appear in succession and that after the fourth the fifth and final kingdom of God would annihilate and replace those kingdoms forever.

Daniel himself was given a further vision of four beasts many years later which provides further information concerning these empires, each of which was represented in a beast.

Daniel's Four Beasts

Daniel 7

7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

2 Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.

3 Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

4 "The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it.

5 "And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'

6 "After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

7 "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast — terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large

iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

8 "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

9 "As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

11 "Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.

12(The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

15 "I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me.

16 I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this.

"So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things:

17 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth.

18 But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever — yes, for ever and ever.'

19 "Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws — the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.

20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell — the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,

22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

23 "He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.






24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.

25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

26 "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.

27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

28 "This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

Statue	Beasts	Empire/ Kingdom	Date	
<p>The head of the statue was made of pure gold,</p> 	<p>like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle</p>		<p>Babylon</p>	<p>605 - 539 BC</p>
<p>its chest and arms of silver,</p>	<p>like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth</p>		<p>Medo/ Persian</p>	<p>539 – 331 BC</p>
<p>its belly and thighs of bronze,</p>	<p>like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads</p>		<p>Greece</p>	<p>331-168 BC</p>
<p>its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.</p> 	<p>terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns</p>	<p>Imperial Rome</p>	<p>168 BC-476 AD</p>	
	<p>another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully</p>	<p>Papal Rome</p>	<p>533 – 1793</p>	
	<p><i>This fourth and last beast continues to undergo change, the details of which are given in Revelation.</i></p>		<p>1794 – present</p>	

<p>a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.</p>		Christ's Millennium Kingdom	Beginning date ? Continues for eternity
--	--	------------------------------------	--

1. Head of pure gold/Lion with wings

- This is the Babylonian Empire (605 - 539 BC). Babylon's official symbol was a lion with eagle's wings.³
- Babylon was used as an instrument of God's judgment upon the *southern kingdom* of the nation of Israel – identified in the Bible as **“the house (or kingdom) of Judah”** - which had rejected God's covenant.



The separate *northern kingdom* - **“the house (or kingdom) of Israel”** - had earlier come under God's judgment for also breaking covenant.

Babylon carried the kingdom of Judah into captivity in stages from 604BC to 586BC, destroying its capital Jerusalem.

Earlier, in 722 BC, the Assyrians under Shalmaneser V and then later under Sargon II conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, destroyed its capital Samaria and sent the Israelites into exile and captivity. The northern tribes never returned *en masse*.

- Jeremiah prophesied that Judah's captivity in Babylon would last seventy years (25:11-12) before Judah was attacked, vanquished and deported by the Babylonians.

Daniel understood Jeremiah's prophecy and prayed for the release of the Israelites held in captivity by the Babylonians. They returned to the land of

Palestine in several migrations beginning in 538BC - under the edicts of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes - rebuilt the temple and reinhabited Jerusalem.

- The city of ancient Babylon was located in the present-day country of Iraq.

2. Chest and arms of silver/Bear raised on one side with three ribs in its mouth

- This is the Medo-Persian Empire (539-330 BC). Its first ruler was Cyrus the Great who conquered Babylon in 539 BC.



- **Three ribs.** These are the three great conquests that eventually brought the Persians to world dominance. Egypt, Lydia and Babylon

formed an opposing alliance but were successively defeated:

1. Egypt in 568 BC. Amasis II of Egypt suppressed.
2. Lydia in 547 BC. Croesus of Lydia taken prisoner.
3. Babylon in 539 BC. Babylon is occupied. Nabonidus captured.

- **Raised up on one side.** At first the Medes and Persians ruled jointly, but later the Persians rose to be the greater power.
- The state of Persia was located in the present-day country of Iran. (Iran was known as Persia up until 1935).

³ Empire maps from Free Bible Maps and Charts <http://gods-word-first.org/bible-maps.html>

3. Belly and thighs of bronze/ Leopard with four wings and four heads

- This is the Greek Empire (331-168 BC).
- **Four wings.**
Alexander the Great subdued the world in an astonishing seven years (330-323 BC). The “**four wings**” represent the speed of conquest.



- **Four heads.**
Represent the division of the kingdom into four parts. On June 11, 323 BC, Alexander died suddenly and unexpectedly at age 33. However, he did not have a strong heir so the kingdom passed to the Diadochi (Latin meaning "successors" who were the rival generals, families, and friends of Alexander the Great who fought for control over his empire after his death) and was eventually divided into four distinct districts after several wars of succession (323-301 BC).

4. Legs of iron, feet of iron and clay/ Terrifying and frightening beast with large iron teeth and ten horns; three of which are displaced by a little horn

- This is the Roman Empire (168 BC - 476 AD).

This beast represents the cruel, crushing power of the Imperial Roman Empire which ruled the 'world' for five centuries, followed by the Papal Roman

Empire, i.e. Roman Catholic Church, that ruled essentially the same territory for nearly a further thirteen centuries.



- The “**ten horns**” are the states or kingdoms of the European continent. The ten horns are equivalent to the ten toes of the statue. (The “**two legs**” speak of the division between the Western and Eastern parts of both the Imperial Roman Empire and the Papal Roman Empire.)
- The “**little horn**” represents the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church. The pope “**boastfully**” claims to be ‘God’ on the earth.
- Daniel’s prophecy foretells the next important development in Europe after the collapse of the Imperial Roman Empire, which was finally overthrown by Germanic tribes in 476 AD. Another power arises with the removal of three of those tribes – the Heruli, Vandals and Ostrogoths.

That power was the *Papal* Roman Empire, which sprang up out of the *Imperial* Roman Empire. The papacy uprooted and destroyed the Heruli, Vandals and Ostrogoths because they remained opposed to the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church on doctrinal grounds (Arian v Nicene), and therefore would not submit to the papacy.

The nature of the “**beast**” was one and the same: Papal Rome held dominion over the same area; it persecuted Christians in the same way; it ruled from the same city; and its practices were essentially the same - pagan and contrary to scripture - although dressed up in ‘Christian’ garb.

- The “**war against the saints**” (v21) refers to the brutal persecution of the apostate Roman Church against true believers.
- “**time, times and half a time**” denotes a period of 1260 years (one time = 360, times = 2 x 360 = 720, and a half a time = 180, the total being 1260). From 533, the year in which the eastern emperor Justinian elevated the bishop of Rome to be “head of all the holy churches, and of all the holy priests of God”, until 1793 which marked the time of the French Revolution and the loss of papal power is a period exactly equal to 1260 years.

(This period also appears in the Book of Revelation. It also refers to the length of time that Papal Rome would rule the world. Revelation 12:6 refers to a period of “**1,260 days**”. In Revelation 12:14 the very same time period of v6 is defined as a “**time, times and half a time**” linking Daniel’s prophecy and this chapter in Revelation. See later notes on Revelation.)

Daniel's 'Seventieth Week'

The Historicist interpretation strictly applies a chronological sequence to Daniel's 'seventy weeks' prophecy found in Daniel Chapter 9. Thus, the very last, or 'seventieth', week continues immediately upon the fulfillment of the prior sixty-nine weeks. Applying this principle, this week is found to be a prediction of the end of the Old Covenant and installation of the New Covenant, its rejection by the Jews and the consequential judgment of God in the destruction of the (second) temple and the city of Jerusalem.

This contrasts starkly with the Futurist methodology. Futurists believe that this 'week' is a period of seven years which occurs right at the end of the age. This was *the* essential element of Jesuit Ribera's system of interpretation during which he conjectured the appearance of a *future antichrist*. The 'seventieth week' is not a prediction therefore, concerning the Jews, Jerusalem and the Christ; but rather of the Jews, Jerusalem and the antichrist.

The system of the Futurists' teaching is built upon the foundation of this peculiar interpretation of Daniel's 'seventieth week'. All of their understanding of the Olivet Discourse, the Book of Revelation and other end-time prophecies, fits within the context of this seven year period. If the Futurist interpretation of this essential verse of scripture (Daniel 9:27) is overturned then the whole edifice of Futurism comes crashing down.

Daniel 9:1-27

1 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom--

2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.

3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

- Daniel understood from the book of Jeremiah that Judah's time in captivity was drawing to an end and that they would return to the land of Palestine (see Jeremiah 23:11-12; 29:10). The reason for their return was to rebuild Jerusalem, and to prepare the way for the Messiah who would usher in the New Covenant.
- So Daniel prayed (v4-19) seeking God for Judah's future. God's answer is recorded in v24-27.

24 "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

- **"Seventy sevens (weeks** fn NIV & KJV)" is $70 \times 7 = 490$ years based on the year-for-a-day rule.
- **"are decreed"** is translated from the Hebrew *"chathak"* which literally means "severed" or "cut-off".

Judah and Israel were both under God's **"seven times"** judgement declared in Leviticus 26:18:

"If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins *seven times* over."

Seven times = $7 \times 360 = 2,520$ years. Starting in 604BC when Jerusalem was taken into captivity by King Nebuchednezzar, the 2,520 year punishment ceased in 1917AD, the very year that General Allenby liberated Jerusalem from the Turks and Jews were permitted to return to the land of Palestine.

Therefore, this 490 years was a special period of grace "**decreed**" by God to be taken out of, i.e. severed or cut off from, the seven times judgement.

- For what purpose? To permit the coming of the Messiah. The latter half of v24 contains 6 statements that unequivocally refer to the saving work of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary:
 1. **"to finish transgression,**
 2. **to put an end to sin,**
 3. **to atone for wickedness,**
 4. **to bring in everlasting righteousness,**
 5. **to seal up vision and prophecy and**
 6. **to anoint the most holy"**

- To "**anoint the most holy**" refers to Jesus the Messiah. The titles Messiah and Christ mean "anointed one". Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at the river Jordan. After His temptation in the wilderness he returned and proclaimed:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim

freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

(Luke 4:18-19).

Thus, He announced the beginning of His ministry. The Messiah had come.

All the prophecies concerning the Messiah would be fulfilled in Him i.e. **"to seal up vision and prophecy"**.

He was the Lamb of God who would **"atone for wickedness"**. And by His death and resurrection enable the new birth and so **"finish transgression"**, **"put an end to sin"**, and **"bring in everlasting righteousness"**. This is the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ! And the promises contained within the New Covenant (see Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:8-13).

- Once the 490 years was completed, the Jews and Jerusalem would fall again under the **"seven times"** judgement of God. And this was accomplished in 70AD, when the Roman armies overthrew Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.

25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

- In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we recorded several decrees issued by Persian kings permitting the Jews to return to Palestine and to rebuild Jerusalem.

- **“the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem”** - The principal decree regarding reinhabiting and rebuilding Jerusalem was made by Artaxerxes in 457 BC. (Note: Cyrus’s decree in 538 BC was for the rebuilding of *the temple*, in contrast to Artaxerxes decree which applied to the whole city of Jerusalem.)
- This prophecy thus foretells the exact time of the appearance of the Messiah, **“the Anointed One”**. He will appear after **“seven sevens and sixty-two sevens”** = 69×7 or 483 years.

483 years after 457 BC brings us to 27AD! which was the very time that Jesus was baptised at the river Jordan. Jesus declared **“The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand...”** (Mark 1: 14-15)

(Note: Present-day Jews are forbidden by their religious leaders to calculate this date from Daniel’s prophecy! The reason is obvious. This date proves that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.)

- The reference to troublesome times is aptly demonstrated in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which details the opposition both men faced to their work (see especially Nehemiah 4).

26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

- **“the Anointed One will be cut off”** refers to the crucifixion of Jesus. Isaiah used the same language in 53:8 **“for he was cut off out of the land for the living...”**

- the **“people”** are the Roman armies which destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70AD. The Roman General who led these armies was Titus. He was the **“ruler (or “prince” KJV) that will come”**. (Titus was the son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian which made him a Roman prince and heir to the Roman throne.)
- Daniel’s prophecy begins with the command to rebuild the city, and it ends with its destruction in 70AD. The Roman armies ravaged the entire city, sweeping all away in a bloody flood.
- **“War will continue to the end”** refers to the war against the Jews from 66-70AD. In the end, Jerusalem was left totally desolate.

27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And one who causes desolation will come upon the pinnacle of the abomina(tion) until the end that is decreed is poured out on the desolate. (fn. NIV)⁴

- **“He will confirm a covenant with many for one seven”**. The **“He”** refers to the subject of the preceding sentence that is the Messiah, who was to confirm or ratify the terms of the covenant for **“one seven”** = seven years.
- In the middle of the **“seven”** when Jesus suffers and dies, He overturns the Old Covenant putting an **“end to sacrifice and**

⁴ The NIV translates the latter half of this verse in the main text as **“And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”** The translation provided here is that which appears as a footnote in the NIV which arguably follows the Hebrew better - as does the KJV which renders v27 **“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”** The NIV main text translation appears to use some liberty perhaps influenced by the Futurist approach.

offering". When Jesus cried out on the cross **"It is finished!"** (John 19:30) the curtain in the Temple was torn from top to bottom (Mark 15:37-38). The Old Testament was now made null and void having been replaced by the New Covenant. Old Testament sacrifices were no longer required and they finally ceased in practice, when the Temple was destroyed by the Roman armies, in 70AD.

- The 70th week began with the baptism of Jesus in 27AD and concluded in 34AD with the stoning of Stephen - a total of seven years. Up until the time of Stephen's death the New Covenant had been offered to the Jewish nation, and his death - the death of the very first Christian martyr - at the hands of the Jewish leaders marked their final rejection.
- Now persecution broke out upon the church (Acts 8:1), and the gospel began to spread to other (Gentile) nations.
- The last part of the verse predicts the judgement of God upon the Jews, Jerusalem, the temple and the land for the rejection of the New Covenant. The **"one"** again points to Jesus, who will make Jerusalem and the land desolate until the consummation of the appointed time, at the end of the age.
- During the time of the desolation, there would be an overspreading of the area with abominations or foreign powers with their strange armies and pagan practices of worship.

Just before His crucifixion Jesus lamented over Jerusalem and pronounced the judgment to fall upon it and its inhabitants:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her

wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate."

(Matthew 23:37-38)

Jesus warned in Matthew 24:15-16:

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel - let the reader understand-- then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

He was alerting His faithful followers to the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, warning them to flee. It was recorded by Josephus that the Christians had fled the city before its final siege. (See in the following explanation of the Olivet Discourse the identification of the "**abomination**" with the Roman armies that overran the land of Judea and besieged Jerusalem in 70AD.)

The Futurist Corruption of v27

Futurists take v27 out of its chronological context and cast it into the indeterminate future. The "**He**" spoken of is interpreted to mean *the antichrist*, a world leader who makes a "**covenant**" of peace lasting for 7 years. During this time the Great Tribulation unfolds, which Christians escape having been raptured to participate in the "**wedding supper of the Lamb**" (Revelation 19:9). The antichrist rules over the world from a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, "**proclaiming himself to be God**" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) and is the "**abomination**". He halts the sacrifices which had been recommenced in this new temple after 3 1/2 years.

It should be clear to the reader that this interpretation is a complete misrepresentation of its true meaning. It is a Jesuit-inspired fabrication and a

fraud, and has led a multitude away from the truth and potentially into the arms of the very real antichrist who is the papacy.

The Futurist predictions of:

1. A rebuilt temple together with the recommencement of Jewish sacrifices.
2. The appearance of a world dictator, who is the antichrist.
3. This world dictator sets himself up in the temple in Jerusalem and proclaims himself to be God.
4. A 7 year covenant of peace with the Jews enacted by this world ruler, which he breaks after 3½ years.
5. This 7 year period is the great tribulation, with wars, pestilences and famines experienced throughout the world.
6. A secret rapture whereby Christians are miraculously removed from the earth to be with Christ during the marriage supper of the Lamb.
7. The antichrist forces every inhabitant of the world to receive the mark of the beast which allows them to engage in economic trade.

Are all fanciful and false, and will be eventually be seen by all to have utterly failed.

The Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24:1-35 & Luke 21:5-36⁵

Matt 24:1-3	Luke 21:5-7
<p>1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.</p>	<p>5 Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said,</p>
<p>2 "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."</p>	<p>6 "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."</p>
<p>3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"</p>	<p>7 "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"</p>

- Matthew records that Jesus was asked two questions by his disciples. First, when will the temple be destroyed and secondly, what would be the sign of His (second) coming which would occur at the end of the age.

⁵ The Olivet Discourse is also recorded in Mark Chapter 13. It is virtually the same as Matthew's account.

- Although Luke omits the second question, there are strong reasons to believe that he does cover aspects of Christ's response to it. Firstly, because of the parallel nature of Jesus' responses recorded in both Matthew and Luke. And secondly, because of the direct reference in Luke's account to the (second) coming of Christ - **“At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”** (v27) - which is made after Christ's statement concerning the fulfillment of Jerusalem and **“the times of the Gentiles”** (v24).
- Taking into account the historical record concerning the events before and at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70AD, it can be concluded that the first question is answered by Jesus in Matthew v4-22 and in Luke v8-24, and the second question is answered in Matthew v23-41 and in Luke v25-33.⁶

⁶ Jesus continues in Matthew's account right through to the end of Chapter 25, to present a series of parables applicable to the time of His coming and people's preparedness or, more pointedly, their lack thereof. Luke also relates the essential meaning of these parables in v34-36.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

<p>Matthew 24:4-8</p> <p>4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you.</p> <p>5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.</p> <p>6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.</p> <p>7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.</p> <p>8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.</p>	<p>Luke 21:8-11</p> <p>8 He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them.</p> <p>9 When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."</p> <p>10 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.</p> <p>11 There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.</p>
---	---

During the period after Christ's ascension into heaven and up until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, the following general conditions existed in fulfillment of Christ's prophecy:

- **“many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many”** The historian Josephus records “the land was overrun with magicians, seducers, impostors who drew the people after them in multitudes into solitudes and deserts, to see the signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God.”

Among these are: Dositheus who claimed he was the Christ; Simon Magus who claimed he was the Son of God; Theudas persuaded many to go with him to the River Jordan to witness the parting of the waters; and an Egyptian who Josephus said commanded a following of “thirty thousand men that were deluded by him”.

- **“wars and rumours of wars”**: During this period there were three separate threats of war against the Jews by Caligula, Claudius and Nero.

There was great civil unrest in Parthia and there were threats of war between Rome and Parthia, with Jerusalem in the middle.

The Governor of Syria declared war on Arabia, however, the death of Tiberius prevented it.

Four Roman Emperors Nero, Galba, Otho and Vitellius were assassinated and various factions were set up throughout Europe.

In the city of Seleucia, the Greeks and Syrians joined together against their common foe, the Jews, and slew about 50,000.

Similarly, in Caesarea the Syrians massacred about 20,000 Jews reportedly in the space of one hour.

What is remarkable about this aspect of Christ’s prophecy was that at the time He made it, the Roman Empire was at peace.

- **“famines and pestilences”**: Agabus in Acts 11:28 foretold of famine in Palestine in 46AD, which was recorded by Josephus and who acknowledged the death of many by starvation.

During the reign of Claudius in 41-54AD, there were four serious famines in Rome, Greece and Palestine.

As to pestilences, there were two notable outbreaks, one in Babylon in 40AD and the other in Italy in 66AD during which some 30,000 lives were lost in Rome itself.

- **“earthquakes”**: Tacitus mentioned one at Rome, during the reign of Claudius.

During the reign of Nero, the cities of Laodicea, Hieropolis and Colosse were overthrown and Pompeii was almost destroyed by an earthquake.

Josephus also mentions a large one in Palestine.

- **“fearful events and great signs from heaven”**: Josephus says that a “star resembling a sword stood over the city of Jerusalem and a comet that continued a whole year. At the feast of unleavened bread during the night, a bright light shone round the altar and the temple, so that it seemed to be a bright day for ½ an hour. The eastern gate of the temple, of solid brass, fastened with strong bolts and bars, and which had been shut with difficulty by 20 men, opened in the night of its own accord. A few days after the feast, before sunset, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds and surrounding the city. A great noise, as of the sound of a multitude was heard in the temple saying ‘Let us remove hence.’”
- **“the end will not come right away”**: Jesus’ reference here to **“the end”** relates to the destruction of Jerusalem not the end of the age.

<p>Matthew 24:9-14</p> <p>9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.</p> <p>10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,</p> <p>11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.</p> <p>12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,</p> <p>13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.</p> <p>14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.</p>	<p>Luke 21:12-19</p> <p>12 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.</p> <p>13 This will result in your being witnesses to them.</p> <p>14 But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.</p> <p>15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.</p> <p>16 You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.</p> <p>17 All men will hate you because of me.</p> <p>18 But not a hair of your head will perish.</p> <p>19 By standing firm you will gain life.</p>
---	---

- "you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me": The New

Testament record in the book of Acts and the Apostles letters to the churches, aptly demonstrates the persecution faced by Christians.

- **“this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations”**: The gospel was proclaimed throughout the whole known world, prior to 70AD (see Acts 17:6, Romans 1:8 and Colossians 1:5-6).
- **“then the end will come”**: this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, which Jesus now speaks specifically about.

<p>Matt 24:15-22</p> <p>15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel-- let the reader understand--</p> <p>16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.</p> <p>17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house.</p> <p>18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.</p> <p>19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!</p> <p>20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.</p>	<p>Luke 21:20-24</p> <p>20 "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.</p> <p>21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city.</p> <p>22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.</p> <p>23 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people.</p> <p>24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the</p>
---	---

<p>21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now-- and never to be equaled again.</p> <p>22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.</p>	<p>nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.</p>
---	---

- **“the abomination that causes desolation”**: Luke’s account directly links **“the abomination that causes desolation”**, which is a quote directly taken from Daniel 9:27 (the key Futurist verse), with the Roman armies that besieged Jerusalem. They came with their pagan symbols and practices that were an abomination in the sight of God. The **“holy place”** refers to the land occupied by Israel as the Promised Land set apart by God.

The Roman armies besieged the land of Judea because of a revolt by the Jews (that had begun in 66AD) resulting in the destruction of Jewish towns, and the enslavement and displacement of Jews. This war together with two further wars conducted by Rome against the Jews is best described as genocide of the Jews. It utterly overturned the Jewish nation as an organized society and the province of Judea was renamed Syria Palaestina. The remnant of surviving Jews either were sold as slaves or became refugees resident in foreign lands.

- **“let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city”**: During the first Roman military campaign, Jerusalem was surrounded on three separate occasions. Firstly, in November 66AD, then in 68AD and finally in 70AD.

Eusebius records that the Christians who were in Jerusalem at that time fled immediately after the first siege and subsequent retreat, to the north of Jerusalem to a place called Pella located in the foothills of the Transjordanian Mountains. They obviously recalled and heeded Jesus' prophecy.

- **“the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people”**: During the sieges the Jews suffered horrendously. Civil war broke out amongst opposing factions and Josephus records “the blood of all sorts of dead carcasses stood in the lakes in the holy courts themselves”. The stench and putrefaction of death was evident all over the city.

During the height of the siege in 70AD, food was so scarce that many cases of infanticide and cannibalism were reported. Parents actually killed, roasted and ate their own children.

Many went out of the city at night in search of food. About 500 of these were caught each day and were subsequently crucified within sight of the city walls. Josephus records there “wasn't enough room for the crosses, nor crosses for the victims so several were oft-times nailed to one cross”.

- **“Pray that your flight will not take place ... on the Sabbath”**: Jerusalem's gates were shut on the Sabbath to restrict movement and prohibit trade. This was to enforce the observance of the ban on work during the Sabbath, in accordance with Old Testament law. Thus, it would be impossible to flee while the gates were shut.
- **“For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now-- and never to be equaled again.”**

“They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations”: On July 15th 70AD the temple was set on fire and on September 11th the Romans gained supremacy and poured into the city incensed by the Jew’s stubborn resistance.

Josephus says the temple “was laid so completely even with the ground by those who dug it up from the foundation, that there was nothing left to make those believe who came hither that it had been inhabited.”

The reason the Roman soldiers had even overturned the foundation stones was because the gold in the temple had melted in the fire and the molten gold had run down between the cracks settling underneath the foundation stones. Jesus’ prophecy had been completely fulfilled – **“...not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”** (Matthew 24:2)

Josephus recorded that 1,100,000 Jews perished during the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, a further 250,000 slain in nearby provinces, and 97,000 captives were taken during the whole war.

- **“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened”**: Titus cut his campaign in Judea short and returned to Rome. In this way “the elect”, i.e. Christians who had fled Jerusalem, were protected from the slaughter of the Roman armies who pillaged and destroyed Jewish towns on their way to Jerusalem and were intent on continuing their desolation in the remaining areas. (Subsequent military governors were appointed by Rome to complete the then campaign against the Jewish nation. It can only be surmised that the Christians were again warned and protected by God during this period and afterwards during the two further wars conducted against the Jews in Judea.)

- **“Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled”**: The **“times of the Gentiles”** was a specific period of punishment upon the Jews for their rejection of the (Old) Covenant. This period was for **“seven times”** or 2520 years. It began in 604BC when Nebuchadnezzar razed the city and took its inhabitants into captivity and finished in 1917 when General Allenby liberated Jerusalem from the Turks. From that time on Jews began to return to the land of Palestine. The Jewish State was declared in 1948. Jerusalem was subsequently handed over to the Jews 50 years after its liberation (or a Jubilee period) in 1967. Jesus now commences to prophecy regarding His (second) coming, which occurs after **“the times of the Gentiles”** have been fulfilled. We are now living in that era and His return is imminent.

The Second Coming of Christ

<p>Matt 24:23-31</p> <p>23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.</p> <p>24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect-- if that were possible.</p> <p>25 See, I have told you ahead of time.</p> <p>26 "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.</p> <p>27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.</p> <p>28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.</p> <p>29 "Immediately after the distress of those days ""the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'</p> <p>30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky,</p>	<p>Luke 21:25-28</p> <p>25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.</p> <p>26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.</p> <p>27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.</p> <p>28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."</p>
--	--

<p>and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.</p> <p>31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.</p>	
---	--

The events described by Christ now concern His return at the end of the age. We are living in this time.

- **“False Christs and false prophets will appear”**: the world presently abounds with cults, false religions and self-proclaimed Messiahs. The New Age Movement’s pagan beliefs and practices are on the ascendancy. Many claim to show the way of ‘enlightenment’ and ‘self-realization’. The collapse of morality and the shedding of Christian beliefs and practices in the Western world over the last four decades has been astonishing.
- **“to deceive even the elect”**: a tsunami wave of false teaching has swept over the church including: the spiritual disciplines of the Catholic Mystics repackaged in the New Spirituality/contemplative prayer movement; New Calvinism; New Apostolic Reformation; the social gospel and ancient-future practices of the Emerging church; and, the New Missiology. The Catholic Church has successfully infiltrated Protestant churches and effectively subjugated them through the deceit of Ecumenism. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been attacked relentlessly from a multitude of fronts and the church has been

corrupted and beguiled into a state of worldliness. Most people who call themselves Christian, are now Christian in name only. A remnant of authentic Christians remain and they now find themselves ostracized by their churches which have abandoned the Truth.

- **“Signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken”**: the **“heavenly bodies”** represent worldly authorities, governments and political (and/or religious) powers. Just prior to Christ’s return the nations of the world - **“the sea”** - will be in turmoil. The 20th century is the bloodiest and most violent in modern history. Two World Wars and Communist Revolutions saw the world in terror and the slaughter of millions (totaling over 200 million - a death toll now eclipsed and dwarfed by the multitude of babies killed through abortion in the last 50 years, some 1.5 billion! The blood of the innocents cries out to God from the ground and His judgment is pending). The 21st century is ripening for a catastrophic economic collapse and tension amongst the nations is progressively intensifying. An outbreak of hostilities could well be imminent which again engulfs the world in war.
- **“Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures (eagles KJV) will gather”**: the vultures (or eagles, the Greek word *aetos* can mean either) symbolize hostile warring nations and Israel the dead carcass.

This period of time, therefore, from the reemergence of Israel in the land of Palestine until Christ returns, is to be marked by the continuance of hostility towards the Jews c.f. Nazi Germany’s attempt to exterminate the Jews in World War II, the six day war between a coalition of Arab states and Israel in 1967, and current Islamic hatred of Israel that could well erupt into war once again.

(The symbol of an eagle is used in Ezekiel 17 to represent the Babylonian Empire, which was used as God’s sword of judgement in the 6th century BC to punish corrupt and faithless Israel. Moreover, the eagle was used as a standard by the Romans who were similarly used by God against the Jews in the 1st century AD. Nazi Germany (1933–1945).also used a heraldic eagle which was derived from the Roman eagle standard.)

- **“as lightning flashes from the East to the West” “they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory”**: there will be no doubt when Christ returns. It will be a momentous event. Christ will appear from heaven in the sky. It will not break as a mere media news headline!

<p>Matt 24:32-35</p> <p>32 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.</p> <p>33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.</p> <p>34 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.</p> <p>35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.</p>	<p>Luke 21:29-33</p> <p>29 He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees.</p> <p>30 When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near.</p> <p>31 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.</p> <p>32 "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.</p> <p>33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass</p>
--	--

	away.
--	--------------

- **“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near”**: Jesus used the fig tree as a symbol of the nation of Israel (see Luke 13:6-9). For nearly two thousand years, the Promised Land had been controlled by Gentile nations. It has only been in the 20th century that the Jews returned en masse to take up residence in the land of Palestine; and gained control of what is now called Israel and the city of Jerusalem in particular. This is a wonderful fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy. Truly, we have witnessed the blossoming of the fig tree. Although Jesus goes on in Matthew’s account to say regarding the precise moment of His return that **“No one knows about that day or hour”** (v36), the whole purpose of the fig tree analogy was to give us a marker to define the time of His imminent return.
- **“this generation will not pass away until all this has been fulfilled”**: This could be taken in two different ways:

 - **“generation”** means the entire human race, and Jesus was reassuring that the world and its people would continue until His return i.e. the world would not end and the human race would not become extinct.
 - **“generation”** means the specific generation which would be alive to witness the fulfillment of His prophecy. Just prior to the Olivet discourse Matthew records the seven woes Jesus pronounced upon the Pharisees which Jesus concluded it by saying:

“And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood

of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, *all this will come upon this generation.*

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. *Look, your house is left to you desolate.* For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Matthew 23:35-39

- The Olivet Discourse was delivered by Jesus in approximately 30AD. 40 years later in 70AD - i.e. when the generation present was still alive - the first half of His prophecy was fulfilled. Jerusalem was taken away from the Jews and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.

It might be conjectured, therefore, that approximately 40 years - i.e. a 'generation' - after the Jews gained control of Jerusalem again, that Christ would return according to the second 'half' of the prophecy. This provides us with the time frame of 1967 + 40 = 2007. And, of course, 2007 has long come and gone. Some believe a 'generation' may refer to a longer period of time, perhaps up to 70 years. This would establish an outside date of 2037.

The signs the Bible provides us with indicate that we are clearly living in the very closing stages of this age. The fulfillment of most of the prophecies of the Book of Revelation – which we will now examine - also confirms this to us. (Zechariah 12-14 may foretell one final invasion of Israel which marks the penultimate event preceding the return of Christ. Ezekiel 36-38 is another prophecy that may also relate to this event. The political status of the world, and the Middle East in particular, suggests a war between Israel and a coalition of Islamic/Communist state forces is very possible, in fulfillment of these particular prophecies.)

The Book of Revelation

Introduction

John is given a vision intended to call attention to the intervention of God in the world's history and Christ's unique privilege to unfold the events of the future. Christ announces things to John that would soon begin to take place, and which would extend through the entire age of the church.

The imagery used throughout the Revelation points to persons, institutions, nations, places and events in certain time periods. Historicists emphasize that the Book of Revelation follows the pattern of other prophetic books (e.g. Daniel and Ezekiel) with its extensive use of imagery. Accordingly, Historicists avoid a literalist approach and seek to find the meaning behind the images. (This contrasts with Futurists who move back and forth between the two approaches, although they typically claim to use a literalist approach.)

Chapters 1-3 deal with the conditions of the church progressively down through history. The church of Ephesus represents the church in John's own day, preceding a succession of subsequent church eras and finishing with the church of Laodicea which stands for the church in the end times.

Chapters 4-5 give authenticity to the prophetic call of the apostle John to present the grand vista of God's future plan, that parallels the calls of Isaiah and Ezekiel.

The seals which are broken in **Chapters 6-8** refer to the dominion of Imperial Rome for three hundred years, and finished with Constantine's establishment of Christianity as the state religion, after episodes of horrific persecution.

The seven trumpets in **Chapters 8-11** foretell the fall of the Western and then the Eastern Imperial Roman Empires.

Chapters 12-18 deal with God's judgments upon the apostate Roman Church that rose to be an empire like the fallen Imperial Roman Empire but cloaked with Christian garb, ruling over the same geographical area.

The Second Coming of Christ is portrayed in **Chapter 19**.

Chapter 20-22 deal with the time after Christ's return. Chapter 20 discusses the Millennium and Chapters 21-22 describe events subsequent to the Millennium.

Chapters 1-3

The "**seven churches**" represent seven periods of church history.

The "**angel**" is symbolic of the leadership of the church of each era and addresses them directly as they are held accountable for their instruction to the church and its consequences (c.f. James 3:1)).

Ephesus *Ch2:1-7* (up to 100AD)

The early church.

Revelation 2:1-6

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write ... I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at

first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

This was the church in existence at the time John received the Revelation.

- **I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance.** The church was praised for having labored hard and for persevering under trial.
- **I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.** It was a church that faced opposition from Jews without and from false apostles/teachers within (c.f. the record in Acts and the letters by the apostles to the New Testament churches dealing with false apostles/teachers and their false doctrines). The church had met this opposition and not succumbed to these attacks.
- **Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.** Nevertheless, it was admonished for having forsaken its first love i.e. that zeal for God and the things of the kingdom of God had waned. And the church was therefore warned of the consequences that if they did not return to the ardent zeal that they had once exhibited then the light by which they had walked, i.e. the Word of truth and the Spirit of truth, would be extinguished and taken from them. They would become a dead church, with form and ritual but having no life and no Presence of God.
- Despite this diminished devotion, the church was praised for rejecting the **“practices of the Nicolaitans”**. There can be no absolute certainty who the Nicolaitans were, however, evidence from the writings of early church leaders point to the **“godless men”** addressed by Jude **“who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ**

our only Sovereign and Lord” (v4). These false teachers permitted worldliness into the church especially sexual immorality and participation in pagan idolatry.

Smyrna *Ch2:8-11* (100-313AD)

The church persecuted by the Imperial Roman Empire.

Revelation 2:8-10

To the angel of the church in Smyrna write ... I know your afflictions and your poverty — yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

- **I know your afflictions and your poverty** The church experienced ongoing brutal persecutions by the Imperial Roman Empire and these lasted for over a century, from about 95 until 313. The martyrdom of Christians in the Roman arena is legendary. (The phrase “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” was penned by Tertullian in the 2nd century in consequence of this relentless period of persecution against Christians – a more literal rendering of Tertullian’s phrase is “We multiply when you reap us. The blood of Christians is seed.”) Often time, properties owned by Christians were confiscated and therefore those that escaped the arena were reduced to poverty.
- A brief but severe persecution first occurred under Nero in 64. It became more focused and deliberate under Domitian (who was the

younger brother of Titus and reigned as Emperor from 81-96) and periods of persecution continued under his successors. The final and most severe persecution began under Diocletian and lasted ten years (303-313), which is the fulfillment of the **“ten days”** referred to in v.10. (Note: Historicists adhere to rule of interpretation that a prophetic **“day”** equals one year.)

- **I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.** Jews also relentlessly opposed the Christians and, just as they had employed the Romans as executioners of Jesus, so their murderous hatred of Christians continued unabated and they solicited the Romans to kill them (cf. the Jews actions at the martyrdom of Polycarp in 155: “Eusebius ... says that when Polycarp was apprehended, and brought before the proconsul at Smyrna, the Jews were the most furious of all in demanding his condemnation. When the mob, after his condemnation to death, set about gathering fuel to burn him, "the Jews," says he, "being especially zealous, as was their custom...ran to procure fuel." And when, as the burning failed, the martyr was transfixed with weapons, the Jews urged and besought the magistrate that his body might not be given up to Christians. (*Barnes' Notes*))

The Jews thought that they, as descendants of Abraham, were God's children, however, Jesus said of them:

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

(John 8:44)

A true Jew is one inwardly whose circumcision is of the heart and not the flesh:

“A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.”

Romans 2:28-29

Pergamos *Ch2:12-17* (313-606AD)

The church compromised with carnality and false doctrine, from Constantine's Edict of Milan until the advent of the papacy.

Revelation 2:12-16

To the angel of the church in Pergamum write ... I know where you live — where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city — where Satan lives.

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

- When Constantine became Emperor of the (Western) Roman Empire in 312 he famously attributed the battle he won, that secured him the throne, to the God of the Christians. (He had had a vision the day before of the sign of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, “By this symbol you will conquer.”)

He officially ended the long period of persecution against Christians with his *Edict of Milan* in 313 when he legitimized Christianity as a State-sanctioned religion. This liberty proved to be a Trojan Horse for the church, however, as he set about to Christianize the Empire through ritual and rule; and pagan entities and practices of the Empire were not renounced and abandoned but merely modified by the adoption of Christian names and concepts. He erected church buildings and the clergy became paid employees of the State. The church was flooded with pagans throughout the Empire who were merely ‘baptized’ into the Christian faith without genuine conversion and repentance.

The form of ‘Christianity’ that was accepted and promoted by Constantine is that identified with a bishop of that time named Athanasius. Athanasius was and is regarded as *the* Father of Orthodoxy in the Orthodox Church, and one of the four great Eastern Doctors in the Roman Catholic Church:

“Athanasius introduced into Rome the knowledge and practice of the monastic life; and a school of this new philosophy was opened by the disciples of Antony [i.e. Desert Fathers*], who accompanied their primate to the holy threshold of the Vatican. The strange and savage appearance of these Egyptians [these Desert Fathers were from an arid region of Egypt, and they looked bedraggled and emaciated because of their severe ascetic lifestyle] excited, at first, horror and contempt, and, at length, applause and zealous

imitation. The senators, and more especially the matrons, transformed their palaces and villas into religious houses; and the narrow institution of six Vestals was eclipsed by the frequent monasteries, which were seated on the ruins of ancient temples and in the midst of the Roman Forum.”

Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

(*Note: The Desert Fathers were a group of monks that engaged in severe asceticism in order to achieve a heightened state of spirituality (a clear violation of Colossians 2:20-23). As their numbers swelled and it became popular for people to travel to them seeking spiritual guidance, they built monasteries and developed monastic lifestyles. The Desert Fathers adopted a meditative practice from Eastern religion which is called hesychasm – a particular type of contemplative prayer that emphasizes a breathing technique. This is a means of stilling the mind in order to engage the spiritual realm. Modern practitioners believe they are communing with God. However, this form of prayer is entirely absent from the Bible and is readily identified as a mystical and occultic practice by which demons – who may masquerade as angels of light - are encountered. The messages received from these spiritual entities are always a corruption of Biblical truth, and typically lead to a belief in Universalism – everyone goes to heaven, there is no hell and Jesus’ sacrifice is an example not a vital penal substitute for our sin – and Pantheism – ‘God’ is in everyone.)

- This ‘Christianization’ of the Roman Empire largely continued under subsequent Emperors. In 380, the *Edict of Thessalonica* declared (Nicene) Christianity to be the official religion of the empire, with the name “Catholic” given to those who accepted that faith definition.

- Subsequently, the State Church or Catholic Church acquired increasing political power. The Emperor Justinian consolidated Roman Law into one codex (accomplished during the years of 529 to 534AD) in which he formally established the authority and rule of the Catholic Church and erected the office of the papacy by installing the bishop of Rome to be the “head of all the holy churches, and of all the holy priests of God”.
- Thus Rome - **“where Satan has his throne”** (v13) – became the centre of what can be called the Papal Roman Empire.
- As the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church had become so corrupted, genuine Christians found themselves again ostracized and persecuted as they rejected the authority of the Church. **“Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city — where Satan lives”** refers to those who opposed the apostasy and eventual tyranny of the papacy (*anti* – against, *papas* – pope).
- **You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.** Just like Israel in the days of Balaam and Balak, the church of this period was seduced into immorality and the worship of idols as a consequence of its paganization and the rise of the papal system.
- **Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.** Whereas the **“church in Ephesus”**, i.e. the early church, had opposed the apostasy and licentiousness of the **“Nicolations”**, the **“church in Pergamum”** now had become corrupted with this teaching and fully given over to its sinful practices.

- Christ threatens to fight this institution with the “**sword of my mouth**” (v16) i.e. His Word, which heralded the future Protestant Reformation era and eventual overthrow of the political power of the papacy.

Thyatira *Ch2:18-29 (606-1517AD)*

The Papal Roman Empire until the time of the Reformation.

Revelation 2:18-25

To the angel of the church in Thyatira write ... I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you): Only hold on to what you have until I come.

- Thyatira is the middle church in the group of seven, and it corresponds with the Middle Ages.
- The reference to “**Jezebel**” relates this period to that which occurred during the time of the prophet Elijah, Queen Jezebel and King Ahab. Queen Jezebel led Israel into a debased state of immorality and idolatry, and into direct opposition to God.

Elijah had to flee for his life from her. Even so, true Christians were forced to flee from the cruel oppression of the Pope who sought to destroy them. The Catholic Church had become an utterly debased church which stood in direct opposition to God and his people.

- As Queen Jezebel caused Israel to worship the mother goddess Ashtoreth (called the “**Queen of Heaven**” - Jeremiah 44:17, 18 & 25) so too the papal church introduced the worship of Mary who is called by Catholics the “Queen of Heaven” and “Mother of God”.
- Jesus warning that he is going to “**strike her children dead**” was fulfilled in a series of disasters, beginning with the Great Famine of 1315–17 and including the Black Death of 1347-1351, which reduced the world’s population by perhaps a half or more, in the later period of the Middle Ages (an estimated 75 – 200 million deaths). The countries controlled by the Papacy were all decimated.

Sardis *Ch3:1-6 (1517-1648AD)*

The church during the Reformation.

Revelation 3:1-6

To the angel of the church in Sardis write ... I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

- The Reformation brought refreshing signs of life but Jesus said “**I have not found your deeds complete**”. In other words, the Reformation went a certain distance in discarding unscriptural traditions and in restoring complete and true biblical authority in the church – “**what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent**” - but it did not go far enough. This is most apparent when a careful inquiry is made of the teaching of the two principal figures of the Reformation, John Calvin and Martin Luther.

1. John Calvin (1509-1564) at a relatively young age authored a book entitled *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in which he defined the beliefs and practices for society. He gained notoriety by being asked to assume control of a particular city (Geneva) in Switzerland, which adopted his *Institutes* as its canon of law. Calvinism became the dominant view in other European countries - especially France, England and Scotland - and during the era of colonisation was exported around the globe. (Churches today which identify with the theology of Calvinism are known as Reformed (also, Presbyterian churches are Calvinist).)

Although Calvin correctly championed the authority of the Bible to be preeminent and above (Catholic) tradition, Calvin's writings demonstrate a direct association between Calvinism and Catholicism. Effectively, Calvinism and Catholicism are branches that derive from the same root. Calvin borrowed the substance of his ideas directly from Augustine (354-430), who is also regarded as a (perhaps better 'the') father of Roman Catholicism. All of the major doctrines of Calvinism can be traced directly to Augustine; as can all of the major doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Calvin wrote:

"Augustine is so wholly with me, that if I wished to write a confession of my faith, I could do so with all fullness and satisfaction to myself out of his writings."

A Treatise on the Eternal Predestination of God

Essentially, Augustine developed a theology which imposed philosophical precepts - mostly derived from the Greek philosopher Plato - upon the scriptures, thereby incorrectly interpreting and corrupting Biblical truth.

Thus, while claiming to use the Bible as the only source of authority, Calvin superimposed a perverse means of interpreting scripture. (This corruption is encapsulated in the Calvinist acronym TULIP i.e. Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and the Perseverance of the saints. Calvinists interpret *all* of scripture through the lens of TULIP. Each of these points is a deception which departs from Biblical truth, and together they define a heinous nature of God, an incorrect view of the nature of man and faith, and a false hope of salvation.)

2. Martin Luther (1483-1546), like Calvin, stood in opposition to the Catholic Church. He correctly taught that salvation was through faith alone, however, he erroneously imported some key Catholic concepts such as infant baptism and a reinvention of the mystical properties of the Eucharist. He criticized and condemned the Anabaptists, who were the fulfillment of those who were among the **“few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes”**. The Moravians are another group who would be included in that **“few”**.

(The present-day Lutheran Church, founded by Luther as the very first Protestant Church, has recanted its historic separation from the Catholic Church and effectively reunited with it claiming there is no difference between the two Churches on their doctrine of the means of justification.)

- Despite the failings of Calvin and Luther, they both identified the Pope as the antichrist:

"I deny that See [the Roman Catholic throne of authority] to be Apostolical, wherein naught is seen but a shocking apostasy -- I

deny him to be the Vicar of Christ, who, in furiously persecuting the gospel, demonstrates by his conduct that he is Antichrist..."

John Calvin

"We are not the first ones who applied the anti-christian kingdom of the Papacy: this many great men have dared to do so many years before us and that frankly and openly under the greatest persecution. The Papacy is the Antichrist".

Martin Luther

It was the Reformers' denunciation of the Pope that was the tip of the spear of the revolution for people and nations to rise up against the antichrist and throw off the shackles of Papal rule and dominion.

- Christ's injunction to **"Wake up! ... But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you."** is an ever present opportunity in this age for person's trapped in false theologies to repent and take hold of the truth, up until the time of His return. It also heralds that the end of the age is approaching as Jesus uses the same expression in the events He related to His disciples regarding His return:

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

Matthew 24:42-44

Philadelphia *Ch3:7-13* (1649AD – the present-day apostasy)

The church in revival and outbreak of world-wide missionary work.

Revelation 3:7-11

To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write ... I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars — I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

I am coming soon...

- The “**open door that no one can shut**” refers to the revivals and missionary endeavor which shook the world in a series of surges through the 17th to 20th centuries.
- This period comprises the time of John Wesley and the Methodists in England, the Great Awakening in America and the modern world-wide missionary movement initiated by William Carey.

(Note: As always, there were false teachers present who peddled their false doctrines. In particular, the principal cults of Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses emerged at this time, while Calvinism rode the wave of revival propagated by the true church.)

- Protestant Christianity changed the world. Power shifted to Protestant Christian nations which grew in economic and military might (first England and now the United States).
- There has been silence in this timeline of the church regarding the Jews since the Smyrna church period, some 1500 years. Now they reappear: **“I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars — I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.”**

The Protestant Christian nations opened the way for the Jews to reemerge as a nation state in the land of Palestine. The Balfour Declaration was a public statement issued by the British government in 1917 during World War 1, announcing support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine; then controlled by the Ottoman (Muslim) Empire and containing only a small minority population of Jews. When England took control of the land after the War, Jews began their remarkable migration back to the land of Israel which culminated in the emergence of new State of Israel in 1948.

The continued existence of the nation of Israel, which is surrounded by hostile Muslim nations, is dependent on the military support of Protestant Christian nations, particularly the United States.

- **“the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world”** was fulfilled in the events of the 20th century with two world wars, and Communist revolutions. In particular, **“world”** could mean specifically the region of land controlled by the Roman Empire which of course was absolutely decimated in both world wars. (Alternatively, in a strict sense, an **“hour”** could mean a possible cataclysmic 2 week period which is still in the future. Nevertheless, “hour of trial” is better

understood as an idiom so an indeterminate but restricted time period is meant.)

- Jesus points to the imminence of his return: **“I am coming soon”**.
- Jesus’ prophecy in Luke 21:24-28 also links these last three points, the reemergence of Israel, tumultuous times and His return:

“Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

There is perhaps more terror ahead for the world in the 21st century before Christ’s return. Nevertheless, true Christians will take courage knowing that the present age is about to pass away and a new age to dawn, with Christ enthroned upon the earth.

Laodicean *Ch3:14-22* (current state of affairs)

The lukewarm liberal churches of the present day.

Revelation 3:14-20

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write ... I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

- **“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot.”** The church has become compromised and corrupted. The Philadelphian Church period has ended and the church has now apostatized. Revivals have ceased and missionary fervor waned.

(‘Philadelphian’ churches resisted liberal trends, i.e. attacks upon the authenticity of the Bible as the Word of God, when they first appeared and this resulted in a multitude of church, Bible college and denominational splits, beginning in the late 19th century and continuing into the 20th century. That resistance has now abated.)

The present-day Laodicean church claims to know God and to do His will, but it is blind to its unbelief that has destroyed the Bible as the source of truth and robbed the gospel of its power; and to the manifold

doctrines of demons that it has allowed in. It has become “**wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked**”. The “**gold refined in the fire**” is the Word of God which if believed as truth and acted upon by faith would correct and overturn its backslidden and apostate state.

The abandonment of Biblical authority by the Laodicean church can be traced to the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of Species* in 1859. It began a hostile intellectual war against the Word of God. Many theologians, in order to protect their academic respectability, succumbed to the pressure to interpret the Bible according to the ‘truth’ of evolution. This resulted in their rejection of Genesis as factual history. However, Genesis is the very foundation to *all* of the central truths contained in the Bible (the nature of God, the fallen nature of man, the penal substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, the new birth, heaven and hell, marriage between a man and a woman etc etc).

Therefore, applying human reason to Genesis also meant the way was open to apply human reason to the whole of the Bible. The Bible now began to be viewed, therefore, as the product of humankind’s attempts to try and understand God and this world, and not of express Divine origin and authorship. Thus, Biblical tenets were regarded merely as malleable concepts not absolute truths. This destroyed the veracity of the Bible as the source of truth and nullified the gospel.

Now that the Bible was no longer regarded as the infallible revelation of God, then the church was forced to adopt the position that it merely contained principles to be interpreted and applied either for personal success and/or social well-being. Secular spirituality, philosophy, psychology, sociology, political ideology, and whatever trend is popular in secular thinking have displaced the Bible in its authority to dictate norms for personal living, the family, the church and society.

The church, having abandoned the Bible as truth, has now failed to be light and salt in the world, and it now awaits its judgment **“to be thrown out and trampled by men”** (Matthew 5:13). Without an effective church, the world has gone mad, delivered over to foolishness and to a reprobate mind, and the final state of social corruption identified in Romans 1 is endemic.

- **“I am about to spit you out of my mouth”** Jesus says the church now nauseates Him. And that He is standing on the outside of the church! – **“I stand at the door and knock”**.

Nevertheless, there yet remains a personal invitation to unite with Christ through genuine repentance and submission to Him. **“If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”** Jesus is ever willing to receive those who genuinely desire to know Him and follow Him with a whole heart.

- The Laodicean church is the last period for the church. It is in a miserable condition when Christ returns and He will cast it from Himself saying **“I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”** (Matthew 7:23).

This ends Christ’s grand vista of the church ages. It appropriately appeared at the start of the Revelation, since the church is the apple of His eye. The Revelation changes abruptly and sets the scene for Christ to reveal the times and world circumstances that His people would live through, from the time it was delivered to John until the end of the age.

Chapters 4-5

Chapter 4 begins with a vision of the throne of God. Similar visions were given to Isaiah (Chapter 6) and Ezekiel (Chapter 1) at the commencement of their election as prophets. It is God's affirmation of the validity of the prophecy.

Chapter 5 shows that Christ alone is worthy and able to unfold and execute the pending dealings of God with mankind, revealed in the scroll and its seals:

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Revelation 5:9-10

God's ultimate objective is to fashion a people for Himself "**from every tribe and language and people and nation**" who will eventually dwell with Him upon a new earth forever. The Revelation unfolds the circumstances and times which the people of God will encounter whilst living in the present age. It focuses upon the evolution of the principal world empires and also the suffering and rejection His people must endure in times of persecution. It complements and completes the major end-time prophecies contained in the book of Daniel and the Olivet discourse.

Chapter 6

Chapters 6-7 deal with the events that were to unfold in the Imperial Roman Empire up until the advent of its demise.

Seal No. 1 (v1-2): the “**white horse**” refers to the period of Roman supremacy from the death of Domitian (96AD) to the peace made by Commodus with the Germans in 180AD. This was the golden age for the Roman Empire which succeeded, by military conquest, to occupy the territories formerly ruled by the three preceding empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece: “**the rider...was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest**”.

“**It’s rider held a bow**” (v2) has particular significance to the first Emperor of this period, Nerva 96-98AD, and the dynasty he established. He was of Cretan descent not Roman and Cretans were known as a race of bowmen (a fact commemorated on their coins by a figure of a Cretan with a bow in his hand).

- **Seal No. 2** (v3-4): the “**red horse**” relates to the time from Commodus (180AD) to Diocletian (284AD). This period was characterized by civil wars and bloodshed in the Roman Empire; especially 235-284AD when the Empire almost collapsed through military revolt and anarchy: “**Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other**”. This tumultuous time in the Empire is known as “The Crisis of the Third Century”. At least 26 claimants to the throne fought with each other to become emperor. The Empire was even split into three competing states. Only after Diocletian came to power was the crisis resolved by his official distribution of power.
- **Seal No. 3** (v5-6): the “**black horse**” refers to the oppressive taxes that were imposed by Galerius, who assumed the title of Augustus upon the abdication of Diocletian: “**Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand**”.

Galerius greedily raised land taxes, based upon productivity, to unprecedented levels. Landowners deliberately reduced grain production in order to avoid the heavy taxation. The practice of

destroying crops became so widespread that the government issued a decree forbidding the destruction of olive trees and grapevine: “**and do not damage the oil and the wine!**”

Some of the emperors of the third century also exacted oppressive taxes. During this period produce was given a monetary value in order to pay taxes (see v6). Under Caracalla (218-222) it was said that every part of the Empire was crushed under the weight of the heavy taxes.

- **Seal No. 4** (v7-8): the “**pale horse**” represents the decimation of the Empire’s population by “**sword, famine and plague**” during the Crisis of the Third Century and afterward: “**Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him.**” From 248 to 296AD it was reported that five thousand people died daily in Rome, and many towns were completely depopulated. It is estimated that one half of the entire Empire’s population perished.
- **Seal No. 5** (v9-11): “**the souls of those who had been slain**” corresponds to the last, and most furious and savage, persecution under Diocletian and his immediate successors. The goal was to destroy Christianity entirely. This period is known as “the era of the martyrs”.

Christianity was forbidden by law in 303AD. All Christian assemblies were prohibited, and all scriptures and church buildings were ordered destroyed. In Phrygia, an entire city of Christians was burned along with its inhabitants, not one man, woman or child recanted or surrendered. So many believers were cast to the wild beasts in the Roman arenas that the beasts became satiated and they could not be coerced to continue to attack and kill the Christians thrown to them.

After Diocletian’s abdication in 304AD, the persecution continued unabated until 311 in the Eastern Empire and 313 in the Western

Empire, until Constantine became the Emperor and completely reversed the Empire's stance on Christianity. Whereas Christianity was ruthlessly suppressed now he endorsed Christianity as the official State religion!

Jesus consoled the dead, **“the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained”**, that it would be only **“to wait a little longer”** before **“the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed”** i.e. when the terrible persecutions would end and the Roman Empire judged, prophesied to begin with the following **“sixth seal”** and **“seventh seal”** and completed with the **“seven trumpets”** (Ch 8-10).

- **Seal No. 6** (v12-17): the apocalyptic signs reveal the pending overthrow of the Roman Empire. The **“great earthquake”** is a metaphor for political (and/or spiritual) revolution. **“The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.”** represents the destruction of the existing political authority which was the Imperial Roman Empire.

Chapter 7

- **Seal No. 6 continued:** the stage is set for the next major developments in history - the fall of the Imperial Roman Empire and the spiritual corruption of the church which rose to replace it as the Papal Roman Empire. These events are symbolized in the following **“seven trumpets”** (Ch 8-10).

The “**four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth**” represent the armies of judgement to be unleashed against the Imperial Roman Empire. Barbarian nations began to threaten the Empire at the beginning of the 4th century. They were momentarily held at bay during the interval between Constantine and Theodosius from 306-395AD.

The servants of God – the “**144,000**”, “**12,000**” from “**all of the tribes of Israel**” - who receive a seal upon their foreheads, represent the true church who are saved from the sword of the barbarians and the corruption of the church. The two tribes of Dan and Ephraim are excluded from the list of the twelve tribes. Dan was renowned for its early and persistent idolatry (from the time of Judges right through to the captivity - see Judges 18:30). Ephraim, whose lands held the major border to Dan, was implicated in this idolatry. Thus the false church was identified by its idolatry.

The “**great multitude**” who have come out of the “**great tribulation**”, represent all those who remained faithful during the succession of persecutions under Imperial Rome. During that time, which lasted three centuries, it is estimated that 10 million Christians died for their faith.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 reveals the series of events that would lead to the end of the Imperial Roman Empire. Firstly in the west – the first four “**trumpets**” - and secondly in the east – the last three “**trumpets**”. The Western Roman Empire (capital Rome) corresponds largely with the area of modern day Europe. The Eastern Roman Empire (capital Constantinople), better known as the Byzantine Empire, at varying stages of its dominion, controlled areas now located in Italy, Greece, the

Balkans, Lebanon, Israel, the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Syria, Asia Minor, and North Africa.

- **Seal No. 7:** the brief **“silence in heaven”** (v1) refers to the interval between Constantine and Theodosius (306-395), just prior to the series of invasions against the Western Roman Empire represented in the first four trumpets. Constantine’s *Edict of Milan* in 313, recognized Christianity as a legal religion, halted the persecution of Christians and returned confiscated property to them.
- These invasions commenced at the start of the 5th century and eventually led to the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476. Each trumpet relates to invasions by particular groups and identifies their primary areas of conquest as **“a third”**.
- **Trumpet No. 1** (v7): **“hail and fire”** are symbols of God’s judgement. The Goths and Vandals under Alaric were the very first instruments used as God’s judgement against the Western Roman Empire. Rome had not had to confront foreign invaders for 800 years and it was stunned. The Goths attacked Gaul, Spain and Italy from the north, burning or destroying everything in their path - **“A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up”**. From 408 to 410 they besieged the city of Rome three times, sacking it in 410.
- **Trumpet No. 2** (v8-9): the **“huge mountain”** - which represents a strong and powerful kingdom - was the Vandals. Historians refer to the king of the Vandals, Gaiseric (389-477), as “the Tyrant of the Sea”. For over six centuries no hostile ship had disputed Rome’s mastery of the sea. The Vandals left their Baltic home by sea to invade Rome. They destroyed the ships and commerce of the Romans, and were

distinguished in Rome's downfall by their conquests on the sea and the islands.

The Vandals also attacked Gaul and Spain. As Roman ships were sunk and their sailors slaughtered, portions of the sea became red with blood - **“A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed”**. Having captured Carthage, the Vandals pirated the seas for thirty years before returning to pillage Rome for fifteen days. They took their booty away on their ships and left the capital abandoned.

- **Trumpet No. 3** (v10-11) the **“great star”** - which represents a ruler - was Attila the Hun (406-453), who was known as “the scourge of God”. The emergence of the Huns was sudden like the appearance of a meteor. Attila assembled his 800,000 men upon the banks of the Danube. As the Vandals were the master of the sea, the Huns were the masters of the great river. They decimated the regions of the Rhine, upper Danube, and Po rivers. In the Italian Alps, they shed so much blood the springs became polluted. It has been estimated that 300,000 men laid slaughtered in the rivers. Consequently many died through famine, disease and pestilence because of the contaminated water supply - **“(The) great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water--the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter”**.
- **Trumpet No. 4** (v12-13): **“a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars”** represent the political hierarchy of Rome. The conquest of Rome and the end of its imperial rule were accomplished by the Heruli under the command of Odoacer in 476.

The last of the western emperors, Romulus-Augustus, was banished, and Odoacer commanded that the name and the office of the (Western) Roman emperor be abolished.

In v13 the angel announces a turning point. The Western Roman Empire had been destroyed under the emblems of the first four trumpets. The next two trumpets, each described as a “**woe**”, relate to the Eastern Roman Empire (or Byzantine Empire) and its overthrow. (After that, the Revelation turns back to view the west with the seventh trumpet, where the vanquished Imperial (Western) Roman Empire is replaced by another Empire - the Papal Roman Empire.)

The Eastern Roman Empire survived the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century AD and continued to exist for an additional thousand years until it fell to the Ottoman Empire in 1453.

Constantine had moved the throne of the Empire away from Rome to Constantinople (now called Istanbul, the largest city in modern day Turkey) in 330 and from there ruled the whole of the Roman Empire; both West (which was distinguished culturally as Roman/Latin) and East (distinguished culturally as Greek). Theodosius I (379–395) was the last Emperor to rule both the Western and Eastern halves of the Empire. In 395, he bequeathed the imperial throne jointly to his sons: Honorius in the West and Arcadius in the East, and from that time on the Roman Empire was partitioned and ruled separately by two different Emperors.

(The Roman Catholic Church was also to experience a similar separation. The head of the entire Roman Catholic Church, i.e. the Pope, was first declared as the bishop of Rome in 533, after the fall of the Western Roman Empire (and eventually was to acquire political

power over the same region). Thus he was the religious head of the church in both the remnant states of the Western Roman Empire and the Eastern Roman Empire.

The Eastern split with Roman Catholicism occurred as a consequence of the crowning of Charlemagne, King of the Franks, as Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III in 800. This act made the Byzantine Emperor redundant, and political relations between the East and the West deteriorated until a formal split occurred in 1054. At that time, the Eastern Church supported the political leadership in the East and consequently severed all ties with the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church, and became distinguished as the Greek Orthodox Church with a Patriarch as its head.

There are only minor differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church in their beliefs and practices.)

Chapter 9

- **Trumpet No. 5** (v1-12): the “**locusts**” represent the Saracens (Muslim Arabs) and their campaigns against the Eastern Roman Empire from 612 to 763. The “**king**” is Mohammed. “**They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree...**” In the Koran, Mohammed instructed “Destroy no palm trees, nor any fields of corn, cut down no fruit trees.” - This policy stands in stark contrast to the slash and burn approach of the earlier Gothic invaders in the west.

The Saracens were not able to “**kill**” papal Rome as a political body, but only to “**torture**” it for a while. They desolated the (Eastern) Greek and (Western) Roman/Latin churches but were not able to exterminate them, nor gain control of the entire Empire. Those “**who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads**” (v4) were the corrupt and idolatrous Roman Catholics against which the Saracens chiefly prevailed.

The “**five months**” are 150 years (5 x 30 prophetic day-for-year). Mohammed adopted the policy of making converts by the sword in 612. The Muslim Arabs attacked the Eastern and then Western churches from this time on, seeking to forcibly convert Europe from Christianity to Islam. These attacks were checked by Charles Martel, who defeated the Muslims in 732 at Tours, only after they had conquered Spain and had won territory in southern France. In the year 763, the Muslims finally ceased their policy of aggression and moved their capital to Baghdad. From 612 to 763 is exactly 150 years.

The symbol of the “**locusts**” was an apt description of the Arab hordes. In the Old Testament, the Midianite Arabs were likened to invading locusts (Judges 6:5). Islamic tradition speaks of locusts having dropped into the hands of Mohammed, bearing on their wings the inscription: “We are the army of the Great God.” Their traditional turbans can be seen as “**crowns**”. The description of having “**faces like the faces of men**”⁷ and “**hair ... like women’s hair**”, refers to their practice of having long beards and long hair. The “**breastplates of iron**” were easily identifiable - the Saracens wore iron coats of mail. The “**tails and stings like scorpions**” refers to the skill of Saracens

⁷ NIV translates “human” instead of “men”. Most translations have “men”.

who were renowned for their ability to fight rearward over the tails of their horses.

- **Trumpet No. 6** (v13-21): the “**third of mankind**” is the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, with its capital at Constantinople. The “**horsemen**” are the Turkish hoards who conquered the Byzantine Empire.

The “**four angels ... bound at the great river Euphrates**” represented the Turks who were divided into four principalities, and who, though having conquered Baghdad in 1055 and being a formidable empire, were constrained in moving west from the Euphrates.

In 1062 (probable), the Turks crossed the Euphrates and began assaults upon the Byzantine Empire. In 1453, the Turks - or Ottoman Empire - conquered Constantinople, bringing to an end the last vestige of the Roman Empire in the East. The increments of time - “**hour and day and month and year**” - calculated on the year-for-a-day principle yields 391 years. This is the period from 1062 to 1453.

The term “**two hundred million**” can be translated “two myriad myriads” which means a vast but indefinite number. Furthermore, the Turks had the custom of using the term “myriads” in the numbering of their troops.

As to the colour of the breastplates - “**fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur**”, the Ottomans were renowned for wearing war apparel of scarlet, blue and yellow.

The reference to “**fire, smoke and sulfur**”, relates to the use of artillery. Cannons were first used by the Turks at the siege of Constantinople.⁸

The “**power**” being in the “**tails**” relates to the *‘pashas’* which were Turkish standards constructed by attaching two or three horse tails to a pole.

The Western Latin and Eastern Greek churches that escaped the destruction of the Saracen and Turkish hordes persisted in their idolatrous “**worship of demons and idols**”. By this time, the papal authority was responsible for the “**murder**” of hundreds of thousands of Albigenses and Waldensians. The “**immorality**” of the popes had become legendary. And their practice of indulgences (paying money to the church for the forgiveness of sins) represented “**thefts**”.

Chapter 10

After Imperial Rome fell to the barbarians in 476 (first four seals), the power of the papacy - Papal Rome - arose in its place in Europe. The popes and the system that sustained them became incredibly corrupt. The papacy is the Antichrist, the principal opponent of the pure faith of Jesus Christ.

This rise of the papacy has not been expressly mentioned in the Revelation up until this point. The fall of the Byzantine Empire in the sixth trumpet, now turns attention back to the west. The prophecies of Chapter 10 - 11:1-15 are about the Reformation period in the early 16th century.

⁸ The smallest fired a stone shot weighing 200 pounds. The largest with a bore of three feet, could hurl a 1,200 pound ball.

- The “**mighty angel**” (v1) is Christ. The “**little scroll**” (v2) is the Bible, which hitherto had been withheld by the Church from the people – it remained a Latin version, a language not spoken by the common people, and only priests were permitted to own one. The Bible now became available because of two developments: the invention of the movable-type printing press (1436 or 1437) and the translation of the Bible into contemporary European languages.⁹
- The “**loud shout**” (v3) is Christ’s challenge to the doctrines of Roman Catholicism, through the Reformers (Luther etc.) and their precursors (Wycliffe and Huss).
- The “**seven thunders**” (v3) were the Papal Anathemas denouncing Luther and the Reformation.
- “**There will be no more delay**” (v6) signals that Christ will now commence the overthrow of the political power of the papacy. As the Jews had been given many centuries to repent of their rebellion against God so the apostate papal church was also granted centuries to repent and turn to God. The Jews had killed the prophets sent by God, just as the Roman Catholic Church had killed dissenters and true believers. It is conservatively estimated that 50+ million believers were put to death during the reign of Papal Rome.
- “**I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour**” (v10) represents the true church’s acceptance of the Bible at the time of the Reformation. After hundreds of years of the Bible being withheld, it was as “**sweet as honey**” to those who now received the Word of God. The consequence of it turning the

⁹ Erasmus published a Greek N.T. in 1516; Zwingli, Swiss N.T. 1518; Luther, German N.T., 1522; Tyndale, English N.T., 1526; Danish Bible, 1537; King James Version, 1539.

“**stomach ... sour**” refers to the opposition and persecution by the Catholic Church against the Protestants.

- “**You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings**” (v11) symbolizes the preaching of the Word by the Protestant movement and that the gospel would extend throughout the world. The Reformation and evangelical/missionary movement that followed was an epoch moment in the world, fashioning and shaping it for centuries to come. (Note: In comparison, the Catholic Church was characterized by the performance of rituals, rites and ceremonies, not the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.)

Chapter 11

- The Reformation radically “**measure(d)**” (v1) i.e. reassessed what was meant by (1) the “**temple**” i.e. the true church, (2) the “**altar**” i.e. the subject of sacrifice and atonement (justification by faith), and (3) “**the worshippers there**” i.e. what constitutes true membership of the church (v1). The “**outer court**” (v2) represented the apostate Catholic Church, and thus referred to as “**the Gentiles**”.
- The “**forty-two months**” (v2) refers to (42 x 30 =) 1260 years of papal domination, and persecution of the true church. From 533, the year in which the Eastern emperor Justinian elevated the bishop of Rome to be “head of all the holy churches, and of all the holy priests of God”, until 1793 which marked the time of the French Revolution and the loss of papal power is a period exactly equal to 1260 years (in 1798 the pope was taken prisoner by French troops under Napoleon).
- The parallel period of “**one thousand, two hundred and sixty days**” (v3) during which the “**two witnesses ... will prophecy**” (v3) refers to

the fact that there was always a small band of dissenters to Papal Rome who comprised the true church. They proclaimed the truth of God's Word. **"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth"** (v4) – the true church alone possessed the Holy Spirit (the oil) and the Word of truth (the light). Two witnesses were required under Old Testament law to convict a murderer (Deuteronomy 17:6). The true Christians were these witnesses, proved by their very own martyrdom that indicted the murderous Roman Catholic Church.

- The **"fire (that) comes from their mouths and devours their enemies"** (v5) speaks of the power of the Word of God which ultimately prevails. The **"rain"** that is withheld (v6) refers to a spiritual drought upon the apostate church. The **"plagues"** (v6) are the calamities that fell upon the territories controlled by the papacy. It was as though there was a perpetual shedding of blood along the waterways of Europe.
- The **"beast"** (v7) is the Roman Catholic Church and the **"the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified"** (v8) is Rome. Rome, the seat of the Papacy, is called **"Sodom"** for its abominations, **"Egypt"** for its tyrannical cruelty, and the place where the **"Lord was crucified"**, because of its persecution of the true church.
- The Roman Catholic Church continually persecuted true believers and sought to eradicate them – to **"overpower and kill them"** (v7). In particular, beginning with Pope Innocent III in the 12th century, there was an intense effort to overcome all resistance to papal supremacy, such as that posed by the Waldenses and the Albigenses. At the third Lateran Council of 1179, war was declared against the heretics, followed in 1231, by the Inquisition.

- The attempts of the Church to silence the “**witnesses**” appeared to have succeeded. At the 9th Session of the Fifth Lateran Council in 1514 it was declared “There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule and religion; opposers there exist no more” and “The whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its Head [the Pope].”
- The bodies of the “**two witnesses**” lay dead for “**three and a half days**” (v11), which is interpreted to represent 3½ years. From the day of declaration of the Fifth Lateran Council, May 5, 1514, until October 31, 1517, when Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg church, was precisely 3½ years.
- “**they stood on their feet**” (v11) is an apt description of the true church rising back from the dead. At the Diet of Nuremberg in 1523, Pope Hadrian declared “The heretics Huss and Jerome seem now to be alive again in the person of Luther.”
- The rising up to “**heaven**” represents the gaining of political freedom from Rome (v12).
- The “**severe earthquake**” (v13) is reference to the political convulsions that rocked Europe after the Reformation. “**A tenth of the city collapsed**” (v13) refers to the partial but significant loss of Papal power. The “**Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake**” (v13) are interpreted as seven “*chiliads*” (Gr.) meaning provinces or countries. The Union of Utrecht comprising seven provinces - Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Friesland, Groningen, Overijssel and Guiderland – formally separated from Spain and therefore Papal control in 1579.

The spread of Protestant ideas was swift and emboldened most countries in Northern Europe to quickly join in the rebellion against Papal supremacy. Only Italy and Spain remained loyal at that time.

- **Trumpet No. 7:** sounds the end of the supremacy of the apostate Roman Church. It brings to an end the series of visions encompassing the Seals and the Trumpets, which foretold the events surrounding the fall of Imperial Rome and subsequently the demise of Papal Rome. Christ had now taken His **“great power”** and had **“begun to reign”** (v17).

Yet there were still developments to occur subsequent to the demise of Papal Rome that saw a continuation of the existence of the **“beast”**, i.e. the controlling World Empire, before Christ’s return. Chapter’s 12 - 18, provide information concerning the evolution of this **“beast”**. The last verse of Chapter 11 - **“Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.”** (v19) – marks the beginning of a new division of information now to be conveyed in the Revelation i.e. Christ’s disclosure to His church of the times in which His people will live up until His very return.

Chapter 12

Chapters 12 and 13 revisit the periods already covered in the Book of Revelation, providing confirmation as to the interpretation of the prophecy, and also giving further insights in order to understand the iterations of Daniel’s fourth **“beast”**.

- **“... a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head” (v1):** The **“woman”** represents the universal people of God – formed by those who in the past were obedient to the Old Covenant, and now and into the future those who are obedient to the New Covenant. The **“sun”** and the **“moon”** represent the New and the Old Covenants. The twelve stars are the twelve apostles chosen by Christ to be the first leaders of the church under the New Covenant (and who will **“sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel”** (Matthew 19:28)).
- **“... an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads” (v3):** The **“dragon”** is revealed as Satan (12:9). The seven crowns upon the seven heads represent the seat of authority of both Imperial and Papal Rome, which was established at and through Rome (a city known from antiquity to have been built upon seven hills). Satan is therefore revealed as the inspiration and force behind the persecution of the church, and the overlord of both Imperial and Papal Rome.¹⁰

The **“ten horns”** correlates it with Daniel’s fourth beast which was the Imperial Roman Empire and which evolved into the Papal Roman Empire (Daniel 7:7 - **“... in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast — terrifying and frightening and very powerful ... and it had ten horns.”**).

¹⁰ The dragon was first used as an ensign by the armies of Imperial Rome near the close of the second century and became common in the third century. Ammianus Marcellinus, a Roman soldier and historian, gives this description of the standard: "The dragon was covered with purple cloth, and fastened to the end of a pike gilt and adorned with precious stones. It opened its wide throat, and the wind blew through it; and it hissed as if in a rage, with its tail floating in several folds through the air." (Barnes' Notes)

- **“She gave birth to a son, a male child ...”** (v5): The **“son”** is Jesus, who appeared as fulfillment of the Old Covenant, initiated the New (overturning the Old) and so is directly connected with the sum of God’s people through time, made up of saints under both the Old (**“moon”**) and New (**“sun”**) Covenants (12:5).
- **“... And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne”** (5): Jesus ascended back to heaven to remain at the right hand of the throne of God, until His return when He will **“... rule all nations with an iron scepter...”** (v5).
- **“The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days”** (v6): The true church was to be preserved by God whilst facing the persecution of the papacy. The exact same period of time is stated once again for the dominion of the Papal Roman Empire, **“1260 days”** which is 1,260 years.

(The **“little horn”** which appears upon Daniel’s fourth beast is the papacy (Daniel 7:8, 20-22, 24-25). The exact same period of time is stated in Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 12:14 **“time, times and half a time”** which is 1260 years – a prophetic time is 360 years, thus $360 + 720 + 180 = 1260$.)

- **“... the dragon ... pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child”** (13): The **“dragon”** now continues his pursuit of the **“woman”** in the form of Papal Rome (12:13). The true church is miraculously preserved by God despite extreme opposition (12:14), during the period of the reign of the papacy (**“time and times and half a time”** (12:14) or **“1,260 days”** (12:6) i.e. 1260 years).

- **“... the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring — those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus” (v17):** The **“rest her offspring”** are the churches that arose from the preaching of the gospel and so were **“those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus”**. The Catholic Church stood opposed to these churches relentlessly persecuting them and therefore is condemned for disobeying God's commands and inventing a new **“testimony of Jesus”** which is their Eucharist. Therefore, the Catholic Church is rightly revealed as an opposing whore of Chapter 17, to this **“woman clothed with the sun”** in Chapter 12.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 provides more information of Satan's relentless persecution of Christ's church through the world empire controlled by Satan. Satan exercises his authority and power through the world empire.

- **“And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name” (v1):** The **“beast coming out of the sea”** is Imperial/Papal Rome. It corresponds directly with the fourth beast of Daniel Chapter 7, which is the Roman Empire. Daniel's fourth beast was only to be finally overthrown when Christ returns (cf. Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45, 7:11-14, 26-27). This chapter gives insight as to how this beast continues in power until that Day.

The **“seven heads”** (v1) - later explained to represent **“the seven mountains”** (17:9) upon which the harlot sits - are again the seven hills upon which Rome is built.

- **“The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion” (2):** The first three beasts of Daniel are signified here with the **“sea”** beast sharing components of them. It resembles a **“leopard”** (Greek Empire), with **“feet like a bear”** (Medo-Persian Empire) and **“mouth like a lion”** (Babylonian Empire). Thus, this beast would also be a world empire like the previous empires and appear after them.
- **“One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed” (3):** The head which received the **“fatal wound”** (v3) and then was **“healed”** signifies the collapse of Imperial Rome but its reemergence in the form of Papal Rome. The Roman Catholic Church reintroduced Roman paganism dressed up in Christian garb.
- **“Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?”” (v4):** The worship of **“the dragon”** i.e. Satan, is associated with worship of **“the beast”** i.e. the Pope. For centuries people have kissed the foot/hand/ring of the Pope in veneration. The beast is the anti-Christ and therefore he solicits worship.
- **“The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months” (v5):** Once again, the same period is referred to regarding the rule of Papal Rome, **“forty two months”** which is 1260 years (a prophetic “month” is 30 years and $42 \times 30 = 1260$ years). Therefore, Satan’s hatred of the **“woman”** (the true church) in Chapter 12, is revealed as being manifested through this **“beast”** (the Catholic Church), in Chapter 13 (and later again the **“prostitute”** in Chapter 17)

- **“He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven” (v6):** The beast is associated with **“blasphemies”** (v5). To blaspheme is to make oneself equal with God. The Imperial Roman state religion was essentially an imperial cult that regarded emperors as gods. Papal Rome was no different. Various occupants of the papal throne have made personal blasphemous claims claiming to be God. Pope Nicholas declared “The Roman Pontiff judges all men, but is judged by no one ... I have the authority of the King of Kings. I am all in all and above all ... Wherefore, if those things that I do be said not to be done of man but of God, what can you make me but God?”

Blasphemous statements are not only reserved for the Popes during the period of the papacy’s political power. Pope Leo XIII in 1894 claimed “We hold the place of Almighty God on earth.” His successor, Pius X, boasted “The Pope ... is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.” In turn Pius XI said in 1922 “You know that I am the Holy Father, the representative of God on earth, the Vicar of Christ, which means that I am God on the earth.”

- **“He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them ...” (v7):** The exact same power is also attributed to the **“little horn”** on the fourth beast of Daniel - **“... this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them ...”** (Daniel 7: 21).

Dissenters of Roman Catholic rule and dogma were persecuted, beaten, tortured, mutilated and killed by various means for the greater part of 1,000 years. They were burned, crushed and impaled. Multitudes were put to the sword by the armies of the Pope and the princes he commanded. Millions upon millions were martyred.¹¹ No

¹¹ By order of the Popes, tens of thousands of Vaudois were massacred in Northern Italy (1237-1342); Lollards were terribly persecuted in England (130-1413); thousands of Hussites were killed in Bohemia (1421); the Spanish Inquisition burned alive 31,912 and tortured 300,000

wonder Jesus exhorted **“This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints”** (v10).

“From the birth of Popery in 606 to the present time, it is estimated by careful and credible historians, that more than fifty millions of the human family, have been slaughtered for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors, an average of more than forty thousand religious murders for every year of the existence of Popery.”

John Dowling, *History of Romanism* (1845)

- **“Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.”** (v11-12): The second **“beast”** is the Society of Jesus, i.e. the Jesuits, which was founded by Ignatius Loyola, that rose up out of the Roman Catholic Church to continue the exercise of Satan’s control in the earth at the conclusion of the 1260 years.

The second beast is a morphed version of the first beast as it **“exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.”** A Jesuit-controlled Vatican aptly fits this description.

Protestants (1481-1808); 3,000 Vaudois were suffocated and burned in a cave in Piedmont (1488); fifty thousand German Protestants were hanged, burned or buried alive by Emperor Charles V (1546); Catholic queen “bloody Mary” burned alive over 300 Protestants (1555); the Duke of Alva executed 36,000 Protestants in the Netherlands (1567); in the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in France 60,000 were butchered in 1572; in Magdeburg, Germany, 20,000 Protestants were massacred (1631); Irish Roman Catholics mercilessly martyred 40,000 Protestants (1641); Huguenots were persecuted by French Dragoons (late 1600’s); 11,000 Vaudois were martyred in Northern Italy (1686).

The Jesuits previously had become the education, missionary and clandestine political/military arms of the Catholic Church in 1545. They were commissioned by the Pope to spear-head the Catholic Counter-Reformation with the objective to destroy the Protestant Reformation; and so preserve and protect the temporal power of the Pope i.e. Rome.

The Jesuits' influence grew and they became renown throughout the world for their clandestine political operations. In 1773 the Jesuits were suppressed across the world by Pope Clement XIV under pressure from Portugal, France and Spain, because of their political interference and manipulation. Jesuits throughout the world were forced to renounce their vows or go into exile. They were not eliminated, however, and they regrouped and went underground.

In 1798 the temporal, i.e. political, power of the Pope was broken when Napoleon's troops took Pope Pius VI prisoner, which concluded the 1260 years.

Napoleon reinstated Pope Pius VII with the Concordat of 1801, and Pius VII reinstated the Jesuits in 1814 ending their suppression. The Jesuits now had effective control over the papacy.

(There is conjecture that Napoleon's confinement of the Pope in 1798 was at the behest of the Jesuits in retaliation for the Pope's suppression and that this episode directly led to the Jesuits subsequent control of the Vatican which continues to this day. Napoleon himself always remained a Catholic and he received the sacraments of Confession, Extreme Unction and Viaticum just before he died.)

Thus, while the Pope's reign as the 'sea beast' during the "**forty two months**" or 1260 years had ended, the beast continued to exist, under a minor transformation as the 'earth beast'. Satan's ultimate objective to subdue and conquer the saints would not cease with the end to papal supremacy. This would continue and now be achieved through the Jesuits who seek to accomplish this purpose through world domination:

"At what then do the Jesuits aim? According to them, they only seek the greater glory of God; but if you examine the facts you will find that they aim at universal dominion alone. They have rendered themselves indispensable to the Pope, who, without them, could not exist, because Catholicism is identified with them. They have rendered themselves indispensable to governors and hold revolutions in their hands; and in this way, either under one name or another, it is they who rule the world."

Luigi De Sanctis (former Catholic priest),
Popery, Puseyism and Jesuitism (1865)
 (translated by Maria Betts (1905))

"But there is a religious society, the tendency of which is highly dangerous, and which should never have been admitted into the territories of the empire viz., the Society of Jesus. Its doctrines are subversive of all monarchical principles. The General of the Jesuits desires to be sovereign master, the sovereign of sovereigns. Everywhere that the Jesuits are tolerated, they strive for power, at any price. Their society is by nature fond of ruling, and nourishes, therefore, an irreconcilable hatred of all existing power. Any action, any crime, however atrocious it may be, is meritorious, if committed for the interest of the society, or by the orders of its General.

General Count Montholon, *History of the*

Captivity of Napoleon at Helena Vol II, (1846)

John Wesley wrote:

“The false prophet – So is the second beast frequently named, after the kingdom of the first (the Popes) is darkened; for he can then no longer prevail by main strength, and so *works by lies and deceit.*”

Napoleon Bonaparte wrote this statement on the Jesuits in his memoirs while exiled on the island of St Helens:

"The Jesuits are a military organization, not a religious order. Their chief is the general of an army, not the mere father abbot of a monastery. And the aim of this organization is POWER. Power in its most despotic exercise. Absolute power, universal power, power to control the world by the volition of a single man. Jesuitism is the most absolute of despotisms; and at the same time the greatest and most enormous of abuses. The general of the Jesuits insists on being master, sovereign over the sovereign. Wherever the Jesuits are admitted they will be masters, cost what it may. Their society is by nature dictatorial, & therefore it is the irreconcilable enemy of all constituted authority. Every act, every crime, however atrocious, is a meritorious work, if committed for the interest of the Society of Jesuits, or by the order of the general."

The exact nature of Jesuit control of world affairs is impossible to ascertain because of the secretive nature of their operations. They were expelled by numerous nations – at least 83 - over the centuries for their covert political interference.¹² But then there are many other extraordinary yet largely

¹² “Between 1555 and 1931 the Society of Jesus was expelled from at least 83 countries, city-states and cities, for engaging in political intrigue and subversive plots against the welfare of the

unverifiable claims of their involvement in the 20th century Russian communist revolution, Nazism, the two World Wars etc. etc. (This could after all be because of misinformation and propaganda disseminated by the Jesuits themselves through media under their control.)

Nevertheless, the historical developments with regard to Catholicism and the Jesuits correspond well with the evolution of 'sea beast' into 'earth beast' of Revelation 13. And present-day apostasy of Protestant churches and capitulation to ecumenism is coinciding with the reemergence of growing Catholic influence in the world; especially in the United States with many alumni of Jesuit Colleges in positions of power. Joe Biden is only the second Catholic to be elected President of the United States – the other was John F. Kennedy. And his election coincides with a U.S. Supreme Court that only since 2005 has had a majority of Catholic justices. Moreover, for the very first time ever, a Jesuit occupies the seat of the Holy See, Pope Francis.

- The beast has “**two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon**” (v11). The two horns represent the two heads of the Roman Catholic Church – the White Pope and the Black Pope who is the Jesuit General. It mimics Jesus Christ, but is a wolf in sheep's clothing, and is the mouth-piece of Satan, “**he spoke like a dragon**”.¹³ (The Black Pope is also the “false prophet” of Revelation 19:20.)
- The second beast is said to perform “**great and miraculous signs**” (v13). To this day, the Roman Catholic Church has claimed a litany of miracles, mostly bizarre - images have lit their own candles, crucifixes have spoken, idols have sweat, turned their eyes, moved their hands,

State... Practically every instance of expulsion was for political intrigue, political infiltration, political subversion, and inciting to political insurrection. “ (J.E.C. Shepherd, *The Babington Plot: Jesuit Intrigue in Elizabethan England*).

¹³ Since the time of Pope Gregory (590), bishops have worn a cloak of lamb's wool and abbots have worn a miter with two points and are known as the Goruti meaning “horned ones”.

opened their mouths, healed sicknesses, raised the dead etc. etc. Of course, demonic powers could account for any actual supernatural occurrences.

- “... **causing fire to come down from heaven to earth ...**” (13) refers to the fiery judgment of the Catholic Church via the Jesuits against Protestant heretics e.g. the Inquisition, and assassinations/revolutions/wars instigated by the Jesuits to bring countries under their subjection. It is the Jesuits who “**cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed**” (v15):

“Finally, let all with such artfulness gain the ascendant over princes, noblemen, and the magistrates of every place, that they may be ready at our beck, even to sacrifice their nearest relations and most intimate friends, when we say it is for our interest and advantage.”

Ignatius Loyola (1540), as quoted in W. C. Brownlee, *Secret Instructions of the Jesuits* (1857)

“I furthermore promise and declare that I will, when opportunity present, make and wage relentless war, secretly or openly, against all heretics, Protestants and Liberals, as I am directed to do, to extirpate and exterminate them from the face of the whole earth; and that I will spare neither age, sex or condition; and that I will hang, waste, boil, flay, strangle and bury alive these infamous heretics, rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women and crush their infants' heads against the walls, in order to annihilate forever their execrable race. That when the same cannot be done openly, I will secretly use the poisoned cup, the strangulating cord, the steel of the poniard or the leaden bullet, regardless of the honor, rank, dignity, or authority of the person or persons, whatever may be their condition in life, either public or private, as I at any time may be

directed so to do by any agent of the Pope or Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Faith, of the Society of Jesus.”

Jesuit Extreme Oath of Induction

- The “**mark of the beast**” (v16) represents open and unqualified allegiance to the Pope (cf. 14:9 refers to the joint act of worshipping the beast and receiving the mark). The mark was received during the initiation rites into the Church when the inductee knelt before the Bishop - the Pope's representative - and their forehead was 'crossed' by the Bishop. The allegiance was preserved in the taking of communion.

A Catholic publication, *The Faith of our Fathers* by J.C. Gibbons, says:

“The Sacrament of Confirmation is also known by the name of CRISM, because the Forehead ... is anointed ... in the form of a Cross. In the Sacred Crism, which is marked on our foreheads He hath sealed us by the indelible Character Stamped on our souls, which is indicated by the Sign of the Cross impressed upon us. The Bishop performs (with the right hand never the left) the eternal unction, but God sanctifies the Soul by His secret operation.”

John Gill in his *Exposition of the Entire Bible* writes:

“...those who were obliged to receive the mark in the right hand seem to be the clergy, such who entered into holy orders; who lifted up their right hand, and swore and vowed allegiance to the pope, and testified they were ready to defend and support his religion and interest; and who in their ordination are said to have an indelible character impressed on them: and those who received the mark in their foreheads are the common people in general, who one and all have the same impress upon them; which may intend either the sign of the cross in baptism, or rather their open confession of the

Popish religion, which they as publicly avow and declare as if it had been written on their foreheads.”

- The title in Latin, "VICARIVS FILII DEI" appears on the Pope's coronation. It means "Vicar of God" or "one who stands in the place of (anti-) God (Christ)", and crown has a numerical value of exactly "666" (v17).¹⁴

Also, Iraneus in the 2nd century suggested that "LATEINOS" (Greek for "Latin"), which also adds up to number 666, could be the identifier of the beast.¹⁵ The Roman Church was and remains characterised by the use of Latin, a feature derived from the Western Roman Empire.

- "... **no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark ...**" (v7): Under the rule of the first (sea) beast, there were several edicts issued by popes prohibiting the intercourse of trade with heretics. For example, at the Third Lateran Council (1178) Pope Alexander III issued an order that "no man presume to entertain or cherish them in his house, or land, or exercise traffic with them."

Specifically with regard to the Waldenses and Albigenses the same Pope ordered "no man should presume to receive or assist them in selling or buying, that, being deprived of the comfort of humanity, they may be compelled to repent of the error of their way."

Pope Martin V decreed that "they permit not the heretics to have houses in their districts, or enter into contracts, or carry on commerce, or enjoy the comforts of humanity with Christians".

¹⁴ V=5, I=1, C=100, L=50, D=500, all other letters =0.

VICARIVS = 5 + 1 + 100 + 0 + 0 + 1 + 5 + 0 = 112

FILII = 0 + 1 + 50 + 1 + 1 = 53

DEI = 500 + 0 + 1 = 501

VICARVIS FILII DEI = 112 + 53 + 501 = 666

¹⁵ L=30, A=1, T=300, E=5, I=10, N=50, O=70, S=200

L ATEINOS = 30 + 1 + 300 + 5 + 10 + 50 + 70 + 200 = 666

Under the rule of the second (earth) beast, this prophecy might yet have future fulfillment.

Chapter 14

Chapters 14-16 foretell the seven bowls of wrath which find fulfillment in the judgement upon the papacy, beginning with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars and concluding yet in the future.

- Chapter 13 entailed an unhappy state of affairs for true believers, the **“144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads”** (v1). Those who resisted the papacy were conquered and killed, or at least excluded from commerce and ostracized from society. Chapter 14 shows the saints who remained pure and virtuous (**“those who did not defile themselves with women”** (v4) is a reference to the Mariology of the Catholic Church) triumphant before the throne of God.
- **“Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth — to every nation, tribe, language and people.”** (v6): The **“angel”** represents the Great Awakening in the 18th and 19th centuries identified particularly with John Wesley and William Carey. Wesley and his Methodist movement transformed England with the gospel which in turn affected countries throughout the world via England's colonies. Carey is known as the ‘Father of the Protestant Missionary Movement’, which saw the gospel taken to nations and people's groups, which had never heard the gospel. This is the period of extraordinary revivals and the commencement of a world-wide missionary era.

For over 1000 years the church had faced relentless persecution by the Papacy and the gospel suppressed. There was now an extraordinary unleashing of the gospel and its messengers throughout the world – **“to every nation, tribe, language and people”**. This was an epoch moment in the history of the church and its influence in the world. (This Great Awakening corresponds with the Philadelphian church, that was followed by the **“lukewarm”** Laodicean church which is the present-day compromising and ecumenical church period – the last before Christ’s return.)

- **“He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come ... A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."”** (v7-8): The preachers of the gospel during the Great Awakening fearlessly identified the Roman Catholic Church as an apostate church, and the papacy as the antichrist.

John Wesley wrote “He [the Pope] is in an emphatical sense, the Man of Sin, as he increases all manner of sin above measure. And he is, too, properly styled the Son of Perdition, as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers... He it is...that exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped...claiming the highest power, and highest honour ...claiming the prerogatives which belong to God alone.”

William Carey wrote “The destruction of the temporal power of the Pope is a glorious circumstance, and an answer to the prayers of the Church for centuries past...”

- In declaring the true gospel they contrasted it with the false gospel of Rome. They pronounced judgement therefore upon the Roman Catholic Church and the papacy, and called their converts to leave the Catholic Church. The **“hour of his judgement”** (v7) announces the impending destruction of **“Babylon”** (v8) which is another symbol for Rome. It is also called **“the great city”** (Revelation 17:18).

(We are still living in the time of this unfolding judgement which will eventually conclude when Christ returns. Only then are the **“beast”** and the **“false prophet”** utterly destroyed when they are both finally thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20.)

- **“A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury””** (v9-10): Eternal torment awaits those who have worshipped the beast and received his mark. Members of the apostate church who acknowledged the Pope as their ‘Lord’ and ‘King’, who believed his doctrines and participated in his eucharist, who sustained his temporal power and relied on his protection, would suffer a terrible consequence.
- **“I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one “like a son of man” with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, “Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.**

Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18 Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." 19 The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath". (v14-17)

The first harvest (v15-17) refers to the in-gathering of souls during the Philadelphian church period. The second harvest (v18-20) refers to God's final judgement upon the wicked and the end of papal supremacy that began in this period and finds its eventual fulfillment at the close of the Laodicean church period; which is also the very end of the age, marked by the return of Christ. This last and final judgement is the subject of Chapters 15-19.

Chapter 15

- **"I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues — last, because with them God's wrath is completed."** (v1): The **"seven last plagues"** herald the consummation of the ages. With them, God's wrath is said to be **"completed"** and **"All nations will come and worship before ... (Him)"** (v4).
- The **"seven bowls"** (v7) represent progressive overthrow of Papal Rome just as the seven trumpet judgements were sent to destroy Imperial Rome.

Chapter 16

- **Bowl No. 1** (v2): the “**ugly and painful sores**” refers to the moral corruption, atheism, and general dissolution of society which spread over those countries where the beast and his image were principally worshipped. This was the beginning of the end of papal rule. It commenced with the French Revolution (1789 - storming of the Bastille; 1793 - Louis XVI beheaded; 1798 - Pope taken a prisoner by Napoleon), which was aimed at the power of the papacy.¹⁶ In five years two million people were slain, including 24,000 priests. The temporal power of the pope in France was broken (yet the religion of Catholicism continued and political power was still wielded by the Jesuits who persisted in their activities in the shadows).
- **Bowl No. 2** (v3): the “**sea**” that “**turned into blood like that of a dead man**” refers to naval conquest. From 1793 to 1815 the great naval battles between England and France occurred. The fleets of France had been the most formidable naval power that had ever existed under papal rule. The annihilation of the French naval force was unprecedented in world history.
- **Bowl No. 3** (v4-7): as in the third trumpet, here the “**rivers and springs**” that became “**blood**” point to conquest in the region of Europe. Beginning in 1793, France launched invasions against Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Northern Italy. These wars occurred on the Rhine, Po and Alpine Rivers and the streams of the Piedmont and Lombardy regions. The same rivers that had flowed with

¹⁶ Robert Flemming, a historicist, informed King William III in England around 1690, that the bowls of judgement in this chapter of the book of Revelation would begin to be poured out on the Latin kingdom in the year 1793-94 (using the 1260 year time frame) and that it would begin in Italy or France.

the blood of martyred saints, now flowed with the blood of their oppressors under God's retribution.

- **Bowl No. 4** (v8-9): the “**sun**” refers to a great ruler. It is an apt description of Napoleon. Within 8 years he scorched every kingdom in Europe, from Naples to Berlin, from Lisbon to Moscow.
- **Bowl No. 5** (10-11): the “**throne of the beast**” represents Rome. French forces entered Rome in 1797. They systematically pillaged the city. The churches, convents and the palaces of the cardinals and nobility were laid waste. Their spoiling of Rome exceeded that carried out earlier by the Goths or the Vandals.

Robbed of all defense, in 1798 Pope Pius VI was ordered to dispossess himself of all his temporal power. Refusing this he was forcibly removed. One historian records he “was dragged from the altar in his palace, his repositories all ransacked and plundered, the rings even torn from his fingers, the whole effects of the Vatican and Quirinal inventoried and seized, and the aged pontiff conducted, with only a few domestics, amid the brutal jests and the sacrilegious songs of the French dragoons, into Tuscany.” (Sir Archibald Alison, *History of Europe*, Vol. 1, pp542-546.)

Throughout Europe, from 1798 to 1866 the authority of the papal system progressively deteriorated. The lands and monasteries owned by the Church were confiscated and declared national property. This period corresponds with the completion of the 1260 years declared to be the time allotted for the rule of the papacy, defined as the ‘sea beast’. (In 533, the Bishop of Rome was installed as the supreme Bishop by Emperor Justinian. Adding 1260 years yields 1793, when Papal power was broken by the French Revolution. Also in 606

Emperor Phocas issued a decree conceding to Pope Boniface III. Adding 1260 years yields 1866, when Papal power was broken in Italy.)

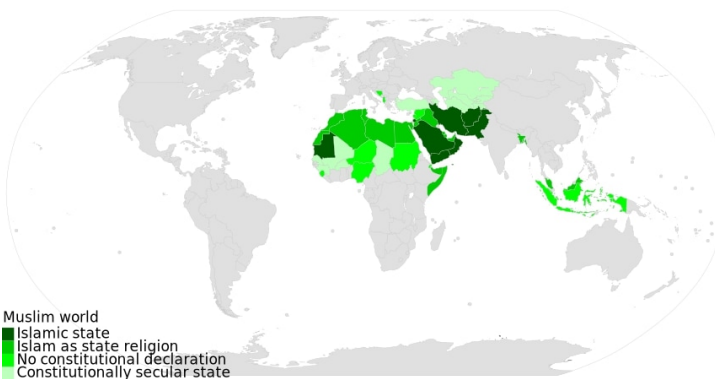
Nevertheless, the papacy was not annihilated for “**they refused to repent of their works**”. Its blasphemies continued: for example the Immaculate Conception of Mary was declared in 1854 and the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope when speaking *ex cathedra* was declared in 1870. Thus they “**cursed**” or “**blasphemed**” (KJV) the God of heaven. The Jesuits now rise up as the ‘earth beast’ and evolve into the power behind the papacy, and the hidden world empire.

- **Bowl No. 6** (v12-16): just as in the sixth trumpet, the “**Euphrates**” refers to the Turks. Here the river “**dried up**”, meaning the Turkish power, which was now the Ottoman Empire, was to diminish.

The Ottoman Empire was an Islamic caliphate that controlled large areas of the Middle East, Eastern Europe and North Africa for more than 600 years. At the height of its power it ruled Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Egypt, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, part of Arabia and the North African coastal region. The Ottoman Empire began to decline in the 17th century and was finally overthrown as a consequence of its defeat in the First World War.

The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire saw independent Islamic States under Sharia Law, or States with Islam as the state religion, evolve in the Middle East with one important exception. Jews were permitted to return and take control of the land of Palestine, which had been a part of the Ottoman Empire. Israel is today surrounded by hostile Islamic nations.

As to Central Asia, atheism was enforced by the USSR and only limited religious activities was permitted in the six Muslim countries of the USSR - Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Though marginalized by atheistic communism, the Islamic religion was largely retained by the populations of these nations which have now regained their independence with the disintegration of the USSR. Although none of these states is yet an Islamic



State under Sharia Law, Islam is the majority religion and radical Muslim groups are active.

The reemergence of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine, together with Islamic controlled regions to the west of Israel, perhaps points to the fulfillment of the prophecy “**to prepare the way for the kings from the East**”. In present circumstances, these “**kings**” maybe conjectured to be a confederacy of Islamic nations in the Middle East and Central Asia, and/or Russian and Chinese forces. Both Russia and China are Communist states based upon Marxist ideology (see also below regarding the “**frogs**”). The astonishing rise of China in the last 50 years has placed it on a trajectory to rival the United States as the world’s dominant super-power. With present-day Israel aligned with the United States, both Russia and China are antagonistic to Israel.

- The “**three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet**” signify doctrines of demons that take hold throughout the world (c.f. 1Timothy 4:1). These began to manifest

in the mid 19th century during the Age of Enlightenment (1715 – 1789) and continues unabated to this day.

The Enlightenment was founded upon the core belief in the sovereignty of human reason. Thus, human intellect, i.e. 'science', was to be relied upon as the primary source of truth and knowledge, and expressly not the revelation of God i.e. the Bible.

In 1793, that the Convention of the French revolutionaries proclaimed the investiture of the goddess of Reason and a new state imposed cult, with the express purpose to replace Catholic Christianity and overthrow its dominion. A



prostitute was paraded through the streets of Paris hailed as representing the deity of Reason and she was seated on the high altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris replacing the Catholic 'God'.

The Enlightenment marked an extraordinary turning point in the world's history. This idea in the elevation of human reason enforced the misnomer of the separation of state purportedly built upon science (hard facts/truth) and the church built upon religion (variable mode of worship/superstition). It is a misnomer because every person adopts and is guided by a world-view which is a belief system i.e. religion. Atheism is as much as a religion as is Theism. Truth does not lie within a human being, truth is found in God and Him alone. The atheist has built his world-view upon a lie. The vast majority of people do not regard themselves as atheists, but they are unwittingly being guided by the same lie, i.e. that human reason is the source of all truth.

Operational science was not the product of the Enlightenment, although that is what is commonly believed. Operational science that has produced modern technologies is based upon the truth that God created a world defined by physical laws.¹⁷ The principal founders of operational science were men who regarded the Bible to be the source of truth that inspired them to examine and harness the physical laws created by Almighty God. These include

- Physics: Newton, Faraday, Maxwell, Kelvin
- Chemistry: Boyle, Dalton, Ramsay
- Biology: Ray, Linnaeus, Mendel, Pasteur, Virchow, Agassiz
- Geology: Steno, Woodward, Brewster, Buckland, Cuvier
- Astronomy: Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Herschel, Maunder
- Mathematics: Pascal, Leibnitz

The architects of the Enlightenment hijacked the scientific method, claiming it as their own, and divorced it from its Biblical roots.

The Bible is therefore the foundation to operational science and in no way is it antagonistic to the scientific method. Where modern science fails is when it delves into *historical science* while denying the true history of the world as explained in the Bible. A fossil is not a fact of history, it is a fact in the present. A story is told that explains the world of the animal from which the fossil came. That story can be derived from the truth of God's Word, or the fiction of men's minds.

Historical science disconnected from the Bible therefore leads down a path of falsity. For example, secular historical science portends that

¹⁷ The prophecy in Daniel 12:4 predicted a period of technological advancement that would occur

‘everything came from nothing’, the so-called Big Bang. But that idea is itself refuted by operational science! Therefore, scientists who believe in the Big Bang must use blind faith. And Romans 1:22 rightly condemns them: “**Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...**”

One of the chief falsehoods that is wrongly regarded as a ‘scientific fact’ is the modern theory of evolution which was first presented in Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* published in 1859. It has singlehandedly relegated the Bible to the dustbin of history. Darwin wrote:

“[the Old Testament is a] manifestly false history of the world...[it is] no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos, or the beliefs of any barbarian...[the men who wrote it] were ignorant and credulous ... that the Gospels cannot be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events, that they differ in many important details ...[therefore] I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation... disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete...I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my Father, Brother and almost all of my friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine.”

Evolution (plus the Big Bang) has become firmly fixed in people’s minds as the true history of the world and in particular the reason for human existence. The calamitous result of this elevation of human

reason over divine revelation cannot be overstated. The result upon society has been devastating with the destruction of the family unit, the rise of homosexuality/transgenderism and the wholesale slaughter of millions of innocents through abortion. Romans 1 reads like a script of our current age. Truth has been sacrificed on the altar of human reason and the world has gone mad.

Other great falsehoods of recent times which repudiate the Bible as the truth and have beguiled multitudes are:

- **Marxism.** It has been the direct cause in the 20th century of the death of millions and persistent hostility and persecution of Christians. Karl Marx wrote "My object in life is to dethrone God and destroy capitalism." Karl Marx claimed his ideas were the social outworking of Darwin's theory. (Marxism lies at the root of the current Black Lives Matter movement.)
- The **New Age** with its occultic meditation practices promoted and practiced throughout the post-Christian western world.

The New Age is characterized by worship of the 'mother goddess earth' – again an idea that finds support in Darwin's theory (cf. the grip that the climate change agenda has particularly upon youth, couched in terms of the need to care for the earth for fear of extinction).

The **New Spirituality** is a Christianized version of the New Age that has been driven into the Protestant churches at an astonishing pace in the last two decades via the contemplative prayer movement. The New Spirituality is sourced from the teachings and practices of the Catholic mystics. It leads to universalism and pantheism and thereby

constitutes a direct assault on the redemption story of the Bible.

- Secular **Multiculturalism** which defines all religious faiths to be equal and exalts secularist concepts over Biblical norms. Again, this idea has only had traction because of the all pervasive belief in Darwinian evolution. Thus religions are all primitive attempts to explain the existence of the universe and life; and are mere vestiges of past societies that can be abandoned now that human reason or ‘science’ has triumphed.
- **Islam**, which has seen a recent reemergence as a potent force in the world.

Moreover, the ecumenical movement initiated by the Pope in 1962 at Vatican II has, over the course of recent years, effectively subdued Protestant resistance to Rome. With the light of the gospel extinguished and their savor lost, Protestant churches that have capitulated to Rome have now destined themselves for judgment (cf. Matthew 5:13). The **“lukewarm”** Laodicean church is the compromised Protestant church that now exists.

- **“They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.”**: The doctrines of demons emanating from the three frogs would take hold throughout the world, and would gather the nations of the world together as one in opposition to God just prior to the return of Christ. This is an apt description of the present conditions that exist in the world.
- **“Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.”**: The word **“Armageddon”** used here

is the one and only time it appears in the Bible. Strictly translated it means the “mountain of Megiddo”. Megiddo is a region in Israel mentioned several times in the Old Testament where decisive battles took place. It links to the “**the battle on the great day of God Almighty**”, a yet to be fulfilled event.

It is at the time of this event that Jesus says “**Behold, I come like a thief!**”, an expression used several times throughout the New Testament to refer to His second coming (see Matthew 24: 42-44, Luke 12: 39-40, 1Thessalonians 5: 1-4, 2Peter 3: 10).

Therefore, it corresponds with the event described in Revelation 19:11-21, when Jesus appears as the “**rider on the white horse**” who “**treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty**” upon “**the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.**” (See also possibly Zechariah 12-14.)

There is an obvious parallel between the tower of Babel and the mountain of Megiddo. At the advent of the former, all the people united in opposition to God. The tower resembled a mountain and the people erected it to reach the heavens i.e. to declare themselves the determiner of their own destiny and therefore ultimately gods themselves.

In the latter, “**the kings of the earth**” (i.e. governments and ruling world authorities) are gathered together to the mountain of Megiddo, as a consequence of them accepting and acting upon the falsehoods perpetrated by these “**spirits of demons**”, that unite them and therefore the world in opposition to God.

The evidence is easy to discover (though hidden from the general public by owned and controlled media) that the principal authorities of

the present world are uniting once again to declare humankind to be the determiner of their own destiny and therefore ultimately gods themselves.

These authorities include The United Nations, the World Economic Forum, World Health Organisation, the Council for Foreign Relations, and the Bilderberg group, together with corporate elites – Military/Industrial complex, Big Banks, Big Tech and Big Pharma.

These organizations have an agenda for a One World System or New World Order, in which they rule over the people of the earth in order to advance the evolution of humankind and save the earth by restricting the consumption of the world's resources via population control. More importantly, this represents a united opposition to God in the destruction of Biblical norms for society in sexual orientation freedom, trans-genderism and trans-humanism.

Politicians and governments have in general submitted themselves to this agenda, evident by them collectively accepting the lies of Climate Change and trans-genderism, and forcing the peoples of the world to relinquish individual freedoms in face of the Covid Epidemic.

- **Bowl No. 7** (v17-21): the fulfillment of this judgement is still in the future. The “**earthquake**” such that “**No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake ... and the cities of the nations collapsed**” speaks of the complete overthrow of the governmental systems of the world; and the end of the age. “**The great city**” is a reference to Rome and it is particularly singled out at this 7th and last bowl judgment; thus finally the beast which stood opposed to Christ and His church is struck down, never to rise again. This epoch “**earthquake**” event signals the

utter and final overthrow of the empire of the beast, and coincides with Christ's return to take dominion of the earth.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 gives a more detailed description of the judgement inflicted upon the apostate Roman Church referred to in the last chapter, though using different imagery. There is now a distinction made between the religious authority and the political authority of the Papal Roman Empire.

- **“One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.”” (v1-2)**

Imperial Rome and Papal Rome were both politico-religious regimes. The **“great harlot”** (v1) and **“Babylon”** (v5) represent the *religious* authority of both Imperial Rome and Papal Rome (c.f. Revelation 17:18 **“the woman ... is the great city”** which is Rome). The beast the woman rides represents their *political* power. Both Empires declared a state religion, and those who opposed it were brutally and mercilessly destroyed, through the exercise of their political authority.

Isaiah 21:9 links Babylon with idolatrous worship:

“... 'Babylon has fallen, has fallen! All the images of its gods lie shattered on the ground!’”

Imperial Rome worshiped a pantheon of gods and bowed to a Caesar who was proclaimed a living god. Graven images abounded both publicly (temples) and privately (homes). So too, Papal Rome worshiped a plethora of 'saints' and bowed to a proclaimed living god who is the Pope.¹⁸ The Catholic Church is renowned for its graven images, icons and relics; again erected and displayed both in public (churches) and private (homes).

Idolatry is specifically identified in the Ten Commandments as a detestable sin. The Catholic Church changed the Ten Commandments to omit the second which condemns idolatry:

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:4-5

A Catholic Bible does not contain this verse, it is entirely missing! The number of Ten Commandments is maintained by splitting the tenth commandment into two separate commandments.

In practicing idolatry the Catholic Church fails the very first commandment:

¹⁸ Catholics say they don't worship but only venerate the saints. However, this is mere semantics. They have images of the saints they give adoration to and they pray to the 'saints' for protection/success/miracles. Thus there is no effective difference between Catholic veneration and pagan worship.

You shall have no other gods before me.

Exodus 20:3

(Of course, there is so much more in the Bible besides the Ten Commandments to condemn idolatry which Catholics must ignore. Thus they indeed show themselves apostate, distorters of God's Word and enemies of God.)

- **“The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet”** (v4) depicts the colour of the robes worn by popes and cardinals; **“gold, precious gems and pearls”** (v4) speak of the great wealth of the Catholic Church.
- The title of **“THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH”** (v5) well describes the Catholic Church. Pope Benedict 13th in 1725 said

“This catholic and apostolic Roman church is the head of the world, the Mother of all believers And Mistress of all the churches.”

As the Mother of Prostitutes she has spawned impure churches throughout the world. Vatican figures show an estimated 1.2 billion Roman Catholics in the world, around 15% of the world's population. More than 40% of the world's Catholics live in Latin America and Africa has seen the biggest growth in Catholic congregations in recent years.

- **“She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries”** (v4) refers to the idolatry,

indulgences, pagan-styled rites, ceremonies and rituals, and wanton immorality which has so characterized the Roman Church.¹⁹

- The reference to her being **“drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus”** (v6) points to the bloody persecution of the true church by the apostate Church. It continued the persecution by Imperial Rome for exactly the same reason, Imperial Rome and Papal Rome regarded true Christianity as a heretical cult that threatened the existence of the state.
- The **“seven hills on which the woman sits”** (v.9) is a direct reference again to the city of Rome renowned for it being built on seven hills.
- The **“seven kings”** (v.10) refers to the seven forms of government that ruled over Rome prior to the rise of the papacy:
 - The five forms of government that had existed in Rome *before* John’s time and had therefore “fallen” were kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs and military tribunes.
 - Imperial Caesars were in power *at* the time of John.
 - And a duchy (a type of dukedom in the kingdom of Ravenna) which came into existence *after* the last Caesar (Romulus Augustus) was deposed in 476AD. At John’s time this power had “not yet come” (v10). And, it existed “for a little while” until the new empire, which was the Papal Roman Empire arose.
- **“The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction”** (v11) refers to the political power of the Roman Catholic Church and directly links

¹⁹ For example Pope John XII (955-963) was “guilty of every crime; violating virgins and widows, high and low; lived with his father’s mistress; made the Papal Palace a brothel; was killed while in the act of adultery by the woman’s enraged husband.”

Papal Rome with Imperial Rome as “**he belongs to the seven**”. The Imperial Roman Empire, under the authority of Caesars, would be overthrown and reappear as the Papal Roman Empire, under the authority of Popes.

"The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the pontificate, Rome, resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable, and been thenceforward a most foul habitation of cattle. But in the pontificate it revived as with a second birth; its empire in magnitude not indeed equal to the old empire, but its form not very dissimilar: because all nations, from East and from West, venerate the pope, not otherwise than they before obeyed the emperor."

Augustine Steuchus

“**He...is going to his destruction**” (11) points to the final and complete overthrow of the papacy; an event still in the future.

- “**The ten horns**” which are “**ten kings**” (v12) refers to the kingdoms or nations of Western Europe that had been part of the Imperial Roman Empire. After the overthrow of this Empire, and for a short period of time, i.e. “**one hour**” (v12), before the emergence of the Papal Roman Empire, there existed ten independent kingdoms in this region:

(1) the kingdom of the Vandals

(2) the kingdom of the Suevians

(3) the kingdom of the Visigoths

(4) the kingdom of the Alans

(5) the kingdom of the Burgundians

(6) the kingdom of the Franks

(7) the kingdom of the Britons

(8) the kingdom of the Huns

(9) the kingdom of the Lombards

(10) the kingdom of Ravenna

The area encompassed by these kingdoms came under the dominion of Rome yet again with the rise of the Papacy.

These kingdoms evolved into European states. At the time of the Reformation there were exactly ten European state powers: France, Spain, England, Scotland, Germany/Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary and Portugal.

- **“The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire”** (v16): The religious authority of Rome, i.e. **“the great prostitute”**, was struck down beginning with the Age of Enlightenment. This coincided with the demise of the political power of the Pope which was progressively overthrown by the European state powers. The European states have coalesced today as the European Union and are secular and multicultural in their religious outlook i.e. they are irreligious if not anti-religious.

Nevertheless, despite the ruin of the Papal Roman Empire, the Papacy continues to this day under the control of the Jesuits (the present Pope is a Jesuit!), and will not be completely annihilated until the return of Christ. Moreover, the Jesuits continue in their quest for

world dominion, and they secretly operate in political affairs and manipulate outcomes. They now constitute the present-day beast in the world. With the recent capitulation of Protestant churches to false teachers and Rome's ecumenism, Jesuit-trained Catholics are rising to public positions of power in many Protestant nations throughout the Western World.

- **“For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.”** (v17): The 4th beast of Daniel has therefore morphed into successive regimes over the last 2000 years. From Imperial Rome to Papal Rome (the sea beast), to Papal Rome under the control of the Jesuits (the earth beast), to a European Union of irreligious States which Jesuits still control in secret. All of these are given their authority and power through Satan (the dragon).

This last iteration of the beast which is now upon us, leads to the conclusion that this present time is the very end of the age when very soon **“God's words are fulfilled”**.

Chapter 18

Revelation Chapter 18 describes the final overthrow of Papal Rome. This heralds an as yet future event.

- **“Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!”** (v2): Spiritual **“Babylon”** i.e. the fountain of falsehood that flows from Rome, is to be completely annihilated, mirroring the utter desolation of the real Babylon. This occurs only at the return of Christ, depicted in Chapter 19.
- **“For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her ...”** (v3) broadens the scope of Rome’s influence beyond Europe which is identified with the beast and the ten kings. Catholicism has its greatest followings now outside of Europe, especially South America and Africa; and has achieved recent extraordinary influence in the United States.
- The reference to **“Come out of her my people”** (v4) suggests there are true believers who are yet found in her, and they are instructed to leave the Catholic Church. Moreover, it shows the error of Protestants who succumb to her deceit and fall in line with Rome’s ecumenism.
- The mention of **“her plagues”** which overtake her in **“one day”** (v8) and **“In one hour she has been brought to ruin”** (v17, 19) suggest this final overthrow will be very swift.²⁰
- The many references to trade and commerce (v11-23) perhaps direct to Papal Rome’s financial power, as distinct from its political authority and religious rule. Roman Catholicism is intertwined with Europe’s economic system as it is estimated that the Vatican still owns one-third of Europe’s real estate. (Moreover, several banking houses control the

²⁰ Using the year-for-a-day rule, the final destruction of Rome’s power and wealth would progressively occur over a year and its eventual end take about 2 weeks (“1 hour” = 15 days).

world's money system and Jesuits may well be influential in this small body of people.) This passage may describe a world-wide financial collapse, much greater than anything experienced since the Great Depression of the 1930's, which is still in the future.

- **“Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: “With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again ... Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.” (v21):** This foretells the complete and utter destruction of the dominion of the ant-Christ system founded in Rome, and its existence will now forevermore be extinguished in the earth. This **“boulder”** echoes the rock cast at the foot of the statue in Daniel:

“While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.”

Daniel 2:34-35

- **“In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth.”” (v24):** This demonstrates Rome's diabolical and continual opposition to the true church. Imperial Rome was eclipsed in its murder of Christians by the Church of Rome, and the multitude of wars which they conducted span a period of some 2000 years. Babylon-Rome is responsible for more innocent

blood than any other institution that has ever existed on the face of the earth.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 heralds the return of Christ for His Bride, the true church, which is coupled with the complete destruction of the last beast.

- There is great rejoicing at the final overthrow of the religious system that ruled the world in opposition to God and His people (v1-6). This all takes place at the return of Christ: **“For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready”** (v7). His bride, in contrast to the harlot Roman Church, is virtuous being described as **“righteous”** and wearing **“fine linen, bright and clean”** (v8).
- Christ appears as the rider on the **“white horse”** (v11). His coming is associated with the annihilation of Rome’s dominion and power. The capture of the beast and the false prophet and the execution of their judgement in the lake of fire signal the end of the age and of world empires, which were controlled by Satan through wicked rulers (v20).
- **“And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, “Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great.””** (v17-18)

When Christ returns multitudes will immediately fall under the judgment of God, **“the great supper of God”**, and be killed when **“He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty”** (v15). For the

surviving nations that remain into the Millennium (see below Chapter 20), **"He will rule them with an iron scepter"** (v15).

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 unfolds what transpires in the earth after Christ returns.

"And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time." (v1-3)

There are three different approaches Historicists have adopted to interpret the thousand year reign of Christ (commonly referred to as the "Millennium") during which Satan is bound and locked in the Abyss - Premillennial, Amillennial and Postmillennial.

Premillennial Approach

- The thousand years is a literal period during which Christ will reign over the nations that remain on the earth. It commences upon the physical return of Christ to the earth. As He returns, the church, both those dead and those living, will be caught up with Him in the air and be given new immortal bodies (1Thessalonians 4:16-18). **"This is the first resurrection"** (v5). These glorified persons will assist Christ in His rule upon the earth, **"they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years"** (v6).

- **“When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog — to gather them for battle.”** (v7-8): Satan will be bound during the thousand years; he is denied any opportunity to exert influence over the nations. He will be loosed again at the end of the Millennium, upon which he immediately sets about to deceive the nations. He causes them to rise up in rebellion against Christ, spearheaded by **“Gog and Magog”**, details of which are perhaps provided in Ezekiel Chapters 38-39 (although this passage may relate to the battle of Armageddon fought at the time of Christ’s return, before the Millennium).
- **“They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.”** (9): Christ physically rules the earth from Jerusalem **“the city he loves”**. As the armies of the nations of the world come and surround the city, they are annihilated.
- **“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”** (v10): This is the very final act of the devil. He is now thrown into **“the lake of burning sulfur”** (also called **“the lake of fire”** (20:14)), a place of perpetual torment and of no return.
- **“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.”** (v5): After this final act of rebellion, the resurrection of the wicked dead occurs and they are judged at the Great White Throne (the living wicked were judged by Christ upon His return at the commencement of the thousand years - see Matthew 25:35-46):

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place

for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (v11-15)

- A new heaven and a new earth are created after the Millennium (see Chapters 21-22 below).

Amillennial Approach

- The thousand years is symbolic of a long, indeterminate period, corresponding to the age of the church (from Christ till His return).
- The binding of Satan represents the victory of Christ over the powers of darkness accomplished at the cross.
- Satan will be loosed briefly to wreak havoc and persecute the church at the end of the present age.
- The fire coming from heaven and consuming the wicked (v9) is symbolic of Christ's Second Coming.
- A general resurrection and judgement of the wicked and the good will occur at Christ's coming, followed by the creation of the new heavens and the new earth.

Postmillennial Approach

- The thousand years may or may not be a literal duration, but it definitely speaks of a glorious age, prior to the Second Coming, in which the true church will stand triumphant on the world's stage. The gospel will have universal influence over the whole earth, i.e. the world will effectively be Christianized.
- Because of this reign of the true church, Satan will be effectively bound.
- A final attempt of Satan at the end of the age will fail.
- A general resurrection and judgement will occur at the coming of Christ.

Broadly speaking, over time, Historicists have moved from the Amillennial, to the Postmillennial to the Premillennial view, in light of world developments. Early authors such as Luther were Amillennial and Postmillennialism was popular during the Great Awakening in the 19th century (especially amongst the English Puritans).

With the advent of the immense social tumult of the 20th century including two World Wars, the Great Depression, the rise of Communism and the reemergence of Islam with its hostile persecution of Christians, together with the general collapse in morality and godliness in previous Protestant nations, the Amillennial and Postmillennium views have become untenable and abandoned.

Futurist's are also Premillennialists, however, their interpretation of what occurs at the end of the age with the rebuilding of the temple, the rapture of the church out of the world and their belief in the role of a restored literal Israel during the Millennium with the reinstatement of the sacrificial system, all stand in stark contrast to a Historicists understanding of the Millennium. Historicists in no way entertain the idea that sacrifices will recommence and

continue throughout the Millennium. Christ's sacrifice was once for all. It would be an affront to the sufferings of Christ and a denial of the efficacy of His blood, to resume animal sacrifices.

The Old Covenant with its temple and sacrificial system was made obsolete by the blood of Jesus. Historicists believe emphatically that the **"temple"** of 2Thessalonians 2:4 is the church (see 2Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:21-22), and not a structure made of stone, which Futurists believe. Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (Mark 13:2) after His own **"temple"** which was His body was killed and then raised back to life (John 2:19). The church now is the body of Christ and also the temple of Christ. Those who promote the rebuilding of a physical temple stand in opposition to God.

(Note: Though not embracing Historicism nor Futurism, leaders of the New Apostolic Reformation have effectively resurrected the Postmillennium view in very recent times. Their 'prophecies' of national revivals and 'apostles' who were to rise to positions of authority in the world enforcing the kingdom of God upon the earth have not eventuated, however, and the movement cannot be sustained. The New Apostolic Reformation is riddled with falsehoods and false teachers.)

Chapters 21-22

Chapters 21-22 herald the dawn of a new age. The old world is destroyed and a new world is created by God that will continue forever. All that is evil and wicked has been removed. All who stood opposed to God in rebellion, both in the spirit realm and the natural world, languish in the lake of fire. The perfect order, as it was in the Garden before the fall, is restored. There is now no more death, violence, sickness, pain, suffering etc. The whole world has become a paradise, and God dwells with the people He redeemed for Himself forevermore.

- **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.”**
(21:1): After the return of Christ at the close of the Millennium, **“a new heaven and a new earth”** is created, as it was in the beginning before the fall.

The old heaven and old earth are destroyed (cf. 2 Peter 3:10-12 **“...The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare...That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.”**)

And the curse affected at the fall in the Garden is annulled: **“No longer will there be any curse.”** (22:3)

Satan, the beast, death, hell and the wicked have all been thrown into the **“lake of fire”** (or **“burning sulfur”**) (20:10, 14). Their time has ended forevermore.

- **“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”**

(21:2): This city is the antithesis of **“the great prostitute”** (17:1). The way in which it is said that this city comes **“down out of heaven”** (21:2, 10) and that **“the throne of God and of the Lamb”** (22:1) is in the midst of the city, means that God’s own throne will be established forevermore upon the earth: **“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”** This **“Holy City”** replaces the **“great city”** (17:18), i.e. Rome, through which Satan exercised control over the world (2:13), which is now no more. (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:24 **“Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.”**)

- All things have been made new again:

““Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!”” (21:3-5)